



Required Reading

Newsletter of the Children's Scholarship Fund

Volume VI, Issue IV

giving
parents
a choice

giving
children
a chance

Fall 2009
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CSF Hosts Talk with Eva Moskowitz

Children's Scholarship Fund was honored to recently host a conversation with Eva Moskowitz, CEO of the Success Charter Network, which comprises four highly successful charter schools in Harlem. CSF President Darla Romfo and Eva had a lively discussion about several education reform topics including parental empowerment, political advocacy, and tax credit scholarships.

When CSF started giving scholarships away in 1999, Eva was one of the first people who came by for a visit. And she told us why that evening, saying, "The Children's Scholarship Fund was doing such interesting work – more promising than many of the other efforts by giving money directly to parents to allow them to exercise parental choice."

As Eva said, putting power in the hands of families to make smart choices about where their children are educated is a noble goal. She also discussed the high level of involvement her schools require from parents, noting the vital connection between parental commitment and student success, something the CSF model also encourages.



CSF President Darla Romfo and Eva Moskowitz discuss education reform.

Eva, a former New York City Council member, shared her belief in a diversity of educational options for families, and praised the model that parochial schools have provided the charter school community, noting that school

“My parents and I wanted to have more opportunities. This would not have been possible without my CSF scholarship.”



Special guests Ashley and Jaime with CSF President Darla Romfo.

uniforms, strict discipline, and a school culture of shared values are all charter school features “borrowed” from the Catholic school model.

Before the discussion with Eva, we also heard from a very special CSF family. Jaime Martinez and his little sister, Ashley, are

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CSF Celebrates New School Year

The 2009-10 school year is well underway, with almost 29,000 low-income children using CSF scholarships across the country. More than six thousand of these children entered private school for the first time this year.

Maria Arce of the Bronx is just one of the many parents who wrote to thank us for the opportunity the scholarship is giving her family. Her son, Alexander, just began Kindergarten at Immaculate Conception School this fall.

“My child has received a scholarship and I cannot begin to tell you the weight that you have taken off my shoulders,” Maria told us. “When I received the letter and opened it, it was like winning the lottery.”

As always, CSF families were awarded scholarships based on their house size, family income, and tuition at their chosen school. Each scholarship covers 25%, 50% or 75% of the tuition, so families always pay at least a portion of the full tuition amount. When you consider that parents like Maria have an average family income of around \$29,000 nationally (\$25,182 in New York), this makes quite a statement about the value parents place on their children’s education.

Since our inception, CSF has provided \$400 million in scholarships, making it possible for a grand total of 111,000 children to attend the private school of their family’s choice.

CSF scholarships empower parents to choose a school they otherwise wouldn’t have been able to afford. Thank you to all the donors and partners who make this possible. ●

Children using CSF scholarships:
28,816

Brand new awards this year:
6,200+

Average CSF scholarship:
\$1,508

Average tuition:
\$3,794

Average family contribution:
\$2,127

Average family income:
\$29,488

CSF Hosts Talk with Eva Moskowitz

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stellar students using CSF scholarships to attend Mt. Carmel-Holy Rosary School in East Harlem. Jaime spoke about the difference being able to attend this school has made in his life. He said, “My parents and I wanted to have more opportunities. This would not have been possible without my CSF scholarship.”

Jaime plays violin, sings in the gospel choir, and is on the ballroom dancing team. He’s also participating in the prestigious Reach for Regis program. Jaime told us he plans to become a lawyer after college so that he can help people in his community.

The evening was a great success and very inspiring. It is truly a privilege to help Jaime and other children like him reach their fullest potential.

