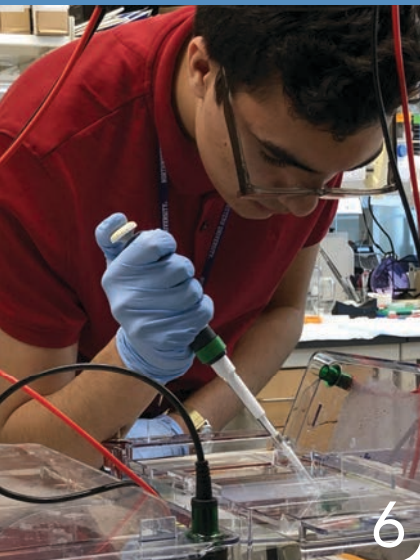


Shoulder **to** Shoulder

FALL 2019

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**Big
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Big Shoulders Fund Support Expands to Northwest Indiana

(Above R) Beth and Bruce White (R) spend time with St. Casimir School students in Hammond, Indiana.

(Above L) Five Holy Trinity High School students participated in the inaugural Northwestern University (NU) GoKidney Sci-High summer program at the Simpson Querrey Biomedical Research Center. During this eight-week program, students assisted their mentors with hands-on research in NU GoKidney's biomedical research cores. A special thanks to Executive Committee member Kimberly Querrey and Lou Simpson for their support of the program.

Thanks to a new, fully funded gift, Big Shoulders Fund has announced the expansion of its support and programming to schools in Northwest Indiana, beginning with the current academic year.

“As part of our mission to provide support and assistance to schools in communities with need, we are excited to build on the success of our efforts in Chicago and extend the organization’s reach by bringing our unique approach to academic programming, volunteerism, and operational support to Northwest Indiana,” said Big Shoulders Fund President and CEO Josh Hale.

The new gift, provided by longtime Big Shoulders Fund supporters Beth and Bruce White, totals \$16 million during the next 10 years. Initially, this investment most directly impacts approximately 3,300 students in 10 elementary and high schools in the Catholic Diocese of Gary by providing operational support and academic programming. An

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Students from St. Casimir School and St. Stanislaus East Chicago in Northwest Indiana.

Big Shoulders Fund Support Expands to Northwest Indiana

...continued from cover

additional 10 schools in the Diocese with 2,600 students will benefit from this initiative through professional development opportunities. Big Shoulders contracted a research team to conduct a needs assessment of the region to determine geographical areas with the greatest opportunity for impact. The gift also supports expanded capacity to allow Big Shoulders to hire a team for the region (see sidebar on p. 4).

Big Shoulders will enhance the schools' long-term opportunities for success through access to technology, curricular resources, and instructional and data coaching, as well as initiatives to increase enrollment, provide financial aid, and offer scholarships, enrichment, and summer programs.

“As part of our mission to provide support and assistance to schools in communities with need, we are excited to build on the success of our efforts in Chicago.”

—Big Shoulders Fund President and CEO Josh Hale

After moving to Chicago in 2006, Beth and Bruce White got to know Big Shoulders Fund and became Patrons at Our Lady of Guadalupe School on Chicago's Southeast Side near Northwest Indiana. In 2011, they launched a scholarship program and started Staddle Camp, which offers middle schoolers from Big Shoulders Fund schools a unique set of science-focused sessions during the school year, culminating in a trip to Brush Creek Ranch in Wyoming. The Whites are ardent believers in the benefits of access to quality education and intend to continue their support of existing Chicago programs in addition to providing this significant gift for Northwest Indiana.

“My family and I are strong believers in the mission of Big Shoulders Fund, an organization that has been dedicated to preserving education and academic access for students in safe, secure, and supportive environments, strengthening schools and entire communities for more than 30 years,” said Beth.

“We are honored to be able to help the organization expand its reach to my native home in Northwest Indiana and positively impact the lives of thousands of additional students and families and the communities in which they live,” commented Bruce.

“Big Shoulders Fund remains committed to educating students, strengthening families, and preserving communities by keeping schools open and providing children access to a quality, values-based education,” said Hale. “Our efforts, and the investments of many, have made a tremendous impact on those we serve in Chicago. We are thrilled to be able to expand our involvement to neighboring schools and communities in Northwest Indiana and look forward to partnering with schools in the Catholic Diocese of Gary.” ■



Teacher Fellow and Mentor Programs Prepare Educators for Long-Term Leadership

Big Shoulders Fund
Teacher Induction Coach
Antoinette Greengard leads
a professional development
session for Teacher Fellows.

