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means to go to college. Major local and national companies and executives line up each year to provide contributions or act as mentors.

"Young people have to have jobs," Marie Johns, former CEO of Verizon Washington, and DC mayoral candidate said in June during the fund's annual basketball tournament fundraiser. “Anything that prepares our young people to move from high school into a good paying job, that is a good thing and I’m all about supporting that.”

Kay continues to build on her efforts to pair students and mentors from the local business community, which forms the core of her original dream to inspire kids in her own classes to make it to college, build careers and lift themselves from poverty. That means not only tapping power players like Washington Capitals chief and AOL Vice Chairman Ted Leonsis as a contributor but pairing him as a mentor to a District school student.

Kay learned that lesson during the 1990s crack epidemic, when she left her job as a Democratic Capitol Hill staffer to teach American government at H. D. Woodson Senior High School in Far-Northeast on the “wrong” side of the Anacostia River. "Driving over that bridge every day was like going between two different planets,” she said. She committed herself to trying to bring those planets together.

Kay reached out to friends in the business and political worlds to guest-teach in her classes and to show that there is life beyond the District's mean streets. One of the first was another Hill staffer from the GOP side of the aisle, Ari Fleischer, who at that time was the Republican spokesman for the House Ways and Means Committee. Kay recruited him to explain the Republican “Contract With America”

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"We’re only as good as our relationships," Kay said. “You have to be relentless to keep something like this going and you have to know how everything and everyone makes it work."