In a society racing toward a high-tech future "while still mired in a racially divided past," Trish Millines Dziko was in a position to make a difference. She quit Microsoft to create the nonprofit Technology Access Foundation in 1996. *Benjamin Benschneider/The Seattle Times*

TRISH MILLINES DZIKO

"You have it, you share it"

Sit with Trish Millines Dziko and you can still feel the passion that drove her to walk away from serious money in order to teach computer skills to minority children. It's in her gaze, her candor, her words. *Evolutionary. Revolutionary. Generational change.*

Dziko (pronounced "Zeeko") has been at it since 1996, when she turned her back on more Microsoft stock options to create the nonprofit Technology Access Foundation. "We've been very lucky," she said when she retired from Microsoft at 39, a millionaire. "And one of my first instincts as a person who grew up fairly poor is: You have it, you share it."

An African American woman who rose from programming to prominence in Puget Sound's largely white male geekocracy, she has been anything but retiring. She remains committed to changing the world one kid at a time.

In her vision, that also means one teacher at a time, one principal, one superintendent, one school board, one PTSA, and one archaic policy at a time. While she's at it, why not try to transform the culture of philanthropy?

And *do* get her started on diversity. "It's become a multi-billion dollar industry with very little to show for it," she says. The tech industry is still primarily male and white. And it's hardly alone. Nonprofits whose constituents are mostly people of color tend to be run by white people. A survey of the largest nonprofits and foundations in the U.S., including 180 organizations working in education, youth development, and social welfare and justice, found that 87 percent of all executive directors were white.

"They don't look like me. But they're serving people like me," Dziko says.

Her nonprofit, staffed mostly by women and minorities, started as an after-school program culminating in technology-related internships and $1,000 scholarships. It has morphed into a model for teaching in public schools. In its history, the foundation—or TAF, as it's known—reports that it has served some 19,000 students resulting in a 95-percent high school graduation rate and a 100-percent college acceptance rate for those who applied.

Now, after two decades of challenges, frustrations and lessons, Dziko strides through the sixth- through 12th-grade public school that TAF runs in partnership

Originally an after-school program culminating in technology-related internships, Dziko's foundation—known as TAF—has partnered with the Federal Way and Tacoma public school districts. *Technology Access Foundation (TAF)*

with the Federal Way public school district north of Tacoma. Called TAF@Saghalie, it has adopted Dziko's philosophy, which means weaving science, technology, engineering and math into child-centered and project-based learning. That, in turn, has led to variances in district policy to allow students to use the internet and email during school, and to read *The Hate U Give*, a best-selling young-adult novel about a 16-year-old girl who witnesses a police officer shooting her childhood friend.

Dziko, who played college basketball, still moves with the grace of an athlete. She stops to drape a friendly arm around a boy and exchange a few quiet words with a girl. Then she glides down a hall showcasing college acceptance letters and pops into a ninth grade biology class where students and their teacher, Brandon Carlisle, contrast the evolutionary theories of Charles Darwin and one of his contemporaries, Jean-Baptiste Lamarck. The walls are decorated with student-made posters of science heroes. They're not just the usual suspects like Tesla and Einstein. There's also Neil deGrasse Tyson, the astrophysicist of Puerto Rican and African American descent, and Shirley Ann Jackson, a physicist and first African American woman to be awarded the National Medal of Science. Dziko is quick to credit teachers and others for TAF's success. "We are the product of people who work here and we wouldn't be anything without them." They're people like Sherry Williams who joined TAF when it was four months old as an administrative assistant. Williams now oversees its operations.

But as TAF's executive director, Dziko is still the point guard, directing the team, guiding strategy, doing the bulk of the big fundraising, her raptor vision looking for opportunities for others. And she remains the public face of the foundation. It's a role that's somewhat uncomfortable for her.

Dziko (pronounced "Zeeko") and her team won the 2018 "Geeks Give Back" award from the tech news site *Geekwire*.

"Sometimes I feel the pressure of living up to the way people think I am. People think I can solve anything. I really appreciate that people trust me. But the expectation is that I will always be on-point. But I'm not always. I'm just like everyone else. I have challenges like everyone else."

