



MOVEMENT & STRATEGY

MESSAGE FROM THOMAS

I just marked my one-year anniversary at the helm of Children's Defense Fund-California (CDF-CA). The time passed quickly while the work went deep and wide and the team at CDF-CA dug in for children, youth, and families. I want to take a moment to reflect on the past year and lift up that work. While I understood what CDF was about before becoming a part of our team, I have been continuously impressed by how we engage in the fight for racial justice and where—it is both complex and straightforward, discreet and far-reaching, radical and vital.

As an organization, we are in the middle of a three-year strategic plan to pursue a movement-building strategy that will bring people together to advance child-centered public policy, informed by racial equity and the lived experience of children and youth. This will complement CDF's legacy of policy and advocacy and leverages the 25th anniversary of CDF Freedom Schools® marked in 2020, the 30th anniversary of the Black Community Crusade for Children in 2021, and CDF's 50th anniversary taking place this year, in 2023. This planning represents both a slight shift to our work as well as a return to our roots as an organization committed to making children a national priority. Our 2022 work reflects this vision.

I am proud of the work of the past year, and to step forward with the CDF-CA team in both new and trusted ways to help create a world where Black, Brown, and poor youth and children have the ability to thrive.

Thomas Harvey
Executive Director



ON THE ROAD

CDF Freedom Schools® Site Visits

Key to our ongoing policy advocacy is our relationships with the families, hosts, and teachers at our *CDF Freedom Schools* sites. We chose to go deeper and build on those relationships, holding multiple *CDF Freedom Schools* program events over the spring and summer of 2022. These included more localized outreach, participatory research, budgeting exercises, and listening sessions designed to align our policy advocacy more closely with the communities we work with, and who are most directly impacted by the systems causing them harm on a daily basis. That work resulted in our 2023 policy agenda, which we presented to our *CDF Freedom Schools* program partners in November.

We will continue to be on the road with *CDF Freedom Schools* program partners this year through movement-building strategies aimed to build power for child-centered public policy. This will include multiple strategy-setting convenings with families, partners, and program facilitators, and collaborating on new issue-based campaigns that reflect the needs, experiences and expertise of those impacted by the systems we seek to transform.



Reverend O. Leon Wood, director of the CDF Freedom Schools site at Long Beach School, at the CDF-CA hosted listening session.



California Deputy Superintendent of Public Instruction, Sarah Neville Morgan (above; second from left), met with the team (Yasmine Imani-McMorrin, Education Equity Director, far left; Thomas Harvey, Executive Director, second from right; and Michael Ball, Education Equity Policy Associate, far right) when we visited the CDF Freedom Schools site at The Rose Family Center in Sacramento in July. She also took time to read to the CDF Freedom Schools scholars (below).



TEAM UPDATES

YOUTH JUSTICE

Our Youth Justice work strives to disrupt and dismantle the power of juvenile probation in LA and California while driving investment in the communities, families, and young people most impacted by incarceration. In 2022, we celebrated several wins around shifting funding, divestment, and oversight.

- Defund \$4M of school-based probation's budget and redirect it to diversion and youth development programs
- Eliminate Probation's Citation Diversion Program and its budget of \$2.3 million
- Advocate for the July launch of the Department of Youth Development with an appropriate budget of \$26M. Prior to the Board of Supervisors voting on the county's budget, we connected with every board office to share [this document](#)
- Continue to influence and educate the Probation Oversight Commission by telling their stories at a POC-hosted panel around the harm of incarceration

In 2022, we also organized, pushed, and achieved historic approval for increased oversight and inspections around [conditions of confinement](#). A large part of our year was focused on demanding that probation cops stop pepper spraying youth and children. In spite of state and local law forbidding the practice, probation cops have used chemical munitions against youth and children more than 200 times. Listen here to Director of Youth Justice, Milinda Kakani, who was asked to speak on KPCC's AirTalk about the illegal and immoral use of chemical agents against children.



Advocating with partners at the LA County Board of Supervisors for funding to support Youth Justice Reimagined.

TEAM UPDATES

HEALTH JUSTICE

Continued

Health Justice focused on expansion of the CA Community Schools Partnership Program, a program whose original legislation was partially co-authored and championed by CDF-CA. This program has grown beyond our initial vision, adding another \$1.1B and an extension of the program until June 2031.

Our advocacy efforts and local outreach activities helped to support the Chula Vista Unified School District to submit a successful Community Schools planning grant, and we helped other municipalities get educated and prepare to apply for grants through sharing best practices in an issue brief, holding a kick-off event, and hosting two webinars on Community Schools and trauma-informed health and education services in March and September of last year. We facilitated monthly meetings with LA advocates to support LAUSD Community School efforts, built a small coalition to advocate for better inclusion of early education and child care, and co-sponsored legislation to expand the program.

Our health work also positioned us to successfully lead four statewide coalitions pushing for policies that prevent and treat toxic stress. This all leads to an agenda in 2023 which will build on the momentum we are creating with our health strategies and the growing influence CDF-CA has to demand our state keeps babies, children and youth at the center of decisions that require investments in health and well-being.



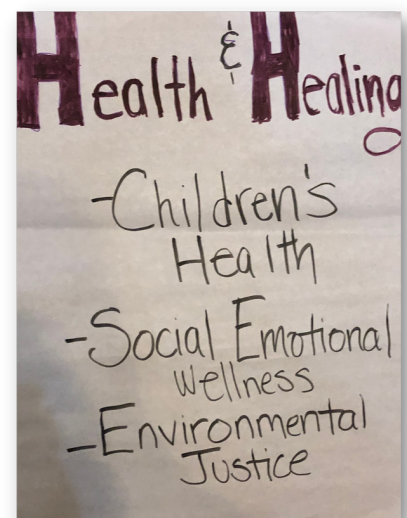
COMMUNITY SCHOOLS: HOW THEY CAN SUPPORT YOUR COMMUNITY

Join us at a webinar and hear about the billions of dollars in funding available to provide accessible, community-designed approaches to serve families and children from birth to graduation. REGISTER TODAY!

