Dear Friends,

The above quote perfectly illustrates what happened 20 years ago when a small group of people decided to start Uplift Education. Led by Rosemary Perlmeter, these visionaries were granted one of the first authorizations to open a charter school in Texas. Their goal was to establish a school of character, excellence, and innovation, and thus The North Hills School (later renamed Uplift North Hills Preparatory) opened its doors the following year in 1997.

In 2004, the founders decided to expand on their initial success to form Uplift Education and with a generous gift from the Communities Foundation of Texas, opened their first inner city school, Peak Preparatory (later renamed Uplift Peak Preparatory). From that point, Uplift Education has grown to be the largest public charter district in North Texas, and has continued on that path towards building character, excellence, and innovation. Our graduates are not only accepted to college, but are having huge success in college, earning degrees, and giving back as globally-focused citizens.

One such example is Lily Ngaruiya, featured on the cover of this year’s annual report with some of our scholars representing our Pre-K–12th grade continuum. Lily graduated from Uplift Summit International in 2011, attended Vassar College, earned her degree, and has now returned to the Uplift family, working as a Road To College Counselor at her alma mater. When asked why she wanted to work for Uplift, Lily said, “I thought there was no better way to start my career than to be able to give back to a place that has given so much to me. I would have never known about the college I attended, been able to be a part of so many amazing opportunities, nor pushed myself out of my comfort zone if it were not for my Road To College counselor. To be able to offer even just a fraction of that to others motivates me every day.”

As Lily pays homage to her roots, so do we. Our founder had a clear vision, but also knew the importance of remaining nimble. As we have grown, we have kept looking forward and have adjusted our course to meet the needs at hand. As our founder was not satisfied with the status quo, nor are we today. We have bold plans for expansion and continue to champion the causes of education reform.

Just as we did in 1996, Uplift Education will continue to look forward with our scholars in mind. Join us as we take a look back over the past 20 years and honor those who made us who we are...then and now.

Yours sincerely,

[Signature]

Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it’s the only thing that ever has.

-Margaret Mead
2016: 17,360 campuses
(Pre-K thru 12th grades)

1997: 60 scholars

2016: 16,000 scholars

1997: 1 school
(6th & 7th grades)

2016: 1,500 teachers, administrators
and support personnel

74% of our scholars are on free/reduced lunch

MAJOR MILESTONES

1996: Texas approves formation of charter schools.

1997: TEA grants charter to Uplift North Hills.

1997: 9 faculty members

2004: Uplift Peak Preparatory opens in east Dallas.

Uplift Charter Management Organization (CMO) forms.

2007: Uplift receives funding from major partners to expand and open Uplift Hampton, Uplift Summit, International and Uplift Williams.

2015: Uplift forms innovative partnership with Grand Prairie ISD Education Energized, changing Charter-ISD landscape in D/FW.

2016: Uplift Education celebrates 20 years and forms a strategic plan of growth for the future.

NETWORK NOTABLES

SCHOLAR DEMOGRAPHICS FOR 2016

1% OTHER
5% WHITE
8% ASIAN
20% AFRICAN
66% HISPANIC

and just as many waiting for the opportunity to attend an Uplift school.

1997: 1 school
(6th & 7th grades)

2016: 1,500 teachers, administrators and support personnel
HORSES IN PERPETUITY
An interview with Uplift Education founder, Rosemary Perlmeter

Anyone who visits Uplift North Hills in Irving will see a beautiful, sprawling campus filled with 1,500 happy, college-bound scholars. What many don’t know is the history of that campus and some of the other challenges that Uplift Education founder, Rosemary Perlmeter, faced to start that first school. We interviewed Rosemary to find out more:

What was the driving force behind starting Uplift North Hills?
A group of parents, of which I was one, had a strong desire to start a school that provided an alternative to traditional public schools and incorporated the character and values we saw in many private schools. A professor at The University of North Texas educated me on the new charter school laws that had just gone into effect in Texas, and we decided to pursue that route. Our charter was granted, but we waited a year before opening to make sure we did it right. I stepped out of my career as a corporate lawyer to be the principal of the school and into a whole new world of public school administration.