She does promise this: "I am always who I am. No matter what the situation, you get Trish. I certainly know how to tailor my speech. But you will get the truth no matter what."

THERE IS NO QUESTION where Dziko got her drive, vision and selflessness. "That comes directly from my mother," she says. "Everything that I am as a person has to do with how she raised me and the things that I observed with her and the things she was able to accomplish as a woman who cleaned houses for a living. You can't get any better of a role model than her."

Pat Millines, Dziko's mother, was born in 1906 in rural Putnam County, Georgia. She and her family migrated to New Jersey and settled in Belmar, a small seashore town just south of Asbury Park, which would become renowned for launching Bruce Springsteen's career. (Springsteen's E Street Band is named for a spot in Belmar where they used to practice.)

In Manhattan, Pat Millines cleaned the residences that the Warner brothers of Hollywood fame kept in the Pierre Hotel, on the doorstep of Central Park.* Millines would pocket cab fare they gave her and take the bus home. She did the same with lunch money. And she worked 51 weeks a year, cleaning two homes a day. That kind of thriftiness allowed her to buy her own house in Belmar. And then another.

She was a single woman in her early 50s and childless when she adopted Trish. "I knew I was adopted but you don't ask, 'Why did you adopt me? ' I have

* Trish received the Arthur Ashe Athletic Association Leadership Award for supporting youth in a 1998 ceremony at the Pierre Hotel.

Pat Millines cleaned houses 51 weeks a year, paid all her bills promptly in cash, bought two houses, and stressed to her daughter the importance of going to college. *Trish Millines Dziko*

no idea, but I know I'm grateful," Trish says. Pat raised Trish by herself. She also took in troubled relatives, led drives to start three local Baptist churches, and paid all her bills promptly in cash.

Her mother stressed the importance of Trish going to college. "Well, as a black woman on the East Coast, who grew up in the South," Trish says, "she didn't have a choice, right? You do what you can to thrive to make sure the next generation gets something better than what you had."

The same was true for her cousins. "None of our parents had gone to college but they knew that was the thing we needed to do to be successful."

At around the age of 13, Trish told her mother she didn't really see the value of going to college.

"Another one of my genius moments," she says with a laugh. "So she made me come work for her that summer cleaning houses. That was my job. And it was hard. Two houses a day, and then also the spring, she prepares houses for the people who come down from New York for the summer, so I did that as well, and lesson learned."

AT ASBURY PARK High School, Trish took Swahili for three years and remembers reading a lot for English classes: Hemingway, Hesse, Shakespeare, Solzhenitsyn. Early on, she realized she was way ahead of her classmates in algebra. Her teachers got her into the honors track for math. Only later did it dawn on Trish that school officials had probably assumed she couldn't do higher level math because she was black.

She was "kind of geeky" back then. But there wasn't much to explore in the way of technology, so she carted the film projector around to classes, threaded celluloid through sprockets inside the machine and onto a take-up reel, flipped the bulb on, and watched the device entertain her peers.

When it came to sports, *The Asbury Park Press* ran a picture of her as an 11-year-old at a swimming class. Trish was then known as Pat Millines, the same as her mother. Almost seven years later the newspaper depicted the agile teen in high-top Converse All-Stars shooting a layup in a state championship game. The only senior on the squad, she was at point guard in Asbury Park High School's 57-37 victory.

Pat Millines, the only senior on the Asbury Park team, goes up with layup as Phillipsburg players are left standing flat-footed. Bishop girls won the state title, 57-37, Saturday night.

QUEENS OF COURT — Asbury Park High School's state championship girls' basketball team, which finished a 24-1 season, is proud of its title trophy and the net through which it poured the points last weekend. The starting five, left to right, are Colleen Collins, Pat Millines, Martha Megill, Betty McGuire and Pam Reaves. The Blue Bishops also are prominent on The Daily Register's first annual All-Monmouth County team which appears on page 21.

Register staff photo by Dan Lardi

"It was the sport you played if you liked sports," she says about basketball in the 1970s. There weren't many women role models in the sport then, so she emulated New York Knicks' guard Earl "The Pearl" Monroe, copying his spin move. "I played at the playground in South Belmar. I always played with the boys."

