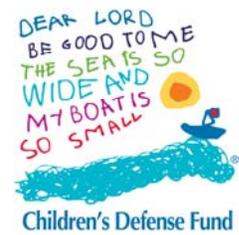


Children's Defense Fund Freedom Schools® Program Description



Children's Defense Fund Freedom Schools programs are partnerships with local community organizations, schools, churches, and universities that help children develop a love of reading while increasing their self-esteem and generating positive attitudes toward learning. CDF Freedom Schools® programs provide free summer and after-school support for children and families through a curriculum that features five components:

- High Quality Literacy Enrichment
- Parent and Family Involvement
- Civic Engagement and Social Action
- Intergenerational Leadership Development
- Nutrition, Health and Mental Health

Modeled after the intergenerational servant leadership approach used during the Mississippi Freedom Summer Project of 1964, today's *CDF Freedom Schools* programs employ college student leaders to facilitate our high energy six-week summer program using the Integrated Reading Curriculum. These Servant Leader Interns help children and youth (ages 5 to 18) understand, through the weekly themes and books of our Integrated Reading Curriculum, they can make a difference in themselves, their family, their community, country, and world through hope, education, and action.

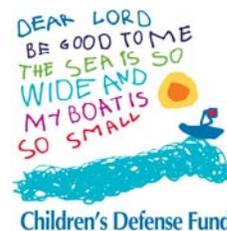
At *CDF Freedom Schools* program sites, children read high quality books and are engaged in learning activities that are appropriate to their developmental needs and interests. Each child also takes a book home each week in the summer program (and each month in the after-school program) for their personal library. Children receive two nutritious meals and a healthy snack every day in the summer program and healthy snacks in the after-school program. Trained adult Site Coordinators and Project Directors provide daily on-site supervision for each of the classrooms, staffed at a 1:10 intern-to-child ratio.

Each partner organization's leadership and all *CDF Freedom Schools* staff are trained by the Children's Defense Fund during the annual Ella Baker Child Policy Training Institute. This preparation includes an eleven-day training that prepares the Site Coordinators and Servant Leader Interns to operate a *CDF Freedom Schools* program. Held at the Children's Defense Fund's historic Alex Haley Farm in Clinton (TN), and in partnership with the University of Tennessee, the Ella Baker Child Policy Training Institute is described as a high quality transformative experience. The training equips staff to meet their responsibilities to the children in their care and empowers them towards a life long commitment to active service and leadership on behalf of children and families.

The E. M. Kauffman funded Philliber Research Associates longitudinal evaluation of the *CDF Freedom Schools* program in Kansas City (MO) indicates children who attend *CDF Freedom Schools* programs score significantly higher on standardized reading achievement tests than children who attend other summer enrichment programs; African American middle schools boys made the greatest gains of all. An evaluation conducted following the 2005-2006 *CDF Freedom Schools* Emergency Katrina Project in Mississippi and Louisiana verifies that a majority of children regarded as "unreachable" or "unteachable" with difficult attitudes and low self-esteem made great improvements. Youth and young adults whose lives were interrupted and affected by crises received consistent, daily service to better understand themselves, their situations and their potential. Families dealing with complex change following crisis were afforded quality childcare.

Since 1995, more than 70,000 children and families have been touched by the *CDF Freedom Schools* program experience and more than 7,000 college students and 1,500 adults have been trained to deliver this empowering model. In summer 2009, the *CDF Freedom Schools* program is partnering with 101 sponsor organizations to serve nearly 9,000 children at 136 program sites in the following 81 cities and 27 states (and Washington, DC).

Children's Defense Fund Freedom Schools® Fact Sheet



CDF Freedom Schools Program 2009

Children Served:	8601
Servant Leader interns:	970
Program Sites:	134
Sponsor Organizations:	99
Cities:	79
States (and DC):	27

2009 Sponsor Organization Demographics

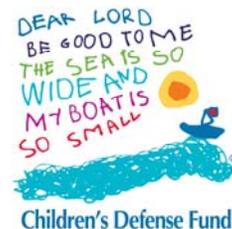
Community-Based Organizations:	59%
Faith-Based Organizations:	33%
Schools:	5%
Municipalities	3%

