



Education Division

Energized teachers energize students

“After our breakfast of porridge, toast, jam and coffee, and our ride to the south end of the island, we started through the glacial valley of the Daal – a huge valley running east west across the south end of the island. I observed a nest with snipe eggs in the Daal. We arrived at the top of the Sneck, a fault tunnel through the cliff rocks to the cliff bottoms on the west side of the island. Peering down through the tunnel, the descent seemed impossible. We wedged down, one at a time into the entrance. The fault was filled with green moss, ferns, moisture, and an occasional sheep skeleton.

“Dr. Furness and Keith (a graduate ornithologist from the north of England) helped us over the amazing rough descents between boulders. At the base, the Sneck opened onto the seabird nesting cliffs of Slyhellicks. On the cliffs, we banded puffins and common guillemot. I recorded as Keith banded puffins. We returned up the Sneck. I was able to make most of the ascent without help.”

– from the July 1, 1988, journal entry of science teacher Bonnie Fancher on a visit to Foula, North Shetland Islands

Foula, a tiny, wind-swept speck of an island in the North Atlantic, is a world away from Switzerland County Junior-Senior High School in southern Indiana. But each spring, when Bonnie Fancher shares her passion for birds and nature with her environmental studies class, the teacher and students are transported.

Before she takes students out into the field to identify birds in their own community along the Ohio River, Fancher often shares her photos from the summer of 1988, when she took part in an Earthwatch Institute expedition to Foula, one of the North Shetland Islands and the most remote of all the inhabited British Isles.

Fancher worked alongside researchers and other expedition members to band the legs of birds, including puffins and Arctic skua, a unique hawk-like gull native to the North Atlantic, to learn more

(OPPOSITE) *Stephen Clough, an English teacher at Homestead High School near Fort Wayne, serves up Shakespeare with tea for his senior class. His Teacher Creativity fellowship allowed him to go to England for research and to trace family history.*

about their habits and habitat on the island they share with just 30 or so hardy islanders.

“Just getting out the photo album and looking at the pictures has an effect on students,” Fancher says. “When they see that their teacher has worked in the field and done something unique, students see that teacher differently. The experience helps my students perceive me as a scientist as well as their teacher.”

Creative renewal

Fancher's trip was made possible by a grant from what was, in 1988, a new initiative of the Lilly Endowment: the Teacher Creativity Fellowship Program.

First funded in 1987, the summer fellowship program continues to help make teaching in Indiana a more rewarding profession by giving seasoned teachers the opportunity to take a creative sabbatical, a time of renewal that allows busy professionals the opportunity to revitalize their own joy in learning.

In its first year, the Endowment awarded 75 grants of \$4,000



(LEFT) Eighteen years ago Bonnie Fancher received a Teacher Creativity fellowship and headed for the Shetland Islands on an Earthwatch expedition where she kept a journal. What she learned there and since has kept her enthusiasm alive for teaching ornithology, water quality and science in Vevay, a southern Indiana town on the Ohio River.

financial support and time away from the classroom or school. In 2006 the Endowment received approximately 900 applications and awarded 120 grants of \$8,000 each and nine grants of \$25,000 each to Indiana educators.

Among the recipients over the years:

- Paul Beckwith, a science teacher at Angola Middle School in northeast Indiana, is the recipient of two fellowships, the first in 1989, when he walked 568 miles along England's coast over two months, studying the geographic features of the seaside and generally feeling like "the last man on earth." He successfully applied for a second grant and in the summer of 2003, Beckwith studied the watermen – more widely known as commercial fishermen – of Chesapeake Bay.
- Celestine Bloomfield, the media specialist at Indian Creek Elementary School in Indianapolis, was one of 50 African-American students to integrate Lew Wallace High School in Gary in 1966. Her Teacher Creativity fellowship project helped her find a voice for her own story and reconnected her with former classmates whose stories have helped her students see real people behind the civil rights movement.
- Stephen Clough, an English teacher at Homestead High School near Fort Wayne, was a veteran teacher of 20 years who never dreamed he would have a chance to travel abroad when he applied for a Teacher Creativity fellowship in 1995. The fellowship sent him to England and allowed him to visit many of the places he'd read and taught about throughout his career. It also allowed him to trace his family history and begin gathering materials for a book about an English ancestor, William Clough, a clockmaker. Clough has made nine return trips to the British Isles, including some with groups of students who follow the route made legendary in Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*. In 1999 Clough traveled with his wife, Donna, who received her own fellowship grant to study music and her ancestry in Sweden.



each. Twenty years later, nearly 1,700 licensed Indiana teachers and administrators have participated.