What challenges did you and your team face in those first few years?
The challenges were many, but mainly revolved around building codes, deed restrictions and the rules of public education. After a couple of years in temporary facilities, we found our current property. It was the Las Colinas Equestrian Center, owned by the city and listed as a “white elephant” property deemed too expensive to maintain. When I saw the property, I immediately thought it would make a perfect school. One problem though—the deed restricted the property’s residents to “horses in perpetuity.” I had just met a real estate developer, Grady “Buddy” Jordan Jr., who was willing to buy the equestrian center from the city and get the deed restrictions changed, then sell part of the land and buildings to us in small increments. We raised money through tax-exempt bonds. We were the first charter school in the nation to sell tax-exempt bonds, so we worked with the state to develop that protocol.

When did you know that your success was worth duplicating?
After a few years, we realized that other communities could use the same opportunities for school choice that we had established. We formed a task force, nicknamed “Project Gemini,” to research the possibility of expanding into south Irving. In the middle of our exploration, the Communities Foundation of Texas contacted us and asked to tour Uplift North Hills. They let us know that the support existed for us to open a school in east Dallas, so we changed course and began the process to open Uplift Peak Preparatory. When we opened Uplift North Hills, we weren’t sure how many students would show up that first year. When we opened Uplift Peak, we had parents waiting with tears in their eyes for this opportunity for their children. We knew that this was just the first step toward our future of providing educational choice for under-served communities.

What are you most proud of, and what is your hope for the future of Uplift Education?
From that first year with two grades and fewer than a dozen staff members, I am so proud to see how we have grown. More importantly than the size of our network, I am proud that we have maintained the vision that we started with two decades ago—a vision that incorporates the hard edges of a rigorous education with the soft edges of character, ethics, compassion and global awareness. I was proud of what we built at Uplift North Hills all those years ago, and I would be just as proud for my grandchildren to attend any one of the Uplift schools today. If only they lived in the D/FW area!

Now, more than ever, there is a need for high quality education choices, regardless of zip code. My hope is that Uplift Education will continue to grow and meet that need. I know they are up for the task.

Rosemary is no longer involved with daily operations of Uplift Education, but continues her work in education reform by developing entrepreneurial educators committed to transformational change essential to eliminating the achievement gap in urban public schools.

View our full interview with Rosemary Perlmeter at youtube.com/uplifteducationvideos
Uplift Luna Preparatory celebrated its first graduating class in 2016. The class of 35 seniors, many of whom had been at the school since its inception, were all accepted to college and earned $7.6 million in scholarships and grants. 81% of the class were the first in their family to attend college.
The growth of Uplift Education and our ability to make a difference in so many lives would not have been possible without key partnerships along the way. Todd and Abby Williams are staunch advocates for public education in the D/FW metroplex. A decade ago they learned about Uplift Education and realized that their vision matched theirs, which led to the establishment of Uplift Williams Preparatory. We interviewed the Williams’ to learn more about their motivation:

What made you decide to get involved in public education?
Both of our lives were transformed by access to a quality, public school education and a college education that was 100% financed through scholarships and loans. We both realized that were we to grow up today, both of those components would be much harder to come by. We couldn’t stand by while the ladder to living the American Dream was being pulled away for many, many families.

What motivated you to help start Uplift Williams?
Knowing the incredible difference that a quality education had played in our personal lives, we were honored to invest with Uplift and together help create a school that would provide similar life-changing opportunities for our community’s children.

What was your vision for Uplift Williams?
We envisioned that Uplift Williams would be a school reflecting a familial environment of high expectations where each student would be known, encouraged, and challenged to reach his or her highest potential.

