

2020 Impact Report



THE TRAVELING
SCHOOL

A world where
strong, compassionate
female leaders build an
equitable and sustainable
global community.



Mission

The Traveling School amplifies female voices through transformative education to ignite positive change.



Next Generation Leaders

When young women build leadership skills, they become tomorrow's changemakers.

Dear Traveling School Community—



When first learning to kayak, I realized early on how dynamic the river can be. No matter how many times you run a rapid, you never hit a wave the same way. You can build your skills—a strong brace, a quick roll and the ability to read the water—to avoid flipping. However, all the skills in the world aren't enough to navigate every rapid successfully.

Jennifer Royall,
Ecuador, 2015 🌟

*Keep it straight and maneuver
as necessary!*



In the end, it was the wonders of the rivers and my whitewater community, despite a few flips and inevitable swims, that kept me coming back. It was showing up, year after year to take on the rapids. And yes, it was also my husband's advice that got me down so many challenging rivers—"Keep it straight and maneuver as necessary!"

This year, that advice has stayed front and center here at The Traveling School. While this has been a difficult year on so many fronts, it is in The Traveling School's DNA to face challenges head on. Over the past 18 years there have been unique situations each semester which require a quick roll, a strong brace or a correction stroke – animal bites, waiting out strikes and demonstrations, erupting volcanos and floods, flipped itineraries due to political

strife. In these instances, we strive to make the adjustments and move forward—that's what we do; that's what we've always done.

2020 has required us all to adapt to a new set of unimaginable challenges. Like most of you, we've had to pivot, persevere, be patient, stay still. **This pause has given The Traveling School the opportunity to reflect on what is at the heart of what we do—**discovering joy in learning, building community, engaging with people and landscapes—all this to ***amplify female voices to ignite positive change.***

We aren't committed to just a location on a map, but to providing transformative educational experiences for young women. We are dedicated to empowering female leaders and changemakers. For now, we must maneuver away from international programing to pioneer a new domestic itinerary. This is not an ending, but instead, a new beginning.

We are grateful to you, our Traveling School community—alumnae, board of directors, staff, parents, faculty and friends—for all you have done this year to sustain us through rough waters. We appreciate your uplifting words, shared resources and generous gifts. You have helped keep us upright and pointed straight towards our next horizon line.

What follows are stories of *your* impact—the rippled effect of your generosity—on our most recent Traveling School graduates, on alumnae in college and adulthood, on those who are committed to making positive change. **We couldn't have weathered this past year without you.** Thank you for joining as we embark on our newest adventure.

With gratitude & joy,
Jennifer and The Traveling School Team

Jennifer Royall, Executive Director

A Semester of Joy



2019 Fall semester | *Southern Africa*

The Traveling School's 34th semester was one of growth and joy. A smaller group than usual meant 12 students and four teachers developed an intimate community and bonded as a family.

They belted favorite pop tunes on the hot, seemingly never-ending drives through the desert sun...offered hugs when the poetry written for Literature class exposed vulnerability...belly laughed their way through fashion shows and Thanksgiving pie.

Each young woman left the semester as a more authentic version of herself, ready to make positive change in the world.

Zambia

Botswana

Namibia

South Africa

"Not only did The Traveling School expand my world view, but my entire sense of self was expanded through my experiences."

Skye | TTS34 Alumna

TTS34 at a Glance

01

monkey invasion
of the unoccupied
Big Blue truck

240

academic projects
written with pencil
and paper

100

days of greetings in
Zimbabwe's Shona
language

A dazzle of

12

adventurous
students

3:45am

Earliest wake-up to
reach the summit of
Dune 45 by sunrise

01

night-swim
under the stars
on the Orange
River

A pride of

04

inclusive and
wise faculty

"Before The Traveling School, I took my human rights for granted and sat comfortably with my privilege. On my semester I learned to listen. Now, I listen to my friends, peers and teachers of color to help fight against racial injustice, rather than fight without discussion first."

Cassidy | TTS34 Alumna

TTS35

A Test of Perseverance



2020 Spring semester | *South America*

Our 35th semester was unlike any other. TTS35 faculty Danika Robison tells of a semester that remained rooted and fruitful, even if disrupted by the pandemic.

Ecuador

Peru

Zoom

"We were in the middle of an incredible Traveling School experience when we realized COVID-19 would abruptly transform our community. Upending the semester as we knew it was hard.

Yet the rich and incredible first half allowed us to connect online based on the community we had become. We continued to deepen our friendships and explore relevant and urgent academic topics and social issues, this time on Zoom. Navigating the difficulties of spring 2020 alongside a strong community was reassuring during such uncertain times.