She was Asbury Park's high-scorer in their 1975 championship game. But she really loved feeding the ball to teammates, creating shots for others.

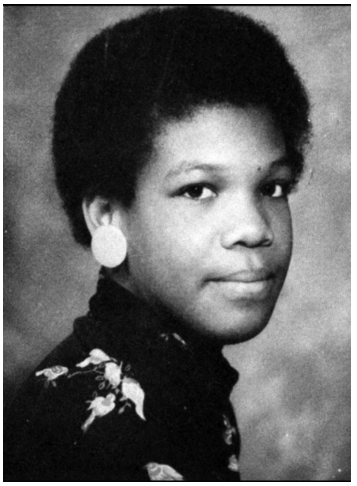
In her senior year, while studying and playing championship-caliber ball, she helped care for her mother, who was bedridden with cancer of the pancreas and liver. Pat Millines died a month before Trish's high-school graduation. Her will stipulated that Trish would not get access to her modest estate until she turned 35. It was another of Pat's efforts to help Trish make her own way.

Alone at 18, Trish entered nearby Monmouth College that fall, the first woman to receive a full basketball scholarship to the school.* "I think if I had done anything different it would have been a huge slap in the face to my mom, a huge sign of disrespect to her. She worked so hard to get me to where I needed to be."

She wanted to major in electrical engineering, but her prerequisite classes conflicted with basketball practice. She switched to computer science. "She was an athlete when she enrolled here, but more of a student by the time she left," said Monmouth coach Joan Martin.

She was invited to try out for the fledgling Jersey Gems of the short-lived Women's Professional Basketball League. But her salary would've been in the

* Trish also lettered in volleyball and softball. The school became Monmouth University in 1995.



Dziko's first job out-of-college was writing software to test a new military radar system. "It was really cool," she says. *Trish Millines Dziko*

neighborhood of $6,000. After graduating from Monmouth in 1979, without the benefit of interviewing or negotiating skills, she landed a job at the Computer Sciences Corporation in New Jersey.

Her job was writing software to test a new military radar system. "It was really cool," she says. But then she learned that others had been hired in programming without a background in the field, and they were making thousands more than her. "I'm kind of sorry that I learned about how those things worked, because I was just happily going along," she said after getting a glimpse of sexism and racism in corporate America.

SHE SOON LANDED a job with Hughes Aircraft in Tucson, Arizona. This time she negotiated her salary and moving expenses. She bought a motorcycle, got an apartment, and learned that programming at Hughes was quite prestigious. "You were like, you know, a god."

Even better, she transferred to a team headed by a woman and became a "really good programmer." She made more friends. But Tucson was hot as hate. And it was a college town that seemed to hibernate in the summer. And when you're in your early 20s, like Trish was, you want a little more than stifling heat and sleepy summers. She had visited San Francisco during the first annual Gay Olympics and liked the city.

She decided to move there. Without a job. During an economic recession. She bought a small motor home, about the size of a camper you might see on a pickup truck, she says. She packed her dog and cat. But she couldn't find a job in San Francisco. For six months she lived out of her motor home, parking at a marina and the beach.

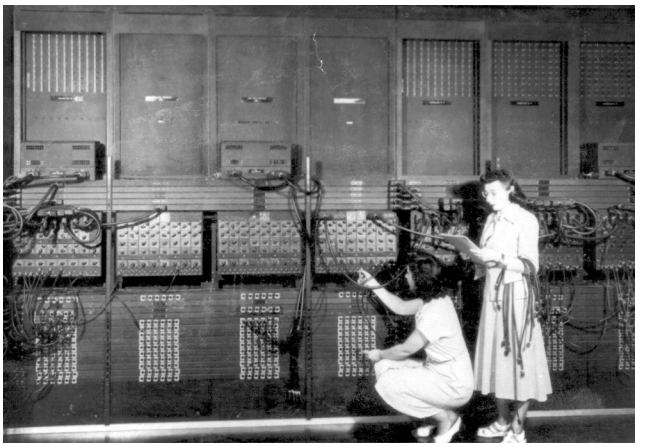
"It's not a time that I'm particularly proud of so I generally don't talk about it," she says. "But what I am proud of is that I looked at myself and realized that, 'Okay, you can't keep living like this.' " And she found a job teaching programming.

