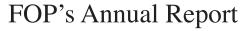
The Fuzzy





Cheesecake

and Community Newsletter

Volume 7: December MMX

www.harvardfop.com

Greetings from Steering Committee 2011

As the autumn leaves and crisp air have settled into Cambridge, Steering Committee 2011 has settled into our role for the year. We have spent the past month thinking about our visions for the program, and how we will make these visions into realities. It is with excitement and determination that we are diving into our projects and working towards making next year's FOP trips as successful as this past year's trips.

This past August, FOP sent out 34 trips to the backcountry of New Hampshire, Vermont, and Maine. Of these 34 trips, 8 of them had a canoe component and 5 were service oriented.

Recently, our service trips have received some special attention! Each year our service trips partner with various outdoor organizations to restore trails in high-traffic zones so as to preserve the beautiful mountains that we, and many others, enjoy. This year, one of our groups, trip 62,

received an award from the Green Mountain Club for its hard work and dedicated service. The trip was further honored by the City of Cambridge for their exceptional contribution. Inspired by this, SC '11 hopes to continue to develop the service component of FOP and consider how service ethic can fit into more of our trips.

In the past year, our program saw a major transition as we welcomed Coz Teplitz, a Harvard and FOP SC alum, as our new director. Jess Ross, who expertly headed our program for five years, handed the reins over to Coz mid-May. In her time with the program Jess affected lasting change, increasing program accessibility by reducing the program's financial burden for families and instilling FOP with her compassion and openness. We miss her care and enthusiasm, but are excited for the year ahead. Coz's energy, vision, and love for FOP are evident in everything he does and will be tremendous assets in the coming year as we work together towards

taking FOP to new heights.

In the year ahead, we hope to concentrate on a few particular goals, including continuing our fundraising efforts and increasing the on campus presence of the FOP community. We are always looking for ways to expand and diversify our community and one way we aim to do this is by minimizing the financial burden of FOP for families by offering more financial aid and by having more gear available for rent. At the same time we hope to continue to build and strengthen the FOP community on campus. We have been brainstorming ways to reach out to our leaders and our FOPpers, such that our community of FOP may be continued through the entire year.

Finally, we wanted to say that this program could never be where it is today without the support and dedication of all of you. For this we would like to offer huge thanks. Whether you went on a trip, led a trip, sent your child on a trip, or helped those trips become a reality through your generous donations, you are a part of our FOP family, and you have helped create an incredible group which will only continue to grow in love for the outdoors, support for each other, and service to our community.

"Let your walks now be a little more adventurous" -Henry David Thoreau

FOP Love, Steering Committee 2011



Steering Committee 2011: Caroline Burke, Louise Hindal, Lilla Cosgrove, Maria Dieci, Noah Madoff, Michael Zheng, Sarah MacVicar, Coz Teplitz

| In this Issue: | |
|---|--|
| SC'11 Welcome | |
| About: FOP | |
| From our FOPpers | |
| A Parent's Perspective - Patricia Gunuchian Grayson | |
| Fuzzy Optimistic Persons - Jennifer Nan | |
| Returning to FOP -Patrick Ziemnik | |

| From the Director - Coz Teplitz | 5 |
|--|---|
| Award Reunion - Leaders and FOPpers of Trip 62 | |
| Honoring Jess Ross - Dean Thomas Dingman | |
| Welcoming Paul "Coz" Teplitz - Katie Steele | 6 |
| FOP's 2010 Annual Report | |
| 2010 Donors | |
| | |

ABOUT: FOP

THE WEEK:

3 States • 5 Nights Under the Stars • 34 Trips • 71 Leaders • 1 Director • 283 First-Years • 4032 Tortillas • Countless Memories

THE HISTORY:

FOP was developed in 1979 by the Dean to provide students with a stronger support network upon entrance to college. FOP is the oldest and largest pre-orientation program for freshmen at Harvard. Every year, FOP sends approximately 18% of the incoming first-years on six-day backpacking, canoeing, and camping trips at the beginning of the school year. Since 1979, over 6000 students have begun their Harvard experience by living with 8-10 peers in the backcountry, under the leadership of 2-3 trained upperclassmen leaders. FOP is one of only 46 AEE-Accredited Programs in North America, such as the National Outdoor Leadership School and Outward Bound.