Consistency, reliability, and trust—these qualities contribute to a positive and productive culture at a school. One important way to accomplish this is by retaining quality teachers; with too much turnover, schools take two steps forward, then three steps back.

Big Shoulders Fund prioritizes the growth of teachers as leaders and offers opportunities for professional development to cultivate remarkable educators who commit to teaching at Big Shoulders Fund schools throughout its talent pipeline, from classroom assistants to principals.

Professional development programming, which Big Shoulders launched in 2015 with support from the Opus Foundation, continues for a large network of teachers, and this year there are two additional areas of focus: Teacher Fellows and Mentors. “These new initiatives provide a deeper level of support to a select group of teachers,” said Eliza Bryant, director, academic programs and enrichment. Applicants to both programs, which exceeded the number of available slots, had to demonstrate a strong commitment to teaching at Big Shoulders Fund schools, pursuing opportunities for professional growth, and exhibiting leadership potential. Consequently, Big Shoulders welcomed 11 Fellows and 11 Mentors serving 21 schools this year.

Teacher Fellows, who have been in the classroom for two to four years, gather to identify goals and challenges, receive dedicated coaching support, and work with a broader network of teachers on foundational skills for strong instruction.

“I want to better myself and my practices to provide students with meaningful learning experiences and a quality education,” said Fellow

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Thomas Zbierski
Senior Director, Scholarship Programs and School Relations

Teacher Fellow and Mentor Programs Prepare Educators for Long-Term Leadership

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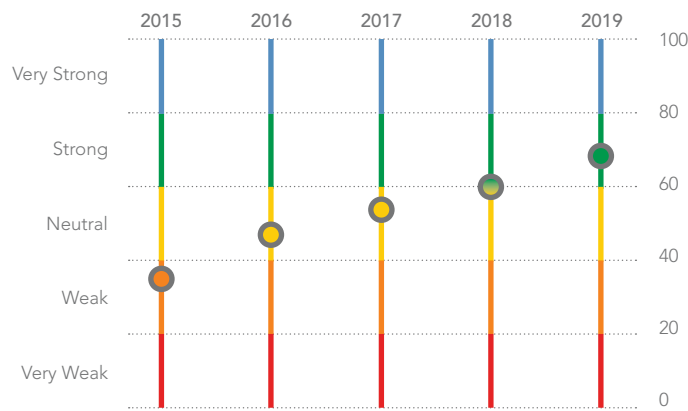
Anne Aviles, a Maternity BVM School kindergarten teacher. “I hope to gain better strategies for teaching students with diverse learning needs. I want to become a reading specialist, since reading opens the door to other learning.”

Mentors, who have at least four years of teaching experience, want more leadership responsibility and are deeply committed to advancing within the Big Shoulders Fund school network or at similar schools.

“People who teach have dedicated their lives to walking alongside others on their journey,” described Mentor Maggie Writt, who teaches middle school literacy at Academy of St. Benedict the African. “In my first two years, several longtime teachers took me under their wings. They were people I could trust when I needed guidance or someone to listen. I’ve realized my responsibility in stepping into that role.”

“I became a Mentor to help new teachers,” said Christine Aguirre from St. John de la Salle Academy. “When I started teaching five years ago, I attached myself to a veteran teacher. I learned so much, and I still use some of her techniques in my classroom.”

5Essentials Survey—Socialization of New Teachers



Schools with strong Socialization of New Teachers, as measured by the University of Chicago’s 5Essentials Survey, include new teachers in the professional community and offer helpful feedback on their instructional practices. Big Shoulders Fund schools that have implemented 5Essentials since 2015 have moved from “weak” to “strong” on this measure, demonstrating significant growth.

Roberta Bobko has taught at almost every grade level during her 19 years at St. Mary Star of the Sea School. “I decided to take part in the Mentor Program because it’s important for teachers to help each other. Just like our students, we never stop learning. There have been several times in my career when the advice or direction of a colleague has proven to be more valuable than gold.”