During Thanksgiving 1984 she visited Seattle and liked the mountains, the water, and the neighborhoods, with their own parks and community centers. She liked that "nobody blinks an eye" at gay and lesbian people. It's one reason she calls Seattle one of the country's best places. "I like that we can go out as a family and everybody already makes the assumption that we are a family, and they talk to us like they talk to the straight couple with kids standing next to us. I love it."

She packed up a U-Haul and moved north in January 1985. But this time she

had savings to last six months. She had interviews lined up. She figured she'd work for Boeing, which offered her a job. Instead she went to work for Telecalc, which offered her a better experience as manager of its testing department. There, she was introduced to people who had worked at an upstart company called Microsoft.

ALTHOUGH NOT WIDELY known, there was a time when women flourished in computer programming. Men tended to think hardware was a greater engineering challenge and more lucrative. The first programmable digital computer in the U.S., known as ENIAC held more than 17,000 vacuum tubes. "In contrast, programming it seemed menial, even secretarial," wrote Clive Thompson in "The Secret History of Women in Coding." Women, some believed, were better suited to the precise and repetitious nature of programming—as if it were knitting with numbers.



Women, some believed, were better suited to the precise, repetitious nature of programming computers such as ENIAC (above) the first programmable digital computer in the United States. *U.S. Army Research Lab*

And computers didn't see gender. They didn't care about skin pigmentation.

By 1960, the proportion of women in computing and math professions, classified together in federal government data, was 27 percent and climbing.

By the 1983-84 academic year, 37 percent of all students graduating with degrees in computer and information sciences were women.

Shortly after Trish first visited Seattle, the programming pipeline began to change. Paths in college, and to the industry, and up the chain of command, favored a new type—the teen obsessive, hunched over a keyboard, sporting a pale "cathode ray tan," along with a hard-core attitude.

The tide of girls studying computer science receded. By 2010, the share of women graduating with such degrees plummeted to 18 percent.

Research showed that gender began to matter. From where the first home computers were located (hint: not in girls' bedrooms), to who got one as a gift, to the informal "internships" sons and fathers enjoyed over the new gizmos, to stereotypes of white male nerds in pop culture—all of it gave boys encouragement and an edge over girls.

By the time they got to college, boys were ahead in programming and girls (as well as some minorities) were seen as not committed enough. Women, along with black and Latino students, began to drop out, even though a student's decision to quit computer studies or switch majors "did not seem to be correlated with coding talent." A seminal study at Carnegie Mellon University—which led to the book *Unlocking the Clubhouse: Women in Computing*—found that by the third year of college, women who remained in the field caught up with the "hard-core" boys.

Boys, it turns out, did not have an innate advantage in computer science. But they had gained a cultural one. As more males dominated the college and professional ranks, they tended to hire—and promote—those who were like them.

That's when women really felt they hit a wall.

TRISH STARTED WRITING software for Microsoft in 1988, which broadened her skills. But in time, she came to dislike her manager and his "in-your-face" style that was popular at the company. One day as her team prepared to ship a new product, Trish kept hitting a bug in tests. The bug popped up at different times without a detectable pattern. She and her manager set up computers side-by-side and kept running the test script. They sat together all night trying to figure out the problem. They got to know each other a bit. "And I'm like, well, he's a pretty nice guy."

That guy—who remains her friend to this day—was Bob Muglia, who went on to become a top executive at Microsoft. He hired her as a program manager in 1990 to work on a tool for database management that later would be used by organizations around the world, including most Fortune 100 companies. She was part of a small team. They were young. "We didn't have any lives. We were there, you know, seven days a week, sometimes 15 hours a day." And they "kicked some butt."

She eventually moved to the hardware group where she became program manager for the kids' mouse called EasyBall. "That was a cool project, let me tell you. I have my EasyBall still at home," she says.