THE MISSION:

To provide group adventure-based experiences that promote the development of social support and self-awareness for first-year students and leadership development for members of the Harvard community.



THE VALUES:

- Compassion
- Responsibility to community
- Care and responsibility to the environment
- The equality and intrinsic worth of all people regardless of gender, age, race, sexual orientation, religion, ethnic or socio-economic background

THE RESEARCH:

- 1. FOP is the most successful Harvard pre-orientation program in providing social support networks to first-year students.¹
- 2. The first 6 weeks of college are highly significant in adjusting to college life.²
- 3. Students indicate that involvement in a pre-orientation program significantly improved their introductions to Harvard. ³
- 4. College outdoor pre-orientation experiences are correlated with higher academic achievement throughout college.⁴

WHY WE FUNDRAISE:

The First-Year Outdoor Program endeavors to provide financial aid and gear to anyone who needs it in an effort to minimize and ultimately to eliminate any financial barriers that might prevent students from participating in the program. Your donation will help us reach this goal.

3 Report of the Freshman Orientation Advisory Committee. (June 2005). P. 7 & Appendix C.

¹ Bell, Brent J. (2006). "Wilderness Orientation: Exploring the Relationship Between College Preorientation Programs and Social Support." *Journal of Experiential Education*, 29(2), 145-167.

² Baker, R.W., & Siryk, B. (1984). "Measuring adjustment to college." Journal of Counseling Psychology. 31, 179-189

⁴ Gass, M.A. (1987). "The Effects of a Wilderness Orientation Program on College Students. Journal of Experiential Education, 10(2), 30-33.

A WEEK IN THE WOODS

Toria Justicz, FOPper 2010

Even though I've only known my FOP group for approximately a week longer than most other people here, they will always maintain their special status as "my FOP friends." To non-FOPpers, there's not really an adequate way to explain the hilarity in naming an orange shovel "Colon Trowel" or the joy in feeding your new best friend a face full of cheesecake. However, these moments hold special importance to my FOP group and me and have formed the basis for our strong relationships with each other. In those six short days, I learned more about these people than I'm probably allowed to mention, and I'm very happy that I did.

vide support and laughs whenever I need them. I don't get to wake up each morning entangled in my neighbor's sleeping bag, but maybe it's best for our long-term friendships that we maintain some personal space and hygiene. Wherever there's a FOP group, there's sure to be an unbelievably good time ahead, especially with the dependable Mr. Colon Trowel leading the way across foreign soil—or, at least bringing up the rear.

FOPPER TESTIMONY

FOPper class of 2010

"FOP equipped me with a strong network f friends and a reliable support system going into college."

- Lauren Libby



During our daily hikes, our leaders got to know each of us individually and gave us abundant opportunities to ask them all types of questions, no matter how silly. Surrounded by the beauty and quiet of the outdoors, I felt that I had the space to mentally prepare myself for the huge transition ahead. By the time we reached campus, I had newfound confidence that if I could handle the New Hampshire wilderness, I could handle freshman orientation without a problem.

"In those six short days, I learned more about these people than I'm probably allowed to mention, and I'm very happy that I did."

I'm both excited and comforted to know that even though my FOP trip has ended, my FOP experience has not. My group has played such an important role in my adjustment to college, continuing to pro"I remember telling my parents when I got back, that despite the fact that it rained and it was sometimes uncomfortable, that I never stopped smiling and laughing on FOP. It was the ideal way to begin my Harvard experience!"

-Caroline Vernick

"It was one of the most fun experiences of my life thus far. It's great to come into freshman year with a tight group of friends already."

-Matthew Wagner



"I know that many, if not a majority, of my friends from FOP will remain with me throughout my freshman year and beyond."

