



An Extraordinary Gift from NoVo Foundation

By Pamela Cantor, M.D., President and CEO, Turnaround for Children



Proud kindergartener at Fresh Creek Elementary School

It is a milestone in Turnaround for Children's 12-year-old history. NoVo Foundation has made an extraordinarily generous \$10 million gift to Turnaround to build a movement that establishes Fortified Environments for Teaching and Learning as an essential pillar of education reform, school design and equitable educational opportunity for all students.

NoVo, led by Jennifer and Peter Buffett, believes in building “a more equitable, cooperative and just world” and in “the collective responsibility to help all boys and girls to realize their full potential.” These core intentions align with Turnaround’s goal of equity for all children through education in environments in which they can develop to their fullest.

To reach that goal, Turnaround has looked to science to inform its understanding of the challenges children bring into the classroom that schools are struggling to address, particularly schools serving low-income communities. Jennifer Buffett cited this scientific insight when describing NoVo’s decision to support Turnaround’s efforts to build the Fortified Environments movement:

“Dr. Pamela Cantor brings a deep understanding of the science behind how stress associated with poverty impacts the way children grow and learn. Her key insight is that the challenges are recurring and predictable which makes it possible to deliberately design education environments to address those challenges. This paves the way for students to experience learning that is rich and

Continued on page 2

Partners in School Transformation

By Scott Cartland, Lorraine Chanon and Melanie Mullan

Mullan: Nearly one in four children in the U.S. lives in poverty. Of these children, a vast majority have been exposed to violence, substance abuse, disrupted relationships, homelessness, or other hardships. Thanks to emergent brain research, we now have a clearer view into the predictable and recurring ways that adversity and chronic stress interfere with learning and development. With this understanding, we believe schools can organize to defuse the impact of that stress, much as our partners Fannie Lou Hamer Middle School and Wheatley Education Campus have experienced.

Cartland: When I came to Wheatley in 2008, it was an incredibly negative and dysfunctional place. There was a tremendous amount of anger and violence which manifested itself as fighting, cursing, students running in the halls and disruptive classrooms. Academic proficiency rates were in the low teens and teacher turnover was high. Lessons fell apart quickly because students didn’t have the stamina to work.



At Fannie Lou Hamer Middle School, Turnaround Social Work Consultant Bena Ortiz, School Social Worker Gina Rowe and Principal Lorraine Chanon meet to discuss individual student cases

Continued on page 3

Continued from page 1

An Extraordinary Gift from NoVo Foundation

relevant, that prepares them for genuine positive relationships, engagement and opportunities in life, so they don't fall through the cracks. Dr. Cantor is leading an important national movement to make fortified environments a pillar of education reform and we at NoVo Foundation are thrilled to support her and her organization in this vital effort.”

Turnaround is very thankful for this gift and for its potential to transform the way we design and fortify our nation's learning environments so that all students are able to take advantage of the rigorous standards and curricula today's society and economy demand. For those of us who seek equity for all children, it is important to know that kids exposed to adversity—such as violence, homelessness and economic insecurity—internalize these experiences as stress. This stress impacts the developing brain and thus the way children behave and learn in school. As a result, many come into the classroom not ready to learn and several years behind their peers academically.

Since the brain is malleable until early adulthood, the environments children grow up and learn in have an enormous impact on



Dr. Pamela Cantor, President and CEO

“Dr. Pamela Cantor brings a deep understanding of the science behind how stress impacts the way children grow and learn.”

how they develop, for good and for bad. This suggests that the catalyst to transform our struggling schools into thriving schools lies in the deliberate design of school environments fortified to combat stress; fortified to promote social, emotional and academic readiness; and fortified to accelerate academic recovery and growth.

In the past year, Turnaround has engaged in a variety of activities (including high-profile social impact summits, education panels, print, digital, broadcast and social media) to raise awareness of the challenges in our struggling schools and bring the science, as well as innovations in practice and metrics, into greater focus to help more schools and more children succeed. We have not been alone in this effort. With the support of Deputy Secretary Jim Shelton and other deputies at the Department of Education, and in collaboration with New Profit Inc., a coalition has come together to begin the work of defining the field and building the movement for Fortified Environments for Teaching and Learning.

The movement includes organizations dedicated to the adoption of innovative, scalable practices that develop social, emotional and cognitive attributes common to all successful students. We and others recognize that our biggest challenge in doing this lies in high-poverty schools where the need is greatest.

