

# FRIENDS OF BREAKTHROUGH SCHOOLS

## Tenacious Teachers – Spirited Students!

**Tenacious** = determined, persistent, relentless, steadfast, unswerving

**Spirited** = bright, energetic, enthusiastic, fearless, passionate

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### A Note from John Zitzner

*Persistence, patience, positive attitude, and peace.* The 4 P's have been essential over the past 10 years. That's when I first dipped my toe in urban education. While we continue to make strides, there are still over 30,000 children attending failing schools in Cleveland.

#### Breaking Through on Advocacy?

By June 30, there will be a new budget for the state of Ohio. The question is: Will there be progress when it comes to properly funding high-quality public charter schools that are woefully underfunded compared to their district counterparts?

Today, **Breakthrough Schools receives less than 2/3 of the per-pupil operating funding** earmarked for public school children in Cleveland, even though we are public schools. In addition, we receive virtually no funding for facilities. As you probably know, Cleveland voters passed a renewal levy for substantial state-matched facilities funding for public district schools. Current law says we are not part of that fund because we are a public charter school.

So, our efforts over the past year or so have been geared to the creation of additional facilities/startup funding to enable Breakthrough, and other great schools, to replicate and grow to serve more children currently enrolled in failing schools. We are pleased with the reception Breakthrough is receiving in Columbus (and Washington DC!). We believe we are beginning to make headway with elected officials **thanks to so many of our "Friends" of Breakthrough who have helped with introductions and more.** If you have a desire to be involved with our advocacy efforts, Mike Merriman, FOB Board Chair, and soon to be Advocacy Committee Chair, and I would love to speak with you.

Thank you for your support,



### A few highlights from this year:

- Next year we open our **11th school**: Citizens Academy Southeast on Harvard Avenue near Lee, furthering our goal to reach 19 schools by 2019.
- Our growth increases the number of Cleveland children that will attend high performing schools from around 3,000 to approximately **3,500 children next year**. Over 95% will be minorities and 80+% will be from low-income families.
- In order to reach our goal for philanthropy for Fiscal 2015 (which ends on June 30), we **still need about \$500,000** and we have a donor who has agreed to **match NEW or INCREASED gifts** received by June 30. If you are in the "not yet a donor to Breakthrough" group, what a FANTASTIC time to jump in and help because your gift will be doubled.
- Parallel to our fundraising, we are constantly working in Columbus and Washington DC to **educate our elected officials** on the absolutely **inequitable funding** that our students receive for their schools compared to their peers who elect to attend district schools. In order to be fully sustainable, we need to change funding laws, and we are working on it.
- Our educators have been working overtime to **help our students** adjust to the **Common Core** standards. We support the adoption of the Common Core, which raises the bar for children in Ohio.
- This year, we will **send 224 high school ready 8th graders to high-performing high schools** in our area. While most attend the **highest-performing** CMSD high schools, a good number will attend the highest-rated parochial and independent schools in our area. This is SURE to help increase Cleveland's high school graduation rate in the coming years as more and more of our students get "caught up" while at Breakthrough, and then move on to great schools as they prepare for success in post-secondary education. Check out the list of high school acceptances on page 3!

This is hard work. On behalf of the **434 teammates at Breakthrough**, we thank you for helping us help our children. Cleveland will indeed be the Championship City in Urban Education in the USA. **We will not give up on that goal!!**

**Upcoming  
Events**  
See back page!

Learn how you can get involved  
and support our students:

[BreakthroughSchools.org/Friends](http://BreakthroughSchools.org/Friends)

3615 Superior Avenue, Suite 3103A • Cleveland, OH 44114

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*Governor Kasich Visits Breakthrough!*

## Volunteer Spotlight: Lubrizol

Breakthrough Schools receives a tremendous amount of support from Lubrizol and their employees. Chuck Hillier, Instrument Systems Quality Manager at Lubrizol, coordinates their Building Bonds Day, a day that involves multiple volunteer sites for Lubrizol around the community for one day, and Breakthrough is a recipient of their time and efforts. At the beginning of the year, Chuck meets with the Operations Manager to review the school's project list and ensure that the equipment necessary to complete the jobs is available. This year, over 30 Lubrizol employees will volunteer at Breakthrough for the day! Chuck has coordinated a number of projects, including:

- Painting of all remaining classrooms, bathrooms, offices, the gym, all stairs and stairwells of entire building, and door frames not painted by the contractor;
- Removal of wooden archways and benches in the playground area, making it safer for the kids;
- Weeding around the fenced in area behind the school, allowing more parking space and better clearance for cars arriving for student pickup;
- Fixing interior and exterior lighting ballasts, replacing, fixing and rewiring to help save thousands of dollars!