-Joseph Wall

A PARENT'S

Perspective

Patricia Gumuchian Grayson

Let me give you a brief background on my daughter. She is a highly intellectual child, who spent most of her time reading, reading, reading. She is by all means not an athlete; although she is an excellent skier and a decent tennis player. Her only outdoor activity, being raised in New York City, has been walking to and from school. She is petite and frail.

As soon as my daughter made the decision to attend Harvard, she immediately signed up for FOP. She was so excited! When I read the program details, I thought: "She will back out, there is no way she will be able to endure this rigorous outdoor program."

How wrong was I! From the moment that we said our goodbyes until the moment I heard her voice; I worried the dreaded phone call: GET ME OUT OF HERE! Instead, after six long days, four of which were under nasty rainy weather, I finally heard my daughter's voice and to my dismay, she was utterly happy; saying that these have been the best days of her life!

The next day, I met my daughter at Harvard for the official move in day. I thought that she would want to get settled in as soon as possible; instead she told me: "Mom, leave the moving to later, first let's grab a good breakfast, I have SO much to tell you!" She did it all, carried all the equip-

ment on her weak back, climbed the mountains on her skinny legs, learned to use the great outdoors to relieve herself and slept under the stars.

I must say, I hardly recognized my daughter; she beamed of happiness. The most rewarding factor to the trip was not only the fact that she grasped the wilderness in all its beauty but mostly the fact that she made it. As a parent, I think that FOP should be mandatory; what a learning experience!

FUZZY OPTIMISTIC PERSONS

Jennifer Nan '08, leader alumna

When I started my very first trip with FOP as an incoming freshman, I had virtually no experience with the outdoors. It was the autumn of 2004 during Hurricane Katrina, and almost all FOP trips that year had only one precious day of sunshine before it started pouring. My trip, filled with outdoor novices, was barely prepared for a week in the woods without the basic comforts of civilization, let alone a week of soggy lunches, soggy boots, and soggy skin. The terrain, in retrospect, was not difficult, but to my beginner's feet it was filled with challenges, peril, and exhaustion.

Despite the difficult circumstances, I realized that far from being miserable, my spirits were consistently elevated the entire trip. FOP had revealed a version of me that I had not known before, a version that was resilient, cheerful, and crunchy. And that version came out even though I was stuck outside in the middle of a hurricane.

"FOP had revealed a version of me that I had not known before, a version that was resilient, cheerful, and crunchy."

I've noticed the positive effects of FOP on personalities besides my own. On trips FOPpers tend to be some of the most interesting and helpful people around. FOP leaders are known for being an optimistic and empathetic bunch. But FOPpers and leaders come from diverse backgrounds, have different personalities, and are ultimately a random assortment of people who just want to go hiking. So why is it that this collection of people, when assembled under the guise of FOP, suddenly turns into an unusually likeable and friendly group filled with camaraderie and kindness? Is it pure coincidence? Of course not. It's because on FOP, the leaders and FOPpers consciously and unconsciously work hard to create an environment that is great to live in.

On a FOP trip with brand new acquaintances, you get to redefine, potentially for

the first time in your life, how others perceive you. Social norms still exist, but in the depths of the woods these rules are relaxed, and even cast away. (Singing in public? Licking your bowl clean? Talking about the quality of your "long distance phone call"? Who does that?!) Without the baggage of social history and norms, members of a FOP trip are fully empowered to define the dynamics of the group, as well as their individual contributions to it. In this environment, FOPpers shine in a way that you don't always see on campus. Personally, I feel like I am the best version of myself when I'm on FOP.

So whenever I'm not in the woods and external pressures are getting me down, I remind myself of FOP. On FOP, I was always capable of working with others to construct an environment that made it easy for me to be the type of person I wanted to be. And although it's sometimes tougher in the front country to do this, the fact that I was able to do it on FOP empowers me to try elsewhere in my everyday life.