How do you involve your family in your philanthropic work?
We are active philanthropists, wanting to contribute both our financial resources as well as our “sweat equity,” and we feel blessed to have had a small but active role in the planning and creation of Uplift Williams Preparatory in its earliest years. Still today, almost ten years later, members of our family stay engaged by serving on the local advisory council, the Uplift Board of Directors and as volunteers in the classroom.

Tell us a little about how your family is investing their efforts in public education. We know you are doing a lot more than just supporting Uplift Education.
We helped bring Teach for America and Urban Teachers to D/FW to meet our critical need for quality teaching pipelines. We also founded and are leading the Commit Partnership, which today serves as a backbone for our region’s collective impact work supporting age 0-22 education in Dallas County.

What vision do you have for public education in Dallas?
We have a vision that Dallas can be a city where all students of various races and income levels attend public school together and receive a transformative public education where their talents are honored. We want our educational environment to be one that sets students up to be successful in life and maximizes their potential. Dallas can be a city where the American Dream is alive and well and exists for every child in our city, regardless of zip code.

The Todd and Abby Williams Family Foundation supports a variety of educational causes in Dallas. If you would like more information on partnering with Uplift Education to promote public education choice, please contact Deborah Bigham (dbigham@uplifteducation.org).
A LOOK BACK

1) Honoring a valuable partner, friend, and founding board chairman, Phil Montgomery, at Uplift Peak Preparatory – 2011.
3) Scholars on a college visit – 2011.
6) Groundbreaking in Fort Worth – 2012.
7) IB Diplomas granted to Uplift North Hills seniors – 2010.
9) First College March at Uplift Peak – 2014.
12) College Fair at Uplift Hampton – 2011.
Once again, our high schools earned national recognition.

NATIONALLY RECOGNIZED FOR 2016

U.S. NEWS & WORLD REPORT BEST HIGH SCHOOLS
GOLD MEDAL

THE WASHINGTON POST AMERICA’S MOST CHALLENGING HIGH SCHOOLS
RECOGNIZED

NEWSWEEK AMERICA’S TOP HIGH SCHOOLS
RECOGNIZED

As in years past, Uplift maintains its investment-grade rating and continues to find innovative ways to bridge the funding gap created by state policies for charter schools.

As in years past, Uplift maintains its investment-grade rating and continues to find innovative ways to bridge the funding gap created by state policies for charter schools.

REVENUE

85%

85%

87%

87%

State Foundation School Funding
Private Philanthropic Donations
Federal Funding
National School Lunch & Breakfast Program

EXPENSES

57%

57%

19%

10%

8%

6%

8%

6%

4%

10%

10%

8%

6%

School Salaries & Benefits
Other School Operating Expenses
CMO Staff & Operating Expenses
Interest on Debt & Bonds
Depreciation & Amortization

Note: Not final audited numbers. Final audit will be available in January, 2017.

75% of Uplift graduates are enrolled in college or have earned a higher education degree.

21.7 is the average ACT score for Uplift juniors and seniors. A score of 21 is considered a “college-ready” benchmark.

47% of Uplift graduates are considered college-ready based on their ACT scores.

87% of Uplift primary schools are either PYP authorized or PYP candidate schools.

91% of Uplift secondary schools are either MYP authorized or MYP candidate schools.

100% of Uplift high schools are on track for IB Diploma Programme authorization.

47% of Uplift graduates are considered college-ready based on their ACT scores.
When Beatriz Sierra was seeking a school for her two daughters, Jessica (6th grade) and Nancy (5th grade), she decided to take a chance on a brand new school she had heard about in the area. That was nine years ago, and the school was Williams Preparatory (later renamed Uplift Williams Preparatory).

Now those two daughters have earned their high school degrees from Uplift Williams and are both attending college on full scholarships. Jessica is in her second year at Emory College in Atlanta, Georgia, while Nancy is in her first year at Hope College in Holland, Michigan. But the Sierra family is not done yet! Her two sons also attend Uplift Williams; Roberto is currently a sophomore and Jesus is in 1st grade.