Thursday, March 17
11 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.

Logos for: children's defense fund california, United Way, and United Ways of California.

The CDF-CA hosted webinar on Community Schools was highly attended and supported learning across the state about this new opportunity for California schools.



At CDF Freedom Schools site listening sessions, community members consistently provided input on the importance of community health which has helped to inform our advocacy agenda.

TEAM UPDATES

ECONOMIC JUSTICE

Continued

We were rebuilding our Economic Justice team in 2022 but still managed to provide some big wins for kids and families in California because of our leadership.

Our work here is based on strategic partnerships as well as our ability to be a leading voice among fellow advocates who see economic justice as a key piece to lifting children out of poverty in California for good.

In 2022, we re-established CDF-CA's active presence in the CA Guaranteed Income Community of Practice to support CBOs to successfully apply for the new state guaranteed income pilot program. CDF-CA was active in strategy sessions to identify ways to expand and strengthen the pilot program through state legislative, budget, and/or administrative advocacy in the new year.

We were an important voice in the California Work & Family Coalition, as part of the successful effort to pass SB 951 to make paid family leave and state disability insurance more accessible to California's families. Our leadership on the CalEITC Coalition resulted in the final state budget agreement that included a number of ongoing investments we championed including:

- Expanding the Young Child Tax Credit income threshold to \$0
- Creating a Foster Youth Tax Credit to provide a \$1,000 credit to young adults who were in the foster care system
- Increasing funding for Free Tax Preparation, Outreach, and Education to \$20 million annually for two years and \$10 million ongoing.



A Twitter post after a rally prior to the first hearing of the state Assembly's Select Committee on Poverty and Economic Inclusion in Sacramento.

TEAM UPDATES

EDUCATION EQUITY

Continued

Our Education Equity team continues to target place-based work to inform the broader advocacy and systems changes we seek for all children in California. For over 5 years, that has largely involved building power among parents in Long Beach Unified School District by hosting data walks, LCAP forums, and regularly engaging with key district staff around issues that parent voices have raised. In 2022, our team focused on facilitating deeper and more meaningful relationships between community members and the district by engaging both through technical assistance and Town Halls that targeted causes we support—the effects of the budget process, reimagining school safety through the elimination of policing in schools, Black student achievement, and improved wellness resources for all district students. This support to both community and decision-makers in the district led to continued investment in Black students and increased wellness resources.

In the past year, as we have done for over 3 years, we also directed place-based efforts to continue interaction and monitoring of the Los Angeles County Office of Education (LACOE). Our work with LACOE braided with our Youth Justice work as our teams joined to hold LACOE publicly accountable during meetings of the Probation Oversight Commission for teaching, resources and learning conditions in juvenile halls and camps.

During our *CDF Freedom Schools* site listening sessions last year, the Ed team listened to the needs of *CDF Freedom Schools* program communities to shape and deepen our advocacy heading into 2023. We identified a need for a resource bank to assist community power-building with tools dedicated to advocacy capacity building, assistance with system navigation, and overall political education. We plan to begin developing this resource bank in 2023 with input from our community partners to ensure we include the most useful and relevant information.



CDF-CA co-hosted a town hall for the Long Beach Unified School District on school counseling as part of ongoing work to improve access to mental health resources in LBUSD.

NATIONAL UPDATE

CDF-CA enjoys a robust and exciting partnership with our fellow CDF state and national offices. The national office in Washington D.C. engages us and supports our work through multiple programs and activities from which we draw inspiration. CDF President and CEO, Rev. Dr. Starsky Wilson, shared highlights of 2022 with us recently. We are excited to pass them on to our California constituents.

Underlined text denotes hyperlinks

- Our *CDF Freedom Schools* program was awarded a [National Endowment for the Humanities](#) grant for a two-week summer institute for educators entitled [Centering Youth Agency in the Civil Rights Movement](#); launched an expanded after-school program model; and is poised for pre-Covid, historic levels of service in 2023.
- With a focus on leadership development and organizing, we launched the [Practicing Resurrection](#) capacity-building program for faith leaders which led directly to our hosting the [Proctor Institute for Child Advocacy Ministry](#) last summer at the re-opened CDF Alex Haley Farm.
- CDF was awarded a [National Basketball Association “Season of Giving”](#) grant to relaunch the Black Student Leadership Network (BSLN) for college-age young adults. We will launch a pilot program to cultivate student leaders within our existing network and engage them in a specialized curriculum, focusing particularly on those attending Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) and in key areas where CDF plans to expand our work.



CDF's Black Student Leadership Network gathered at CDF Haley Farm in Clinton, TN, in December, with more than 60 students from colleges and universities across the country.

COMING SOON



ChildWatch 2023

After a year off, CDF-CA announces the return of ChildWatch, a signature legacy event that focuses on the state of children in California. Keep an eye out for more information soon.

THANK YOU!

The program work of Children's Defense-California highlighted here was sponsored in 2022 by the following foundations:

*Annenberg Foundation
Ballmer Group
California Community Foundation
The California Endowment
California Wellness Foundation
Casey Family Programs
Edward A & A.I.O Shay Foundation
Liberty Hill
Weingart Foundation*