This movement has the potential to integrate important work today in growth mindsets; learner variability; integrated student supports; efforts to create opportunities for boys of color; efforts to empower adolescent girls; innovations in technology for the personalization of learning; and the central place of social and emotional learning in children's development. We believe all of this is in service of rigorous teaching and learning which will provide equity of educational opportunity to many more students.

The NoVo gift offers us an incredible opportunity to accelerate the work of this coalition. Turnaround is honored to work on behalf of all children and their families to understand and tackle the challenges that students bring into the classroom every day. We will expand our thinking about how schools need to be designed to prepare all students for a 21st Century education, career and opportunity. And we are honored to partner with a coalition of committed organizations to build this movement now.



Classroom Supports and Intervention Coordinator Cheryl Bryan works with pre-k students at Orr Elementary School

Continued from page 1

Partners in School Transformation

Chanon: At Fannie Lou Hamer, we have always worked to build an environment that blends high expectations with positive social-emotional learning. Yet despite our small class size and engaging curriculum, there was always an undertone of student negativity. Our teachers maintained caring relationships with their students, yet students would still act out. This stress wore down teachers and students alike. Students came to school with issues that teachers were not prepared to handle and couldn't overcome. We wanted to help but didn't know how.

Mullan: At Turnaround, we think about schools on a Red-Yellow-Green continuum. RED represents schools that are overwhelmed by stress, disruption and students unready to learn. YELLOW represents schools where the culture and climate is safe, calm and focused, but there is still much academic recovery needed. GREEN represents schools where students are developing socially, emotionally and academically in a supportive, high-expectations environment. While much of the education reform movement of the last two decades has focused on the distance from Yellow to Green, far less has been done to solve the challenges of Red schools. Without the backbone of a safe, supportive school culture, improving academics becomes much more challenging.

Cartland: CityBridge Foundation introduced us to Turnaround. They knew we needed help, particularly in working with students and families in need of significant support.

Turnaround's biggest impact on Wheatley was with our student support team process and helping us build pathways to care. We worked on creating a calmer school environment but struggled to effectively address individual students who needed the most help. With Turnaround, we developed a partnership with a local mental health provider, Hillcrest. Their counselors would attend our team meetings and if there was a student referral that needed to be made, it happened right there at the table. Immediate help was needed and immediate help was given.

Chanon: We sought to partner with Turnaround to build support around Classroom Management—yet the relationship became much more than that. Turnaround's comprehensive service model gave us strategies to create caring, safe learning environments for all students. They helped teachers create cooperative learning groups that really worked, where students could put their heads together to think critically on a meaningful topic and then share their work with the rest of the class. Turnaround for Children helped us build a sense of trust and interconnection that permeates our whole building.

Mullan: Turnaround's multi-year partnership is designed to transform schools into what we call Fortified Environments for Teaching and Learning—environments intentionally designed to relieve stress, foster positive relationships between students and adults and instill in children a sense of belonging and motivation, ultimately producing the conditions for healthy development and



7th Grade students at Wheatley Education Campus

academic recovery and growth. Our tiered intervention works simultaneously to address student, classroom and school needs, providing teacher training, expedited student services, and integrating our team with the school's leadership. As with Wheatley and Fannie Lou Hamer, the combination of our strong partnership and the school staff's dedication to both improving the school climate and helping students can achieve a gradual change from Red to Yellow.

Cartland: My only wish is that we would have started working with Turnaround in year one or two—we would have gotten a lot farther a lot faster. One of the central things that Turnaround has brought to Wheatley is the idea that whatever the struggles are, whatever the obstacles are, there's a system that can be put in place. There are moves that you can make that are going to make things better. We still have

a lot of work to do at Wheatley but we've come a long way. Student achievement is significantly higher, the building is calmer and students are more engaged. It never becomes easy work but there's more optimism about the future of our school than there was when we started the process.

Chanon: Before Turnaround, you could walk into the classrooms of Fannie Lou Hamer and see good teaching, but maybe not a caring class. Since our partnership, our classrooms are more student-centered. Teachers feel prepared with a rich toolbox of strategies to connect with students, from leveraging cooperative learning to engaging thinking, to developing meaningful learning targets with students to address expectations on a Common Core concept. Through our partnership, we have been able to raise the bar in all areas of teaching and learning.

Scott Cartland is the Principal of Wheatley Education Campus in Washington, D.C., a Turnaround partner since 2011. Lorraine Chanon is the Principal at Fannie Lou Hamer Middle School in the South Bronx, a partner since 2009. Melanie Mullan is Turnaround's Chief Program Officer.