“It’s exciting to be in a room of people who are passionate about their work, especially when Big Shoulders is running the show,” shared Fellow John Borah, who teaches literacy at St. Malachy School. “Their professional development programs make great teachers. I hope to become the best teacher I can be, and this fellowship will help get me there.” ■



Big Shoulders Fund Hires Northwest Indiana Team

As Big Shoulders Fund expands its reach into Northwest Indiana (see cover), two experienced professionals with roots in “the Region” join the organization to lead those efforts:



DAN KOZLOWSKI is Regional Director, Northwest Indiana Initiative. He will partner with senior leadership to provide strategic vision, management, and execution of this initiative. Kozlowski was vice president for advancement at Marian Catholic High School in Chicago Heights beginning in 2016. Prior to that, he served in advancement roles at

Valparaiso University where he earned an undergraduate degree in accounting and an MBA. Kozlowski is a board member of the Lions Club in Cedar Lake and board member of Holy Name of Jesus Foundation.

GISELE JONES is Director of Community Partnerships and Engagement. She will take a leadership role in launching the Northwest Indiana initiative, designing and implementing broad-based and hyperlocal marketing campaigns to increase enrollment. Jones was director of student engagement at Edison Learning Management Corporation in Gary, Indiana beginning in 2012. Originally from Gary, she earned her bachelor’s degree from Indiana University Northwest and her MBA from Indiana Wesleyan University.



“The interest we received in these positions surpassed our expectations,” said Big Shoulders Fund President and CEO Josh Hale. “After a very competitive hiring process, we are thrilled to have Dan and Gisele join the Big Shoulders team and lead the way as we expand the number of schools and families benefiting from our programs. With their deep connections to Northwest Indiana, skills, experience, and desire to make a difference, they are equipped to hit the ground running as we launch this new initiative.” ■



(L) Sullivan Leadership Fellows gathered for their annual retreat.

(Below) Sullivan Leadership Fellow and Leo High School Principal Shaka Rawls.



Sullivan Leadership Fellows Program Addresses Principal Retention and Growth

Big Shoulders Fund knows that strong and dynamic school leaders are essential to ensure students achieve at the highest levels, especially when facing challenges of poverty and violence. Principals—by recruiting, developing, and retaining strong teachers; prioritizing enrollment and wise resource allocation; and maintaining a healthy and effective school environment—affect all students in a school.

Beginning in 2018, thanks to the vision and generosity of supporters Tim and Sue Sullivan, Big Shoulders piloted the Sullivan Leadership Fellows Program. “Studies have shown the single biggest factor in school success is a talented and experienced principal,” said Tim. “After discussion with the Big Shoulders team, we designed a program focusing on principal leadership development and retention at Big Shoulders Fund schools.”

“Among our goals is to achieve a principal retention rate that exceeds national and local levels,” Sue Sullivan described. “Additionally, we hope the program will expand their skill sets and help them learn ‘best in class’ methods in the management of their schools. Finally, we want principals to feel supported and have fun with their peers.”

Anna Cirilli, principal at St. Nicholas Cathedral School, outlines challenges she faces. “We constantly strive to keep education current and rigorous, maintain up-to-date technology in the classrooms, and provide teachers with coaching and feedback to foster collaborative practices that relate to high student achievement.”

“The most impactful challenge is the feeling of isolation,” shared Leo Catholic High School Principal Shaka Rawls. “The enormity of the responsibility places a great burden on us, and we are often left considering decisions for hours, even days. Not many people can understand the nuanced context in which we make decisions, so our process is often internal and isolating.”

The Sullivan Leadership Fellows Program convenes Cirilli, Rawls, and 14 other school leaders to provide a meaningful peer cohort and collaborative learning opportunities to improve their practice and strengthen their results. “The program invites us to share a problem with our peers and work through ways to problem-solve,” Cirilli described. “Hearing the struggles of other principals and listening to the solutions and feedback allow me to more effectively cope with similar situations.”

This professional learning community focuses on areas such as academic outcomes, enrollment, matriculation, school culture and climate, faculty and staff professional development, and leadership skills. Participants receive a \$7,500 stipend in each of the first four years, with a more significant stipend in the fifth year based on progress toward goals.