In addition to all of this, Chuck does an excellent job of making sure that everything is cleaned up and put back in place. Staff at the school level say, "It's like they come in, do amazing things and then they are gone again!" Thank you from all of us, Chuck. You and the Lubrizol volunteers continue to give 100% to help our students. Your efforts allow them to return to a safe and warm environment after summer break, giving them the ability to focus on their education.

## Tenacious Teachers

The Breakthrough Schools network supports the Common Core Standards and believes in its approach of boiling down the big ideas that children need to understand, not just on the surface, but in depth. The PARCC, which is often confused as Common Core, is an assessment that measures student learning of the Common Core Standards. What we still don't know is whether or not the PARCC assessments are a good measure of Common Core Standards. We are doing everything in our power to better understand both Common Core and the PARCC assessments, and will be looking at all data points very carefully and modifying instruction as appropriate.



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# Spirited Students

March 18, 2015, Alura Winfrey, a Breakthrough student, had the opportunity to hear President Barack Obama speak in person. During the Q&A portion of the event,

## Alura had the confidence to ask the President:

"If you could go back to the first day of your first term, and the first day of your second term, what advice would you give yourself?"

## The President immediately complimented her with, "That's a good question" and delivered a news-making response!

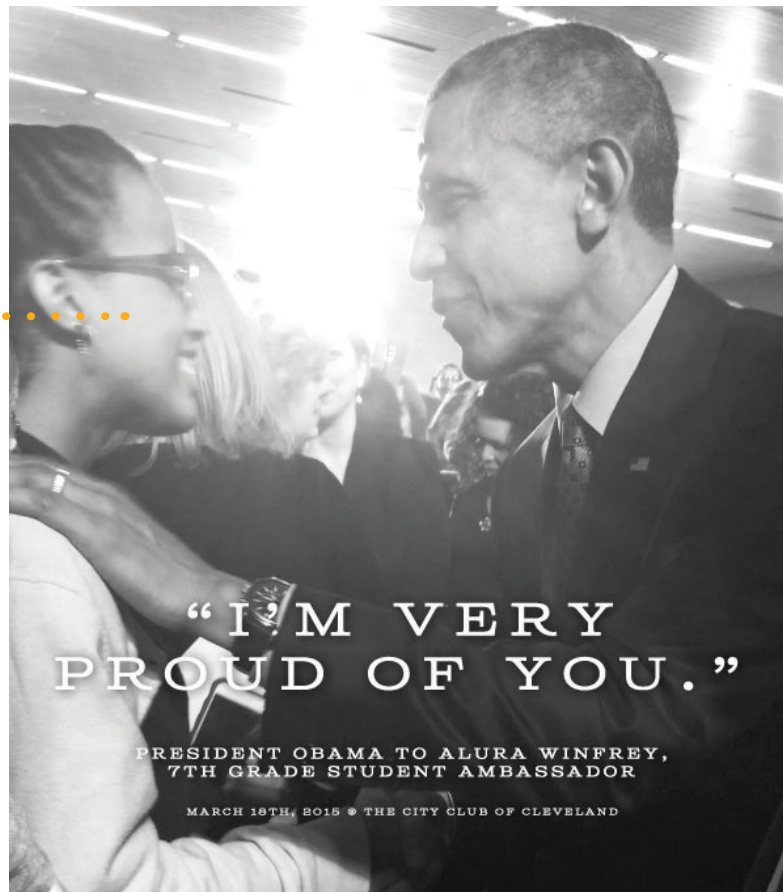
To read all about Obama's answers to Alura, check out:

- [www.washingtonpost.com](http://www.washingtonpost.com)
- [www.politico.com](http://www.politico.com)
- [www.cityclub.org](http://www.cityclub.org)

After the session,

## Alura and the President met, and he told her "I'm very proud of you."

Breakthrough Schools is proud to be able to expose our students to an experience of a lifetime such as this one. Our Spirited Students are the future. Well done, Alura! We are all very proud of you as well!