5th Annual Turnaround Impact Awards Dinner Raises \$1.2 million!



On April 30, more than 450 guests gathered at Cipriani 42nd Street during one of the rainiest nights on record to celebrate the 5th Annual Turnaround Impact Awards Dinner.

The event, celebrating Turnaround for Children’s transformative work in high-poverty schools, raised \$1.2 million to support Fortified Environments for Teaching and Learning in schools and districts in New York City, Newark, N.J. and Washington, D.C.

Turnaround honored Hank Azaria and PwC with 2014 Impact Awards—Azaria for co-founding *Determined to Succeed*, an organization that helps low-income students attain the dream of a college education, and PwC for its *Earn Your Future* program, which improves financial literacy among K-12 students. Jillian Griffiths, a member of Turnaround’s Board of Directors, accepted the award on behalf of PwC.

The evening, hosted by Turnaround’s Board of Directors and Honorary Chairs Kelly and David Gerstenhaber, Vanessa Kirsch, and Simone and David W. Levinson, was exceeded

by CNN Anchor Chris Cuomo and featured introductions by 6th and 7th graders from Collaborative Arts Middle School, a recitation by poet Amber Rose Johnson, a speech by Dr. Pamela Cantor and a special performance by Theophilus London.

Steering Committee members Renee Barasch, Maureen Cogan, Cristina Cuomo, Lise Evans, Erica Karsch, Simone Levinson, Rebekah McCabe and Aliza Waksal played a vital role in helping to plan the event.

1. Theophilus London, Michael Amo-Adu, III 2. Marcus Samuelsson, Rachel Nadjarian, Hank Azaria 3. Lyn DeSantis, David Hall, Jillian Griffiths, Michelle Lee 4. David Levinson, Michael Karsch, Michael Siden, Tom Tuft 5. Simone Levinson, Hank Azaria, Katherine Bradley 6. Amber Rose Johnson 7. Lise Evans, Simone Levinson, Renee Barasch, Dr. Pamela Cantor, Chris Cuomo 8. Nia Reid-Vicars, Everlastyn Lattimore, Dr. Pamela Cantor, Michael Amo-Adu, III

SUPPORT US

School’s out but Turnaround is in!

At Turnaround for Children, we spend the summer training staff who work with teachers, principals and social workers in our partner schools. This lays the groundwork for a successful school year.

To make a contribution, visit www.turnaroundusa.org or call 646.786.6219.

A Day in the Life of a Turnaround Instructional Coach

To better understand how Turnaround for Children’s model works in schools, *The 180* shadowed Instructional Coach Meghan Kimpton on a typical workday in the Bronx.

At 7 a.m., Kimpton is battling traffic on the Brooklyn-Queens Expressway. This year,

she is assigned to three partner schools in New York City: PS 50 Clara Barton Elementary, PS 531 Archer Elementary, and PS 357 Young Voices Academy.

On a recent rainy Thursday, she arrived at Young Voices around 8 a.m., starting off with

Continued on page 6

Building the Case for Fortified Environments

It has been a busy spring! Dr. Pamela Cantor and much of Turnaround’s leadership have traveled from coast to coast, participating in nearly a dozen events including the GradNation Summit, New Profit Inc.’s Gathering of Leaders, Yale Education Leadership Conference, and New York State Education Department District Effectiveness Institute. Each was an opportunity to speak with educators, policymakers, researchers, thought-leaders and funders to build the case for Fortified Environments for Teaching and Learning that give every student the chance to succeed.



Dr. Pamela Cantor at GradNation with Cami Anderson, Superintendent of Newark Public Schools



Sheila Walker, PhD., Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health and Dr. Cantor at S&R Foundation’s Illuminate panel sponsored by JP Morgan and CityBridge

Award Recognition

Turnaround for Children is proud to have been selected by the American Psychiatric



Dr. Owen Lewis and Dr. Eliot Goldman with the APF’s Award for Advancing Minority Mental Health

Foundation as a 2014 recipient of the Award for Advancing Minority Mental Health. The award, which came with a check for \$5,000, recognizes mental health professionals and programs that are “undertaking special efforts to increase public awareness of and secure quality and comprehensive mental healthcare for underserved minorities.”

Turnaround is also honored to have been chosen from among 3,600 organizations worldwide as a top-five finalist for The CLASSY Award, which recognizes “high impact organizations that are driving measurable social change around the globe.”