I've taught four Traveling School semesters, and the lessons of each one are personal, relevant and lasting. ***The Traveling School is an investment of a lifetime for students. The semester is just the beginning.***

Danika | Four-time TTS Faculty (TTS27, TTS29, TTS30, TTS35)

TTS35 at a Glance

12,841'

Highest elevation reached
(Laguna Quilotoa crater
lake, Ecuador)

04

Strong and quick-
thinking faculty

07

Themed PE
workouts on
Zoom

15

Curious
students

12

days of quarantine
in Peru

1st

Virtual Traveling
School
semester

03

Student interviews
with national media

01

Prom hosted in a
Peruvian garage
during lock
down

"When I said to my mom, 'I think I changed a little on The Traveling School' she replied, 'I don't think you changed that much, you became yourself.'"

Kiki | TTS35 Alumna

One Family's Story of Generosity

Coming from Potomac, Maryland, Lena Belvin left home during her sophomore year and immersed herself into The Traveling School's 23rd semester in South America. Now 22 years old, Lena is in the Naval ROTC program at the University of San Diego where she pursues a double major in Mechanical Engineering and Physics. Her sights are set on becoming a Navy pilot.

Lena and her parents draw a direct line from her Traveling School semester to her current achievements and career path. Lena's Traveling School teachers nurtured her love of learning and interest in science in a way her home high school never did. She thrived in the small class sizes and experiential academics her semester offered.

"Lena always says she 'is who she is because of The Traveling School.' She gained self-confidence and learned about leadership and teamwork, both of which helped to earn her place in the competitive Naval ROTC program."

In August of 2020, The Belvin family gave a significant gift to The Traveling School during this year of uncertainty and disruption.

"We have great confidence in the Traveling School's ability to adapt to changing circumstances. With that in mind, we want to ensure the organization is able to survive during these challenging times by supporting critical staffing and program costs."

Kim and Robert give to The Traveling School because its impact is something they, and Lena, feel every day.

Thank you to The Belvin Family for generously donating so that more young women can gain confidence to follow their dreams—just like Lena.



📍 Lena in ROTC training





TS26 swimming in the Zambezi River, 2015

The Unbreakable Bond of TTS26

1,825 Days of Community

A Traveling School semester is 105 days long. But the bond of The Traveling School's 26th semester has endured for 1,825 days and counting.

That's right—five years out, the young women of TTS26 are as tight-knit as when they left Africa in the fall of 2015.

Emma ponders the close connection, pointing out, "It's hard to pin down exactly what is so special about this group of people. **But we were able to build intimate connections through our shared experiences and had a commitment to love each other deeply.**"

Even now, they stay connected through a daily group chat, monthly

video meetups and hosting in-person reunions whenever possible (they've pulled off two so far). These young women hold holiday gift swaps, consult each other when making life decisions, exchange hand-written letters and always have plans in the works for when they'll be together next.

Their bond solidified while on semester, but not because they are all the same. Rather, "We were a group with a range of personalities, backgrounds and passions," according to Chloe.

Malia shared that their differences meant everyone had something to offer, "whether their sense of humor, thought process or creativity, everyone had something

to share with the rest of us."

Emma describes the connection they established on semester as, "unspoken, but electric. We were all in it together, and it was unquestioned we would remain in contact and stay friends."

Simply put, TTS26 is a beautiful and inspiring example of the power of community.

Intentional community-building is at the core of The Traveling School.

It's the foundation on which each semester engages in experiential academics, develops leadership skills and takes calculated risks in the outdoors.

The importance of community has come to light this year especially, as the world is forced to keep socially distanced to fight COVID-19. And according to Mimi and several others, the 14 alumnae appreciate each other this year more than ever.

"This community is especially important now because we are all feeling a bit more lost and isolated than ever before," Mimi says. "With so much chaos and unpredictability, it's grounding to have a community

who knows me so well!"

During their semester, the supportive nature of the group allowed each young woman to expand in her own way. Katie says her Traveling School sisters empowered her to be herself and to dream big. Simrill learned how to be more flexible in the face of change. Chloe gained self-confidence, Mimi practiced resilience, and Jane cultivated her passion for learning about the world.

And together, they all learned the true value of community.

Their Traveling School semester may have only been 15 weeks long, but it was just the beginning of their journey through life together.

"With so much chaos and unpredictability, it's grounding to have a community who knows me so well!"

