CDF FREEDOM SCHOOLS®

YOU CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Children's Defense Fund
Freedom Schools®

DEAR LORD BE GOOD TO ME THE SEA IS SO WIDE AND MY BOAT IS SO SMALL

Children's Defense Fund

40 Years

WHY THE CDF FREEDOM SCHOOLS® PROGRAM?

The *CDF Freedom Schools* program provides summer and after-school enrichment through a research-based and multicultural curriculum that supports children and families around five essential components: high-quality academic enrichment, parent and family involvement, civic engagement and social action, intergenerational leadership development, and nutrition, health and mental health. In partnership with community based organizations, faith institutions, schools, colleges and universities, homeless shelters and juvenile detention centers, the flexible *CDF Freedom Schools* program boosts student motivation to read, generates positive attitudes toward learning, and connects the needs of children and families to resources in their communities.

The Children's Defense Fund Leave No Child Behind® mission is to ensure every child a *Healthy Start*, a *Head Start*, a *Fair Start*, a *Safe Start* and a *Moral Start* in life and successful passage to adulthood with the help of caring families and communities.

"I Can Make a Difference"

The *CDF Freedom Schools* "I Can Make a Difference" theme incorporates the totality of CDF's mission to support children and young adults to excel and to believe in their ability to make a difference in themselves and in their families, schools, communities, country, and world with hope, education and action. Since 1995, more than 100,000 children in grades K-12 have had the *CDF Freedom Schools* experience. As an intergenerational educational program founded by CDF President Marian Wright Edelman and the Black Community Crusade for Children (BCCC) that emphasizes child literacy and learning, the *CDF Freedom Schools* program is committed to restorative social justice through education and advocacy for our nation's most valuable resource—its children.

A student at the *CDF Freedom Schools* site at Duke University in Durham, North Carolina.

EVERY CHILD: READY TO LEARN. READY TO ACHIEVE AND SUCCEED!

The CDF Freedom Schools® program serves children ages 5–18 and ensures every child receives a *Healthy Start*, a *Head Start*, a *Fair Start,* a *Safe Start,* and a *Moral Start* in life to foster the successful passage to adulthood with the help of caring families and communities.

The *CDF Freedom Schools* program trains college students and recent graduates as servant leader interns to deliver the Integrated Reading Curriculum. The dynamic curriculum aligns with the Common Core State Standards and includes science, technology, engineering and math (STEM education) activities. Our goal is to identify, train, nurture, mobilize and empower young leaders to advocate for children in their communities back home.

Children are encouraged to dream, set goals for themselves, cultivate positive attitudes and high expectations.

A Healthy Start: *CDF Freedom Schools* summer programs are required to provide two nutritious meals (breakfast and lunch) and at least one snack to each child, every day. These meals must meet USDA standards.

A Head Start: Children read a superb collection of culturally relevant and diverse books at *CDF Freedom Schools* sites. The curriculum promotes cooperative learning, critical thinking, and nonviolent conflict resolution.

A Fair Start: To promote a healthy home life, each week parents participate in education workshops on child care, health care, advocacy, financial management, employment, stress reduction, and home ownership. Staff connects parents with needed resources in the local community.

A Safe Start: Background checks are required for all *CDF Freedom Schools* staff and sponsors must meet state and local health and safety regulations.

A Moral Start: Local college students and recent graduates serve as positive role models and mentors for *CDF Freedom Schools* scholars. Children are encouraged to dream about college and set goals for themselves.

"HARAMBEE!" — LET'S PULL TOGETHER

Harambee is a Kiswahili word that means "let's pull together." The *CDF Freedom Schools* program begins each day with "Harambee!," a time of informal sharing when children and staff come together to celebrate themselves and each other. Parents and community leaders are encouraged to participate.

- **Read Aloud**—Guests from the community read to the students.
- **Motivational Song**—"Something Inside So Strong." Through repetition, students believe the message.
- **Recognitions**—Celebrates accomplishments.
- **Cheers and Chants**—Builds self-esteem and gets the children ready to learn.
- **Announcements**—Schedule changes, field trips, or special events.
- **Moment of Silence**—Personal moment of reflection.

