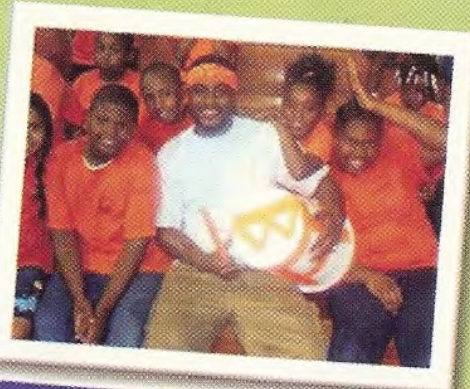


Seigle Avenue

Freedom School Partners

Annual Report
2009 - 2010



Celebrating Ten Years of Growing Together

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+ over 50 Freedom School interns, bus drivers, and many community volunteers



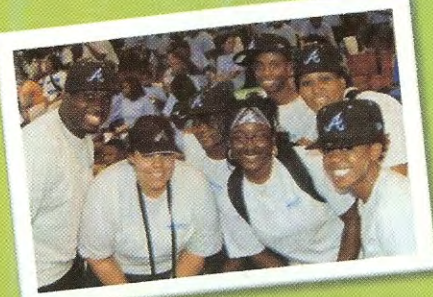
Program Locations

Seigle Point After-School Program

110 Winding Path Way
Charlotte, NC 28204

Summer 2009 Freedom School Sites

- *Avondale Presbyterian Church
- *Billingsville Elementary /
Myers Park Presbyterian Church
- *Christ Lutheran Church
- *Druid Hills Elementary/
A Child's Place
- *First Presbyterian Church
- *Highland Renaissance Academy/
Covenant Presbyterian Church
- *Johnson C. Smith University
- *Myers Park United Methodist Church
- *Seigle Avenue Partners/
Elevation Church



A Letter from Mary Nell McPherson Executive Director, Freedom School Partners



Dear Friends,

This year we celebrated our tenth anniversary. It is hard to believe that in the course of a decade we have grown our after-school program to serve almost eighty students who live in the area once known as Piedmont Courts. We have witnessed the transformation of this public housing project into the new Seigle Point community. Invited by the Charlotte Housing Authority to be the onsite provider of after-school and summer programs in this new community, we now reside in a beautiful, state-of-the-art facility. We also rejoice that our CDF Freedom Schools® have grown to serve 500 children throughout the city. But our work is far from done. The need in Charlotte is much greater.

Research shows that summer learning loss is the largest factor in the achievement gap for low-income children. Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools recently reported that the poverty rate in our school system has exceeded 50%, which means that more than 50,000 elementary and middle school children need quality summer learning opportunities.

This fact brought us to an exciting new phase of our mission. Freedom Schools really make a difference in summer learning. We knew in our hearts that reading good books every day and being inspired by college student role models would make a positive impact on elementary and middle school students. Now we have exciting preliminary research to support just that. Please read the article about our promising findings later in this report.

On this tenth anniversary we have much to celebrate. We are no longer just "Seigle Avenue," although we are thankful for our history in that community. We have preserved that history in our new name "Freedom School Partners" and have expanded our vision to serve more than forty CMS high-poverty schools. This mission will require many partners: colleges and universities, Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools, houses of worship, foundations, corporations, and many, many volunteers.

We are thrilled that the Leon Levine Foundation has graciously bestowed a \$300,000 gift over three years to help create a sustainable model for the expanded CDF Freedom Schools® program.

Now more than ever, we need your support of resources, gifts, time, and talents to move our mission forward. We value your partnership as we work to close the achievement gap and create a more hopeful future for many of Charlotte's children.

In Partnership,

Mary Nell McPherson

McPherson honored as Community Leader by Mecklenburg Ministries



Mecklenburg Ministries honored Mary Nell McPherson with their 2009 Community Leader Award at a well-attended breakfast at Park Road Baptist Church. Mecklenburg Ministries is a non-profit organization of 88 member congregations that work to foster interfaith cooperation, promote racial and ethnic understanding, and address social needs in Mecklenburg County.

