

Scholarship Story

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Class XXX

President, For Houston's Kids

- What was made possible for you through the ALF scholarship?

When I was notified that I had been invited to be a participant in ALF Class XXX, I knew I would need financial assistance. I had taken a significant pay cut 9 years before to become the executive director of Mission Houston, a small citywide faith-based organization, since I was (and am) passionate about its vision of mobilizing resources to address the needs of our city and community. Because I was eligible to take a study sabbatical, the Board of Mission Houston was able and willing to provide a portion of the Class participation fee and I could afford to pay some. But without the generosity of ALF's donors and the availability of scholarship funds, I would have missed out on the remarkably helpful, stimulating, life-giving ALF Class experience.

- What has been ALF's impact on you? And what does being part of the ALF network mean to you?

Three things come immediately and gladly to mind.

1. Encouragement: The ALF vision, the caliber of the ALF staff, and the number of gifted and influential classmates and Senior Fellows in our city who are committed to Houston fulfilling its immense potential by maximizing our greatest assets and addressing our deepest needs, has amplified my hope that the revitalization of every portion of our city is possible.

2. Personal Enrichment: Among the great treasures of my life are the shared experiences and deep relationships with my Class XXX Classmates who risked personal vulnerability, engaged in disclosing the moving stories of events that shaped their lives, chose to be learners, and demonstrated a commitment to mutual affirmation and very practical responding to one another's needs. That affection and responsiveness was on full display in my own life last August when I found myself incapacitated for almost a month, and my Classmates took the initiative to provide food, helped with our yard work, and sent notes and gifts that assured me - and my wife - of their concern and availability to help.

3. Allies: I have been in transition for the past 10 months, moving from Mission Houston to serve a new effort launching this fall, For Houston's Kids. Our goals are to address the needs of children and youth ages 0-19 through collaboration in pursuit of commonly agreed measurable results by providers of services to kids, and to mobilize 250,000 new volunteers to assist them. My ALF seminars brought clarity, values and skills that were of enormous help in the convening and listening we did with leaders in the business, government and social services sectors. My Classmates have been of invaluable help - counsel for me, connections to individuals and organizations, and even generous financial support. The collective impact power inherent in the ALF community is incredible!

- Without scholarships, what will others be missing?

It is certainly my hope that I added value to my ALF Classmates, in addition to being the recipient of great value through them and through the leaders/staff. Based on my experience, there are certainly others in Houston who would likewise benefit from and make valuable contributions to an ALF Class - people who are already making deposits for the well-being of our city but who do not currently have the financial capacity to pay the entire commitment required. So not only would those people not have the opportunity for the personal enrichment and the sharpening of their skills as citizens and leaders that ALF Class participation brings, but ALF will miss having them as integral parts of our expanding community of Senior Fellows.