On top of that, she was going on recruiting trips for minority applicants, having dinners with candidates of color the company wanted to hire, and playing a part in founding Blacks at Microsoft.

"BAM was created totally out of necessity," Trish says. "We had people coming from historically black colleges, coming from neighborhoods where it was predominantly one race, and coming to the northwest where it's all white, mostly. And coming to Microsoft where it's really, really white. And living on the Eastside." They had questions, such as where to go to church, or for a haircut, or to socialize.

Only about 40 African Americans worked at Microsoft then. BAM organized a Minority Student Day that brought kids from Seattle's Central District to Redmond, gave them a tour, showed them the technology, and basked in their excitement. They fed families at Thanksgiving and bought gifts for them at Christmas. They set precedents for diversity groups at other companies. She doubts any similar group

anywhere "had as much fun as we did."

She then decided to leave the familiar harbor of technical work for an opening in the diversity department. She "really, really, really wanted to pursue this whole issue of diversity" and how to recruit more people of color to the company. But she went from a respected job to one that some saw as threatening. She hit waves of resistance.

"You have to get people to really think about their own privileges in the world before they will change for somebody else. And you have to convince them that giving some of that to someone else doesn't necessarily take it away (from them). All the really hard things I couldn't get people to do."

MICROSTUFF

B.A.M.! to Honor King on Monday

Next Monday, January 18, is the day set aside to honor Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Even though it's not a Microsoft holiday, you can celebrate for an hour or two with B.A.M.! (Blacks at Microsoft).

On January 18, B.A.M.! will be showing video documentaries about King in the Building 21 Columbia Room (1129) from 1-2:30 P.M. Please join us.

The dream lives at Microsoft.

—B.A.M.!

MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. 1929–1968

B.A.M.! President Trish Millines beside a poster of Martin Luther King, Jr.

Trish also came to realize that while Microsoft was improving its recruiting, people of color still faced a problem. The tech industry was getting its talent from colleges. And college opportunities were limited for people of modest incomes. There was a reservoir of talent in Seattle being ignored, brimming with girls and kids of color. Microsoft and others weren't seeing it because it was at the high-school level.

ON A WINTER DAY in 1996, Trish and her partner Jill Hull, a mental health counselor, were walking their dogs and bemoaning the lack of opportunities for kids of color. In a society racing toward a high-tech future "while still mired in a racially divided past," Trish was now in a position to make a difference. Microsoft's program of providing employees with stock options had created several thousand new millionaires, including Trish, as stock value rose by a factor of 250 in the decade after the company went public in 1986.

But rather than chase more zeros for her bank account, she turned to the gap between technological haves and have-nots and its implications for children of color. She quit the company four months after her turning point conversation in the park with Hull. The duo created the Technology Access Foundation. "It seemed to happen overnight," said Hull, who co-managed the program until she left to have the couple's first child. (They would adopt three more at birth.) "It isn't like Trish to dwell on problems. She's about action."

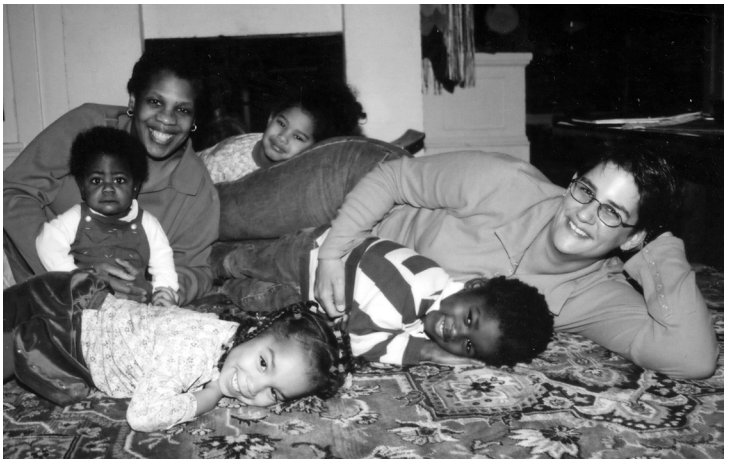
Trish's action plan for TAF was to flood the technology industry with so many talented people of color that companies could no longer use the excuse that they couldn't find capable young minority candidates, particularly from the most overlooked populations—African Americans, Latinos, Native Americans and Pacific Islanders.

