

A DAY OF CELEBRATING NORTH TEXAS TEACHERS

CFP Foundation event to be a “halftime rally for teachers”

BY JAIME ARON

Think back to your childhood and the people who molded your life. Somewhere along the way, a teacher — or two, maybe even three — opened doors you didn’t even know existed.

From kindergarten through high school, and again in college, teachers continue to play vital roles in the lives of students, including the guys who will be competing in the College Football Playoff.

So when CFP organizers started a charitable foundation, it only made sense that their focus was education — and, more specifically, educators.

The CFP Foundation’s flagship program is called Extra Yard For Teachers, and it has several elements that are already making a difference.

The victories began in August through [a partnership with DonorsChoose.org](#), a website that connects classrooms in need with

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people who can help. Right around the time the football season kicked off, several wish lists were fulfilled, such as a classroom in Alabama



 EXTRA YARD
FOR
TEACHERS
SUMMIT 2015

CELEBRATING TEACHERS: Young minds, like these students from Mount Auburn Elementary in Dallas, have benefitted from the Extra Yard for Teachers Program. The Extra Yard for Teacher Summit looks to reward the teachers who play such a vital role in the development of these children.

that had **24 students but only 19 desks** getting the extra five desks they needed, and a classroom in New York receiving \$500 worth of **charcoal pencils, erasers, drawing pads and more for their artwork.**

Foundation leaders also wanted to tap into the excitement of championship weekend with an event that would bring together teachers in a meaningful way. They came up with the **Extra**

Yard For Teachers Summit on Saturday, Jan. 10 (two days before the national championship game at AT&T Stadium).

Billed as “A Day of Celebrating North Texas Teachers,” this one-of-a-kind event is a mash-up of a TED-style conference and a celebration of teaching.

“We’re thinking of this as a halftime pep rally for teachers,” said Sharon Lyle, one of the event’s main organizers. “Coming out of winter break, going into the spring semester, it really is like halftime of the school year. And we really, really want it to be celebratory. Too often, teachers on the front line don’t get the acknowledgement and recognition they deserve. So this is truly just to say thank-you.”

“When we talk to teachers, a recurring theme

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that keeps coming up is that teaching really is an isolating profession," she continued. "You might see peers and colleagues during breaks, in the hallways, etc., but for a huge part of the day you are the only adult in a room full of kids. So a lot of them are excited about the opportunity to be among their peers and to have an opportunity to get know each other."

Because the event is open to teachers of all grades, from all types of schools (public, private, charter, independent), the focus is not professional development, or the latest-and-greatest in curriculum. Lyle describes it simply as an opportunity to hear from "people doing extraordinary things in education and doing a higher-level modes of teaching."

This half-day event (12:30-4:30 p.m.) will be held at the Kay Bailey Hutchinson Convention Center. **Tickets are free, but must be registered for in advance.** There are only 800 spots available, which is another reason to sign up soon. For folks who can't make it that day, live streaming will be offered. The event also will live on through eventual uploads of each presentation.

The agenda will include about 12 speakers and two performers over two sessions. Each talk will run roughly 2 to 6 minutes, with speakers encouraged to include their own stories of teachers who made a difference in their lives.

"We worked with a committee of educational advisers to put together a list of speaking candidates," Lyle said. "We're aiming for 50 percent art, 50 percent

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AT&T PLAYOFF PLAYLIST LIVE! HEADLINERS NAMED

Last week, The College Football Playoff (CFP) announced that Lenny Kravitz and Sting will be the headline performers for its new signature musical event, AT&T Playoff Playlist Live!, the premier concert series at the American Airlines Center in Dallas during the weekend of the National Championship.

Kravitz will perform Saturday night, January 10. Sting will take the stage Sunday, January 11.

One-day ticket prices for AT&T Playoff Playlist Live! are \$30 for upper level and \$41 for lower level. Two-day passes are also available at \$46

for upper level and \$60 for lower level. Tickets are now available for purchase at www.ticketmaster.com/attpayoffplaylist.

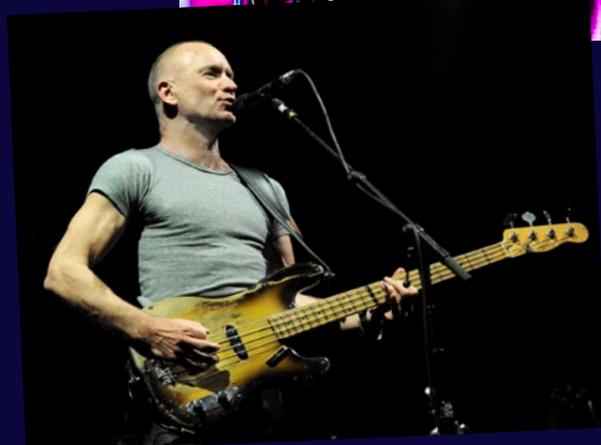
Additional acts will be announced later.

