

REQUIRED READING

Spring Semester 2021 Newsletter



A Banner Year for Educational Choice

American families are emerging from the pandemic empowered with more educational choices than ever before. After more than a year of struggling with remote learning, many parents are seeking out alternatives such as private schools, charters, microschools, and homeschooling. In response to this demand, as of this writing, six brand new choice programs have passed in Arkansas, Indiana, Kentucky, Missouri, New Hampshire, and West Virginia. Another 14 existing programs have been expanded in 11 states, including a number in states where CSF partners operate:

New Hampshire: The New Hampshire legislature just passed a new education savings account (ESA) program, and Governor Sununu signed it into law as part of the new state budget. The new Education Freedom Accounts plan will allow families with incomes up to 300 percent of the poverty level to direct a portion of the funds spent by the state for their child's education to private school tuition, online learning programs, and other educational expenses as they choose. CSF already administers scholarships partly funded through the Granite State's Education Tax Credit program, and is gearing up to administer this new program, as well. In recent months, CSF assisted a coalition helping parents and the public understand how valuable the program would be.

(Continued on p. 2)

2,340

CSF Scholars graduating
8th grade nationwide

668

CSF Scholars graduating
8th grade in NYC

841

CSF alumni on track to
graduate 12th grade in NYC

Congratulations, CSF Class of 2021!

Congratulations to the 2,340 CSF Scholars nationwide who will graduate from eighth grade this month, along with thousands of CSF alumni graduating from high school and college. Here are a few of this year's grads.

Armando Hernandez

CSF School: Our Lady of Lourdes School, Upper Manhattan

His experience as a CSF Scholar: "Going to school [at Our Lady of Lourdes] is an amazing experience due to how everybody treats you. The teachers are, no doubt, some of the best and most patient teachers I've ever met in my life. My classmates are also very amazing. They treat you with kindness and are always open to everyone. I would like to thank everyone who supports this fund and helps kids like me. I will always remember what you did for me."



High School: Fordham Prep, Class of 2025

Taylor Howard

CSF School: The Learning Tree Cultural Preparatory School, Bronx



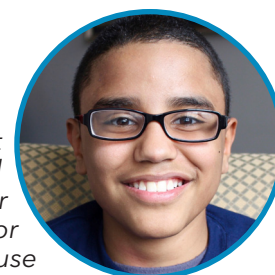
Her experience as a CSF Scholar: "I found I was able to grasp my full academic potential at The Learning Tree. In a short period of time, I had a school and friends that I was comfortable with. I am exceedingly thankful that I could attend The Learning Tree for my middle school years. I have learned that if you work hard, you can accomplish anything you put your mind to."

High School: Park East High School (a selective public high school), Class of 2025

Adrian Yrrizarry

CSF School: Manhattan Christian Academy, Inwood

His experience as a CSF Scholar: "In my four years at MCA, I was part of the student leadership team, I played for the school basketball team, and I've held honor roll for four years. Thanks to the Children's Scholarship Fund for giving me a scholarship to be able to attend MCA. Because of my success at MCA, I've now been given the opportunity to apply for high-achieving high schools, and I've gotten accepted."



High School: Mount St. Michael Academy, Class of 2025

THE CHILDREN'S SCHOLARSHIP FUND provides children of low-income families with tuition assistance in grades K-8, and supports expanding educational opportunities for all children.

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CSF in the News



"Education might be the one area where we have more freedom after this [pandemic] rather than less, because parents are tuned into what's happening and a lot of parents are saying, 'We need to have school choice. We need to have the option of sending our kids to private schools or homeschooling or doing whatever we need to do to get our children educated.' ...And who better than parents to decide what their child needs?" - CSF President Darla Romfo speaking with David Asman on *Fox Business Tonight*, March 30, 2021, one of five recent interviews on Fox News and Fox Business News, <http://bit.ly/CSFFoxBiz0330>



"In the wake of the pandemic, parents told us they want us to re-think and re-imagine education. New Hampshire families in need are grateful and relieved the Senate Finance Committee included education freedom accounts for low and moderate-income children." - CSF New Hampshire Executive Director Kate Baker Demers, WMUR, 05/26/21, <http://bit.ly/WMUR0521>



"What we have to remember is that every child learns differently and we have to create a model where every child can thrive." - Memphis Opportunity Scholarship Trust Executive Director Abbey Cowens, ChoiceMedia.tv's Story of the Day, 5/25/21, <http://bit.ly/MOSTChoiceMTV21>



"Now more than ever, we need schools of all types to flourish so all children have a better opportunity for an education that prepares them well for the future. And we need to entrust and empower parents with the resources to choose what works best for each child. The future depends on all our children having an equal opportunity to get a quality education." - CSF President Darla Romfo, *The 74*, 1/25/21, <http://bit.ly/74DMR2021>



"Maybe the curtain has been drawn back. Maybe we're going to do something that builds a system where the kids are the priority, and the money follows the child, and every child has access to a good education." - CSF President Darla Romfo, *KDKA Radio Morning Show*, 3/17/21, <http://bit.ly/CSFKDKA21>

A Banner Year for Educational Choice (cont.)

