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Major Gift from Meyerhoff and Becker Will Help Double Teach For America Corps Size

(Baltimore, MD, 10/23/09) The Baltimore Community Foundation announced today that Robert E. Meyerhoff and Rheda Becker have made a major gift to the Baltimore City Public Schools Fund of the Baltimore Community Foundation. The gift will help double Teach For America's corps size in Baltimore City Public Schools by the 2010-2011 academic year and has already had an impact on the size of this year's corps, helping build it to 243 teachers.

"The Baltimore Community Foundation created the Baltimore City Public Schools Fund to accept contributions from private individuals and businesses who wish to support excellence and innovation in our city's public schools," said BCF President and CEO Tom Wilcox.

"Through their generous gift, Mr. Meyerhoff and Ms. Becker are helping Dr. Alonso implement his powerful vision for transforming public education in Baltimore."

Monies raised for the Baltimore City Public Schools Fund are available for special programs and activities in Baltimore schools. Requests by City Schools CEO Andrés A. Alonso are reviewed and approved by lead staff and trustees of BCF. Grants from the fund have supported a variety of projects and initiatives, from the Great Kids Come Back campaign, which helped re-enroll hundreds of students who had dropped out; to hiring teams of youth workers to help targeted schools change their culture and improve student behavior; to opening 24 new "Transformation Schools" serving grades 6-12 over the next four years.

Donors may also earmark contributions to the Baltimore City Public Schools Fund for specific purposes, as Mr. Meyerhoff and Ms. Becker have done for the Teach For America initiative.

“We are thrilled by, and extremely grateful for, this significant gift that allows City Schools and TFA-Baltimore to expand City Schools’ teacher corps in this time of both economic challenge and critical momentum in our schools,” said Dr. Alonso. “Teach For America is an important part of City Schools’ overall strategy to improve teacher effectiveness in every classroom, and to continue to increase student achievement. On behalf of City Schools, I thank Mr. Meyerhoff and Ms. Becker for their tremendous generosity and commitment to our kids.”

Teach For America, the national corps of top college graduates of all academic majors who commit to teach for two years in urban and rural public schools, came to Baltimore in 1992. Currently, 243 corps members teach in 87 Baltimore City public schools. In addition, 194 Teach For America alumni continue to work in Baltimore in the field of education.

The corps is growing from 163 in 2008-2009, to 243 in the current school year, to 318 by the 2010-2011 school year. The Meyerhoff-Becker gift makes this possible.

“We’re grateful to Mr. Meyerhoff and Ms. Becker for their support of our efforts to reach the day when every child in our city will have the opportunity to achieve academic success,” said Omari Todd, executive director of Teach For America-Baltimore. “With this partnership, we can continue to provide high-quality teachers and leaders who are committed to taking on the challenges of Baltimore City Public Schools and advocating effectively for fundamental, long-term change.”

ABOUT THE BALTIMORE COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

The Baltimore Community Foundation distributed \$28 million in 2008 to hundreds of nonprofit organizations in the Baltimore region and beyond. With assets of \$143 million, BCF comprises more than 600 different charitable funds.

BCF invites donors to **Invest in Baltimore** through its civic agenda, which combines economic development with poverty reduction by making strategic investments in the areas of human services, youth, education, transportation, neighborhoods, diversity, environment, arts and culture, and promoting Baltimore.

BCF helps individuals, families and organizations carry out their charitable plans, with the common goal of improving the quality of life in the greater Baltimore region, today and for generations to come. To donors, BCF offers a complete toolkit for charitable giving, expert assistance in learning more about the causes they care about, and the opportunity to join others with similar interests to learn and give together. To the community at large, BCF offers a permanent, growing source of grant monies, as well as a common meeting ground and leadership on important issues in our region.

In addition, BCF provides grantmaking oversight for two independent foundations, the William G. Baker Jr. Memorial Fund and the Leonard and Helen R. Stulman Charitable Foundation.

More information about **Invest in Baltimore** as well as support for individual donors' philanthropy and more can be found at www.bcf.org.

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