In her introduction, 2008 Award-recipient Rabbi Judy Schindler spoke to Mary Nell's faith, service, leadership, and advocacy on behalf of Charlotte's children. "[Mary Nell] has given all of us the direction we need so that more and more of us can open our doors during the slow days of summer, to inspire those most in need to learn- as we dance with them, sing with them, read with them, creatively study with them, engage in social action projects together and help our most fragile youth understand that, with the paddles of education and learning in their hands, they have an abundance of professional or personal destinations before them."

Johnson C. Smith University hosts Fourth Annual CDF Freedom Schools® Summer Jubilee

Over nine hundred scholars; Thirteen sites; Largest event to date

Johnson C. Smith University co-sponsored the 4th Annual Carolina Children's Defense Fund (CDF) Freedom Schools® Jubilee and Day of Social Action on Friday, July 10, 2009, in the Jack S. Brayboy Gymnasium. The Jubilee officially launched the CDF Freedom Schools® summer literacy program, which encourages children grades K-8 to develop a lifelong love of reading.



With 968 scholars in attendance, Dr. Ronald L. Carter, President of Johnson C. Smith, spoke on the importance of literacy and social action. He encouraged the scholars never to be afraid to dream. Dr. Carter emphasized that they should embrace reading so that they too could make a difference--even at a young age.



The event kicked off with Harambee, which means "all for one" in Swahili, and included social action chants, dancing, cheering and singing from the 13 sites represented, which included all 9 Charlotte-area sites, plus 4 other sites from North and South Carolina. Tonia Bendickson, WBTV news anchor, and Allen Davis, intern at Billingsville Elementary, hosted the second part of the program.

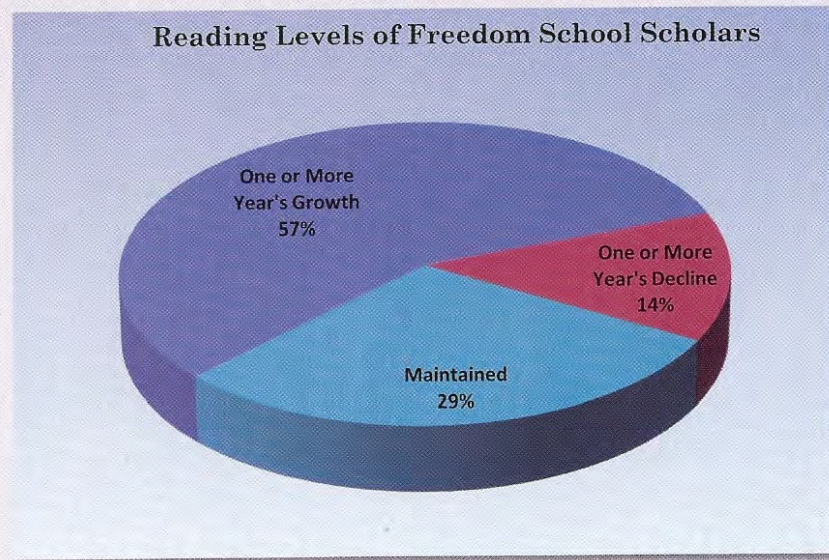
The celebration concluded with an advocacy demonstration. Scholars marched with school banners on the track of JCSU's Irwin Belk Complex to represent and raise awareness of the nearly nine million uninsured children and pregnant women in America. Bank of America and Duke Energy also co-sponsored this annual event.

Pilot Study Results Surprising, Promising

Freedom School Students Make Gains in Summer Reading

Last summer, the Institute for Social Capital at UNC-Charlotte conducted a pilot research project on the reading ability of students before and after Freedom School. The results of this pilot project are very promising - certainly worth expanding the study and worth sharing the news.

