

April 2, 2013



Dear Prospective **Teacher Institute** Participant,

As we celebrate **40 years** of service and advocacy on behalf of America's children, the **Children's Defense Fund** (CDF) is proud to announce a new initiative designed to support the professional development of certified teachers and professionals in education throughout the nation. Since 1995, CDF has provided quality summer and after-school enrichment for children from low-income families and underserved communities through our CDF Freedom Schools® program—an intergenerational educational initiative founded by CDF President **Marian Wright Edelman** and the **Black Community Crusade for Children** that emphasizes literacy, youth leadership development, parent involvement, civic engagement, and social action. Founded in 1973 as a direct result of the American Civil Rights Movement, CDF is committed to restorative social justice through education and advocacy for our nation's most valuable resource—its children. This year, we are inviting certified teachers, curriculum directors, literacy specialists, administrators, and education professionals to participate in our inaugural **Teacher Institute** (TI). This professional development opportunity is one of two exciting new program tracks being featured at our **18<sup>th</sup> annual Ella Baker Child Policy Training Institute** in **Knoxville, TN, from June 2 – 9, 2013**.

The CDF Teacher Institute is an intensive, seven-day professional development and training seminar designed for early to mid-career K-12 educators and school-based personnel. The institute will focus on effective instructional practices derived from the *CDF Freedom Schools* program model and **Integrated Reading Curriculum** (IRC). The overarching goal of the Teacher Institute is to encourage, equip, and empower educators to employ innovative teaching methods in the areas of literacy and English language arts. By introducing participants to the *CDF Freedom Schools* model and providing them with the resources they need to effectively implement it in their local schools and communities, CDF hopes to enlist educators in our mission to close the achievement gap and *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*.

The Teacher Institute will provide education professionals with an opportunity to enhance their skills and develop proficiency using **culturally relevant pedagogy** and **effective instructional strategies** for students in diverse classroom environments—but especially for students of color and students living in poverty. Throughout this seven-day professional development institute, Dr. Tamba O. Jackson, Associate Professor of Instruction and Teacher Education at the University of South Carolina, will collaborate with current teachers and former Ella Baker Trainers to lead a variety of dynamic workshops on salient issues in K-12 education. Participants will have an opportunity to discuss topics including, but not limited to those listed below.

- Social causes and consequences of poverty
- The relationship between culture and schooling
- Teachers taking social action in classrooms, schools, and communities
- Culturally relevant teaching, literacy, and Common Core Standards

In addition to affording participants an opportunity to engage in critical, solutions-oriented discussions on relevant social issues that impact education and instruction, the Teacher Institute will engage participants in **research-based instructional practices** and curricula to demonstrate how the *CDF Freedom Schools* program model improves academic achievement. As a nationally recognized model for innovative out-of-school learning, instruction, youth leadership development, and parent and community engagement, the *CDF Freedom Schools* Integrated Reading Curriculum (IRC) will serve as an engaging case study for institute participants to critically interrogate and explore.

Research has shown that the *CDF Freedom Schools* program is making a significant impact. In fact, the program was one of 14 innovative national programs highlighted in a **Harvard Family Research Project** report entitled "Year-Round Learning: Linking School, Afterschool, and Summer Learning to Support Student Success" (2011), which demonstrated success in providing quality learning opportunities for youth. Moreover, a two-year study of children enrolled at *CDF Freedom Schools* program sites in Charlotte, N.C. and Bennettsville, S.C., reported that 90 percent of the children tested did not suffer summer learning loss, and 65 percent improved or showed gains in independent reading by the end of

the program. Another three-year study conducted for the Kauffman Foundation reported that in 2008, students enrolled in Kansas City's summer *CDF Freedom Schools* program demonstrated significant improvements in reading. This success is inextricably linked to the fact that *CDF Freedom Schools* 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 2012, *CDF Freedom Schools* programs across the country served more than 11,500 children at 170 program sites in 82 cities and 25 states (including Washington, D.C.). We partnered with 114 sponsor organizations to bring our Integrated Reading Curriculum to children in urban and rural communities nationwide. Furthermore, over 1,225 college youth and adults served as servant leader interns (SLI) and site coordinators (SC) at our program sites last summer. Since 1995, approximately 100,000 children have had a *CDF Freedom Schools* experience and 9,000 college students have been trained to deliver this empowering model.

The foundation of the *CDF Freedom Schools* program is the Integrated Reading Curriculum (IRC), which exposes children to enriching and culturally relevant educational content in ways that help them develop literacy skills. The IRC is updated annually by a distinguished cadre of scholars and practitioners in the field of education, so it remains current with the changing environment of K-12 education. The IRC also employs effective teaching practices and sets high expectations for learning outcomes among children, especially those from historically marginalized and undeserved communities. Furthermore, *CDF Freedom Schools* program activities that help children develop conflict resolution skills and social action projects oriented around civic engagement work in concert to complement the dynamism of IRC instruction. For these reasons, the *CDF Freedom Schools* approach to literacy, youth development, and parent involvement has been recognized by U.S. Secretary of Education **Arne Duncan** as a model strategy of child engagement that fosters the development of positive attitudes toward reading and a commitment to lifelong learning, service, and leadership.

For more information about how to register for the 2013 Teacher Institute, please reference the enclosed materials and contact our Operations Coordinator, **Ms. Dana Hall**, at your earliest convenience.

Ms. Dana Hall  
*Operations Coordinator*  
Children's Defense Fund, *CDF Freedom Schools*® program  
p (202) 662-3555  
e [dhall@childrensdefense.org](mailto:dhall@childrensdefense.org)

If you have specific questions about programmatic elements, content, or the organization of the Teacher Institute, please contact **Dr. Tandra O. Jackson**.

Dr. Tandra O. Jackson  
*Associate Professor of Instruction and Teacher Education*  
University of South Carolina  
p (803) 777-3077  
e [tandra.jackson@sc.edu](mailto:tandra.jackson@sc.edu)

To ensure the quality, impact, and relevance of this professional development opportunity, the Teacher Institute curriculum has been aligned with Common Core State Standards, INTASC, NCTE, and National Board for Professional Teaching standards. We hope you will join us in **Knoxville, TN** from **June 2 – 9, 2013** as we explore the *CDF Freedom Schools* model together.

For more information about the *CDF Freedom Schools* program, and the positive impact it is having on the lives of children and youth across the country, please visit our website at [www.freedomschools.org](http://www.freedomschools.org) and email us at [freedomsschools@childrensdefense.org](mailto:freedomsschools@childrensdefense.org). Thank you for your time and thoughtful consideration. We look forward to your participation in the **2013 Teacher Institute**.

Sincerely,



Cameron Van Patterson, Ph.D.  
*Director of Internal Operations and Quality Assurance*  
**Children's Defense Fund, *CDF Freedom Schools*® program**  
p (202) 662-3654 | f (202) 662-3580  
e [cpatterson@childrensdefense.org](mailto:cpatterson@childrensdefense.org)  
[www.freedomschools.org](http://www.freedomschools.org)



The Children's Defense Fund (CDF) 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.

CDF provides a strong, effective and independent voice for *all* the children of America who cannot vote, lobby or speak for themselves. We pay particular attention to the needs of poor and minority children and those with disabilities. CDF educates the nation about the needs of children and encourages preventive investments before they get sick, drop out of school, get into trouble or suffer family breakdown.

CDF began in 1973 and is a private, nonprofit organization supported by foundation and corporate grants and individual donations.