"I've been to hundreds and hundreds and hundreds of schools around the country, and I will tell you that my visits to *Freedom Schools* have been amongst my most inspiring and the most memorable."

– Arne Duncan, U.S. Secretary of Education

WHAT MAKES *CDF FREEDOM SCHOOLS* DIFFERENT?

Serves all students who apply, K–12th grade. No child is denied access due to socio-economic circumstance.

Creates a fun learning environment in every classroom. A 10:1 child-to-teacher ratio keeps the culturally relevant curriculum engaging.

Works for faith-based and community-based organizations, for schools and school districts, for colleges and universities, for homeless shelters and juvenile detention centers, and for museums and culture centers; all have successfully sponsored *CDF Freedom Schools* programs.

Trains all *CDF Freedom Schools* staff to deliver a high-quality program. The annual Ella Baker Child Policy Training Institute is held on the CDF Alex Haley Farm in Clinton, Tenn. and at facilities in Knoxville, Tenn.

Builds the next generation of leaders by investing in college students and recent graduates to teach the program and advocate for children.

Reweaves the fabric of the community. *CDF Freedom Schools* programs bring parents, local leaders, and resources together to support children and families.

CLOSING ACHIEVEMENT GAPS AND STOPPING SUMMER LEARNING LOSS

In 2012, a four-year study of children enrolled at *CDF Freedom Schools* sites in Charlotte, N.C. found over 90 percent of the children studied showed no summer learning loss, and 63 percent showed gains in reading and reading comprehension. In June 2011, the Harvard Family Research Project released a report in which the *CDF Freedom Schools* program was one of 14 innovative national programs highlighted as having "demonstrated success in providing quality learning opportunities for youth." In 2008, a three-year study conducted for the Kauffman Foundation reported that students enrolled in Kansas City, Missouri *CDF Freedom Schools* demonstrated significant improvement in reading.

"My child had phenomenal interns that taught him how to be confident in himself, his family and his community."

– ***CDF Freedom Schools*** **program Parent**

WHAT POTENTIAL *CDF FREEDOM SCHOOLS* SPONSORS NEED TO KNOW

Schedule: During the summer, a *CDF Freedom Schools* site must operate for a minimum of seven hours each day, Monday through Friday, for six consecutive weeks. Recommended hours of operation are 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

Staffing: The program must be staffed by college-age adults (19-30) from the local community who have completed at least one year of college and have plans to complete their college degree. These adults must be paid a stipend by the sponsoring organization.

Training: All staff must participate in training programs facilitated by CDF national staff in Tennessee.

Nutrition: *CDF Freedom Schools* programs must provide two nutritious meals and at least one snack for each child every day during the summer, and a meal or snack for the after-school program.

Insurance: Sponsors must obtain necessary insurance coverage to serve children.

CDF FREEDOM SCHOOLS: TOMORROW'S LEADERS TODAY

In 2012, *CDF Freedom Schools* partners served more than 11,000 children operating in 170 sites in 82 cities and 25 states including Washington, D.C. More than 13,000 servant leader interns have been trained at CDF Haley Farm, and many have gone on to become teachers, principals and professors.

FINANCIAL COMMITMENT

Financial resources are essential to a high-quality program, and *CDF Freedom Schools* programs are no exception.

- Each program site must be able to operate at no charge to families.
- Each program site must purchase the required books for the site and for the children.
- The sponsoring organization must pay training fees to CDF for servant leader interns and site staff including those for the annual Ella Baker Child Policy Training Institute in Tennessee.

For more information on the financial commitment required for program sponsorship, please contact the national *CDF Freedom Schools* program office at (202) 628-8787 or email us at freedomschools@childrensdefense.org.

WHAT COULD POSSIBLY MATTER MORE?