Mimi | TTS26 Alumna

TTS26 reunion in 2017



Together, we're building a more diverse and equitable Traveling School



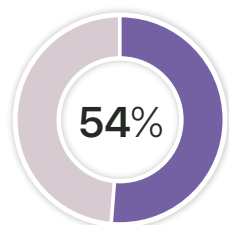
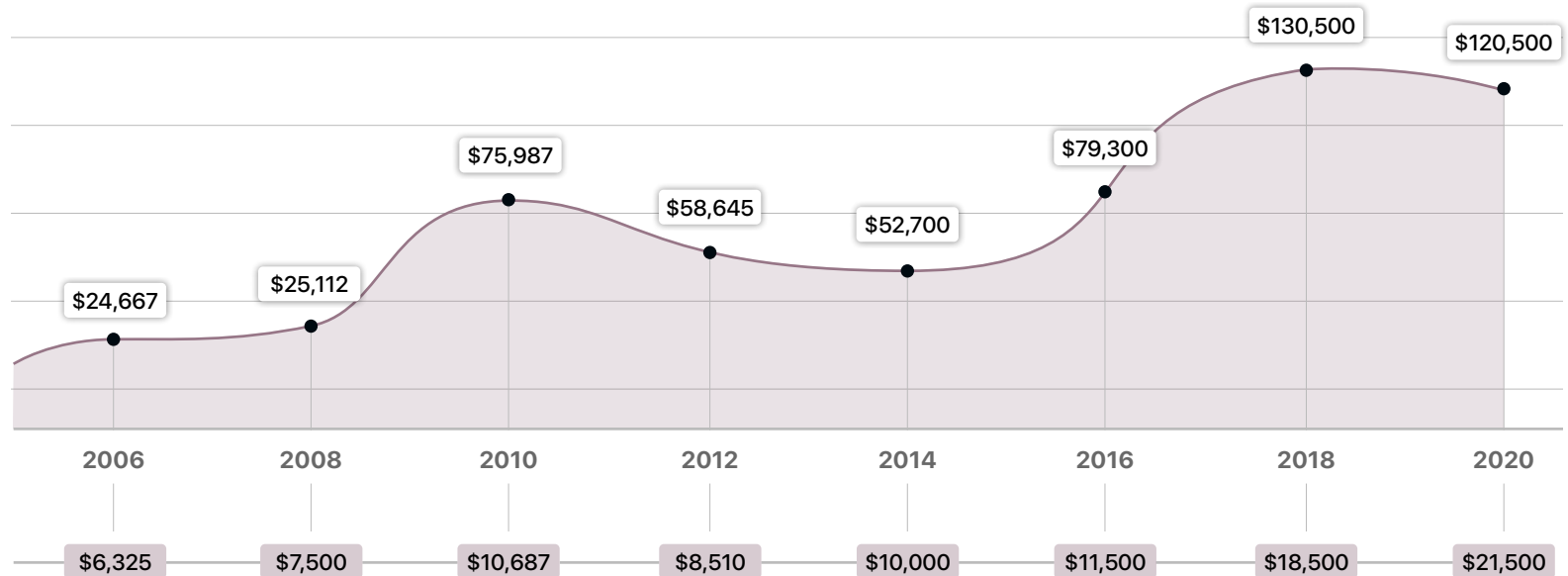
"Just because the cost of an experiential semester is expensive doesn't mean it should be a white-only or privileged-only space. If we as a Traveling School community believe in raising up and empowering young women, it's up to us to show we mean all young women—not just one socioeconomic cross-section."

Cyprien | TTS16 Alumna



\$1,000,000+ Financial Aid distributed over time

Financial Aid distributed over time



Average percentage of Financial Aid students

"The Traveling School never seemed possible until I received a scholarship. Thank you for helping me go on a semester, for making The Traveling School more diverse and for changing my mind about my own possibilities. Thank you for your continual support of this life-changing Traveling School."

Alex | TTS34 Alumna

Alumnae Council

We want to keep The Traveling School community alive for alumnae by continuing to foster the values of empowerment, curiosity and exploration that our semesters embedded in each of us.

Ariela | TTS22 Alumnae Council Member



Cyprien Pearson-Du Toit
Bay Area, CA
TTS16



Helen Wilson
Boulder, CO
TTS19

Kaitlyn Hepburn
Washington D.C.
TTS25



Ariela Martin
New York, NY
TTS22



Natalie Trono
New York, NY
TTS22

Want to connect with the Alumnae Council?

Reach out to the council any time with ideas, updates, resources or just to connect.

