



Children's Scholarship Fund

REQUIRED READING

Fall Semester 2023 Newsletter

CSF and its Partners Hit \$1 Billion Milestone

Twenty five years after Ted Forstmann and John Walton founded Children's Scholarship Fund, a new milestone has been reached. CSF and its partners nationwide have awarded scholarships worth more than \$1 billion to more than 209,700 children.

This school year alone, CSF and its partners are empowering the families of more than 33,900 children to choose the schools or education settings that best meet their needs, giving them the educational foundation they will need to fulfill their potential. That total includes nearly 9,000 students using CSF scholarships for the first time this year.

From studies and alumni surveys, we know that CSF alumni are likely to graduate from high school on-time at higher rates than their peers who do not attend private schools (96.2 percent vs. 83.7 percent in New York City this year).

In addition, CSF parents report high levels of satisfaction both with CSF and their children's schooling. In fact, in a recent survey, 99.4 percent of CSF New York parents said their CSF scholarship helps them make the best educational choices for their child, and 95.3 percent rated their experience with CSF a 4 (14.7 percent) or 5 (80.6 percent) on a scale of 1-5.

2023-24:

CSF by the Numbers

33,945

CSF Scholars nationwide

8,980

new scholarships nationwide this year

209,736

CSF Scholars since inception

\$1.078

billion in CSF scholarships since inception

Education Savings Accounts:

A New Frontier for Choice

Education savings accounts (ESAs) are becoming a popular way for parents to meet their children's individual needs. Unlike traditional scholarships, ESAs give parents purchasing power to fund educational expenses such as homeschool curricula, educational software, and technology, in addition to private school tuition.



Missouri State Treasurer Vivek Malek (second from left) and Jermeicia Jackson, TTEF's MOScholars Program Manager, with two of this year's MOScholars. TTEF, CSF's St. Louis partner, offers MOScholars ESAs as well as other scholarships funded through charitable donations.

In 2023 alone, ten states expanded or passed new ESA programs, and more are expected to join the trend in 2024. Several CSF partners are at the forefront of implementing these programs and sharing best practices with others.

In **New Hampshire**, CSF has run the Education Freedom Account (EFA) program since it launched in 2021. In three years, the program has grown from serving 1,635 children to more than 4,700 Granite State children. Earlier this year, the New Hampshire legislature expanded income requirements so families earning up to 350 percent of the federal poverty level are eligible, up from 300 percent. CSF New Hampshire also manages scholarships funded through the Education Tax Credit program.

Missouri's MOScholars program offers low-income families ESAs (called Empowerment Scholarship Accounts) funded through donations for which businesses and individuals earn tax credits. CSF's St. Louis partner, Today and Tomorrow Educational Foundation (TTEF), is one of six scholarship granting organizations managing ESAs across the Show-Me State. This year, Today and Tomorrow is administering 435 ESAs and 5,576 other privately-funded scholarships for families in 11 counties in the St. Louis area.



The Fjeldsted family uses New Hampshire Education Freedom Accounts managed by CSF to homeschool their children.

Recently, **Utah** announced that its newly passed universal ESA program, Utah Fits All, will be managed by Colorado-based ACE Scholarships, which partners with CSF in Colorado, Kansas, Mississippi, Montana, Texas, and Wyoming. The Utah program is expected to help about 5,000 children in the 2024-25 school year.

THE CHILDREN'S SCHOLARSHIP FUND empowers families by providing children in need with scholarships, and by supporting expanded educational opportunities for all children.

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Message from the President

Dear Friends,

The Christmas season and its origins in Jesus' birth are a vivid reminder that hope can take root in an inhospitable world. While on the surface, history may seem to record nothing but the messy rise and fall of nations, under the surface there is always another story playing out in even the worst of conditions—a hopeful story akin to Christmas with human beings loving and sacrificing—inspired by something or someone bigger than themselves.

The people I encounter daily at the Children's Scholarship Fund reinforce that hope can still take root and grow in a hostile world. The ecosystem of donors, families, and a growing variety of educational providers is inhabited by people who are inspired by something bigger than themselves.

All of us at CSF are so grateful and humbled to be a part of this work and to help put the pieces together in this big puzzle that spells hope. If you are reading this note, you are a piece of this puzzle, helping to bring hope and light into a darkened world. Thank you so much for that.

May you and your family experience all of the blessings of the season.

Merry Christmas and Happy Holidays!

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Darla Romfo".