How will America's children be able to compete in our increasingly global economy if they cannot read, write and do math? Without a good education, millions of America's 16.1 million poor children will remain poor throughout their lives and many will become trapped in the Cradle to Prison Pipeline® crisis that leads to school dropout, arrest and incarceration, and hopeless dead-end lives.

In America today:

- A public school student is suspended from school every second and a half.
- A public high school student drops out every 8 seconds.
- A child is born into poverty every 32 seconds.
- A majority of all children and more than 76 percent or more of fourth and eighth grade Black and Hispanic public school students cannot read or compute at grade level.

Listen to Kyla's story. When she was in the third grade, she failed the state-required end-of-grade tests at her Charlotte, North Carolina elementary school. Her grandmother was worried that summer school wouldn't be fun but then she heard about the CDF Freedom Schools® program, and she knew Kyla would love the program and have fun at the same time. Kyla's principal agreed that she could participate on one condition, that Kyla re-take her tests in the middle of the summer. Kyla passed with the highest possible score. Kyla gave her *CDF Freedom Schools* experience the credit: "The stories we read in Freedom School, I could relate to, and we got to keep our books at the end of each week so I could read them again at home."

Kyla is just one of the thousands of children for whom the *CDF Freedom Schools* program has made an enormous difference. *CDF Freedom Schools* sites are safe and restorative learning spaces where children are surrounded by caring adults and college students from their community who share their enthusiasm for learning and reading and are committed to serving them as authentic mentors. The children are encouraged to dream about college and set goals for themselves, and for many of them, including Kyla, the program is a life-changing experience.

Now is the time to set our children free from illiteracy, low expectations, and jobless, hopeless futures. Children have only one childhood, and for them, tomorrow is today. We need to act with urgency to narrow the achievement gap and move our nation toward true educational equality and excellence for all children. But this will not happen unless adults in all walks of our children's lives step up and pick up our responsibilities to nurture and protect the next generation.

I hope you will answer the call to rescue our youth from hopelessness and despair and dead-end lives by starting a *CDF Freedom Schools* program in your community.

Marian Wright Edelman

CDF President

"We want our children to appreciate fully the artistic, moral and spiritual values that will bring to them much of their heritage of the past and make it possible to pass these values onto their successors…"

— Dr. John Hope Franklin (1915–2009)

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Freedom Schools®

Contact CDF Freedom Schools® Staff Today:

CDF National Office
25 E Street, NW
Washington, DC 20001
Tel: (202) 628-8787
Fax: (202) 662-3570

The *CDF Freedom Schools* program has regional offices in the following states:
California, Louisiana, Minnesota, Mississippi, Ohio, New York, South Carolina, Tennessee and Texas.

For more information on how to contact a *CDF Freedom Schools* office near you, please visit our website: **www.freedomschools.org**
Email: freedomschools@childrensdefense.org

SUPPORT THE DREAMS & EDUCATION OF CHILDREN IN YOUR COMMUNITY!

☐ Yes, I would like to sponsor a *CDF Freedom Schools* program in my community. Please send me more information about the application process.

☐ Yes, I would like to speak with someone about the *CDF Freedom Schools* program and learn more about this dynamic program that is making such a profound difference in the lives of children across the country.

☐ Yes, I would like to support the mission of the Children's Defense Fund by making a financial contribution to the *CDF Freedom Schools* program. Please make your check payable to the Children's Defense Fund. CDF is a 501(c) 3 charity. All donations are tax deductible to the extent permitted by law.

☐ Yes, please keep me informed about the work CDF is doing to protect and defend the rights of all children. I want to be contacted directly about key children's issues, policy developments, and social actions on behalf of children.

NAME (FIRST, LAST) DAYTIME PHONE

MAILING ADDRESS

(CITY, STATE, ZIP)

EMAIL ADDRESS

Please detach this form and mail it to:

Children's Defense Fund
25 E Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20001

For additional information, please call (202) 628-8787 or email us at freedomschools@childrensdefense.org

www.freedomschools.org

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