In October 1997, TAF opened in a building in south Seattle. It initially offered after-school technology classes for high-schoolers and classes concentrating on math, writing and problem-solving for kindergarten-through-eighth-graders. The programs required high-schoolers to log six hours of learning a week over the course of eight months. And they imposed strict rules about attendance, grades and apparel.

The William H. Gates Foundation gave $444,000 to TAF just after its first birthday. Trish and Jill would donate $250,000 to the foundation.

In its first year, 27 out of 32 students made it through the "Technical Teens Internship Program." They learned networking, web development, programming, and media production. Of those, 23 were hired for paid summer internships by area companies and agencies. Soon TAF was turning away more students than it admitted.

That same year, on a gorgeous spring day, Trish and Jill dressed in new outfits. Along with family members from New Jersey and Utah, they gathered in Kerry Park for its magnificent views overlooking Seattle. Trish and Jill walked to an altar but neither one could finish their vows because they started crying. Wind blew out candles and swept flowers off tables. The serious became comical. While not yet legally wed, Trish and Jill considered themselves married. They wanted their kids to have the same last name, and not a hyphenated one, so they chose "Dziko," an African name meaning "of the world."



Trish and Jill with their kids: Zora is on the floor in front of Trish, who is holding Isaiah; Elise is leaning on Jill's hip, with Langston lying on the floor in front of Jill. *Trish Millines Dziko*

After Washington adopted its marriage equity law in 2013, Trish and Jill contemplated getting legally married. They wondered what it would really mean. And did it matter? So they asked their kids. Their oldest daughter said she already thought of them

as married. Their oldest son asked if there would be cake.

They rounded up some close friends and marched into the chambers of King County Superior Court Judge Mary Yu some 16 years after what they considered their real wedding and made it official.

AS TAF BEGAN TO COUNT its alumni in the hundreds, Trish Dziko and foundation staff realized the limitations of out-of-school programs. They built a strategy to reach more students by partnering with public schools. TAF then revealed a plan to establish five new public schools rooted in science, technology, engineering and math, known collectively as STEM, in minority neighborhoods. The foundation hoped to provide at least $1.5 million a year in supplemental funds to each of the schools. It hoped to buy a computer for every student, hire more teachers to keep class sizes low, and extend the school day.

Dziko started hunting for grants, donations and school partners. The first TAF academy, or school-within-a-school, was proposed for Seattle's Rainer Beach High School. In state tests, only 27 percent of Rainier Beach 10th graders passed the math portion and just 3 percent passed the science component. TAF would have a say in choosing the school's principal, teachers and enrollment. While the idea was not entirely novel—the Gates Foundation had encouraged specialized academies within public schools—Dziko was "the first African American, at least locally, to offer a transformative plan backed up by millions of dollars."

Computers don't see gender or skin color. Research has shown that boys don't have an innate advantage in computer science although stereotypes have given them a cultural edge in the field. *Trish Millines Dziko*

But Dziko faced community opposition, in part because the school district excluded parents from early discussions about the school TAF wanted to open in 2008. Local activist Sakara Remmu said people "weren't really sure where she comes from or who she is." Some suspected Dziko's plan was elitist, or were put off by her assertive can-do demeanor. Others even speculated that Dziko, who served on a district school-closure committee, recommended shuttering certain schools so she could take them over. At one community meeting the Rainier Beach PTSA president led a walkout.

Dziko's proposal for Rainier

Beach withered. “It was all politics,” she says.

Carla Santorno, superintendent of Tacoma Public Schools, was then chief academic officer for the Seattle district. There was nothing fundamentally wrong with TAF’s model, Santorno says. “I believe TAF would’ve worked effectively in Seattle if there had been a disposition of the public to accept it.”

On hearing the news about Seattle, Federal Way schools Superintendent Tom Murphy called Dziko. “I liked what I heard,” Murphy said.