2009 Locations

Elaine, AR	Lutcher, LA	Charlotte, NC
Gould, AR	Marrero, LA	Davidson, NC
Marianna, AR	Monroe, LA	Newark, NJ
Marvell, AR	New Orleans, LA	Trenton, NJ
Altadena, CA	New Roads, LA	Las Vegas, NV
Long Beach, CA	Newellton, LA	Bronx, NY
San Francisco, CA	Port Allen, LA	Brooklyn, NY
Washington, DC	River Ridge, LA	Mt. Vernon, NY
Miami, FL	Shreveport, LA	Rochester, NY
Sanford, FL	Tallulah, LA	Cleveland, OH
Atlanta, GA	Vacherie, LA	Columbus, OH
College Park, GA	Vidalia, LA	Dayton, OH
Jonesboro, GA	Laurel, MD	Kirtland, OH
Champaign, IL	Riverdale, MD	Toledo, OH
Chicago, IL	Silver Spring, MD	Oklahoma City, OK
Springfield, IL	Battle Creek, MI	Tulsa, OK
Gary, IN	Kalamazoo, MI	Pittsburgh, PA
Kansas City, KS	Minneapolis, MN	Bennettsville, SC
Topeka, KS	St. Paul, MN	Greenville, SC
Louisville, KY	Kansas City, MO	North Charleston, SC
Alexandria, LA	Raytown, MO	Beaumont, TX
Baton Rouge, LA	St. Louis, MO	Galveston, TX
Campti, LA	Columbia, MS	Houston, TX
Ethel, LA	Greenville, MS	Virginia Beach, VA
Eunice, LA	Jackson, MS	Milwaukee, WI
Harvey, LA	Metcalfe, MS	Wheeling, WV
Lafayette, LA	Shelby, MS	
Leonville, LA	Brevard, NC	

Children's Defense Fund Freedom Schools®

Background and Vision



The Children's Defense Fund and our sponsor partners work with children, parents, young adults, and caring community leaders to create a new education vision for our children through the *CDF Freedom Schools* program. We seek to create a supportive, nurturing world that sets high expectations for children, strengthens their sense of self worth, and lets them know that they are loved and valued by caring adults. In the words of Dr. John Hope Franklin, honorary co-chair of CDF's Black Community Crusade for Children® (BCCC), 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 them on to their successors. [We want to help our children develop] an understanding and appreciation for family, for their own rich heritage derived from their African forebears as well as their American experience, the kind of understanding that will simultaneously provide them with roots and wings.”

At *CDF Freedom Schools* programs children are valued, celebrated, and given opportunities to learn the pleasure of reading and improve their ability to read, while connecting to their culture, developing self-discipline, having fun, and participating in community service and social action. *CDF Freedom Schools* programs are neither remedial nor oriented around a child deficit model. Further, *CDF Freedom Schools* programs are living monuments to the heroes and heroines who worked to achieve the promise of *Brown v Board of Education*. As United States Supreme Court Justice Sandra Day O'Connor stated, “In order to cultivate a set of leaders with legitimacy in the eyes of the citizenry it is necessary that the path of leadership be visibly open to talented and qualified individuals of every race and ethnicity.”¹ Well run educational programs like *CDF Freedom Schools* programs boost the academic achievement of low-income and minority students, and help prepare them to compete in academically strong and diverse student populations.

“An effective social movement needs people who are more interested in developing the leadership of others than in being leaders themselves.”

- Ella Josephine Baker

Dynamic *CDF Freedom Schools* partnerships are helping to reweave the fabric of community. Adults share their experiences, stories, and time with the children and young people. Every child is acknowledged as unique and is encouraged to develop his or her potential and accept responsibility to make a difference. The *CDF Freedom Schools* experience connects children to their rich history and culture, and expands their world and possibilities.

“There can be no keener revelation of a society's soul than the way in which it treats its children. We come from a past in which the lives of our children were assaulted and devastated in many ways, particularly by the destruction of the vital chain of institutions essential to the healthy transformation of children into well functioning adults- the family home, the neighborhood communal structures, an effective educational environment and the wider socio-economic support system. High levels of violence, homelessness, poor nutrition, lack of facilities in the form of health services, clean water, sanitation and places to play in safety have helped to shatter many of our young people's physical, emotional, and spiritual resources so essential to human dignity. As we set about building a new South Africa, one of our highest priorities must therefore be our children – for our children are our nation's future.”

