

RELATIONSHIPS FOR A LIFETIME

It's More Than a Lunch Date

Fifth grade Cookson Elementary student, Noelle Meiring, and volunteer, Wanda Tremblay, have formed a meaningful connection through the Lunch Buddy Program.

Meiring became a TFBT Club member in fourth grade, where she was paired with Tremblay.

Mom, Tammy Fleming, enrolled Noelle in the TFBT Club to benefit her academic and personal life. "Her dad and I are divorced, and she has two older siblings and two half siblings. As the younger child, she needed TFBT to build her self-esteem and to learn how to apply herself at school and stand out as her own person. The last two school years, she has become more focused and is making better choices at school and at home."

Her Lunch Buddy supports her academically and even attended Noelle's recent spelling bee contest, where she was announced Cookson's winner.

"I make a point to eat the school lunch alongside of Noelle, and then we get to play the game 'Sorry!'" says Mrs.

Tremblay. She also gives her student newspaper clippings when her name is listed on the honor roll and finds her special books to encourage her love of learning.

"As a former high school teacher, I had practice building rapport with students. I wanted to continue to guide a student toward academic success somehow, and the Lunch Buddy program provided me that opportunity."

Tammy appreciates the community support. "I work third shift and don't get to do as much with my kids as I would like during the day. When Noelle's Lunch Buddy visits she is ecstatic, and it provides her the chance to have a one-on-one relationship with a support figure at the times I can't be there."

Cookson's weekly TFBT Club advisor, Michael Bunck, is seeing first-hand the great difference these programs are making with our Troy students. "Noelle has become more responsible in the classroom the last couple years. When she



wants to accomplish something, she has now started to put her mind to it and makes it happen. She is an amazing kid."

Mr. Bunck, along with other TFBT staff within Troy City Schools, conducted a holiday writing project with students, sponsored by Troy Daily News. Students wrote rough drafts of a heartfelt message of thanks and sent the final version to their Lunch Buddy in a card. A portion of Noelle's message to Mrs. Tremblay is on the right.

"...Thank you for being so nice to me when we eat lunch with each other. I'm super glad you're my special friend. When I'm down in the dumps... you always pick me up and make me laugh. I like that I can talk to you about anything and you still accept me for who I am. I'm blessed to have you for a Lunch Buddy and words certainly can't express how I feel for having you as a friend, adult and someone I can look up to when I'm in trouble or difficult times. I really like you as my Lunch Buddy and I love you as a family member."

Sincerely,
Noelle Meiring

The Lunch Buddy Program is a TFBT outreach effort accessible to TFBT Club students and other students as selected by Troy City Schools staff.

Contact TFBT executive director, Natalie Rohlf for more information about becoming a Lunch Buddy at (937) 332-0467 or nrohlf@thefuturebeginstoday.org.

Mission: The Future Begins Today provides nurturing, mentoring and scholarship support to Troy students.

CHAMPIONS BEHIND TFBT

Meet Our New Trustees

The Future Begins Today board of trustees elected three new members to serve alongside of them beginning in fall of 2016. Board Development committee chair, Alan Zunke, says, "These newest board members will carry on the work of their predecessors while continuing the tradition of serving with excellence. We are indeed blessed to have these talented and passionate individuals join The Future Begins Today's board of trustees."

Dennis Parker is a graduate of The University of Toledo and is a territory sales manager for ITW Food Equipment Group in Troy. Originally from Toledo, Ohio, he recently moved to Troy with his wife, Traci, who was raised here. Parker says, "This is a wonderful opportunity to give to the community. I want to be a part of developing the program and to engage other community members."

Laurie Johnson, of Coldwell Banker Heritage, has been a successful realtor for nearly 30 years. She and her husband Wendell live in Troy, and she is excited to serve as a student role model through the Lunch Buddy program.

Jeremy Miller, assistant superintendent, Troy City Schools, accepted the election to serve as TFBT's board liaison with Troy City Schools. His vast experience in elementary education and administration brings a respected vision to board conversations, and he is actively serving on the scholarship committee as well.



Dennis Parker



Laurie Johnson



Jeremy Miller

FUNDING THE FUTURE



Haren's Market

Connor Haren received a Last Dollar Grant from TFBT in 2009, when he attended Pikes Peak Community College. He purchased Troy Meat Market in 2011, married Hannah (Karnehm) in 2014, and recently rebranded the shop to the already well-known Haren's Market. They sell locally and organically-raised meats and produce and provide a full-service deli in addition to selling TFBT's Strawberry Salsa.