He and Dziko agreed to a partnership. Their idea would differ from the charter school model—rejected three times by Washington voters—wherein a private group runs a public school with oversight from a school district. TAF’s academy would be the first public school in the state managed with a nonprofit.

A deal was signed to bring the TAF Academy to a campus of portable classrooms nestled between Totem Middle School and Star Lake Elementary School. Both are in Kent but part of the Federal Way district. The academy for sixth- through 12th-graders opened in 2008. Former Microsoft executive Paul Shoemaker, a TAF supporter, said it was as if Trish had to leave Seattle “to get it open.” Or as she puts it, “You’re never a prophet in your own land.”

A volunteer helps a student build a circuit at the school TAF runs in partnership with the Federal Way district. *TAF*

Plans were hatched two years later to create a second academy in Renton.

But in 2012 charter-school advocates succeeded at their fourth try on the ballot. Washington voters approved Initiative 1240 allowing charter schools in the state. Bill Gates gave $3 million to the I-1240 campaign, which won 50.7 percent of the vote. Paul Allen’s company donated $1.6 million.

Under the initiative, charter schools have more latitude than allowed by TAF’s model of partnering with public schools. Teachers at a charter school, for instance, aren’t necessarily covered under the local district’s contract; they can have their own salary structure.*

Dziko says she’s agnostic about charter schools. Studies have found mixed results about their success. The “reality is that most charter schools don’t do even as well as the TAF Academy,” *The Seattle Times* reported in 2012.

* Both charters and the TAF model are free and open to all students, and receive public funding based on student enrollment just like traditional schools.

In an annual tradition, TAF staff "high five" students on the last day of the school year in Federal Way. *TAF*

Nevertheless, Dziko's plans for academies in Renton and elsewhere fizzled. "All the philanthropic money went to charter schools," she says.

TAF had to regroup and recast its strategy.

THEY TOOK THEIR model of STEM education for children of color, distilled it to its essence, and concluded: "Why not marry the best aspects of public schools with TAF?"

After TAF's success in the Federal Way district, Santorno, the Tacoma superintendent, felt Boze Elementary School was ripe for a partnership with the foundation. Boze needed a boost in student achievement and some attention that would excite faculty and parents, Santorno says. Boze certainly met the foundation's criteria for a partnership; 82 percent of its students were of color and 84 percent were eligible for free and reduced lunch. (Other criteria include having a majority of teachers agree to the change, along with school and district officials.)

"I was always impressed with her vision," Santorno says of Dziko. "Here was a female of color who was really interested in giving back and starting something that was focused on the needs of students, especially students of color."

Josh Garcia, Tacoma's deputy superintendent, worked with Dziko in Federal Way. Garcia stresses that Dziko isn't "doing anything to schools" or the district. She's a partner. "Trish learns and adapts. She's a relentless learner. Trish continues to see different opportunities and truly works in collaboration."

Boze Principal Arron Wilkins embraced the plan, which included bringing instruction coaches to Boze and having its teachers attend TAF's institute during

Dziko tells students they need training or education beyond high school, no matter what they want to be. *TAF*

summers—at no cost to the Tacoma school district. A five-year agreement gave both the district and TAF a say in matters such as staffing. The district and TAF plan to use a similar model at Roosevelt Elementary School.

So what does the TAF model look like in Boze?

The overarching goal, Wilkins says, is an environment where the "students' interests, problems, life and community are what drives what we do and how we design their lessons."

In practical terms, that means the kids start with an authentic question they have about a problem. From there, teachers find ways to weave in relevant content—rather than just covering it because it's required by the state.

Debra Hendrix, a fourth-grade teacher, said her students wanted to know how to help their families prepare for a natural disaster. They studied tectonic plates, tsunamis, volcanology and more. Red Cross workers visited their classrooms. Science, math, social studies, and writing were all embedded in their project-based learning. That learning style also teaches students skills for working together and taking responsibility, Hendrix said.

