

Success Stories from Today's Students Tomorrow's Teachers

In 1995, **Jeffrey Cole** was one of TSTT's first recruits. At the time, he was an unmotivated high school student in Westchester County, New York. According to his worried mother, he had no particular career goals.

Thanks to his guidance counselor's encouragement, he joined TSTT, a new program that tapped diverse and economically challenged students to consider teaching as a profession. Jeffrey soon found himself in a summer internship tutoring younger children—and he loved it. He went on to attend college on a scholarship arranged through TSTT. He eventually became an elementary school teacher and is now an assistant director of special education in a large urban school district.

One of the first TSTT graduates to reach the 10-year mark in the teaching profession is **Emerly Martinez**. After college, he returned to teach social studies in the high school from which he graduated, and he is now an assistant principal in a nearby district.

Among the most enthusiastic of TSTT's participants is **Merica Neufville**. She likes to tell me, "TSTT saved me!" Born in Jamaica, her mother moved the family, after the death of Merica's father, to the United States, where her mother worked many jobs to support her family. Merica also worked to help pay bills. She hoped to attend college but thought it would take years to save enough money.

When TSTT came to her large urban school, she joined as one of the first recruits. At her school, guidance counselors had little time for individual students, so the program helped her prepare for college, and the 50 percent tuition scholarship made the difference in her enrolling. We supported her through good days and bad and eventually helped her get a job as a math teacher in a TSTT district. She immediately became a teacher mentor to "pay it forward," giving advice, support, and encouragement to the program's participants.

Today, she stays in touch with many of the students she has mentored. Their relationships have become genuine friendships; she recently organized a bridal shower for one of her former students, and she meets with others throughout the year. We need dedicated teachers like Merica in the poorest, least resourced districts so they can provide students with the education to help them climb out of poverty.

Merica is currently an administrator, pursuing a doctorate in education leadership; she is one of our many success stories.

—B.P.



Emerly Martinez and
Bettye Perkins



Jeffrey Cole



Merica Neufville

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