As word about the program has spread to public and private schools throughout the state – often through word of mouth, from teacher-to-teacher as colleagues share stories of life-changing experiences – the number of applicants has grown, as have the awards.

In recent years, the award amount has increased to \$8,000 for a summer project, and a limited number of awards for \$25,000 are now offered, too, to support large-scale projects that will require additional

- Patricia Cummings, an art teacher who splits her time between Northview Elementary and Central Elementary schools in Valparaiso, is also the recipient of two fellowship awards. In 1998 she traveled to Jordan, where she shared her students' artwork with Jordanians – including Queen Noor – and worked on her own art. Eight years later, Cummings embarked on trips to Jordan and France, where she studied 5,000-year-old pictographs and petroglyphs on cave walls created by early inhabitants. She created her own paintings and rock carvings for exhibitions and engaged her students in creating a “cave” out of cardboard in her classroom. Cummings is even on tour: She painted her van with some of the cave art, along with her new motto, “Art, the First Language.” It's hard to miss her.

Teacher Creativity Fellowship recipients are required to report back to the Endowment on their experiences, but many also opt for an additional benefit of the program. Alumni are invited to gather each summer at Indiana State University for a three-day workshop that has the flavor of a reunion of fellow travelers, where the teachers share their experiences and collaborate on new projects involving technology, writing, curriculum development and sketching.

Clark Hadley, one of the very first fellowship recipients in 1987, visited the Exploratorium science museum in San Francisco to learn how to incorporate science demonstrations into his classroom. Twenty years later, he still uses what he learned then and returns to the summer workshop at ISU to learn more and to be inspired by other teachers who have sought creative experiences.

“The fellowship was the biggest single boost to my teaching that I've ever had, and its impact continues to this day,” Hadley says. “The Endowment tells you – through the fellowship – that you are doing an important job and gives you the opportunity to be around people who are excited about what they do. That's really something special.”

Deeper impact

Teachers usually describe their jobs as personally fulfilling, rewarding work, but there's no doubt that it is also sometimes difficult. Moreover, typical pay levels do not allow teachers many extras.

Teaching can also feel restrictive at times. The opportunities to do projects with students outside class or creative projects in class can be limited by money and the demands of meeting testing standards and covering required material.

“That's why renewal is crucial for teachers, who seem rarely to do anything for themselves, work to the point of exhaustion and often don't even take care of themselves physically,” says Beckwith. “It takes



a special energy and spirit for teachers to engage effectively classrooms of young people every day. It can be difficult to get and keep their students' attention. Not everyone can do it.

“The amount of money that Lilly Endowment provides is not huge, but if you hit the lottery for \$8,000, you'd pay some bills, maybe replace the roof. The Endowment knows this, so they don't just give you the money; they acknowledge your creativity and challenge you to do something with it,” adds Beckwith. “When you come back from your fellowship, you are fired up, you are jazzed, and your students know it, and they get fired up, too.”

Although the primary purpose of the Teacher Creativity

(ABOVE) What next? Youngsters in Patricia Cummings' art class at Northview Elementary School ponder what the cave dwellers would have drawn on the rock walls, an activity they're probably not allowed to do at home in Valparaiso, Ind.

Fellowship Program is to offer Indiana teachers a no-strings-attached opportunity to recharge their creative and intellectual batteries, it's almost inevitable that teachers bring their experiences into the classroom.

"My classroom is nothing like it was," says Clough, who has taught his students to serve a proper English tea and brings new authority to teaching British literature. "Anyone who walked into my classroom before and after my fellowship would see the difference. It's such a blessing to take what I've learned and pass it on to my students. It's been a delight."

Their experiences end up taking students out of the classroom, too. Richard Phillipy, an English teacher at Lawrence Central High School in Indianapolis, visited Florence, Italy, in 2004 on a three-week sojourn to study the art and architecture, and in 2006 he took 10 of his students back with him to Italy to see some of the same works they'd discussed back home in Indiana.