Turnaround for Children Snapshot

Founded

2002

Founder and CEO

Pamela A. Cantor, M.D.

Staff

60

Board of Directors

22 members

Budget

\$12 million

School Partners to Date

84

2013–2014 School Year

18 school partners
Over 7,000 students
Over 700 school staff
7 community-based mental health partners

Average Annual Intervention Cost

\$320,000/school

Average Intervention Length

3-5 years

Programs in Place

New York City (10 schools)
Newark, New Jersey (3 schools)
Washington, DC (5 schools)

Continued from page 5

A Day in the Life of a Turnaround Instructional Coach

a warm greeting and check-in with the school’s principal, Nadia Cruz-Pérez, and guidance counselor, Youche Chia, to confirm the day’s agenda. It was clear from the collegial tone that Turnaround has earned a place as a trusted member of the school community.

First on the docket at 9 a.m. was a kindergarten visit. “Any time we are not in small group sessions or team meetings, we are in classrooms coaching teachers,” says Kimpton. She was joined by Turnaround Social Work Consultant Amy Greenbaum-Strauss to observe a geometry lesson on the attributes of a cone, and was pleased to see the teacher had organized the classroom into a cooperative learning structure called “Timed Pair Share,” which Turnaround had introduced to the school. Afterwards, the two compared perspectives on areas where implementation could be improved, feedback which Kimpton shares directly with teachers.

Next up was a 10:05 a.m. Student Support Team meeting. Every week, Turnaround’s in-school team meets with administrators, social workers and teachers for one period to review student-specific behavioral issues or schoolwide trends. The conversation focused on how to mitigate summer learning loss. Kimpton and Greenbaum-Strauss offered strategies for how staff could approach this concern with parents, such as suggesting reading every day and setting a routine for schoolwork.

A key facet of the instructional coach’s role is the facilitation of small group sessions, where best practices for instruction and classroom management are shared weekly with every teacher. Kimpton taught two back-to-back sessions on the day we trailed her, at 11:05 a.m. and noon. The teacher attendance rate was 100%, as it has been for most of the year. Teachers worked in pairs on the concept of the formative learning cycle, a part of Turnaround’s Student-Centered Learning and Assessment curriculum, and reflected together upon their learning. They discussed what success criteria to look for to know if students are mastering the learning target for the lesson. According to Kimpton, “Helping teachers clarify what lesson outcomes should be can help students understand what they need to do to be successful. Students who understand the bigger picture of how they are being measured for success tend to be more motivated and engaged, which leads to less disruptive behavior and a more conducive environment for teaching and learning.”

At 4 p.m., Kimpton met with Principal Cruz-Pérez to review the day’s sessions. Cruz-Pérez wasn’t surprised to hear that teachers had been receptive. “I definitely see success and impact from Turnaround’s work. I can’t always be there to meet with teachers and give them the professional support they need, and Meghan is my right hand to do that. When I go into the classroom, I definitely see improvement,” she said.

“Before our partnership with Turnaround,” Cruz-Pérez recalls, “new teachers would talk



Enthusiastic learner at Young Voices Academy

about how they needed help with classroom management skills. Now, it’s not so much the classroom management, it is differentiated instruction and rigor. So that’s a huge thing to celebrate. Now they can move on to focusing on the caliber of the instruction.”

After students pack up for the day, Kimpton begins preparing for the next day’s sessions. Instructional coaches customize the Turnaround curriculum to adapt to each school’s unique needs. “Just like a good teacher does, I review the lesson plan and adapt for the specific needs of each group,” she says.

Was this a typical day in the life of a Turnaround instructional coach after all? According to Kimpton, there may be no such thing. “Yesterday at Archer Elementary, I was preparing for a coaching session when a teacher walked in seeking urgent guidance. We talked about how she could keep her ‘personal thermometer’ at an even temperature despite the fact that students might be pushing her buttons. Next, I met with the teacher I was actually preparing for. I spent a portion of the afternoon working with the assistant principal to plan a professional development session for the end of the day, and attended the Student Support Team meeting. Then I provided coaching in two classrooms.”

As Kimpton and all Turnaround instructional coaches know from experience, stress impacts learning and behavior in high-poverty schools, posing obstacles to the learning environment. Sometimes things don’t go according to plan—and so it is an important aspect of the Turnaround team’s job to adapt their support to help schools build the capacities necessary to meet the needs that present each day.