RETURNING TO FOP

Patrick Ziemnik '09, SC '08

This past Ausust, Patrick returned to FOP to work as the cooridnator of FOP's logitical support, called "basecamp".

The last time I felt this much apprehension about FOP, I was a first-time leader in the fall of 2006. Then, I was facing all the jittery uncertainty one would expect for a "rookie" leader. This time, even though I was returning as a "veteran," I faced much of the same uncertainty I had felt four years prior. I was new to the role of coordinating basecamp, and for the first time since 2006, I didn't know most of the FOP leaders in the community. But as soon as we got into the swing of things, and the leaders showed up, it felt like I had never left FOP.

It is hard to capture the craziness and emotion of those few weeks as Basecamp Coordinator, but there are two lessons I was happy to relearn this time around. First, I really miss the FOP community. A lot. This fall, I watched students I had helped shepherd into the program as fresh-faced youngsters transform into sage and confident experts. The newer folks, in turn, stepped up to the challenge with sure-



mindedness and poise. When I reflect on the organizations I have worked for since graduating and the challenge of keeping employees on the same page, I am all the more impressed by FOP's ability to send 70+ leaders all over New England with such high alignment that the community still feels like one unified team.

The second lesson I had to relearn was how difficult FOP experiences can be. College seemed to be a series of events that resulted in me telling my parents, "This was the hardest thing I have ever done," and most of those involved FOP. Coordinating basecamp did not disappoint. The logistics alone were mind-boggling, but what really made the experience so challenging, and so worthwhile, was the demand placed on me by the rest of basecamp. FOP leaders expect the best of each other—we provide support and encouragement, but also, when necessary, some tough love. As one friend told me, "FOP is the only time I have ever said something to someone that I knew might hurt their feelings, but did so because it would help them become a better leader, or even a better person."

"FOP LEADERS EXPECT THE BEST OF EACH OTHER—WE PROVIDE SUPPORT AND ENCOURAGEMENT, BUT ALSO, WHEN NECESSARY, SOME TOUGH LOVE."

FOP is a special combination of camaraderie and critical feedback, cohesive support and high expectations. As I depart the First-Year Outdoor Program once again, I am reminded of how much I miss the it, and how much I have grown from it. Often since graduating, when people ask where I went to college, they follow-up with, "So really, how was Harvard?" I now respond, "I loved it. If you want to know why, let me tell you about FOP."

From the Director

Dear FOP Family,

I am delighted and humbled to write you as the new FOP director. I am excited to continue in Jess's tradition – of working hard to advance the mission of FOP: to provide group adventure-based experiences that promote the development of social support and self-awareness for first-year students and leadership development for members of the Harvard community.

Our mission statement recognizes that FOP serves two populations, a fact mirrored by the role that FOP played in my own college career. As an incoming first-year, my FOP trip offered a sense of footing as I waded through the overwhelming opportunities and occasionally superficial conversations that mark the first weeks of college. Later, as a leader and steering committee member, FOP moved to the center of my Harvard universe – a welcoming community of fun-loving, compassionate folks with whom I could laugh, be vulnerable, and discuss our shared uncertainties about career and lifestyle.

"FOP CAN BE BOTH AN ORIENTATION TO HARVARD AND AN ORIENTATION TO ADULTHOOD."

While FOP continues to have value for both FOPpers and leaders, I believe that we can do more for both groups. FOP's strength is in relationships. I believe that we can use these relationships to better achieve our mission. One of my goals as FOP director is to explore what it means to "promote... self awareness for firstyear students." FOP trips occur at a pivotal time in students' lives. The move to college is a culturally symbolic transition from late adolescence to full adulthood, and college students everywhere question their identity and their role in the world. I believe that we can address this question directly, helping FOP achieve significance both as a source of social support and as an impetus for value formation. FOP can be both an orientation to Harvard and an orientation to adulthood.

I've greatly enjoyed talking with FOPpers and leaders about these ideas, and I am excited to work with them to move FOP

forward. I'd also like to hear from you – to say hello, to hear about what FOP has meant for you, and to discuss where you'd like to see FOP change, if at all. Please email me at fop.director@gmail.com; I welcome your thoughts and comments.