The Institute's research shows that nearly 60% of children increased their reading scores, and another 29% maintained their reading levels. This means that more than 85% of the children in Freedom Schools do better – significantly better – than those children who do not participate in quality summer learning programs.



These excerpts from the *Conclusions* section of the UNC-Charlotte-Institute for Social Capital Pilot Evaluation, illustrate promise and the need for further study:

- *"The data obtained through reading assessments of children in grades 2-5 clearly demonstrate that Freedom School had a positive impact with regard to reading. It is beyond the scope of this evaluation to assign a cause for these results; we cannot know with certainty why the program helped approximately 60% of students grow in their ability to read.*
- *...clearly there is a pattern that emerges from this data showing that Freedom School is a place where many students improve their ability to read.*
- *The vast majority of students not only reported a positive experience with Freedom Schools, but students also believed that their reading had improved.*
- *In conclusion, the results from this first pilot evaluation of Seigle Avenue Partners Freedom School are extremely promising, particularly in regard to the ability of the program to enhance reading skills among inner-city children."*

Highlights from a newsworthy year

"... a shining example nationally of sustainability and community support for summer learning and out-of-school time programming for at-risk youth."

-Marian Wright Edelman
 Founder & President, Children's Defense Fund



6B Wednesday, November 25, 2009

FREEDOM
 At the end of the year, the children of the Freedom Schools summer program are among more than 200 who will visit the Children's Defense Fund Freedom Schools summer program for story time.

Doctors, lawyers, lawmakers, judges, soldiers, publishers, and radio and TV newscasters are among more than 200 who will visit the Children's Defense Fund Freedom Schools summer program for story time.

Bringing well-known and accomplished people to visit each day as guest readers is a way to show about 300 children that their future career opportunities are varied, and reading can help them find success in any field.

They'll hear that message this year from people such as former Mayor Harvey Gantt and Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools chief Peter Gorman.

A CONVERSATION ON FAITH by Ken Garfield

It hit me at the Freedom School finale.

For three summers now, I've been writing stories and snapping pictures, hoping to help you see what a blessing this ministry is to these South Tryon kids.

They learn to appreciate who they are and what they can accomplish. The scholars, as they are rightfully called, also get to devour Sheela's yummy breakfasts, read like crazy and finish with fried chicken and a talent show in Jubilee Hall. Check out the photo inside today's *Cornerstone*.

But something bigger and better dawned on me during the high-decibel finale. This isn't just a blessing for the 65 kids who get to come each summer to reach for life's rainbows. It's a blessing for the rest of us - to be able to nurture these kids, and to help them grow up to show us all a better way.

High fives for Freedom School.

Lord knows this fragile world needs a better way.

As I stared at the flags of many nations that hang in Jubilee Hall, and as I looked out the window that opens onto our city, it hit me. We're all in this together.

Not far from the flags and the window was a homemade Freedom School banner that captures a sacred truth about this ministry and the children who go forth now from this place:

Teamwork makes the dream work.

LOCAL LUMINARIES HELP WITH SUMMER STORY TIME

By KAREN SULLIVAN

Some of the city's best-known leaders have set aside time this summer to enjoy storybooks.

Doctors, lawyers, lawmakers, judges, soldiers, publishers, and radio and TV newscasters are among more than 200 who will visit the Children's Defense Fund Freedom Schools summer program for story time.

Bringing well-known and accomplished people to visit each day as guest readers is a way to show about 300 children that their future career opportunities are varied, and reading can help them find success in any field.

They'll hear that message this year from people such as former Mayor Harvey Gantt and Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools chief Peter Gorman.

At Highland Renaissance Academy last week, one group heard a familiar name. Twila Adams, a disabled Army veteran and board member for Paralyzed Veterans of America who rode a scooter onto the stage.

"To do it make the children aware of the things they can achieve no matter what the disability," said Adams, who stood proudly to accept a thank-you card and to hug the child who gave it to her for reading "Why Mosquitoes Buzz in People's Ears: A West African Tale."