Instructional Coach Meghan Kimpton trains pre-k teachers Maria Perez and Jennifer Mendez at PS 357 Young Voices Academy

One Big Kindergarten

When charter schools were born, they were billed as laboratories of innovation whose best ideas would find their way into traditional public schools. Rarely has that happened. Today however, the collaboration between Bronx Charter School for Excellence (BCSE) and Turnaround partner school PS 85 Great Expectations is a notable exception. A \$500,000 New York Charter School Dissemination Grant over three years is supporting sharing of best practices between BCSE and PS 85, with the goals of improving the reading of kindergarten students and helping teachers collaborate across schools. Already the improvements are remarkable.

According to BCSE Literacy Coordinator Tanya Ghans, students at both schools have shown “dramatic gains in reading achievement” with “the great majority better prepared than ever to enter first grade.”

How has this happened? Every Tuesday after school, the kindergarten teams from PS 85 and BCSE meet together for an hour and a half to work on strategies for the success of all their students. This includes assessing children early in the school year, then grouping them in ways that push them to take on greater challenges sooner. “It’s an intense thought partnership to move kids forward,” says PS 85 Assistant Principal Allison Krenn.

At the beginning of the school year, the team set reading benchmarks for where they expected the kindergarten students to be in November, March and June using a nationally-recognized, comprehensive reading assessment. These assessments measure a student’s reading level, including comprehension, decoding ability and oral reading fluency. Last year, 38% of BCSE students were at or above the benchmark in March. This March, 82% of BCSE students reached or exceeded the goal. Last year, 25% of PS 85 students were



Tanya Ghans, BCSE Literacy Coordinator, and Allison Krenn, PS 85 Assistant Principal

at or above the March benchmark in June. By this March, 56% of PS 85 students had achieved the goal. And for the students who did not meet the benchmark, immediate interventions have been put into place. Every day, those students receive additional reading interventions throughout the school day.

At their weekly sessions, BCSE shares the concept of teaching as a team with PS 85. Instead of focusing solely on their individual classes, teachers now work with small groups of children from across the grade who are at the same level, doing guided reading and instruction. “It’s an all hands on deck approach,” says Krenn. “There is a greater sense of collegiality than before, with everyone working together for a common goal.”

“The idea of one kindergarten team working together for the success of all the kindergarten students has been very impressive,” says Turnaround for Children Program Director Ronni Gambardella. “The idea of benchmarks as ‘must haves’ motivates everyone to get there.”

PS 85, assisted by Turnaround for Children’s instructional coaches, has shared cooperative learning techniques with the BCSE teachers. “They provide an opportunity for kids to communicate with each other around deep and important ideas and to be supportive as they ask and answer questions,” says Ghans. The two schools have also looked into the assessment data to understand how well specific groups of children are reading, such as English language learners and special education students, and address their needs accordingly.

Krenn acknowledges that PS 85’s partnership with Turnaround for Children has made it possible for the team to instill the rigor demanded by this unique collaboration. “We were ready to do this because of our work with Turnaround. It has changed the way our teachers think about the impact of poverty on students and how we can reach them academically. Now we can dive into the student achievement piece.”

For teachers at both schools, the collaboration has opened their way of thinking and provided them with new colleagues to bounce ideas off of. They now visit each other’s classrooms and share what has worked for them and what hasn’t. They may be different kinds of schools, but they have a common goal of student achievement. “The kids are indeed reading,” says Ghans, “and at a higher level.”

PS 85 and BCSE are looking forward to continuing their collaboration with the next crop of kindergartners and to maintaining the achievement of this year’s kindergarten class going forward. Soon it will be one big kindergarten and first grade, four miles down the road from each other in the Bronx.



Teachers from PS 85 and BCSE share best practices

**CONNECT,
 SHARE
 AND
 SUPPORT**



[TurnaroundForChildren](https://www.facebook.com/TurnaroundForChildren)



@Turnaround
 @DrPamelaCantor



[linkd.in/tfcusa](https://www.linkedin.com/company/linkd.in/tfcusa)



@TurnaroundUSA



Donate Today
turnaroundusa.org



the **180**

News from Turnaround for Children

Summer 2014

An Extraordinary Gift from NoVo Foundation p. 1

Impact Awards Dinner p. 4

Building the Case for Fortified Environments p. 5

Partners in School Transformation p. 1

A Day in the Life of a Turnaround Instructional Coach p. 5

Award Recognition p. 5

One Big Kindergarten p. 7