Yours in adventure, Coz



AWARD REUNION

Leaders and FOPpers of Trip 62

On September 25, FOP 62, one of our service trips, received the Green Mountain Club of Vermont's "Group of the Year" award. The trip members had carried 12 foot pieces of lumber up a 3 mile trail to the Skyline Lodge to be used in the construction of a handicap accessible outhouse. The group chose to continue carrying lumber for an extra day in the rain in order to finish the service project.

We had just sent an email to FOP's Steering Committee to ask for the Green Mountain Club's mailing address so that we could send a thank you note to Heidi, the field staff member from the GMC who led us in our service project. So we were more than a little surprised to receive a wonderful note of thanks from the GMC ourselves! We had been invited to be recognized at their Volunteer Appreciation Picnic and Awards Ceremony on September 25th in Vermont! Could this be the most epic trip reunion ever? Yes!

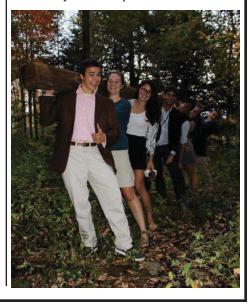
We all piled into a rental van (thanks FOP!) for the long drive up to VT. Two homemade FOP 62 CDs and dozens of catch-up stories later, we stepped out onto the GMC Visitor Center field. The bright green trees and rolling hills we remembered from our FOP trip back in August were now tinged with the yellows and oranges of fall.

After a few minutes of mingling, we joined the other 50 or so members of the GMC community for the award ceremony. "The award ceremony impressed me because there were awards for thousands of hours of volunteer work on the trail, which put the few days we did into perspective," explained Sarah Reilly in a sentiment that resonated with many of the other trip members that day. "It was awesome to be given this award by such a close-knit community. Going up there and attending their end-of-the-year picnic made me feel like our group was adopted into the GMC family," echoed fellow trip member Maddie Gray.

"IT WAS REALLY A ONCE-IN-A-LIFETIME SENSE OF ACHIEVEMENT."

For all of us, the award ceremony offered a time to reflect on the memories of the trip in August. Thomas Dai elaborated on a moment of particular pride from the trip: "I would say that what stands out to me most about my FOP experience was just the moment when we finally crested the hill with our giant wood beams, in the rain, with bruised shoulders but smiles still on our faces. It was really a once-in-a-lifetime sense of achievement."

After the ceremony and picnic, we all went for a 1.5 mile hike on a loop behind the visitor center that was aptly named "The Short Trail." Along the way, we came across a 12 foot piece of lumber lying on the side of the trail. Laughing, we all instinctively lifted it up onto our shoulders.





HONORING THE DIRECTORSHIP OF JESS ROSS

Dean Thomas Dingman

It gives me great pleasure to add a note of appreciation for Jess Ross's very skillful leadership of the First-Year Outdoor Program (FOP). While we are thrilled to have attracted Coz as Jess's successor, nothing should detract from the superior work Jess did.

"I was impressed by Jess's vision and goal-setting and her relentless drive to make the program even better."

In her years as director, Jess impressed us all with her boundless enthusiasm and energy and her respect for the undergraduate leaders. She gave the latter plenty of room to manage operations, consider new directions, and bring along the next generation of leaders - all without relinquishing her own responsibilities. I was impressed by Jess's vision and goal-setting and her relentless drive to make the program even better. This was certainly the case in her bid to enhance fund-raising and to make FOP more diverse. Often, individuals are good organizers or executioners, but lack genuine warmth and the capacity to bring out the best in others. This was not the case with Jess. While for instance, she did the painstaking work to move the director's position from half-time to threequarter-time, she kept smiling and was no less empathetic as she interacted with the student participants.