You can see more photos and watch video clips of the event at our website, www.scholarshipfund.org. We look forward to seeing you at our next event! ●

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**THE CHILDREN’S
SCHOLARSHIP FUND AIMS TO
MAXIMIZE EDUCATIONAL
OPPORTUNITY AT ALL INCOME
LEVELS BY OFFERING
TUITION ASSISTANCE IN GRADES
K-8 FOR NEEDY FAMILIES.**

CSF Around the Nation

Buffalo

Last month, CSF's Buffalo partner program, the BISON Fund, raised more than \$135,000 at their annual Celebration Luncheon, which attracted more than 800 people. Currently, the BISON Fund is supporting 1,420 children who attend 58 different private grammar schools in the greater Buffalo area. Over the past fifteen years, the fund has awarded 15,000 scholarships worth more than \$10 million.



At the BISON luncheon, young scholarship recipients from the Rainbow K School entertain guests with a special performance.



To celebrate BISON's 15th anniversary, six graduates (three current college students and three high schoolers) spoke about how the gift of education inspired them, and how much it meant to their parents and families.

Denver

The Alliance for Choice in Education (ACE) program in Denver recently hosted Family Night at the city's Museum of Nature and Science. Close to 600 scholarship recipients, along with their siblings, parents, grandparents and other relatives, came out to enjoy an evening at the museum. Before taking their tour, most of the parents and children took a few minutes to write letters expressing their thanks for the difference ACE is making in their lives.



ACE scholarship families in Denver line up for tours of the Museum of Nature and Science.



A grateful ACE scholarship recipient writes his thank you letter before touring the museum.

O.A.R. Jams with CSF at the Hard Rock Café



Backstage before the concert at the Hard Rock Café, students from Mt. Carmel-Holy Rosary chat with O.A.R. band members.

A few lucky CSF recipients recently joined the rock band O.A.R. onstage at the Hard Rock Café.

You may remember that last year, O.A.R. band members Marc Roberge and Benj Gershman toured Mt. Carmel-Holy Rosary School in East Harlem (where more than half of the students are CSF recipients) and led the school's gospel choir in a rendition of the Beatles song, "Let It Be." They also presented the school's music program with new violins and a set of bongo drums.

The visit only deepened the band's interest in CSF and the families who are benefitting from our scholarships. Earlier this year, they sponsored a "Best Teacher Award" essay contest. Three winners were awarded \$5,000 each for their schools.

But the band members were still thinking about the great singers they met at Mt. Carmel-Holy Rosary. So this fall, O.A.R. invited some of the children to sing with them again – this time at a benefit concert at the Hard Rock Café in Times Square.

Nine members of the gospel choir left school early for a 2:30pm rehearsal and sound check. Then for the rest of the day, they were treated like VIPs, mingling with the band backstage.

At 8:30 pm, O.A.R. began their set and invited the choir to sing "Let It Be." Then they shared the stage with O.A.R. for the band's hit, "Heard the World."

Children who headlined the Hard Rock included CSF students Christina Quez, Shanya Rodriguez, and Omari Roberts. Thank you O.A.R. for providing another wonderful opportunity for CSF children! ●



Choir members performed the Beatles song, "Let It Be," for O.A.R.

CSF Hosts Talk with Eva Moskowitz

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CSF President Darla Romfo (L) with Christy Walton.



Special guests Ashley and Jaime with their mother and Principal Suzanne Kaszynski.



Dimitri Steinberg (L) with Sara Fay and Elizabeth Palla of the William E. Simon Foundation.



Salvatore Collemi and Nicole Murphy of Rothstein Kass.



Cayley Bazant (L) with Bill Jenks, Matt De La Fuente, and Shirley Jenks.



Rebecca Stewart (center) with Susan Zuckerman and Jill Kafka of the Patrons Program.

The Last Word:

“What I’m deeply committed to is parent choice – to putting power in the hands of families to make smart choices about where their kids are educated. For that reason we need a diversity of choices. I have never been very obsessed with the system of delivery. To me it only matters whether the schools are good. What families need is a broad range of choices and they need parent choice protected.”

- Eva S. Moskowitz, CEO of Success Charter Network and former NYC Council Member



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