



# REQUIRED READING

Spring Semester 2023 Newsletter


## 25 Years of CSF: Marking the Birth of a Revolution


*"This year, lawmakers in seven states followed West Virginia and Arizona in creating broadly available education-choice programs. ... These historic changes are the culmination of a national movement that began a quarter-century ago, with the creation of the Children's Scholarship Fund."*


So said a recent article in *City Journal* by Dan Lips crediting the founding of Children's Scholarship Fund (CSF) 25 years ago with being the catalyst for the school choice gains we see today.


As Lips notes, when co-founders Ted Forstmann and John Walton launched CSF in June, 1998, they kicked off a movement that saw the parents of 1.25 million children applying for the first 40,000 scholarships. Fast forward to 2023, and CSF has provided scholarships worth \$989 million to more than 200,750 children nationwide.

Currently more than half of all states offer programs that fund children instead of systems, including programs administered by CSF partners in Arkansas, Louisiana, Missouri, Montana, New Hampshire, and Pennsylvania. Amid this progress, CSF continues its work of empowering children with scholarships while also educating our stakeholders about the value educational choice can have on individual lives and society as a whole. For example:

 The **New Hampshire** legislature recently expanded eligibility requirements for its Education Freedom Accounts (EFA) Program, and CSF families provided key testimony to lawmakers (see story below).

 **Pennsylvania's** Democratic Gov. Josh Shapiro has signaled support for the proposed Lifeline Scholarship Program, which would offer education freedom to families in failing school districts. CSF Philadelphia's Executive Director Keisha Jordan recently applauded the governor's support in a letter in the *Philadelphia Inquirer*.

 CSF of Omaha alumnus Jacob Idra and other CSF of Omaha alumni have been vocal proponents of the recently passed tax credit scholarship program in **Nebraska**.

 In recent months, CSF has been called upon to provide guidance to those launching new or expanded state programs in at least six states.

As Lips concludes, *"The national movement that Forstmann and Walton created has gone mainstream."*

## New Hampshire Expands Eligibility for EFA Program



CSF New Hampshire families and staff joined lawmakers to celebrate with Governor Chris Sununu as he signed a bill expanding eligibility for the New Hampshire Education Freedom Account (EFA) Program, which CSF administers.

CSF families and staff were on hand last month when Gov. Chris Sununu signed into law recently passed legislation expanding eligibility for the Education Freedom Account (EFA) Program, which CSF administers. Now families earning up to 350 percent of the federal poverty level (up from 300 percent) can participate in the program.

During hearings with lawmakers, CSF Scholars and parents provided key testimony about the program's value.

The EFA Program, now only in its second year, has grown to serve 3,300 children, and we anticipate more than 5,000 Granite State children will use EFAs in the 2023-24 school year.

**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



"The national movement that Forstmann and Walton created has gone mainstream." - Dan Lips, "Birth of the School Choice Revolution," *City Journal*, 6/19/23, [bit.ly/LipsCJ23](https://bit.ly/LipsCJ23)



"We need to have education freedom in this country so the dollars follow the child and the parents can make the decisions about how their child is educated." - CSF President Darla Romfo, *The Evening Edit*, 6/28/23, [bit.ly/DMREE062823](https://bit.ly/DMREE062823)



"As the opportunity divide deepens, Philly parents should be empowered to make decisions for their children." - CSF Philadelphia Executive Director Keisha Jordan, "Options Open," *Philadelphia Inquirer*, 6/27/23, [bit.ly/CSFPite062723](https://bit.ly/CSFPite062723)



"There are hundreds of private schools all over the city meeting the educational needs of all types of New York families for a fraction of what taxpayers spend on our government-run schools – and more families should have the opportunity to choose them." - CSF President Darla M. Romfo, "Let parents choose their kids' schools," *New York Daily News*, 1/26/23, [bit.ly/NYDN012623](https://bit.ly/NYDN012623)



"A lot of New Yorkers don't realize this diverse marketplace of relatively low-tuition private schools exists, but thousands of families have figured it out and voted with their feet," said Darla Romfo, president and CEO of Children's Scholarship Fund (CSF), a nonprofit that provides low-income families with scholarships to attend these schools." - Kerry McDonald, "The Not-So-Secret World of Low-Cost New York City Private Schools," *Forbes*, 3/2/23, [bit.ly/Forbes030223](https://bit.ly/Forbes030223)

## Congratulations, CSF Class of 2023

More than 2,400 CSF Scholars nationwide (including 577 students in New York City) graduated from eighth grade over the past few weeks and are preparing for high school. Thousands more CSF alumni have earned their high school diplomas and college degrees this graduation season.