Finally, I want to comment on Jess as a role model. She was doing what she loved, and based her next move to Outward Bound in North Carolina on her passion, not necessarily on climbing the proverbial "ladder." Who could not be moved by Jess's very serious engagement of her work and, at the same time, her infectious laugh? And who could not be moved by her drive to develop on multiple fronts? She sang outside of work, pursued a Master's degree while she directed the program, and kept taking specialized courses in outdoor education in order to expand her knowledge and experience. Jess was, and is, a real dynamo. We will continue to feel grateful for her wise and spirited leadership of FOP, and wish her the very best in her future pursuits.

WELCOMING PAUL "Coz" TEPLITZ

Katie Steele

Director of Freshman Programming

During my first three years of working with FOP and with Jess Ross (Director, 2005-2010), Paul "Coz" Teplitz's name would occasionally come up in conversation. Everyone always spoke very highly of him – noting his kind and warm demeanor, his skills as an outdoors-person, and his love of FOP. Coz, who worked for six years with the North Carolina Outward Bound School (NCOBS), was clearly held in high regard by many in the FOP community. Consequently, when Jess announced her decision to leave Harvard, I was pleased to see that Coz submitted an application for the FOP Directorship.

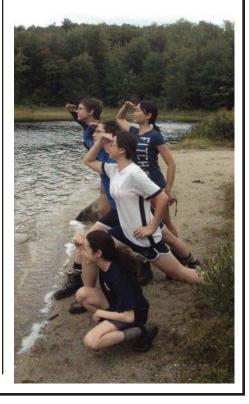
After meeting Coz in person, all of us on the interview team agreed that he was the ideal person to direct FOP and we were thrilled when he accepted the position. He's a great listener who exudes patience and support --exactly the qualities one looks for in a mentor and advisor. Having worked as an instructor, corporate-programs facilitator, and head climber at NCOBS, Coz brings extensive professional experience in the field of outdoor education. And, based on his own time as a FOP leader, a member of Steering Committee, Summer Staff, and Base Camp

Staff, Coz has a strong appreciation for and understanding of the critical role that our students play in leading FOP. Since being appointed as the Director,

"COZ IS FREQUENTLY LOOK-ING FOR WAYS FOR FOP TO SUPPORT THE LARGER GOALS AND MISSION OF THE FRESH-MAN DEAN'S OFFICE."

Coz has maintained this tradition of student leadership while also encouraging efforts to enhance FOP's offerings. For instance, FOP recently expanded the number of service trips for the Class of 2014 and incorporated service into the training for leaders. More behind the scenes, Coz is frequently looking for ways for FOP to support the larger goals and mission of the Freshman Dean's Office. As one example, Coz will offer a "team building" workshop for first-year students who'll be participating in a special leadership development seminar that will take place during the College's new Optional Winter Activities Week.

Most importantly, with Coz as the Director, I have no doubt that hundreds of FOPpers will continue to feel welcomed to Harvard and supported throughout their transition from home to college.



FOP Fundraising 2009-2010



To all of you who donated last year:

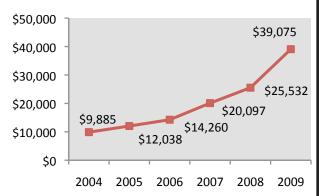
Thank you!

Thanks to your support, we celebrated FOP's 30th year with a bang. We raised just over \$39,000, dramatically exceeding our goal! We used this money to give financial aid to a record number of FOPpers while significantly improving our backpack inventory (see below).

If you gave last year, please consider giving again. We are achieving goals that FOP has worked toward for a number of years. Your donations will help ensure we continue the progess we have made toward making FOP accessible to any interested first-year.

If you have not given before, we invite you to take this step to become further connected to FOP. Play an active role in our work to smooth the transition to Harvard and help make the university a more welcoming place.

Funds raised

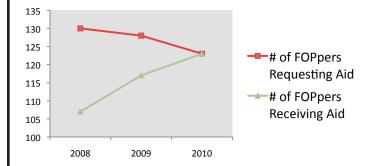


We use 100% of the money we raise to reduce the financial burdern of FOP for incoming students.