Rawls said, “The program gives us a sense of community, a working group of strong, successful leaders who learn from each other. My colleagues challenge and support my work through a critical and encouraging lens. Whether I’m hearing exciting things other principals are doing or being pushed in my practices, this opportunity lets me constantly question my choices. These are some of the best educators, and I am honored to learn from them.”

Tim and Sue Sullivan are pleased with the program’s progress. “Retention of Fellows at Big Shoulders Fund schools is at 95 percent,” Sue noted. “The esprit de corps is extremely strong and has led to honest and collaborative discussions on opportunities and challenges.”

“Seldom are there safe spaces for principals to be vulnerable and supported in this field,” Rawls said. “The role of a principal is competitive and often thankless. This group is the one space where we are pushed to be our best selves and supported as one of the best in the same space.” ■



In the Community





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- 1: Fifty teachers attended the Big Shoulders Fund News Literacy, Civics, and Journalism Conference on May 14. Guests chose from a variety of engaging breakout sessions addressing the different ways students consume and share news of the world around them. Big Shoulders thanks keynote speaker Alba Mendiola for sharing her experience as an investigative journalist and teacher and the McCormick Foundation for their generous support.
- 2: More than 400 people gathered for a night of fun at City Hall for the 13th Annual Big Shoulders Fund Ball co-hosted for the first time by both the Auxiliary Board and Chairmen's Advisory Council. The event grossed more than \$125,000 for Next Generation Board scholarships. The boards thank the Ball Committee, led by Co-Chairs Jenna Buda and Pasquale Recchia (fourth and fifth from L), for a successful night.
- 3: Joni Thompson (second from R), president of Our Lady of Tepeyac High School, received the "Learn. Lead. Proclaim." Award at the NCEA 2019 Conference this past April for her commitment and dedication to education. Thompson has served as an English teacher, assistant principal, dean of students, principal, and president during her 28 years at the school.
- 4: The Chicago Sky Hoops for Health school assembly program taught students at multiple Big Shoulders Fund schools about the importance of eating healthy and exercise throughout the 2018–2019 academic year. Big Shoulders thanks Co-Chair John Canning and his wife, Rita, for making the clinics possible.
- 5: In August, CIBC employees helped Our Lady of Tepeyac Elementary and High Schools get ready for the new school year by participating in organizing school supplies and preparing classrooms for the first day back. Throughout the summer, CIBC volunteers also helped revamp the elementary school's playground.
- 6: On April 30, the Big Shoulders Fund Chairmen's Advisory Council Networking Speaker Series hosted Northern Trust President and CEO Michael O'Grady (L), who discussed the importance of civic engagement.
- 7: Our Lady of the Snows School received the Croghan Teacher's Award in June for exhibiting remarkable growth in test scores and academics. Big Shoulders congratulates the faculty, staff, and students on this recognition.
- 8: The inaugural Big Shoulders Fund Choir Competition took place at De la Salle Institute on May 14. The night of beautiful music was a wonderful look at the different styles and talents of many Big Shoulders Fund schools, students, and school administrators. St. Nicholas Cathedral School took home the microphone trophy as the top ensemble.

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HUMANITARIAN AWARD DINNER

Thursday, May 21, 2020

Big Shoulders Fund will honor the work of Beth and Bruce White at the Humanitarian Award Dinner on Thursday, May 21, 2020. The Whites' support has made an impact on all aspects of Big Shoulders Fund's work: as Patrons at Our Lady of Guadalupe School, as mentors through their White Family Scholarship Program (which has nearly 100 scholars), and as supporters of science enrichment programs, hosting nearly 300 students every summer at Staddle Camp on their Brush Creek Ranch in Wyoming. Most recently, Beth and Bruce White made a \$16 million, 10-year investment to fully fund the expansion of Big Shoulders Fund's programming to Northwest Indiana (see cover).

Dinner Steering Committee members include Ellen and Jim O'Connor, Rita and John Canning, Liz and Kent Dauten, Virginia and Josh Hale, Sue and Tim Sullivan, and Monsignor Ken Velo, while Elizabeth Cole is chairing the Arrangements Committee. For more details or sponsorship information, contact Amelia Drozda at 312.751.3850 or adrozda@bigshouldersfund.org.

save the date