CSF surveys and independent research have shown this year's CSF eighth graders are very likely to go on to graduate from high school on time. For example, last year's CSF New York alumni survey found that 97.8 percent of the alumni graduated on time, compared to New York City's average public school graduation rate of 83.7 percent. Since high school graduation is a key indicator of higher lifetime earnings, better health, and a longer life, that's worth celebrating! Congrats, Class of 2023!



CSF Scholar Donovan Ortega is one of more than 2,400 CSF Scholars graduating eighth grade this year. He will attend Cristo Rey Brooklyn High School in September.

# CSF Partner Programs Around the Nation



## MEMPHIS

Memphis Opportunity Scholarship Trust (MOST) honored graduating high school seniors at their 2023 Senior Reception this May. Members of the graduating Class of 2023 posed with MOST founder Robert Solmson (far left) and MOST Executive Director Abbey Cowens (far right).



## OMAHA

At Children's Scholarship Fund of Omaha's annual CHANCE Luncheon this May (l-r): CSF of Omaha Executive Director Joel Long with 2023 Tal and Mary Joy Anderson Rising Star Award winners Lucy Howell, Dorian Chambers, Nay Lar Paw, and Joaquin Rodriguez Salazar.



## NEW HAMPSHIRE

CSF New Hampshire recently launched an Education Freedom Ambassadors program. Pictured here are CSF parents and staff who gathered for the first training session.



## NEW JERSEY

Tri-County Scholarship Fund recently hosted its eighth annual Lawyers for Tri-County Awards Dinner. The Honorable Julien X. Neals of the U.S. District Court of New Jersey (center), one of four honorees, posed with scholarship recipients and alumni.



## ST. LOUIS

CSF's St. Louis partner, Today and Tomorrow Educational Foundation (TTEF), honored Kevin M. Short, a CSF Board Member and recent TTEF Chairman, at their Fourteenth Annual Archbishop's Gala this April. Pictured l-r: Honoree Kevin M. Short, TTEF Executive Director Julie Soffner, and TTEF Alumnus and University of Notre Dame running back Jeremiah Love.



## NEW YORK

Cortelyou Academy of Brooklyn, NY, where 20 CSF Scholars attended in 2022-23, celebrated its 40th anniversary at a recent gala, and presented Children's Scholarship Fund with a certificate commemorating the expanded opportunities CSF scholarships offer families. Pictured: Cortelyou Administrative Director Sophia Francis and CSF's Director of Scholarship Operations, Marie M. Bathelmy.

# CSF Hosts Palm Beach Event

This March, Children's Scholarship Fund (CSF) hosted an event in Palm Beach, Florida at the home of CSF Board Member Remy Trafelet and his wife, Missy, where we were joined by CSF Co-Chair Margot McGinness, Board Member Chris Halpin, and *The Wall Street Journal's* Dan Henninger.

Margot McGinness reminded guests of the original vision of CSF Co-Founders Ted Forstmann and John Walton, "The premise was that if you give parents a choice, you actually give children a chance, and I think what we've heard tonight is that if you give them a chance and a choice, then they really can thrive." Hearing the compelling life stories from scholarship alumni Jacob Idra and Hera Varmah made Ted and John's vision come alive.

Ideas have power and we are very grateful to Dan Henninger for the work he has done at *The Wall Street Journal*, which, as he noted, has published more than 600 editorials about school choice over the past four decades. CSF is honored to have been the focus of several of these pieces. Dan praised the great strides made with the recent passage of universal education savings accounts in Florida, Iowa, Utah, and Arkansas, while reminding us that the work continues.



From l-r: Lachlan Vogel; CSF Co-Chair Margot McGinness; Wall Street Journal columnist Dan Henninger, CSF President and CEO Darla Romfo, and CSF Board Member Remy Trafelet.



CSF of Omaha Alumnus Jacob Idra and Florida Tax Credit Scholarship Alumna Hera Varmah spoke at the event. Jacob and Hera also provided testimonials in support of new and expanded school choice programs that passed in Nebraska and Florida this year.

## MacroMinds Investment Symposium Highlights CSF

Children's Scholarship Fund was honored to be one of three education charities selected as beneficiaries of the Third Annual MacroMinds Symposium at the Times Center in New York City in June.