"People love the Strawberry Salsa, and we love to sell it, not just because it's delicious, but also because the profit gives other students opportunities like the one I got!"

When you stop by Haren's, you'll find all the supplies you need to pair with your salsa in one visit, such as locally-made tortilla chips, ingredients for a walking taco or even candied jalapenos. Haren's Market is located at 502 Garfield Avenue in Troy and is open M-F, 9 AM – 6 PM and Saturday, 8 AM – 3 PM.

Twenty-five of our Troy students are receiving more than \$42K in Last Dollar Grants for the 2016-2017 academic year! They are attending 14 different institutions of higher education and training.

This is made possible by corporate and individual donors, our incredible Troy Strawberry Festival salsa customers each June, and these local TFBT Strawberry "Sweet Heat" Salsa vendors:



LEARNING, BEYOND THE CLASSROOM

Tim Horton Children's Foundation Camps

Tim Hortons, downtown Troy, Ohio, location, and the Tim Horton Children's Foundation have been very generous to The Future Begins Today and its students. Local Tim Hortons owner Alison Davies has the challenging task of selecting a handful of nominated TFBT students each year to apply for a 10-day summer program at Camp Kentahten in Campbellsville, Kentucky. Campers learn confidence to achieve goals, learn to show respect for themselves, others and the environment, and take part in several challenges and workshops. Forty-six TFBT students have been selected over the past decade.

For Summer Camp June 2016, a record eight students from TFBT were selected to attend. Krislynn Scott, a camper from Heywood Elementary shares, *"At camp, I got to meet people who are positive role models and meet new friends from Troy and other organizations like Big Brothers Big Sisters. We created music with other groups too. It's special to be part of TFBT, because I get to do things I don't ever get to do."*

In the summer of 2017, the camp format will transition to expand their Youth Leadership Camp. Previous Troy campers, ages 12-16 will get to participate in this YLC for as many as five, 10-day sessions spread over five years at various camps in the US and Canada. According to THCF president, Dave Newnham, *"Our (YLC) campers will bring home with them specific challenges to use their new skills in their home lives, in their schools and within their communities. The program is designed to build strengths that help our youth thrive at school, succeed in their future workplaces and become active, contributing members of their communities."*

Troy Junior High student, Miles Kelly, attended the summer camp as a fifth grade TFBT Club student in 2015 and has received an invitation to the YLC program. *"The first time I went was so fun. I learned how to canoe and to shoot a bow and arrow. The*



TFBT students present Tim Hortons (downtown Troy) owner Alison Davies with a thank you gift.

cabins were awesome and the food was good. I learned how to work better as a teammate and to try my best even if something is hard. So when they asked me back for the Youth Leadership Camp, I was really excited!"

In addition to summer camp, and through their partnership with TFBT, Tim Horton Children's Foundation has hosted more than 50 Troy City Schools students each spring break since 2011 for an expense-free, three-day camp experience. TFBT prepares campers for this character-building experience through a camp orientation meeting and table manners training with Van Cleve TFBT Club advisor and frequent chaperone, Janet Rhodes.

"Many of our TFBT Club students don't have the opportunity to leave the state or to attend a life-changing camp to expand their skill sets like this. We are fortunate that our students get to be included in something so powerful," says Natalie Rohlfs, executive director of TFBT.

8th Grade Goes to College

More than 300 of Troy Junior High School's 8th grade students visited Wright State University in fall of 2016 for the third annual "8th Grade Goes to College" program. With coordination with TJHS counselor, Kelly Leganik and principal, Dave Dilbone, TFBT was able to provide early exposure to a viable pathway of post-secondary education for our students. This opportunity was made possible with generous gifts from Miami County Foundation and Troy Noon Optimists!

Cheryl Stiefel-Francis, executive director of the Miami County Foundation, says, *"Campus visits encourage students to pursue education or training beyond high school, and it gives them the opportunity to identify their interests in degree programs that might suit their career ambitions. Troy Junior High students are able to plan early for the type of education, the size of a college they prefer (if that is the path they choose), and the costs that will be needed as well. We're pleased The Future Begins Today offers ALL 8th graders the opportunity to visit a college campus and that they allow us to support this important program."*





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