Using the same model, TAF@Saghalie sixth graders were given a hypothetical $1 million budget, with rows on their spread sheets for college, charitable and housing expenses. Video games and a Dodge Charger might also appear in a student's budget. But hopefully, spending on those items was in sensible proportion to their value, especially after students had received lessons on financial literacy from visiting bank representatives. The idea behind the $1 million exercise is getting students to think about life skills and how math plays into those, Dziko says.

The foundation also petitioned the district to allow TAF@Saghalie eighth graders to read *The Hate U Give* instead of *To Kill a Mockingbird*. Both books are about race and justice. But the former, published in 2017, is much more relevant to students today, Dziko says. (With a woman's false accusation at the core of its drama, *To Kill a Mockingbird*, published in 1960, also complicates the modern "believe victims" movement.)

Obviously, adults have some say in the learning. College readiness starts in kindergarten. TAF's readiness formula for students is awareness, eligibility

and preparedness. "Awareness" for kindergarten through second grade means just getting kids to know there is college, and it can benefit them. TAF high-school students and alumni come in to convey that message to kids "just in a fun way."

With third graders, conversations go a little deeper about what it means to go to college, and what it means to be eligible. By sixth grade, students should know they need good grades. The overall goal is to impart the idea that if you're going to make something of yourself, whatever it may be, you need education or training beyond high school. "I like that because that's how I grew up," Dziko says.

In keeping with her "you have it, you share it" instincts, Dziko didn't take a salary at TAF for its first five years. *Seattle Business Magazine*

TAF wants to export the model around the state. It hopes to transform 60 public schools in Washington in two decades.

WHILE FOUNDATION staff were reshaping their mission, the TAF Academy in Kent was feeling squeezed. The academy's portable classrooms were not ideal for lab work. It couldn't add more classrooms because of sewer-capacity limits. The north part of the Federal Way district, where it was located, faced crowding pressures. Saghalie Middle School in the southern part of the district, was underpopulated. The academy merged with Saghalie in 2017, increasing its number of students from 300 to 700. Students who started at TAF Academy's in Kent as sixth graders got their high-school diplomas from TAF@Saghalie in 2018.

The chief challenge now for Dziko is how to scale up their model to 60 additional schools. "I think our partnership with public education is the way. We just need funders to see it and have some patience and have some faith," she says. "And part of it is having faith in an organization that's led by people of color serving people of color. Philanthropy is not used to that. They're used to giving money to white-led organizations to help brown and black kids."

A 2017 survey of 4,000 people in the philanthropy world found that the homogeneity of nonprofit and foundation leaders contributes to a cycle of unconscious and unspoken racial bias. At the baseline, there's little difference in the education credentials of white people and people of color in the nonprofit sector. And researchers found that minorities were more interested in becoming executives than their white counterparts. But those doing the recruiting and promoting were

often biased, ruling out candidates of color based on the perceived "fit" with an organization. That filter often leads to a pale and male applicant pool. Implicit biases, such as the sound of a name, further favor the white candidates.

The result is philanthropists giving most of their money to people they relate to because they have the same background, Dziko says.* "So that's the kind of stuff we have to look at, not just who's getting hired now. It's looking at their trajectory or the potential of them to move up," she says. "It's pretty grim."

But she's not quitting. And she doesn't regret leaving Microsoft rather than hanging in to bank millions more.

"For what? For what?" she says of the forsaken wealth. "Yeah, I would love to have more money. Jill and I have talked about this a number of times when things were getting tight and we're thinking about, 'OK, should I go back to corporate?'" (She didn't take a salary at TAF for its first five years. The couple are paying for two kids in college, with a third ready to start in the fall of 2019.)

But the tradeoff would be too much. She wouldn't feel like her life was her own. She couldn't take off to be with the kids—and family is her top priority. When the tuition bills roll in the question of going corporate resurfaces. "Then I think, OK, I am one helluva happy person. And I have freedom, which is huge. You can't buy that.

"Generational change is my legacy. We need it. I got it with my mom and her siblings doing the work to lift me and my cousins up. I think our generation let the ball drop a little. So I feel really good that I picked it up."

Bob Young
Legacy Washington

* TAF funders include Alaska Airlines, Amazon, Boeing, Costco, Comcast, Expedia, FlowPlay, Google and Microsoft.

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