



**For Immediate Release
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Unique City-wide Campaign Raises Awareness about and Engages Community in Valuing Local Teachers and Challenges the Community to Help Raise \$250K for Teachers' Projects for Students.

The San Francisco Education Fund and DonorsChoose join forces with San Francisco Mayor Newsom, Interim Superintendent Chan, the Giants, Bank of America, and a Coalition of Community Partners to Launch the Thank a Teacher Today Campaign

San Francisco – The San Francisco Education Fund and DonorsChoose kicked off the first annual Thank a Teacher Today Campaign at Sheridan Elementary school in the Oceanview Merced Ingleside neighborhood. Coming together to launch the campaign were Mayor Gavin Newsom, Board of Education President Norman Yee, Interim Superintendent Gwen Chan, United Educators of San Francisco President Dennis Kelly, the Giants, and Bank of America, along with some of San Francisco's most dedicated school teachers.

The Campaign is designed to promote and recognize the contributions made by San Francisco teachers as well as their professionalism and commitment to students across the City. "During my weekly school visits, I've witnessed first-hand the passion and dedication our teachers have in providing quality education to our students," said Mayor Newsom. "The Thank a Teacher Today Campaign is a great start in ensuring that our teachers are recognized for their essential role in shaping the present and future of San Francisco," continued Newsom. Interim Superintendent Chan agrees that teachers are valued partners essential for educational success. "I graduated from and then worked in SFUSD for 38 years and I have experienced and seen first-hand the difference a teacher can make in a student's life," said Chan.

Intended to be an annual event each May, the Thank a Teacher Today Campaign urges all members of the community -- students, parents, alumni, employers, public officials, community-based organizations, businesses, civic groups, and others -- to join together to honor teachers and support their work in improving student academic achievement. Katie Albright, Director of Public Engagement at the San Francisco Education Fund, believes that it is critical for the community to come together to thank teachers: "Teacher turnover in public schools around the country is too high, particularly in lower-performing schools. This public call to action to recognize teachers is one important step our City can take to change that."

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The Thank a Teacher Today Campaign utilizes the ease and convenience of the internet through its website www.ThankATeacherToday.org, which gives all community members three easy ways to participate: “Thank” by sending a thank-you note or e-card; “Donate” to support the DonorsChoose San Francisco Challenge, which provides funding for teachers’ best ideas; and “Share” a story about a favorite teacher who made a lifetime of difference. Website visitors can also download the San Francisco Education Fund’s parent toolkit (available in English, Chinese, and Spanish), which is filled with innovative activities to appreciate teachers throughout the month of May and the whole year.

The DonorsChoose San Francisco Challenge, sponsored by Bank of America, offers the community an opportunity to respond directly to teachers’ requests and help provide students with the resources they need to learn. On the website, www.donorschoose.org/sfchallenge, public school teachers propose ideas for materials or experiences that will enhance student learning. Then, donors can choose an idea to support, with a gift of \$10 or more. DonorsChoose Bay Area Executive Director Becky Johnson said, “This is a terrific opportunity for community members to join together and honor our teachers by bringing their best ideas to life -- and during May, you can double your gift and impact, thanks to Bank of America.”

Lead sponsors include the San Francisco Giants who will acknowledge teachers for hitting homeruns in the classroom at their home game Tuesday evening May 9th. “The Giants have a long tradition of investing in the local community and in education. We are proud to partner with this City-wide coalition of community members to highlight the tremendous and critical work of our teachers, and to encourage those who live, work, and watch baseball in San Francisco to join us in paying tribute to our educators,” said Larry Baer, Giants Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer.

Major San Francisco businesses, such as Bank of America, also recognize the value of teachers and are honoring them and pitching their support to get the campaign off to a strong start. “Bank of America is pleased to join with this terrific coalition to honor teachers by bringing their best ideas to life,” said Steve Silvestri, San Francisco Market President for Bank of America. “We value the critical role our City’s educators have in preparing our children for the future. As the lead corporate sponsor for the Thank a Teacher Today Campaign, we are proud to inspire and engage our community in responding directly to teachers’ requests for support and providing students with the resources they need to learn.”

Other key partners include Chinese for Affirmative Action, Coleman Advocates for Children & Youth, GreatSchools, Parents for Public Schools-San Francisco, San Francisco PTA, San Francisco School Alliance, and San Francisco School Volunteers. The PTA, which focuses on teacher appreciation every May, welcomes the broad reach of the Thank a Teacher Today Campaign. “This year in San Francisco, we are able to reach significantly more people with our message that teachers deserve our warm thanks for all they do on behalf of our children. The San Francisco PTA is proud to be a partner in the Thank a Teacher Today Campaign,” said Carl A. Barnes, President of the Second District of the California State PTA.

United Educators of San Francisco, the union that represents San Francisco’s public school teachers and para-professional aides, appreciates the spirit of the Thank a Teacher Today Campaign. “Teaching, with the thousand daily decisions it entails, is one of the most demanding jobs in our society,” said Dennis Kelly, President of UESF. “We are pleased to see that teachers are being given thanks for the work that they do and having their dedication recognized.”

By the end of the month, the campaign hopes to raise \$250,000 for teachers’ best ideas and hopes to collect more than 100 stories shared by community members about how their teachers have made a difference and helped improve the quality of life for young people in San Francisco.

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