

The logo for DonorsChoose, featuring the words "DONORS" and "CHOOSE" in a bold, white, sans-serif font stacked vertically on a solid blue rectangular background.

DONORS CHOOSE

This article appeared on DonorsChoose blog in May 2008

Honoring-an-exceptional-teacher-and-inspiring-others/

Dorothy Graham's mother must have been an incredible teacher. Dorothy's mother, Olga Graham, was a public school teacher who inspired hundreds of students throughout her career.

Olga Graham received her Bachelors' Degree from Hunter College in 1927 and began a long, successful career teaching in the New York City Public Schools--mostly in the Bronx. Her secrets for influencing the most hard-to-reach students included assigning special classroom responsibilities and setting high expectations. Olga kept in touch with her young students as they grew, and she was invited to quite a few of their weddings! After the family moved to Los Angeles in 1963, Olga was recognized for her outstanding work as a volunteer reading tutor in the Los Angeles school district. She was a remarkable woman who lived independently well into her 90's, always active and volunteering in the community. Olga passed away on January 31, 2005.

After Olga's passing, Dorothy decided to honor her mother's legacy as a humanitarian and educator by supporting charitable causes that her mother would have loved. When Dorothy discovered the DonorsChoose.org website, she knew she had found something special. And when Dorothy funded her first student project in honor of her mother, DonorsChoose.org found someone special, too.

Dorothy knew that she would be inspiring students and teachers through the gifts she made in honor of her mother, Olga Graham. She knew she was changing the educational landscape for children in high-need schools each time she honored her mother's spirit by funding a project in her mother's honor. What she couldn't have predicted was that she was also inspiring other DonorsChoose.org Citizen Philanthropists with her heartfelt message about what her mother would have loved about each selected project. Imagine Dorothy's surprise and delight when she checked up on one of "her" projects to find this message from another Citizen Philanthropist who had been inspired to contribute, despite never meeting Dorothy or her mother: "We have been touched by the beautiful tributes to Olga Graham. She must have been a wonderful teacher, and what a perfect way for her work to live on."

This donor has it right--Dorothy has found the perfect way to honor her mother's legacy. And, just as Olga Graham inspired her daughter while inspiring her students in New York, Dorothy inspires other donors while inspiring students across the country.