Instagram: @ttsalumnae | **Email:** info@travelingschool.com

Purpose and Goals:

- ① **Connect:** Engage all alumnae through organized events, reunions, alumnae e-newsletters and social media.
- ② **Provide Resources:** Serve as a resource for alumnae seeking to connect, learn and engage.
- ③ **Fundraise:** Encourage alumnae giving.
- ④ **Mentor:** Connect alumnae interested in similar career paths or majors to establish mentoring relationships.
- ⑤ **Guide:** Partner with office staff and Board of Directors to have a voice in vision and planning of the organization.
- ⑥ **Recruit:** Support recruitment efforts for future semesters.



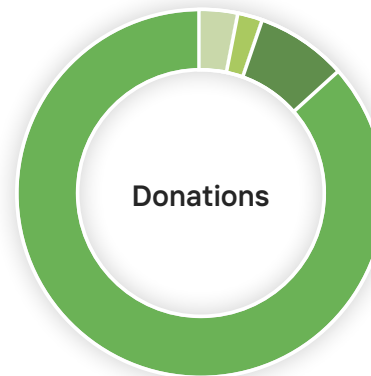
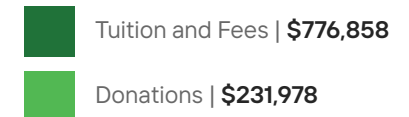
© Students travel as a group on the Santa Cruz Trek in Peru

2019-2020 Financials



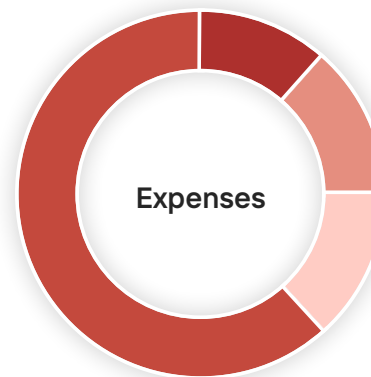
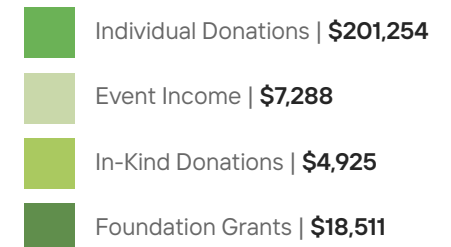
Revenue and Support

Revenue and Support | **\$1,008,836**



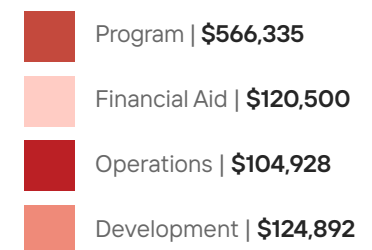
Donations

Donations | **\$231,978**



Expenses

Expenses | **\$916,656**



Data reflects figures from July 1, 2019 to June 30, 2020. We are committed to financial transparency and invite you to view full financial statements at travelingschool.com.

The Traveling School is Grateful for *You!*

2019-2020 Fundraising

Funds raised: **\$231,978**

Number of donors: **266**

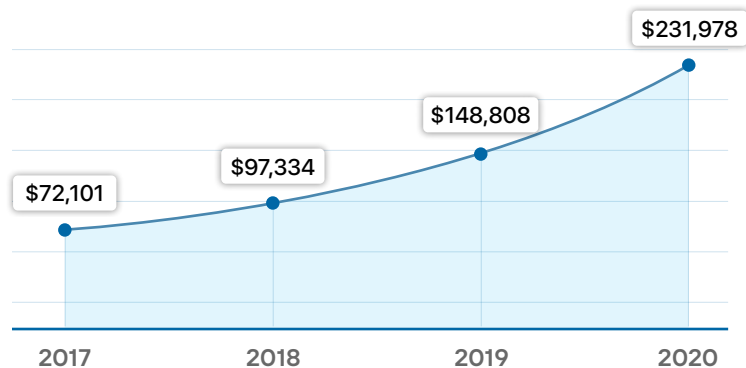
Number of alumnae donors: **50**

Board of directors & staff giving: **100%**

"I left my semester with a more accurate sense of my strengths and weaknesses, a clearer picture of what I was looking for in a college experience and an understanding of what kind of impact I wanted to have."

Natalie | TTS22 Alumna

Annual Fundraising Growth



Traveling School Supporters

Thank you to all of our supporters, past and present.
You bring The Traveling School vision to life.

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*Served on Board of Directors until 2020.
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The Traveling School.

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Erin Schaberg **Academic Teacher**

Faculty / TTS35

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© Soko and Samukwangye take some time for the camera in Namibia



*Empowering young women to
spark change in the world.*

Want to learn more, tell your story or donate? Give us a call or drop us a line anytime!



THE TRAVELING
SCHOOL

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info@thetravelingschool.com