Missouri: A new Empowerment Scholarship Accounts program has passed both the state House and Senate and is waiting for the governor's signature. Under the program, donors to scholarship organizations would receive a tax credit for their contributions. CSF's St. Louis partner, the Today and Tomorrow Educational Foundation, is educating its families and other stakeholders about what this program could mean for thousands of needy families in the Show-Me State.

Montana: On the heels of the Supreme Court's *Espinoza v. Montana Dept. of Revenue* decision last June, the state's existing tax credit scholarship program has been greatly expanded, incentivizing donors to give much larger contributions for scholarships. Families using scholarships from CSF partner ACE Scholarships provided testimony to lawmakers about the value of being able to choose the best school for their needs.

Kansas: An existing tax credit scholarship program was expanded to remove a requirement that students must come from the 100 worst-performing schools and be in grades K-5. Now, low-income students in grades K-8 are eligible to apply. ACE Scholarships has been actively involved in grassroots efforts to connect parents with lawmakers through text and social media so they can make their voices heard.

Maryland: The BOOST voucher program has been expanded from \$6.5 million in scholarships to \$10 million. CSF Baltimore's staff and board have provided assistance to the program's administrators, drawing on their extensive experience managing scholarships.

CSF Partner Programs Around the Nation



ST. LOUIS

This May, Sharon Gerken, outgoing Executive Director of the Today and Tomorrow Educational Foundation, pictured with Today and Tomorrow Chair and CSF board member Kevin Short, received the St. Louis the King Award, the highest honor bestowed by the Archdiocese of St. Louis.



DENVER

During School Choice Week, Denver-based CSF partner ACE Scholarships invited Chris Gardner, the inspiration for the film, The Pursuit of Happyness, starring Will Smith, to talk virtually with students about keeping motivated and staying the course with their education.



OMAHA

At Children's Scholarship Fund of Omaha's recent CHANCE Luncheon, Board Chair Shaun McGaughey (second from left) and Executive Director Joel Long (second from right) presented Tal and Mary Joy Anderson Rising Star awards to scholarship recipients Bryana Saravia, Ledesma Puente, Tori Foster, and Garrett Pint.



MEMPHIS

CSF's Memphis partner, MOST, recently hosted a Senior Reception for scholarship recipients who are graduating high school. The Class of 2021 is pictured here with MOST Founder and Board Chair Robert M. Solmson.



NEW JERSEY

Frances D. O'Brien, Senior VP, Chubb Group and Division President, North America Personal Risk Services, was one of four female executives honored at Tri-County Scholarship Fund's 2021 Women of Achievement Celebration this April. She met with some Tri-County high school scholarship recipients at Mary Help of Christians Academy in North Haledon, NJ before the virtual event.



PHILADELPHIA

CSF Philadelphia's Champions for Change event in April included a discussion about Pennsylvania's tax credit scholarship program with: (top row, l-r) U.S. Congressman Dwight Evans; State Senator Scott Martin; State Senator Anthony H. Williams; (bottom row, l-r) Wells Fargo's VP of Community Development Stephen Briggs, and moderator Chris Bravacos of Bravo Group.

CSF Celebrates School Choice Week with Parent Power Webinar

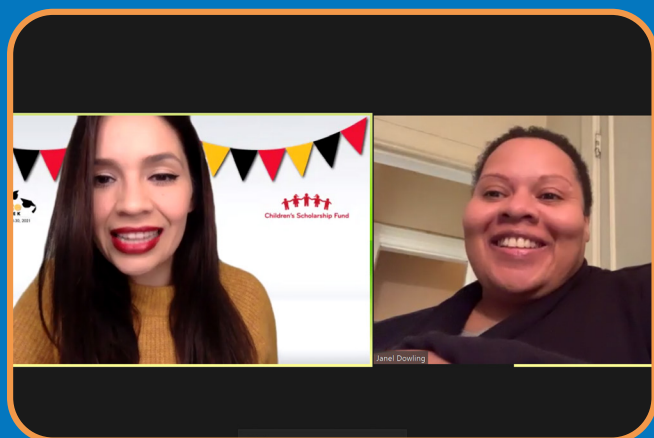
After several years of boisterous events with CSF families, schools, and supporters, CSF celebrated National School Choice Week virtually this year. More than 350 people tuned in live for Parent Power, a webinar featuring student testimonials, panel discussions with CSF parents and principals from participating schools, updates from CSF's program team, and a raffle drawing. The focus was on educating CSF parents about educational choice and affirming the educational choices they are making for their children.

Even though we couldn't be together in person, the enthusiasm was palpable as parents shared comments and questions in the Zoom chat throughout the evening.

