



## 2018 - 2019 Travel Grant Award Announcement

---

November 20, 2018

Dear Faculty,

We are pleased to announce the two recipients of the 2018-2019 Advent Professional Development Travel Grant! Both recipients were inspired by the Advent mission and their own dedication to social justice.

Soon after school ends in June, **Holly Hennick** will travel around the southern United States, exploring historic sites from the Civil Rights Movement. Visiting the cities of Jackson, MI, Little Rock, AR, and Memphis, TN, she will be in the place where history happened, bringing the stories back to First Grade's Changemaker Unit. This follows professional development around Civil Rights that Holly completed last year through Facing History and Ourselves. At one workshop, she connected with Terrance Roberts, one of the Little Rock Nine. Following a discussion with him, Holly was inspired to research how to explore these topics with younger students.

In her application, Holly explained how she would bring this back into the classroom:

*This trip would help the First Grade team expand our year long study about Peaceful Changemakers. We hope to develop lessons related to education equity and specifically the desegregation of schools, including a focus on the people who contributed to this movement. ... This trip would help me to make the connections to broaden this project and enable students to practice gratitude by writing letters to other changemakers either from the Civil Rights Movement or even tie in some present day changemakers who are making a difference in our schools today.*

She also will look to expand the scope of artists presented during the Changemaker unit:

*In First Grade, we also study different artists who have pushed boundaries and made a difference with the visual art they created. My reasoning behind going specifically to Memphis, Tennessee would be to learn more about one or two musician who shaped the music industry to expand that study. Being someone who is passionate about music, it would be a fun way to bring in something new to our unit.*

The committee was excited to hear about the multifaceted way in which Holly would bring her experiences on this trip back to her students. We were impressed with how she would build upon "the commitment to social justice" within The Advent School mission by supporting students in learning about a diverse group of peaceful Changemakers, having difficult conversations, and learning more about the ways in which we can all change the world.

In late June, **Rosa Vega** will travel to Mercatello sul Metauro, Italy to attend the International Study Tour: "Leadership for Change: Identity, Social Justice and the Right to be Visible" facilitated by John Nimmo and Debbie LeeKeenan. This professional development will continue the work from Rosa's graduate studies at Merrimack College as well as allow her an opportunity to work more closely with John Nimmo, the keynote speaker at The Advent Collaborative in spring 2018.

Rosa's week in Italy will focus on creating a vision for social justice in her professional and personal life, reflecting on exploring identity, thinking strategically, and embracing the possibility of growth through conflict. She was excited to work with other educators from around the world who will be thinking about these topics and how they can bring them into the early childhood classroom.

In her shared application, Rosa remarked on this:

*Over the past two years [at Advent] I have been interested in learning more about how I can better support myself, students, families, and colleagues in finding ways to engage in conversations around social justice issues. It has been fascinating to watch and hear how children approach discussions around race, gender, identity, and much more. I am excited about the opportunity to work closely with other professionals in strengthening my understanding and approach in these topics. ... I believe this retreat will help me both personally and professionally to focus on how to be a leader for change.*

As a committee we were impressed with Rosa's interest in developing the ways in which our young students have conversations around social justice issues throughout the school year, particularly her dedication to "finding new ways to lead meaningful and organic discussions with children ... to help them feel heard, empowered, and connected." We will all benefit from her experiences and the approaches she learns from other educators.

Thank you again to all those who submitted proposals. The committee was impressed with your dedication to Advent, social-emotional learning, play-based learning, and the mental health of children. The decision making process was not an easy one, and I am thankful to continue to learn alongside each of you as you make the Advent experience unique and centered in principles of social justice.

We look forward to hearing about both travel experiences and to learning about the expansion of the First Grade and Kindergarten curricula at future faculty meetings. Please take a moment to congratulate Holly and Rosa!

Have a wonderful Thanksgiving holiday!

Best,  
Gretchen