Having sold over 38 million albums worldwide, Lenny Kravitz's musical success has afforded him many opportunities to fulfill his creative vision beyond the recording industry. The artist appeared in a supporting role in the critically-acclaimed film *Precious*, and the box office smash film *The Hunger Games*, as Cinna. He reprised this role in the second film, which was released in Fall 2013.

A 16-time GRAMMY Award winner, Sting's accolades include two Brits, a Golden Globe, an Emmy, three Oscar nominations, *Billboard Magazine's* Century Award, and MusiCares 2004 Person of the Year. He is also a member of the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame and Songwriters Hall of Fame. Throughout his enduring career, he has sold close to 100 million albums from his combined work with The Police and as a solo artist.

Next month, Sting will receive the Kennedy Center Honors, one of the most prestigious cultural prizes in the United States.

Join the conversation on Twitter about the event featuring [@OfficialSting](https://twitter.com/OfficialSting) and [@LennyKravitz](https://twitter.com/LennyKravitz) using the official hashtag [#CFBPlayoff](https://twitter.com/CFBPlayoff).



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science to get the right topics and diversity. There are going to be some surprise announcements, some surprise appearances.”

Some of the speakers already announced include:

+ **CHRIS EMDIN**, an associate professor at Columbia University who is currently serving a fellowship at Harvard. He’s the co-creator of the #HipHopEd social media movement, and a highly sought speaker on topics such as hip-hop education, education in “STEM” (science, technology, engineering and mathematics), politics, race, class, diversity and youth empowerment.

+ **VANESSA RODRIGUEZ**, interim director of the Houston Scholar Program, which helps move students from KIPP and YES schools to make the transition to high school and college. She’s also the founder of Eight Million Stories, a nonprofit group that targets youths who are vulnerable to lives of poverty, homelessness and crime and tries steering them toward becoming learners.

+ **CHRIS LEHMANN**, the founding principal of the Science Leadership Academy, a high school in Philadelphia that’s considered a pioneer of the “School 2.0” movement. He or his school have been honored by Dell, Apple, the McGraw-Hill Research

Foundation and more. He’s spoken at TEDxPhilly and TEDxNYED, and his writing can be found on his website PracticalTheory.org.

+ **DAVERSE LOUNGE**, a Dallas-based trio of Puerto Rican artists who use an infectious call-and-response approach to the Art of Spoken Word based on stories, poetry and songs. The group was featured on TEDxSMU in 2013, and have been nominated for a Dallas MasterMind Award for Innovation of Art and Culture in North Texas.

As with all CFP events — from the game to the various community-based programs — there’s a certain buzz that comes with doing something for the first time. They’re building a working model that will be used surrounding the 2016 game in Glendale, Arizona, and beyond.

“I think it’s incredible — so fun!” said Lyle, who had a similar thrill when her company, Public City, helped launch TEDxSMU. “It’s incredible to see how these things come together and take on a life of their own to become something special.”

What is Lyle most looking forward to?

“At some point in the midst of the production, I always try to look at the audience to see happy faces — smiling, engaged folks with a sense of wonder,” she said. “That’s why we do this.”



‘CMT’S ULTIMATE KICKOFF PARTY’

Toby Keith and Lady Antebellum Team Up

Also joining the 90-minute special from Playoff Fan Central are Big & Rich, the duo heard weekly on the familiar ESPN “College GameDay” theme song, and CMA New Artist of the Year Brett Eldredge.

At&T Playoff Playlist Live! and Championship Tailgate aren’t the only place to catch top name entertainment come championship week.

The College Football Playoff recently announced that CMT to host a special live concert from Playoff Fan Central, the official game-week destination for family fun and entertainment during the weekend of the national championship.

The “CMT Ultimate Kickoff Party Live from the College Football Playoff National Championship” will premiere on CMT Friday, January 9, at 8 p.m. CT and will feature country superstars Toby Keith, Lady Antebellum, Big & Rich and Brett Eldredge. More artists will soon be added to the star-studded performance lineup.

Patrons of Playoff Fan Central will have first-come, first-serve access to the concert which will be held in Hall B of the Kay Bailey Hutchison Convention Center.



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