$1.7 Million Raised in 9 Minutes: Donors Rally Behind Education Equity at The BASIC Fund Luncheon

Led by a matching pledge from Capital Group's Martin Romo, the 2025 Transforming Lives Luncheon raised funds to expand educational access for Bay Area students

Vander Resend, Basic Fund Chairman Jim Herbert, Ronnie Lott, and Osiel Perez at the 2025 Transforming Lives Luncheon

SAN FRANCISCO, CA, UNITED STATES, October 29, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- In a powerful display of generosity, donors at The BASIC Fund's annual Transforming Lives Luncheon raised $1.7 million in just nine minutes, funding scholarships that will open the doors to high-quality education for under-served Bay Area students.

Held at the historic St. Francis Yacht Club, the luncheon brought together more than 200 community members, business leaders, and educators to celebrate the life-changing impact of educational opportunity.

The event featured a lineup of distinguished speakers, including Thomas Friedman, New York Times columnist and three-time Pulitzer Prize–winning author; Orly Friedman, Founder and Head of School of Red Bridge; and Martin Romo, Chair and Chief Investment Officer of Capital Group and BASIC Fund Board Member. Together, they shared stories and insights about the expanding future of education through political, technological, and personal lenses. In a surprise announcement, Romo pledged to match all donations made during the event, doubling every contribution and bringing the total to nearly $1.7 million.

"In nine minutes, this community changed the trajectory for hundreds of young lives," said Jim Herbert, Chair of The BASIC Fund Board of Directors. "Every gift represents someone believing in a child's potential. That's what The BASIC Fund has stood for from the very beginning: giving families a choice, and children a chance."

"Behind every dollar raised is a story of a child who will walk into a classroom that fits them, a teacher who will see their potential, and a parent who can finally breathe a little easier," said Rachel Engelsmith, CEO of The BASIC Fund. "That's the true measure of what this community has and will continue to accomplish together."

Since its founding in 1998, The BASIC Fund has awarded scholarships to nearly 30,000 low-income preschool–8th grade students across the Bay Area. Today, 98% of BASIC Fund alumni graduate from high school, and they are five times more likely to earn a college degree.

"Because of the BASIC Fund, I was fortunate enough to receive a strong education throughout my 12 years of schooling, and am on track to graduate from a four year university," Marta Lopez Melgar, Santa Clara University '29

The event's success was made possible by the BASIC Fund Board of Directors, generous donors, and corporate sponsors including Prologis, Capital Group, Makena Capital Management, KPMG, and the Bank of San Francisco.

The BASIC Fund
The BASIC Fund (Bay Area Scholarships for Inner-City Children) is a nonprofit committed to giving low-income families the power to choose the best educational fit for their children. Since 1998, The BASIC Fund has awarded over $200 million in scholarships, enabling more than 30,000 students to attend private elementary and middle schools. With 98% of its students graduating from high school and 92% pursuing higher education, The BASIC Fund helps close the achievement gap and unlock life-changing opportunities. Learn more at basicfund.org.

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