

Friends and extended family,

Unlike any other year, perhaps, in recent history, many of us are eager for this difficult one to finally be behind us. 2020 has been challenging in innumerable ways, and the Fund is not immune to our new shared circumstances. Yet underneath a complex tapestry of a “new normal,” the Fund has been extremely hard at work keeping the “new” tied directly to the best of the “old” – for the sake of our students and our entire community.

Amidst often dimmed school building lights and corridors, the Fund has diligently, passionately and perhaps with a sense of purpose unmatched in our history, created opportunities for lights to shine brightly.

The lights of which I speak are not only our New Rochelle students, but those of community and school traditions, and, importantly, Fund traditions too. It has been our mission to maintain a positive sense of continuity for the students who benefit from our programs, and to create an educational floor glittered with gold specs for those who populate school halls, be they virtual or real.

That gold doesn’t glitter without cost. We missed celebrating with you last May at our Gala, which provides the majority of the Fund’s annual operating budget. This letter candidly shares with you our immediate great need for your support – more so now than ever before.

With all of this in mind, it’s my pleasure to share with you, accompanied by our collective sense of excitement for the possibilities of a better and safer 2021, all of the ways the Fund has maintained – and even created! – wonderful, exciting opportunities for the students we *all* consider family.

**SAT/ACT Prep Program at NRHS:**

Our four-years long partnership with Applerouth Test Prep continues in full swing for NRHS juniors. This program, subsidized solely by the NR Fund, offers the highest-caliber of SAT and ACT test prep courses at a reduced rate for *all* juniors, with further price reductions available for those students who qualify for reduced or free lunch. Applerouth has been running online tutoring for more than a decade, and so our transition to live Zoom classes for New Ro students will be seamless this Spring.

Over these four years we have provided the highest quality test prep to between 750-1,000 students, and we are already adding to our list this year.



**Poetry Out Loud 2020**

When schools closed last March, no one knew the doors to the Whitney M. Young, Jr. Auditorium, home to the beloved signature Fund program, Poetry Out Loud, would remain closed for the rest of the school year... making it impossible to carry out our 22<sup>nd</sup> in-person festival of young talent and creativity. *But that didn't stop us!* The Fund was committed to the belief that the 3<sup>rd</sup> through 6<sup>th</sup> graders involved last Spring deserved their moments in the sun after all their hard work. So we are currently producing a *virtual* Poetry Out Loud event where a video of each of the nearly 70 young poets reading their original works will be shown via our website, [www.nredfund.org](http://www.nredfund.org). In keeping with tradition, each family will receive a beautiful keepsake book – an indelible collection of these works.

**Grants Program**

Now in its fourth year, the signature NR Fund Grants Program has awarded close to \$75,000 to schools at all levels across the District for innovative programs that promote active student learning and offer the chance for students to find their voice and build their self-confidence. With the Grants Program, the Fund is able to reach the largest number of students under one umbrella initiative, and widen our net of new, enhanced opportunities for them. The fund is now accepting applications for projects planned for the spring of 2021, and



current students, parents, teachers, and administrators are encouraged to apply (through January 20<sup>th</sup> at [www.nredfund.org/grants](http://www.nredfund.org/grants)).



### **Civics Symposium**

The annual Civics Symposium – where A.P. social studies students write papers which are then chosen to be read and discussed with their peers and by a panel of experts – carries on beyond the NRHS walls! Re-designed to work virtually, the Civics Symposium, slated for late January, will welcome back absolutely stellar panelists including: former National Urban League CEO, Hugh Price; *New York Times* best-selling author of *Primary Colors*, Joe Klein; Chair of the Philosophy Department at Iona

College, Alex Eodice; and Dean of Students at Columbia Law School, Hon. Yadira Ramos-Herbert. Additionally, we're thrilled to welcome back visiting professor at Manhattanville College and well-known author, Dr. Amy Bass, as our masterful moderator.

### **One thing hasn't changed this year: 11,000 students, 1 Fund.**

We could not be prouder of what we are accomplishing in our school system and beloved city amidst the new realities we all face. The Fund's mission remains unchanged. Our dedication remains unwavering. Our hopes remain high, with our eyes focused on the future. Our ability to continue our work rests largely in your generous hands.

Onward and upward we go, together!

Warmly,

Sabrina Toback  
Executive Director

**Please help us do more!**

**Donate Now**

*The New Rochelle Fund for Educational Excellence is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization. Did you know that if you make a donation to a charitable cause before the end of the year you can take a deduction for contributions in 2020, even if you don't itemize on your income tax return? Under the CARES Act, part of the federal government's pandemic relief program that passed in March, individual taxpayers can take a deduction of up to \$300 for cash donations made in 2020 when they file their tax return in the spring.*

[nredfund.org](http://nredfund.org)

