



# Required Reading

*Newsletter of the Children's Scholarship Fund*

*Volume X, Issue I*

giving  
parents  
a choice  
giving  
children  
a chance

**Spring 2013**  
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## CSF Chair Mike McCurry Addresses Education Conference

In a very thoughtful keynote address to the Alliance for School Choice summit in Washington, DC, CSF Chairman Mike McCurry discussed his involvement with parental choice and Children's Scholarship Fund, noting that CSF and CSF partners are offering children hope while continuing to demonstrate the great demand among low-income parents for better educational options.

He urged those working toward education reform to remain positive and optimistic rather than demonizing their opponents.

"My suggestion is that we should be thinking of this movement as part of the antidote to the poison that's now invaded our political system," McCurry said, adding that reformers should "make this an issue that's not about left and right and not about Republican and Democrat but about what works for kids and what doesn't work."

Telling the story of Jason Tejada, a CSF alumnus who just graduated from Columbia University (see p. 4 for more), McCurry said the power of such stories fuels the fight for better options – whether through tax credits, vouchers, charters, or other publicly-funded programs – for families unlucky enough to live in a zip code with low-performing schools.



*CSF Chair Mike McCurry encouraging reformers to expand parental choice in education in Washington, DC this May.*

McCurry encouraged the audience of education reformers and policymakers to continue working for parental choice.

"We've got to stay the course, continue to do the hard work, go big, go bold, ... to make sure we get to that destination in which every child in this country goes to a school that equips them for their future and every parent has the opportunity to make a choice about how that kid will be educated," he concluded.

You can watch the entire speech online at: <http://bit.ly/13ohw7l>. ●

## CSF Class of 2013 Celebrates Success

Congratulations to more than 2,100 CSF Scholars nationwide who will graduate from eighth grade this month. As the graduates head to ninth grade, we know they have a greater chance of succeeding in high school and graduating on time thanks to the solid educational foundation they received with the help of a CSF scholarship.

Studies on CSF and other scholarship programs show that low-income children who attend tuition-based elementary schools are much more likely to graduate from high school than those who attend public school.

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8 West 38th Street, 9th Floor  
New York, NY 10018  
(p) 212.515.7100  
(f) 212.515.7111  
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*The Children's Scholarship Fund aims to maximize educational opportunity for all children: for those in need by offering tuition assistance in grades K-8 for alternatives to faltering conventional schools, and for all children by supporting and cultivating education reform and parental choice efforts.*

## 10,000 Rally for NY Education Tax Credit

CSF's Buffalo partner, the BISON Scholarship Fund, played a key role at an April 10th rally in favor of legislation to create an individual and corporate tax credit to benefit both public and private schools in New York.

More than 10,000 people – including hundreds of BISON students and parents – gathered at the Buffalo event which prominently featured several BISON families and alumni speaking about how they have benefited from private school scholarships.

If New York enacts a program allowing corporations and individuals to receive tax credits for their contributions to CSF, it could dramatically increase the number of

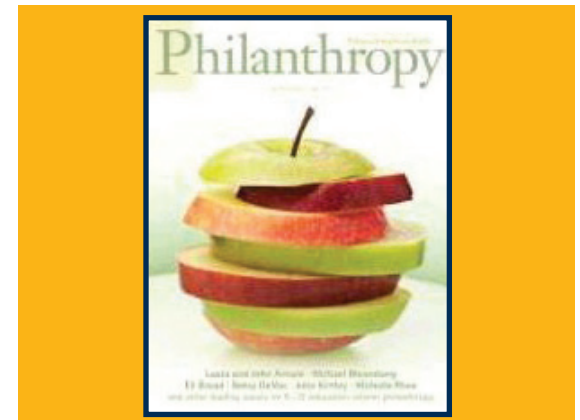


scholarships CSF awards statewide, giving many more New York parents the option to send their children to private schools. ●