Spring  
Newsletter  
**2015**

## Spirited = bright, energetic, enthusiastic, fearless, passionate

### Congratulations 8<sup>th</sup> Grade on your High School Acceptances...so far!

- Bard Early College High School
- Beaumont School
- Benedictine High School
- Cleveland Central Catholic
- Cleveland School of the Arts
- Gilmour Academy
- Ginn Academy
- Hawken School
- John Hay Early College
- John Hay School of  
Architecture & Design
- John Hay School of  
Science & Medicine
- Laurel School
- MC2 STEM
- Montessori High School
- Saint Edward High School
- Saint Martin de Porres  
High School
- Trinity High School
- University School
- Villa Angela-St. Joseph

## SHOUT OUT!

Jones Day partners and associates have donated, and continue to donate, significant hours representing the Breakthrough Schools network as our pro-bono legal firm. THANK YOU, JONES DAY!

## 4th Annual Breakthrough BASH 2015

**SATURDAY, JANUARY 31, 2015**

**Photography donated by Cleveland Photographic Society**

Maria Kaiser – MLOVITTK@aol.com / Joe Vanecek – joe3928@stratos.net

What an amazing event once again!

- Over 800 guests and volunteers
- **Net Income greater than \$425,000!**
- Proceeds from the paddle raise will help to build 7.5 new classrooms

Thank you to our BASH Committee, led by Diane Singer.

**Proud Founding Supporter:**



**Presenting Corporate Sponsor:** Bank of America



**Thank You to Our Magna Cum Laude Sponsors:**

Cyrium Investment Partners, Lubrizol Corporation, Oswald Companies, and Drew and Nancy Forhan



**Save The Date  
Saturday,  
January 30, 2016**

### Be Tenacious and Spirited!

**Alumna Quote:**

“I can’t help but be thankful to Breakthrough Schools for a **strong foundation!** Breakthrough made me the young lady that I am. You’ve **given me the opportunity** to come back and speak, and taught me the **importance of passing knowledge** on and supporting our Cleveland schools. I feel such a sense of purpose when I talk to students and encourage them.”

- Demitria McKenzie



## Swing for the Stars – 5th Annual Golf Outing Monday, July 20, 2015 – SAVE THE DATE and REGISTER TODAY!

**Presenting Sponsors:**

BakerHostetler



Sponsorships and information available at [www.BreakthroughSchools.org](http://www.BreakthroughSchools.org) or contact Karen Solomon, Director of Annual Fund, at (216) 373-2795 or [ksolomon@breakthroughschools.org](mailto:ksolomon@breakthroughschools.org).

**Thank you to our golf host committee:**

Jeffrey Cristal, Michael Cristal, Don Hayes, Mark Mountain, Kirk Neiswander, Ron Stepanovic, and Brian Tucker

## Community Awareness Luncheon- Save the date!

**Wednesday, August 26, 2015** – Windows on the River

**Keynote Speaker: Don Shalvey, Gates Foundation**

Don Shalvey oversees the Foundation’s efforts to advance college ready rates in states, school districts, and networks of high performing charter schools. He will be addressing Cleveland, a Gates Compact City! Compact Cities are recognized by Gates Foundation for their education reform work around having District work with Charters.

Introductions by **Eric Gordon, CEO, CMSD**, additional remarks from a Breakthrough/CMSD graduate who is attending college.

Thank you to Bridget Moreno, Event Chair, for coordinating this exciting event!

### Don’t Miss Out!

- **A Day at the Ballpark** – Spend the day cheering on the Indians vs. Texas Rangers, *Wednesday May 27th while being a mentor to two deserving students* and sharing in the fun of the Club Section! **Become a sponsor today, RSVP at <http://www.edgef.org>.** Special thank you to The Entrepreneurs EDGE for putting together this wonderful experience once again. For more information, contact Kelly Mackey at (216) 694-8005 or via email at [kelly@edgef.org](mailto:kelly@edgef.org).

- **Graduations!** – Hard to believe that another school year is almost at the close. We are so proud of our students and all of their achievements over the year! If you are **interested in attending a graduation** or would like the chance to **attend and hear from our panel of students and teachers** reflecting on their experiences, please **contact Katie Emerson**.

- **Tour a School – Check out our Tenacious Teachers and Spirited Students in the classroom!** Every month one of the schools in our network is featured, accompanied with an update from John Zitzner. Visit [www.BreakthroughSchools.org](http://www.BreakthroughSchools.org) for upcoming dates.

**For more information or to RSVP, contact Katie Emerson, Director of Engagement and Donor Relations, at [kemerson@breakthroughschools.org](mailto:kemerson@breakthroughschools.org) or (216) 373-8360.**

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