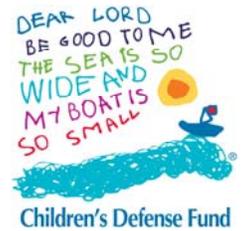
- Nelson Mandela

These words by Nelson Mandela, former president of South Africa, represent the vision of the Nelson Mandela Children's Fund whose purpose is to help inspire new efforts and strengthen existing ones aimed at repairing the ravaged fabric of their youth's social and economic circumstances. His vision and purpose parallel the vision and purpose set by CDF and the BCCC® for the *CDF Freedom Schools* program. His words remind us that while the development we do in our communities is vitally important and significant, it serves a greater purpose as part of a global effort to eliminate physical and psychological child poverty and suffering.

¹Grutter v Bollinger et. al., U.S. Supreme Court, No. 02-241, June 23, 2003

Children's Defense Fund Freedom Schools[®]

Supporting Children and Families in Crisis



Through CDF Freedom Schools[®] partnerships, local organizations provide hope and enrichment to communities dealing with the complex challenges following crises. Our theme, “*I Can Make a Difference!*” influences all aspects of the model and is reflected in each component. The intergenerational affirmation that Servant Leader Interns and children can make a difference in themselves, their families, their communities, their nation and their world, with hope, education, and action, advances the legacy of civic engagement and social action needed to rebuild and recover from disaster and crisis. The *CDF Freedom Schools* program empowers local sponsor partners to meet the needs of children and families facing crisis by:

- **Maintaining an academically and culturally enriching experience for children and youth whose school life has been interrupted or compromised.** At the core of the *CDF Freedom Schools* model is the Integrated Reading Curriculum which develops scholarship in children through exposure to books, images, ideas and activities relevant to who they are what their life experiences have been. Often described as a “curriculum of hope,” the IRC provides a safe space for children and Servant Leader Interns to discuss the emotional, mental and physical aspects of dealing with disaster through the lens of developmentally and culturally appropriate literature and activities. Each week during the summer program, children take home one book for his or her personal library, extending the learning and support to their homes. During the after-school program, children take home one book each month.
- **Feeding children on a healthy and consistent basis.** *CDF Freedom Schools* summer programs provide each child with two nutritious meals and a snack every day. Sponsor partners across the nation report hunger and other critical health and mental health concerns faced by the youth they serve. From the daily stress of poverty to unanticipated disaster situations, *CDF Freedom Schools* program sites deliver timely support and nourishment.
- **Providing children with the consistency of a predictable daily schedule.** At a *CDF Freedom Schools* program site, children know what to expect and can trust that they will be well cared for and highly engaged everyday. Strong relationships are developed between Servant Leader Interns and children at a time when a child’s most meaningful relationships may have been harmed or stressed by the impact of crisis and disaster.
- **Surrounding children with a well-staffed and loving group of young adults focused on meeting the needs of the children.** All *CDF Freedom Schools* program sites are required to hire Servant Leader Interns at a minimum 1:10 intern-to-child classroom ratio; in crises, we recommend a 1:6 ratio. This allows for close attention to be paid to the needs and safety of each child, and nurtures meaningful and strong intergenerational relationships. For many children, the safety, interaction and individual care found at *CDF Freedom Schools* program sites are not available elsewhere.
- **Training young adults to be lifelong Servant Leaders in their communities.** All *CDF Freedom Schools* local sponsor partners and program staff are uniquely trained to deliver quality academic and cultural enrichment, and lead social action efforts for children and families. Servant Leader Interns are held to high standards and role model to children that they can improve their own, and their community’s, ability to prepare for, respond to, and recover from crisis and disaster. The Ella Baker Child Policy Training Institutes are intergenerational and foster local and sustainable leadership skills and opportunities.
- **Beginning each day with a self and community affirming celebration.** *CDF Freedom Schools* program sites report low self-esteem, depression, anger and grief as among the health concerns faced by the children they serve. Further damage to the mental health of children often is a consequence of crisis and disaster. The positive atmosphere generated during “*Harambee!*,” the 30 minute start to each day, is carried on throughout the day in the hearts and minds of the participating children, family members, staff, visitors, and community members.
- **Investing parents in *CDF Freedom Schools* programs.** Empowering partnerships with parents and families is a critical piece of CDF’s child advocacy approach. *CDF Freedom Schools* program sites engage parents as volunteers but also as adult learners, activists, and advocates. Weekly workshops are tailored to the needs and interests of parents and to advance broader CDF initiatives, thus setting up a framework to address crisis and disaster preparation, response and recovery issues at grassroots and public policy levels.