The investment symposium, founded by Dean Curnutt in 2019, is devoted to working with organizations that expand educational opportunities. During the event, which included talks with investment gurus Ross Stevens and Cliff Asness, attendees were treated to a video about CSF. We are very grateful to everyone at MacroMinds Foundation and to all the event sponsors for their generosity.



Members of CSF's Young Leaders Board and President's Council at the MacroMinds Symposium included (from l-r): Americo Arias, Abigail Fossaceca, Eli Joyner, and Thomas Rivera-Patterson.

## CSF Parents Travel to Albany for School Choice Week Celebration

During School Choice Week this year, a group of CSF New York parents joined forces with parents from across the state, traveling to Albany to share their stories with elected officials and raise awareness of the need for greater educational freedom for all New York children.

The parents met with State Senators, Assembly Members, and a representative from the Governor's office, soaking up some history and civics lessons along the way!

Pearlina Huggins, whose children are CSF Scholars at New Grace Education Center in Brooklyn, was part of a group who met with NY Senator Leroy Comrie. She said, "I just love the fact that we were able to sit down at the Senator's table to converse on why we chose our schools. It was good to see parents from different schools collaborating together to voice our opinions about why we should have a choice."

With the support of the National School Choice Awareness Foundation, a strong coalition of groups organized and participated in the event, including: Children's Scholarship Fund; New York Charter Schools Association; Families for NYC; the Empire Center for Public Policy; National Parents Union, and CSF's Buffalo partner, BISON Children's Scholarship Fund.



CSF parents from New York City joined forces with parents from other parts of the state to visit lawmakers in Albany as part of National School Choice Week on Tuesday, Jan. 24, 2023. Photo credit: Cindy Schultz for School Choice Week



CSF New York parents (from l-r: Alicia Robayo, Torrey Encarnacion, Patricia Saintelus, Pearlina Huggins, and Altagracia Perez-Fulgencio) and Natasha Cherry-Perez of the New York Charter School Association met with NY Senator Leroy Comrie of Queens.

## CSF Young Leaders and President's Council Raise Scholarship Dollars

This year, members of CSF's Young Leaders Board and President's Council have fundraised for scholarships while raising awareness for CSF's mission.

- This March, five members of Team CSF raised more than \$8,750 for scholarships by running in the United Airlines NYC Half Marathon! We are incredibly grateful to each of the runners: Josh Farkas, Kurt Faulhammer, Graelin Mandel, Max Masur, and Stephanie Palma for their commitment to helping more families give their children a better education.
- In May, the CSF Young Leaders Board's annual Party for a Purpose raised \$4,500 for scholarships while introducing friends and colleagues to the cause.
- Also this May, Young Leaders Board members Hilal Dahleh and Bobby Ritter hosted their own fundraiser, generating \$1,825 for New York City scholarships.



Young Leaders Board Co-Chair Max Masur was one of five Team CSF runners who raised more than \$8,750 for CSF scholarships in the NYC Half.

If you are interested in hosting a fundraising event or challenge, running a marathon, or joining the CSF President's Council or Young Leaders Board, we would love to hear from you! Please contact Kurt Faulhammer at 212-515-7106.



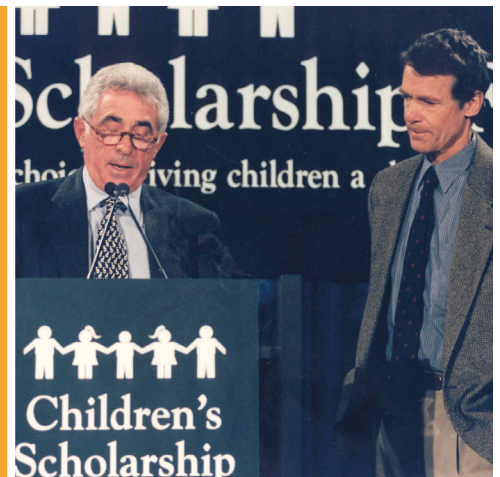
## Children's Scholarship Fund

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# The Last Word

*"John and I and all our partners across the country are thrilled to be helping out children who have so far been deprived of equal opportunity in education. We have found that there is a huge demand for access to quality education, and we hope that our support will help encourage a more competitive educational environment to benefit all of America's children."*

**- CSF Co-Founder Ted Forstmann at CSF's launch on June 9, 1998**



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