Beatriz Sierra chose Uplift Williams nearly a decade ago because she loved what she heard about students, teachers, and parents being in partnership to ensure academic success. She also felt confident that the school would help her children be college-ready. Although Beatriz and her husband never attended college, they knew that they wanted that for their children. Beatriz worried about the affordability of college as well, but knew that academic persistence was the key. She also credits the Road To College program at Uplift Williams for finding the right college home for her daughters.

Uplift Education has always been about family. While academic excellence is our primary goal, we know that it can’t be achieved without the involvement of parents and family members. Currently more than 5,000 of our Uplift families have two or more children in an Uplift school. We understand the importance of offering a K-12 continuum, hosting family-centered events, and being involved in the community as a whole. We see the value in partnering with other organizations to provide our families with opportunities to help enrich their personal lives, such as parenting classes, GED classes, and financial literacy classes.

Just as Uplift started 20 years ago with a few dedicated families, we are committed to continuing that family tradition.

View the Sierra family’s full story and video on our blog, upliftvoices.wordpress.com
Uplift Education has a clear plan for our future based on our 20 years of experience in public education. Our two-pronged approach includes investing in our network to ensure excellence, and investing in growth to be able to serve more scholars.

**NETWORK INNOVATION**

- Juniors and seniors strive to achieve college-ready ACT score
- Road To College counselors help scholars find colleges that match their personal and academic needs
- 40% of our scholars strive to achieve advanced scores on state exams
- Help scholars develop strong social and emotional skills
- 40% of our scholars strive to achieve advanced scores on state exams
- Double the number of scholars in the top 20% nationally in reading and math

Our Goal: **70% will earn a college degree in six years**

**PROJECTED GROWTH**

In two short decades we have grown from a single school with two grades to a network of nearly 16,000 scholars. Over the next five years, we plan to replicate our model of excellence in education and grow our network to serve over 23,000 scholars.

**GROWTH INVESTMENT**

Adding 7,000 seats for scholars in North Texas communities is no small task, but we are up for the challenge. Over the next five years we plan to build out existing schools, develop feeder schools, explore new public ISD partnerships, and start seven new schools in the city of Fort Worth.

- 2016-17: 15,819
- 2017-18: 17,510
- 2018-19: 20,050
- 2019-20: 21,994
- 2020-21: 23,037

91% of the Uplift Class of 2015 matriculated to college, compared to 64% U.S. average and 45% U.S. low income average.
Without the generosity of our donors, Uplift would not be able to provide an education for the 16,000 school year who will help guide the strategic direction of our network.

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INVEST IN THEIR FUTURE

Just as the 20 words and phrases on the facing page illustrate, investing in Uplift Education accomplishes more than just opening new schools! We work to develop globally-minded scholars who are college-ready, and who stay on track to earn a college degree. While we have an amazing core of teachers and support staff, we also know that our goal cannot be reached without the support of community partners and volunteers.

Uplift has a variety of opportunities to work with our schools and scholars, whether you simply spend 30 minutes reading to a child or share your life experience as a mentor to a high school scholar. We hope you will consider not only sharing your time and talent but also consider investing financially into Uplift. Your dollars will be used to continue to develop new practices to further increase scholar achievement and, best of all, we will share those results with others so the impact can multiply. Annually, Uplift receives 20,000 applications for 2,500 spots. Your dollars will provide access to high quality education for North Texas’ highest need families.

To volunteer, contact:
Cassie Hubbert
Development Manager
volunteer@uplifteducation.org
or (469) 398-0084

For corporate gifts and partnership opportunities, contact:
Deborah Bigham
Chief Development Officer
dbigham@uplifteducation.org
or (469) 621-8493

To donate to Uplift Education, please visit:
www.uplifteducation.org/donate

Be a part of our mission.
Be a part of the next 20 years of excellence in education.