For example, CSF Mom Marjorie, writing after the raffle winners were announced, said: "Thank you, CSF, for helping us provide an amazing education for our children, most especially during these unprecedented times. We are blessed and forever grateful. And congrats to the winners. We are all winners thanks to CSF!"

Another CSF parent, Briana, said, "Thank you for the much-needed advice during these unprecedented times." CSF Mom Jessica, responding to the principals' panel, shared, "Amazing! Good to know there are other great schools out there."

You can watch the Parent Power video at: <http://bit.ly/NYCNSCW21>.



CSF Mom Janel Dowling (r) was announced as one of the raffle winners by CSF Alumna Nicole Serrato, who emceed the webinar celebrating National School Choice Week.



CSF's Parent Power webinar included a panel discussion with CSF parents who shared their families' experiences using scholarships. Clockwise top left: Elaine Daly, Falinda Farley, CSF's Director of Scholarship Operations Marie Bathelmy, and Ruth Arias.



Triple the Fun!

A trio of CSF Scholars from the Bronx represented New York in School Choice Week's official kickoff video featuring students from every state in the union. Thank you, Azalea, Grayson, and Isla, for being the perfect ambassadors for CSF and New York!

School Choice Scholars Join CSF for Lunch and Learn



This April, we were honored to have Corey DeAngelis (top left) of the American Federation for Children and Cato Institute's Neal McCluskey (bottom right) join members of our President's Council and Young Leaders Board for a spirited discussion about their book, *School Choice Myths: Setting the Record Straight on Education Freedom*. Topics covered included how Covid has disrupted the educational landscape and led to new choice legislation, how the U.S. compares with other countries in terms of school choice, and numerous school choice studies and book recommendations. You can watch the Lunch and Learn here: <http://bit.ly/CSFLunchLearn21>. Also pictured: CSF President Darla Romfo (bottom left) and Director of Communications Elizabeth Toomey (top right).

Morgan Stanley Team Cycles for Scholarships

We couldn't be more grateful to the entire team of Morgan Stanley employees who cycled to raise funds for the Children's Scholarship Fund (CSF) with their Ride for CSF fundraiser in June. This generous group of more than 140 employees raised more than \$17,000 – enough to fund CSF scholarships for eight children in New York City.

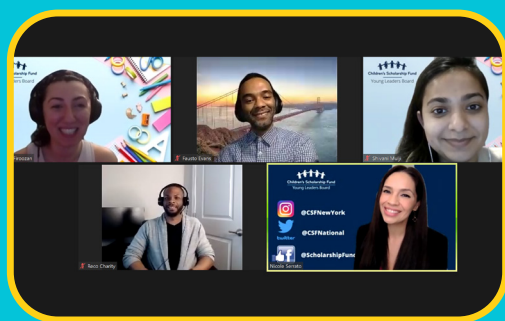
Special thanks to CSF Alum and President's Council member Jason Tejada and his colleague Mikaela Rix, who led this effort. In a Zoom gathering just before the cycling began, Jason introduced his co-workers to CSF, telling them that getting scholarships to attend private school was "a disruptor" for him and his sisters, placing them on a new path with better opportunities for the future.



CSF Alumnus Jason Tejada with his family outside Morgan Stanley's Times Square headquarters this fall when CSF was featured on the signage. Jason, a Morgan Stanley VP, co-lead a cycling event that raised more than \$17,000.

Young Leaders Board and President's Council Mentor Scholars and Alumni

Throughout the spring and summer, CSF Young Leaders (YL) Board and President's Council (PC) members have been sharing their advice and real-life experiences with CSF Scholars and alumni through a series of Zoom webinars on topics ranging from navigating the transition to high school and applying to college to interviewing and embarking on a career path.



Each webinar includes a question and answer session in which alumni (and sometimes their parents) can seek guidance. The series is being recorded and will remain accessible to all CSF alumni as a valuable resource throughout the year.

We greatly appreciate all the YL and PC members who generously taken the time to mentor CSF Scholars and alumni. Special kudos go to CSF Young Leaders Board Co-Chair Priscilla Habeeb Sankar and her team from Morgan Stanley and St. John's Prep junior Alisha Dookhie for spearheading a high school prep webinar for CSF seventh and eighth graders.

If you are interested in volunteering for future CSF alumni events, running a marathon, undertaking another fundraising challenge on behalf of CSF, or joining CSF's President's Council or Young Leaders Board, we would love to hear from you! Please contact Kurt Faulhammer at kfaulhammer@scholarshipfund.org.



Children's Scholarship Fund

8 West 38th Street, 9th Floor

New York, NY 10018

The Last Word

"The CSF scholarship brought a lot of stability to my life, the lives of my sisters, and the life of my family overall by helping fund our grade school education in one, solid school. It allowed us to grow academically and socially in a small, closely knit, and secure atmosphere."

- CSF Alumna Valentina Amate Perez, Yale University, Class of 2021



Children's Scholarship Fund
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