Freedom Schools is modeled after the Freedom Summer Project, in which college students taught poor children in Mississippi and registered their parents to vote in 1964. It is a tuition-free national after-school and summer enrichment program for grade-school students that



Army veteran Twila Adams reads "Why Mosquitoes Buzz in People's Ears."

Viewpoint Pursuing a bold vision in tough times

Judy Schuller was smiling. Her student, Christ Lutheran Church, and Freedom Schools President Michael Marston were dancing, or something like it, at First Presbyterian at the same moment.

They were two of the 200 community leaders who volunteered to read across the country this summer. And their appearances were another step in the growing presence of the Freedom Schools summer program in Charlotte, which has expanded from about 50 children in about 2007 over the past six years. Organizers hope that's just the beginning.

Freedom Schools are summer and after-school programs that aim to encourage reading, self-worth and a love of learning. Studies show that children, particularly low-income children, learn when they spend their time reading and other activities that engage their brains. One study said summer reading loss is the single biggest factor in the achievement gap between poor children and their peers. So reading is a big part of the curriculum.

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\$300,000 will help kids learn over the summer

Summer reading at the Freedom Schools gets a boost from Levine Foundation.

By FRANCO ORDOÑEZ

The Leon Levine Foundation announced Tuesday that it is donating \$300,000 to help build summer-school programs to help at-risk kids.

The grant, to be distributed over three years, supports Freedom School Partners, which provides after-school literacy programs to disadvantaged children living in high poverty areas.

Mary Neil McPherson, director of Freedom School Partners, said learning loss over the summer is the biggest reason for the achievement gap between low- and high-income students.

Freedom School Partners is the new name of Seigle Avenue Partners, which changed its name Tuesday at its 10-year anniversary celebration. The program provides nine summertime Children's Defense Fund Freedom Schools for Charlotte students living in poverty.

McPherson said studies show that at-risk students can lose almost half a year's learning over the summer months when they're not reading and writing. A recent study conducted by Freedom Schools in Charlotte, however, she said that 60 percent of students participating in Freedom Schools increased their reading levels and 30 percent maintained their reading level.

"Their results are outstanding," said Tom Renne, executive director of the Leon Levine Foundation. "We did a \$300,000 investment to help expand program in Charlotte."

Clay Grubb, board president, said their goal is to help the program reach 5,000 students in the next five years. They also hope to grow from nine schools to some 43 summer programs near Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools in high-poverty areas.

The Charlotte Observer

MONDAY • JULY 6, 2009 • 75c

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INSPIRING LITERACY THROUGH SUMMER CAMP



Alisha Ramin, 9; Nadazia Price, 10; and Nyjah Morris, 8, formed a "lighthouse" Tuesday morning during a game called Camp. More than 500 children are active in the program.

"[Seigle Avenue Partners] grassroots effort and the public-private partnership is a model of community support for education for all our children"

-Peter Gorman, Superintendent Charlotte-Mecklenburg Public Schools

Thanks to our Contributors

10/1/08- 9/30/09

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\$10,000 to \$24,999

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Every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of our donor list. If you have made a donation to Seigle Avenue Partners and do not see your name, please call Tracy Montross, 704.371.4922.

\$1000 to \$2499

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Celebrating Ten Years

Seigle Avenue Partners to Become Freedom School Partners

As part of its ten year anniversary celebration on November 24, 2009, Seigle Avenue Partners announced it has taken a new name, Freedom School Partners, and has plans for a major program expansion. The event, attended by over 200 community partners and volunteers, was held at Myers Park United Methodist Church. Children's rights advocate Marian Wright Edelman delivered the keynote address. Edelman, Founder and President of the Children's Defense Fund, which operates the larger CDF Freedom Schools® program, called the Charlotte program a "wonderful bellwether" for the national effort.