## CSF Program Leads to Greater Choice in Florida

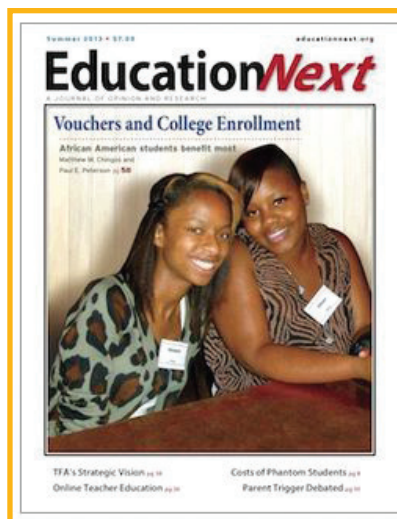
The latest issue of *Philanthropy* magazine features a cover story on education reformers who balance charitable giving with advocacy and direct political engagement. In the piece, former CSF Tampa Bay Founder John Kirtley says that when the CSF partner program received more than 12,000 applications for its first 700 scholarships, he became convinced that philanthropy alone could not meet the demand.

Kirtley went on to fight for a statewide corporate tax credit program. Today, Step Up for Students, the organization that grew out



of CSF Tampa Bay, serves more than 60,000 children throughout Florida who attend all types of private and parochial schools. ●

## Education Next Features CSF Alumni



The cover of the latest issue of *Education Next* (Summer 2013) features two Children's Scholarship Fund alums, Denasia Watts and Tiffany Williams.

Inside the journal, photos of several more CSF alumni accompany an analysis of the August 2012 study from Matthew M. Chingos and Paul E. Peterson which found that African-American students who used scholarships to attend private school were more likely to enter college than their peers at public schools. ●

# CSF Around the Nation

## Memphis



*This May, CSF partner Memphis Opportunity Scholarship Trust hosted a reception celebrating its class of graduating high school seniors.*

## Charlotte



*CSF-Charlotte Founder Julian Robertson with Ayomide Brown, a seventh grader at Trinity Episcopal School in Charlotte. Brown was the student speaker at a recent CSF-Charlotte reception.*

## Omaha



*Special guests at Children's Scholarship Fund of Omaha's recent luncheon included (l-r): CSF President Darla Romfo; CSF of Omaha Chair Mickey Anderson; student honorees, former Indiana Governor Mitch Daniels, and CSF of Omaha Executive Director Sandra Reding.*

## Newark



*CSF's Newark-based partner, the Scholarship Fund for Inner-City Children (SFIC), recently honored publisher William H. Sadlier, Inc. at its annual dinner. Pictured here (l-r): Frank Sadlier Dinger, Chairman; Anthony Linn, SFIC Chairman, and William Sadlier Dinger, President.*

## New York



*Guests at a CSF reception in New York this spring enjoyed a performance from Mt. Carmel-Holy Rosary School's gospel choir (pictured above). The event also featured remarks from Pete Ricketts, former chairman of CSF of Omaha; Peter Simon, co-chairman of the William E. Simon Foundation, and CSF President Darla Romfo.*

## Toledo



*Adrianne Shrove of the Ohio Council of Community Schools (OCCS) and Ann Riddle, Executive Director of CSF partner Northwest Ohio Scholarship Fund, at a School Choice Week celebration in Toledo.*

# Jason Tejada: A CSF Success

At 22, Jason Tejada is a highly accomplished young man, already ahead of his peers in many respects. He just graduated from Columbia University, where he majored in economics and ancient history on a full scholarship, and this summer he will begin work at JPMorgan Chase in Manhattan.

But Jason's life could easily have taken a different path. Growing up in Washington Heights as the son of recent immigrants from the Dominican Republic, Jason knows education is the key to his success, and that many young people growing up in his zip code have not had the same opportunities his schooling offered him.

Jason's mother, Luz, first heard about CSF through a teacher at his public school who thought Jason would excel in a private school setting. Luz liked the more disciplined environment at nearby Incarnation School, and used a CSF scholarship to enroll him there starting in fifth grade. Later, his younger sisters, Joandalys and Jorvelyn, also attended Incarnation as CSF Scholars.