Many teachers speak of the "chain reaction" the fellowship sets off in their lives. Fancher, who returned from Foula more committed than ever to ornithology, has contributed to the Indiana Department of Natural Resources Indiana Breed Bird Atlas Project. She's become a state and national leader in developing standards for high school environmental standards. Her classes began testing bacteria levels in nearby Indian Creek, and their activism has resulted in state and federal grants to Switzerland County for monitoring water quality.

Fancher and her students participate in a floating classroom on the Ohio River with the Ohio River Water Sanitation Commission. "A lot of things began to open up and the Lilly Endowment fellowship was a primary ingredient," Fancher says. "The opportunities just mushroomed."

Sharing what they've learned often extends to their colleagues, too. Shortly after his first fellowship, Clough invited his fellow Homestead teachers to his classroom to learn more about the Endowment's Teacher Creativity fellowships. He's proud that since 1999, 10 other Homestead High School teachers have followed him as recipients.

The buzz is sometimes palpable. "It energizes the whole school," Clough says. "The Teacher Creativity Fellowship Program is opening up worlds and horizons for so many teachers. They would never have had a chance to do such wonderful things without it."

Patricia Cummings has stretched plastic into rocklike shapes and taped together refrigerator boxes to simulate a cave to encourage her art students to enter the world of the cave dwellers. Her most recent Teacher Creativity fellowship took her to France where she studied 5,000-year-old pictographs and petroglyphs on cave walls.





Inspiring youth workers

Working with youth is an intensely rewarding experience, but it can also leave even the most dedicated professional without much time or energy for anything else.

“Professionals who work with youth are like sponges,” says Janet Wakefield, who directs the Journey Fellowship, a Lilly Endowment-funded program aimed at renewing leaders of Indiana youth organizations. “They are squeezed – by job demands, lack of resources, and the sheer energy it takes to work with youth – and then squeezed some more. Pretty soon, the sponge is dry.”

Filling those squeezed youth workers up with revitalizing energy is the goal of the Journey Fellowship, a program initiated by Indianapolis-based Community Partnerships with Youth and funded with a \$900,000 grant by the Endowment.

Like other renewal programs that the Endowment has funded, the Journey Fellowship seeks to encourage professionals by giving them the gift of time to focus on personal and professional growth. Beginning in 2002 with a three-day workshop for Indiana youth workers, the Journey Fellowship evolved into a yearlong series of four, three-day retreats at Indiana state parks and resorts for a select

25 leaders and executives of youth-serving organizations.

The program also reaches out to prospective youth workers with fellowship opportunities at Indiana State University and Indiana University Bloomington. “Explorers,” as the student participants are called, are given the time, space and resources to think about how they can translate their interest in helping youth into a career.

So far, the Journey Fellowship has given renewal opportunities to 100 “trailblazers” – the name the program bestows on its veteran youth workers – and opened doors for 109 prospective professionals.

“For both groups, the retreats offer a chance to reflect, connect with other fellows and be inspired to help kids in new ways,” says Wakefield, herself a 30-year veteran of youth work. “The Journey Fellowships recognize that youth work of all kinds – from well-established organizations like Girls Inc. and the YMCA, to small, grass-roots groups, to that of youth ministers – is a vital part of the village that is helping to raise young people.

“Too often, the people who do that work are nearly invisible to society. When they begin the Journey Fellowship, many youth workers comment that they feel alone, sometimes ready to leave the field they love,” she explains. “After the fellowship year, most participants say they feel renewed, more connected to their colleagues across the state, and more committed to their profession.”

Good things have unfolded since the Journey Fellowship started bringing Indiana youth workers together. “We are building international youth worker relationships with nations like the United Kingdom and Kenya,” Wakefield says. “We also are collaborating with Indiana colleges and universities to establish youth worker certification and degree programs, as well as supporting fellows in forming a professional youth worker association.

“Across the board among the youth workers burnout is always mentioned, as is the lack of recognition in terms of pay and societal acknowledgment that what they do is important,” she says. “We know that youth workers really make a difference. They are vital to the development of healthy communities in Indiana.”

Janet Wakefield is enthusiastic about the Journey Fellowship, a program that allows youth workers to get together to replenish their enthusiasm and energy. This program encompasses both people new to the field and veterans of years of youth work. Wakefield is executive director of Community Partnerships with Youth, the recipient of the Endowment funds.