This means we spend it on two things:

Financial Aid

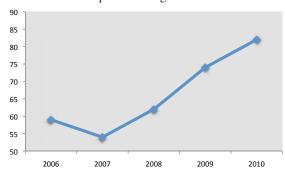
This year, we gave a record \$30,885 in financial aid. Any interested FOPper receiving financial aid from the university also received assistance from FOP.



Next year we are hoping to be able to continue to offer aid to anyone who requests it while also increasing the average aid amount. Help us offer an average of \$250 per FOPper!

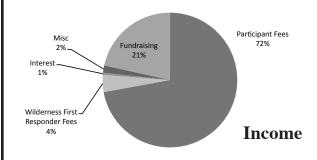
Rental Gear

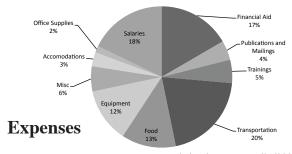
% FOPpers Renting FOP Gear



In 2010, FOP lent gear to 82% of FOPpers - our biggest loan season yet! This year, we're hoping to expand our offerings even further by investing in new sleeping bags, which will allow us to supply gear to an even greater number of participants. More loaner gear means fewer required purchases for incoming FOPpers and their families.

FOP Financials 2009-2010 (FY10)





FOP Supporters 2009-2010

THANK YOU TO ALL OF OUR DONORS!

FOP SUMMIT TEAM (\$500 AND UP)

Walter & JoAnn Beh Eric Berman Leah Boch (Julie & David Boch) Karen & Rees Cosgrove Gloria & Douglas Daly Amy Justice Derek Kaufman Alex Livingston Page McClean Caitlin McDonough Neil & Lisa McDonough Carol & Preston Miller Schwab Charitable Fund Thomas H. Platz Mike Pontrelli & Heather Richardson Dr. Peter S. & Molly Ross Keith Sadlachek David Storto & Shelley Mogil Joann Walker

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Jane Coleman Wolansky

Fritz Beshar B. Jill Comins & Howard S. Stein Cheryl Frank David Garlock Goldman Sachs Philanthropy Fund (by recommendation of Lynn and Richard **Berquist** Mark & Elizabeth Hindal Nancy & Don Jones Daniel & Lynn Lucier Mary McCarthy Stephen Orlins Ben Robbins John Savarese Johann M. Schleier-Smith Gregory & Brenda Soghikian Susan Bagnoli Truman Stephen Whisnant George Zisiadis (John & Maria Psomiades)

FOP TRAIL-**BLAZERS** (\$100-\$249)

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& John Stubbs Ruofel Sun Selena P. Tan & Kenneth

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Marius Wechsler Michael Weh Sandra & Richard

Wortzel Caitrin Moran Wright Hsushi Yeh & Ting-Ling

Georgia Young

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John Pottow & Reshma Jagsi

Sarah Rea David Renton Hilary Roberts Antoinette Rose Neil Rosenberg David & Katherine Rosenberg-Wohl

Jess Ross Andrew Rossner Jason Rowley Jennifer Saal Bernie & Benita

Schachter Joshua Schwartz Diane Sedlachek

In Memory of Ariel Shaker Chervl Silver

Lori Snell Thomas & Amy Spence Lauren & Will

Spielvogel Katherine W. Steele Anna Steim Luke Stein David Stern Stephanie Stuart

Urvashi Surti Ben Taxy Michael Taylor Bob Thompson &

Deborah Johnson D. Stewart Tucker Paul & Christine Tufano Amy Michele Tully Beverely Van Zandt Michael Vhay Alison Wallace Clay West Gregory & Sarah Wetstone

Richard & Barbara Wherley Mary & Peter Young Jianmin Zhang

In-KIND **DONATIONS** Matissa Hollister

Karla Palmer

8

Scott & Audrey Danto

Abigail Donaldson

Emily Donaldson

James Dyett

Hentzi Elek

Tom & Nancy Dingman