Darla M. Romfo
President

CSF Once Again Earns High Ratings from Charity Navigator and GreatNonprofits

Recently, CSF was awarded four stars by Charity Navigator for strong financial health and commitment to accountability and transparency, again achieving the highest rating possible. According to the charity watchdog, their four-star rating means a charity "exceeds industry standards and outperforms most charities in its cause."

We're also happy to report that CSF is once again on the GreatNonprofits' Top-Rated Nonprofit List, thanks to positive reviews from scholarship families, donors, and volunteers.

In one review, a CSF parent shared, "CSF is one of the best non-profits because it allows parents like me to be able to feel comfortable and safe with ensuring their children get the best education possible. I am thankful for them every day." Another parent wrote, "The Children's Scholarship Fund is a great nonprofit organization that helps low income and working families pay for private schools. I want all my children to receive the best education possible and this funding has allowed me to do so."

Visit the GreatNonprofits website to read more reviews and share your own:
<http://bit.ly/CSFgreatnonprofits>.

CSF Partner Programs Around the Nation

San Francisco Bay Area



This September, CSF's Bay Area partner The BASIC Fund celebrated its 25th Anniversary with a luncheon at St. Francis Yacht Club. Pictured are members of the late BASIC Fund co-founder Jim McCarthy's family (starting fourth from left): Molly McCarthy, Michael McCarthy, June McCarthy, and Karen Lynch with BASIC Fund Scholars and their chaperone.

Buffalo



CSF's Buffalo partner, the BISON Children's Scholarship Fund, hosted its Annual Celebration Luncheon in October. Pictured are (l-r): Lauren Ferranti, Hon. Christopher L. Jacobs, BISON President and Co-Founder, and Julie Spitz.

New Jersey



At Tri-County Scholarship Fund's 42nd Annual Awards Dinner in October, honorees Fr. Michael Tidd, O.S.B., Headmaster of Delbarton School (back row, second from left) and John J. Marchioni, Chairman, President and CEO of Selective Insurance Group, Inc. (second from right) posed with Tri-County Executive Director Prudence Pigott (center) and Tri-County scholarship recipients.

New Hampshire



Children's Scholarship Fund New Hampshire's Education Freedom Ambassadors, who raise awareness of Education Freedom Accounts with families in their communities, met with CSF President Darla Romfo (second from right) for a school choice training session this fall. Also pictured: CSF staffers Leanna Long, Shalimar Encarnacion, Wanda Caraballo, and Kate Baker Demers.

National



CSF President Darla Romfo served as a panelist for a school choice session at the State Policy Network's Annual Meeting in late August. Pictured from l-r: Shaka Mitchell of the American Federation for Children; Jason Bedrick of the Heritage Foundation; Jamie Buckland of West Virginia Families United for Education, Darla Romfo, and Charles Bufalino of the National Alliance for Public Charter Schools.

Philadelphia



This October, CSF Philadelphia's VP of Development Megan Jacob Staples (left) and President and CEO Keisha Jordan (right) met with Pennsylvania Secretary of Education Khalid Mumin, EdD in Harrisburg. During the trip, Keisha Jordan provided testimony to Pennsylvania's House Appropriations and Education Committees on the benefit of scholarships and the potential Lifeline Scholarship plan supported by Gov. Shapiro.

Donor Spotlight:

Honoring the Legacy of A. Norman Langhout



The Children's Scholarship Fund was saddened to hear of the passing of longtime supporter A. Norman Langhout (1931-2023) this August.

Mr. Langhout was born in Oak Park, Illinois, and served in the U.S. Army during the Korean War. After his military service, Mr. Langhout worked as a substitute mail carrier while studying at De Paul University. In that role, he delivered many interest and dividend checks, which sparked a lifelong interest in the stock market. He ended up moving to the Los Angeles area, where he enjoyed a 35-year career as a stockbroker. After retiring, Mr. Langhout continued his focus on the stock market, founding several investment groups including one that trains participants in stock selection.

Mr. Langhout's wife, Jeanne Goestenkers, shared that her late husband was a strong believer in the power of education. For 19 years, he was a volunteer at his local library branch, reading aloud to children every Friday afternoon. He began supporting Children's Scholarship Fund in 2014, and met with CSF staff regularly to learn how his contributions were helping to give children a solid educational foundation. He was deeply concerned that children have the opportunity to get a good education and a chance for a better future. On one of his CSF visits, Mr. Langhout met with CSF Alumna Nicole Serrato, who shared her story of how using a CSF scholarship changed her trajectory for the better. As he did with most of the young people he advised over the years, Mr. Langhout impressed upon Nicole the importance of saving, investing wisely, and the value of compound interest.