Executive Director Mary Nell McPherson said the new name is meant to emphasize the group's growing role beyond the Seigle Avenue community, where it was founded in 1999. By 2014, McPherson said, the newly named organization hopes to operate a Freedom School in at least 43 Mecklenburg communities -- one in each neighborhood where Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools has a "FOCUS school." (FOCUS schools receive additional resources because of high poverty rates). Each Freedom School would serve up to 100 children. To spearhead the expansion, the Leon Levine Foundation announced a \$300,000 gift to the organization.



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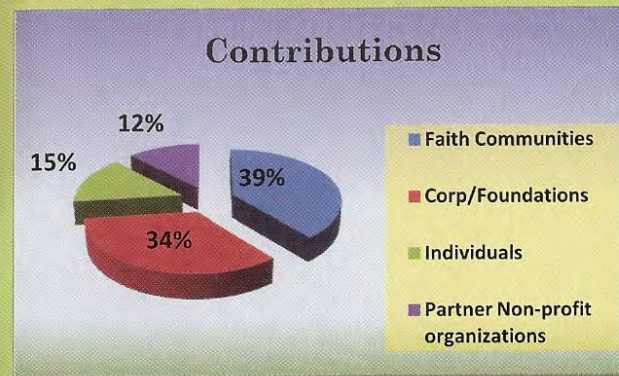
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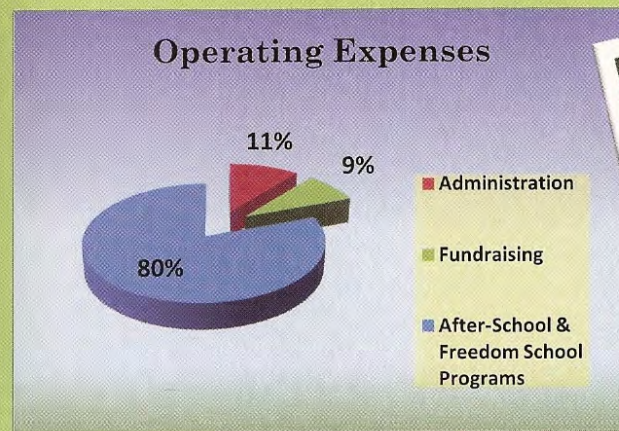
Financial Summary

October 1, 2008 – September 30, 2009



Funding Sources

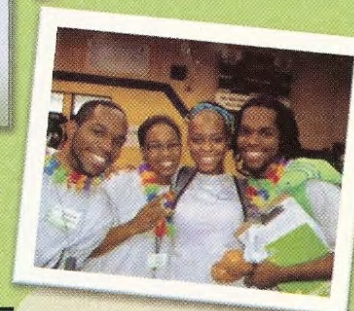
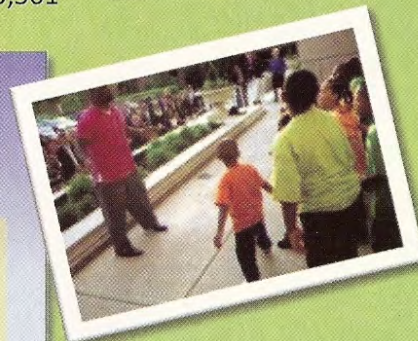
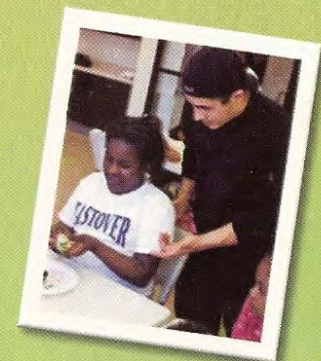
Faith Communities	\$339,006
Corp/Foundation	\$293,873
Individuals	\$126,711
Partner Non-profit organizations	\$105,911
Total	\$865,501



Operating Expenses

Administration	\$94,575
Fundraising	\$76,471
Programs	\$707,909
Total	\$878,955

A copy of the complete audited financial statement is available upon request.



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