

Letter written to the North Dallas Bulldog Support League,

If the terrible events of the past few weeks have taught me anything about life and courage and survival, it is that in the end all we have and all that matters is each other, and that **we find our own courage in the act of encouraging and helping others**. I don't know about you but I'm feeling battered by it all, and I want to help in a way that really makes a difference.

I can't stop the hurricanes or rescue families from the floods or change our politicians' hateful treatment of aspiring young Dreamers. But I can help and encourage the struggling and hopeful students of our high school alma mater; we have all seen the amazing, wondrous outcome when that help has been given by our **North Dallas Bulldog Support League**.

Lately I've given a lot of thought to the many ways that I was helped and encouraged as a student at ND--the dedicated teachers and coaches, the friendships we made that endure all these years later, and most of all the profound impact on my own life when that newspaper editor on the scholarship interviewing committee handed me his card with an invitation to visit, leading to the opportunity for me to go on to college. **I know that I owe a huge debt to North Dallas High and to all those helping hands.**

What better way to make a difference than to help the ND youth of today, those who are struggling with overwhelming challenges in life and are just waiting for the opportunity to show what they are capable of becoming? **That's why I am offering a \$5,000 challenge to the members of our ND Bulldog Support League. I will match all donations to NDBSL up to a total of \$5,000 during the North Texas Giving Day fundraising drive.**

With our help, the League can continue to support the school's academic extra-curricular programs (which in our day we took for granted), with a goal of getting more students involved and engaged in school. We also plan to increase financial support for transporting students to the extra-curricular programs—field trips, competitions, Saturday tutoring and college preparatory classes, etc. **Every program we have supported has empowered ND students to grow and succeed; it's clearly a sound investment.**

**The saddest good news I ever heard was learning last year that all the homeless ND seniors had successfully graduated.** I feel ashamed that youth homelessness is our reality, and I cannot imagine what it must be like to be a homeless youth trying to make it in school. We are expanding our support for critical services that target our homeless teens, with an attainable goal of \$40,000. **Currently 18% of the ND student body is homeless,** and many need transportation, clothing and toiletries, food, medical services, counseling, and mentoring.

**Think about it, and please consider a financial contribution, in any amount, that would be significant to you. It's the least we can do.**

--Gary Cooper '64