An inaugural member of CSF's Founders' Legacy Society, Mr. Langhout left an estate gift to CSF which will help fund scholarships, paying dividends in the form of improved outcomes for children for years to come. We are extremely grateful for Mr. Langhout's generosity and humbled to be part of his legacy.

If you would like to learn more about CSF's Founders' Legacy Society and including a gift to CSF in your estate plans, contact Michele Mitola at mmitola@scholarshipfund.org.

Team CSF Runs NYC Marathon to Raise Scholarship Dollars!



Congratulations to the five Team CSF members who ran the TCS New York City Marathon this fall to raise money for scholarships!

We are incredibly grateful to each of the runners: Myles Christian, Rebecca Dutton, Mary McCarthy, Evans Miller Hall, and Nicole Serrato. By taking on not only the marathon, but also the goal of raising money for scholarships, the Team CSF runners demonstrated true determination, stamina, and generosity!

While the team aimed to raise \$12,500, the runners far eclipsed their goal, bringing in more than \$22,500 in donations - enough to fund nine scholarships for low-income children in New York City.

If you are interested in running a marathon or half-marathon on behalf of CSF or volunteering for CSF in other ways, please contact Kurt Faulhammer at (212) 515-7106.



CSF Launches NYC Homeschool Pilot Program



Nasharai Raysor's sons, Akasha (left) and Raymond, use CSF homeschool scholarships to create a personalized learning plan that includes learning at home, classes at a nearby learning resource center, and robotics classes at their local library.

Recognizing the recent explosion in the number of families choosing to homeschool their children, CSF launched a pilot program this fall to begin offering homeschool scholarships in New York City.

As of this fall, CSF New York parents are using homeschool scholarships to pay for learning resource centers, on-line classes, and other educational expenses, opening up new ways to reimagine education for families whose choices were limited previously.

Nasharai Raysor of Brooklyn is homeschooling her sons, Raymond and Akasha. Several days a week, they attend both in-person and virtual classes offered by XyayX Institute, a black-owned and operated independent learning resource center. On the days the boys are not learning through XyayX, Nasharai uses homeschool lesson plans to teach them, and they also attend robotics classes at their local public library.

“We hop all over the place when it comes to learning. There’s so much to learn, and knowledge is infinite,” Nasharai told us recently. “When we received the scholarship, it really helped open up new learning opportunities for them.”

She added that purchasing curricula and teacher’s guides with CSF scholarships is very helpful because, “[I]t’s not like I have to be science teacher, math teacher, and PE teacher! It’s been life-changing for us.”

In addition to the new homeschooling program in New York City, many CSF partner programs offer homeschooling as an option for scholarship recipients, reflecting a significant post-pandemic growth in homeschooling. While it is difficult to pin down the exact number of children who are homeschooled, a recent *Washington Post* report estimated the number to be between 1.9 and 2.7 million nationwide, representing a 51 percent increase over the past six years.

Three CSF Participating Schools Earn Blue Ribbon Status

This fall, three CSF participating schools in New York City were recognized as Blue Ribbon Schools by the U.S. Department of Education based on their “overall academic performance or progress in closing achievement gaps among student groups on assessment.”

Epiphany School, St. Stephen of Hungary School, and Transfiguration School, all Catholic schools in Manhattan, also had the distinction of being the only non-public schools in New York State to earn blue ribbon status in 2023. Nationwide this year, 353 schools of all types were awarded blue ribbons.

We are pleased that CSF families have the opportunity to choose schools such as these for their children. For example, at Transfiguration School in Chinatown, students enjoy a rich curriculum that incorporates Mandarin lessons for all students, as well as weekly instruction in art, music, and physical education.



CSF supporter Frayda Levy met a group of CSF Scholars at Transfiguration School in Chinatown this year. Frayda told us she was amazed at the positive and loving atmosphere of the school. She noted it was clear how happy and engaged the children are in learning.



Children's Scholarship Fund



The Last Word

“The EFA Program helps my daughters attend a school that meets their unique needs and in which they are thriving. It is a great relief that the program will continue to support educational options that work for my kids and for so many other families across the state.”

- Amy Shaw, CSF New Hampshire parent who intervened in a lawsuit against the Granite State's Education Freedom Account Program. Thanks to the Institute for Justice, the lawsuit was dismissed in November and the program was found not to violate the state constitution.



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