

TEACHERS' NOTES

November 2020

AATF: THE CROSSROADS OF EDUCATION AND JUSTICE

It goes without saying that when 2020 began, AATF had high hopes for all the work we would do with our Fellows. We continued our pursuit of 50 Fellows by 2024 by adding four new Fellows to our program. Although we have more active Fellows than at any time in our history, Covid-19 placed our Fellows in an unexpected position. Additionally, the racial tensions that were laid bare throughout 2020 impacted our Fellows and their stu-

dents in ways we all struggled with. An interview with AATF Alumna, Marian McCullough, Talent Development & Resource Teacher at Mountain View Elementary School, provides a first-hand perspective with the support you provided our Fellows and students throughout these incredible circumstances.

AATF: How is your teaching experience going?

Marian: I'm not really sure that I knew

what to expect. This experience has been tough and stretching, especially when it's come to forming deeper relationships with students and families; however, I've learned so much about the various ways that technology can connect teachers to students and their communities.

AATF: Have you seen needs in your students'/families that you weren't expecting?

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Marian McCullough
AATF Alumna

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2020 CELEBRATION OF FELLOWS

Due to Covid-19, we had to pivot much of our programming. This required the re-framing of multiple events, including our annual Celebration of Fellows. Though meeting in-person wasn't possible for us this fall, over 200 guests gathered virtually in their homes to join us on October 16, 2020.

The event featured five Fellows: LaNika Barnes, Ashlee Bellamy, Desiree Conner, Zora Heard, and Kiara Samuels. In addition to sharing about the

challenges faced during the 2019-2020 school year, each Fellow highlighted the role that AATF played in their jour-



*Desiree Conner, Fellow
Greenbrier Elementary School*

ney.

"For so long I questioned my ability, and those within AATF built my confidence to know that I am capable," was Desiree Conner's biggest gift in being a Fellow. Desiree started her first year of teaching at Greenbrier Elementary last year, and she valued the sense of community in connecting with other Fellows.

We thank you all for supporting this great event, and we look forward to continuing to celebrate our mission in 2021!

THANK YOU TO OUR EVENT SPONSORS:

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CROSSROADS CONT'D

Marian: In this "new norm", kids and families have been extremely flexible and resilient. I've seen more students advocating for their needs than before and more students have been vocal when they feel that they've mastered content. AATF has supported my efforts to meet the varying needs of my students by continuing to offer me a safe space to bring ideas and questions, providing professional development about the importance of engaging in these topics, and connecting me with other organizations and resources that can help me to develop as I shift roles and continue developing as a professional.

AATF: What impact does the opportunity to interact with your colleagues in a safe space have on your ability to do your job effectively?

Marian: Being able to interact in a safe, nonjudgmental environment is essential to me doing my job effectively. If I feel unsafe with my colleagues then I will be incapable of coming to work as my fullest self and incapable of serving children authentically. A safe space for me leads to a safe space for some of our most underrepresented students and their thoughts, ideas, assets, and voices. Students and families have asked for those conversations to be brought into schools and considered.

AATF: What is the most impactful part of your Fellowship on your teaching experience?

Marian: I feel so grateful to have so many sounding boards, professionally and personally. The advice I've gotten from mentors, friends, and other Fellows have guided my professional choices and steps down a path I never could have predicted when I first signed up to be a Fellow. From working with Fellow alumni in my first few years of teaching to being best friends with another alum, the Fellowship has grown my confidence and competence in this profession at an extraordinary rate. It's changed my life.

WELCOME NEW FELLOWS!

This summer, AATF welcomed four new Fellows to our program as members of cohort 2021. Each of these Fellows will complete their teaching certification in 2021.



Christen Edwards
Elementary
Education



Jody London
Elementary
Education



Ashley Miller
Elementary
Education



Siobhan Saul
Foreign Language
Education

ALUMNI FELLOW SPOTLIGHT



Name: Kailyn Gilliam

Subject Area: English

Current School: Jack Jouett Middle School,
Albemarle County Public Schools

Cohort Year: 2019

Favorite part about being a Fellow: "I love the experiences, the conversations, and the interactions I have had. They have given me the confidence to take a chance on myself and grow into the educator I am meant to be. "

Kailyn currently serves on the AATF Programs Committee, and she works to recruit new Fellows to the program. Thanks for all you do for our community, Kailyn!



2021 FELLOWSHIP APPLICATIONS

We are now accepting applications for new Fellows. All new fellowships will begin in the summer of 2021.

We are looking for applicants who are academically competent, are willing to work with other fellows and with mentors, are interested in living and teaching in the Charlottesville/ Albemarle area, and are enthusiastic about education. Preference may be given to peo-



ple seeking endorsement in the areas most critical to the needs of local school systems, but all k-12 areas of endorsement will be considered.

Do you have someone in mind who may be a good fit for our program? Have them contact our Program Director, Jaime Hawkins at Jaime@aatf.org. The applica-

tion is available on our website: www.aatf.org.