Jason thrived in the safe, family atmosphere of Incarnation School, and went on to All Hallows High School with another scholarship. But it was not a seamless transition. During his eighth grade year, Jason was diagnosed with non-Hodgkins lymphoma and underwent surgery and chemotherapy throughout eighth and ninth grades.

Fortunately Jason regained his health and graduated from All Hallows as valedictorian.

At Columbia University, Jason has proven to be a real leader among his peers, becoming President of his fraternity and winning the Dean's Award for Leadership Excellence and the Stanley I. Fishel/Zeta Beta Tau Prize. This May, he was chosen



Jason's extended family came out to cheer for the new graduate!



Jason in cap and gown with his parents, Francisco and Luz.

by his classmates to be the main student speaker at a Latino graduation ceremony at Columbia. In his speech, he thanked his parents for all the sacrifices they have made throughout his schooling, and said he and his classmates now have an obligation to help younger generations get the education they need.

Jason's speech echoed what Jason's mother, Luz, told CSF several years ago. "Thanks to your help, my children have reaped great benefits," she said. "They have been lucky in finding institutions like yours who helped them, and I want them to do the same for others." ●

## *Class of 2013, continued from page 1*

Given the increase in lifetime earnings and other significant quality of life indicators associated with a high school diploma, CSF's board of directors considers high school graduation to be one of the most important measures of our success. For that reason, CSF and CSF partners nationwide will continue to track the progress of our Class of 2013 as they progress through high school, college, and beyond. ●

# Stay in School Fund Helps Sandy Families

When Hurricane Sandy struck last October 29th, many New Yorkers were hard-hit by serious damage to their homes and lost wages. At CSF, we knew that families already living on a tight budget would not be able to pay their tuition on top of extra storm-related expenses.

Thankfully, generous CSF donors stepped in and contributed to our Stay in School Fund, which allows us to give full scholarships to families who are at risk of leaving private school due to unusual and extenuating circumstances.



*CSF Scholars receiving Stay in School funding following Hurricane Sandy pose with St. Mark School Principal Carol Donnelly. Three CSF families at St. Mark School, in Sheepshead Bay, Brooklyn, and three CSF families at St. Christopher School in Staten Island are benefiting from the Stay in School Fund this year.*

After talking with school administrators in areas most seriously affected by Sandy, CSF selected six scholarship families to receive extra assistance: three families at St. Christopher School in Grant City, Staten Island and three families at St. Mark School in the Sheepshead Bay section of Brooklyn.

These families each suffered extensive damage to their homes, and most lost the majority of their belongings. Despite their hardships, they are extremely grateful to their schools for providing a sense of normalcy to their children during a period of uncertainty.

Thank you to all our supporters who contributed to the Stay in School Fund! ●

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# Young Leaders Host Field Trips for CSF Scholars

The CSF Young Leaders was launched last year, and is a dynamic group of young professionals committed to supporting and raising awareness for CSF. Based in New York City, the Young Leaders chaperoned two field trips for CSF Scholars this spring, one to the Museum of Mathematics and the other to the Metropolitan Museum of Art. The group continues to grow and is working towards its fundraising goal of sponsoring five CSF scholarships next year! To find out more or to get involved, please contact Margot Pfohl at [mpfohl@scholarshipfund.org](mailto:mpfohl@scholarshipfund.org). ●



*CSF Young Leaders and CSF Scholars on a recent field trip to Manhattan's Museum of Mathematics.*



*The second Young Leaders field trip took in the Met's Egyptian wing, where the children saw some mummies!*

# The Last Word:

“We’ve got to stay the course, continue to do the hard work, go big, go bold, ...to make sure we get to that destination in which every child in this country goes to a school that equips them for their future and every parent has the opportunity to make a choice about how that kid will be educated.”

**- CSF Chair Mike McCurry, speaking at the Alliance for School Choice summit.**



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