



# 2019 ANNUAL REPORT



Freedom  
School  
Partners

[freedom-school-partners.org](http://freedom-school-partners.org)



\*MORE THAN  
**85%**  
OF SCHOLARS GAINED  
OR MAINTAINED IN  
THEIR READING ABILITY  
DURING FREEDOM  
SCHOOL

\*Measured by Ekwall-Shanker Reading Inventory administered by UNC Charlotte Center for Adolescent Literacies.



Dear Friends,

Freedom School Partners experienced a year of incredible growth and transition in 2019. Together with our faith, community and corporate partners, we served 1,320 children at 18 Freedom Schools.

In addition, we piloted the Freedom School Partners Academy, a secondary scholars program with 18 Freedom School graduates and current high school students, to help bridge the gap between our summer program and the college years. This program will continue in 2020 and enable

Freedom School to deepen its year-round connection to our families and partners and create a pipeline of scholar alumni who will become future Servant Leader Interns.

We also said farewell to Freedom School founder and longtime Executive Director Mary Nell McPherson who retired in 2019. Mary Nell's energy and passion have been felt throughout this organization and the City of Charlotte, and I would like to thank her for 20 years of dedicated service on behalf of our community's children and their families.

Freedom School was evaluated by UNCC's Center for Adolescent Literacies for the 11th year. Here are a few data point highlights from the 2019 summer program:

- More than 85% of Freedom School scholars gained or maintained in their reading ability, compared to a typical loss of 2-3 months.
- Our average scholar daily attendance was 86%, which translates to more than 1,100 children who were safe, well-fed and engaged with positive role models.
- 156 Servant Leader Interns representing 44 colleges and universities inspired our children to be their best selves; 30% of these young people were first generation college students.
- 1,778 volunteers contributed 9,397 hours of service to support Freedom School scholars.
- 60% of parents participated in engagement opportunities including workshops and volunteer projects.

FSP connect, our new online portal for parents, interns and FSP staff was implemented during the summer of 2019. This new technology streamlines the way Freedom School manages scholar registration, family communication and site management to better serve our scholars.

Every summer it is our goal to focus on our core mission to promote the long-term success of children by preventing summer learning loss through igniting a passion for reading and inspiring a love of learning. Each day of Freedom School, while scholars work hard to expand their reading skills, Servant Leader Interns are also teaching them how to maximize their full potential and learn how they can make a difference in themselves, their communities, their country and their world with hope, education and action.

I have just begun my tenure as the new CEO and Executive Director of Freedom School Partners, and I can't wait to see what 2020 holds for this important community organization. The future is bright for Freedom School and our scholars, and I look forward to leading this agency into the future and solidifying its place in the summer learning and literacy landscape in Charlotte. Thank you for your continued support and involvement in this important work. We look forward to writing the next chapter of Freedom School with you and exploring new opportunities for partnership and collaboration in the future.

Glenda Bernhardt  
CEO and Executive Director

## 2019 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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# OUR MISSION

Freedom School Partners promotes the long-term success of children by preventing summer learning loss through igniting a passion for reading and inspiring a love of learning.

Freedom School Partners fulfills this mission by:

1. Delivering a culturally diverse curriculum that affirms our scholars with engaging literature and exposure to the broader community.
2. Serving families and children who lack access to quality summer enrichment opportunities.
3. Addressing the whole child by supporting their academic, social and emotional needs.
4. Offering a work-force development opportunity for college students to gain professional experience, serve as positive role models and enter the teacher pipeline or social service pipeline.
5. Collaborating with diverse community stakeholders who contribute to and benefit from the partnerships.



## What is Freedom School

Children's Defense Fund® Freedom Schools are six-week summer literacy and character building programs led by college student Servant Leader Interns. Freedom School Partners serves children who most need and can least afford summer learning opportunities.

### A Freedom School Day



## Scholar Spotlight – Quotes –

“My favorite part about Freedom School is IRC. You get to read about things that you don’t know but need to know, so you can get smarter before you go to the next grade level.”

– Kyshaun, Scholar, age 9

“My attitude towards books have changed because now I’m stepping up to bigger books than what I thought I could read.”

– Jahlayia, Scholar, age 11

“Every day when I leave Freedom School, I take home a bunch of positivity and happiness.”

– Caydence, Scholar, age 10

“I look forward to Freedom School every summer because people here are so caring and loving. Freedom School brings out the best in us, so we can bring the best out in other people.”

– Qaahir, Scholar, age 13

## College Servant Leader Intern Spotlight



“The most rewarding part of being a Servant Leader Intern (SLI) at Freedom School this summer was seeing scholars grow throughout the six-week program. When I attended Freedom School as a scholar, I remember being a very shy kid. I refused to sing too loud or dance too much during Harambee! because I didn’t want to stick out. One of the scholars I was teaching this summer was

just like me; she didn’t want to participate and was very nervous. As the summer progressed, I could see her coming out of her shell. By the end of the program, she was the one participating the most. This was a complete change for her from the beginning of the six weeks, and I’m so glad I was able to see it happen! Freedom School has continued to help me become more confident too. As an SLI, I

knew I had to go all out during Harambee! so that I could inspire my scholars to get out of their comfort zones a bit more. By doing this and applying what I learned when I was a scholar, I personally grew even more this summer!” – **Asael Salinas, former Freedom School scholar, 2019 SLI and junior at Duke University**

# 2019 BY THE NUMBERS

**1,320**  
SCHOLARS

**18**  
SITES ACROSS  
CHARLOTTE

**156**  
COLLEGE  
STUDENT INTERNS

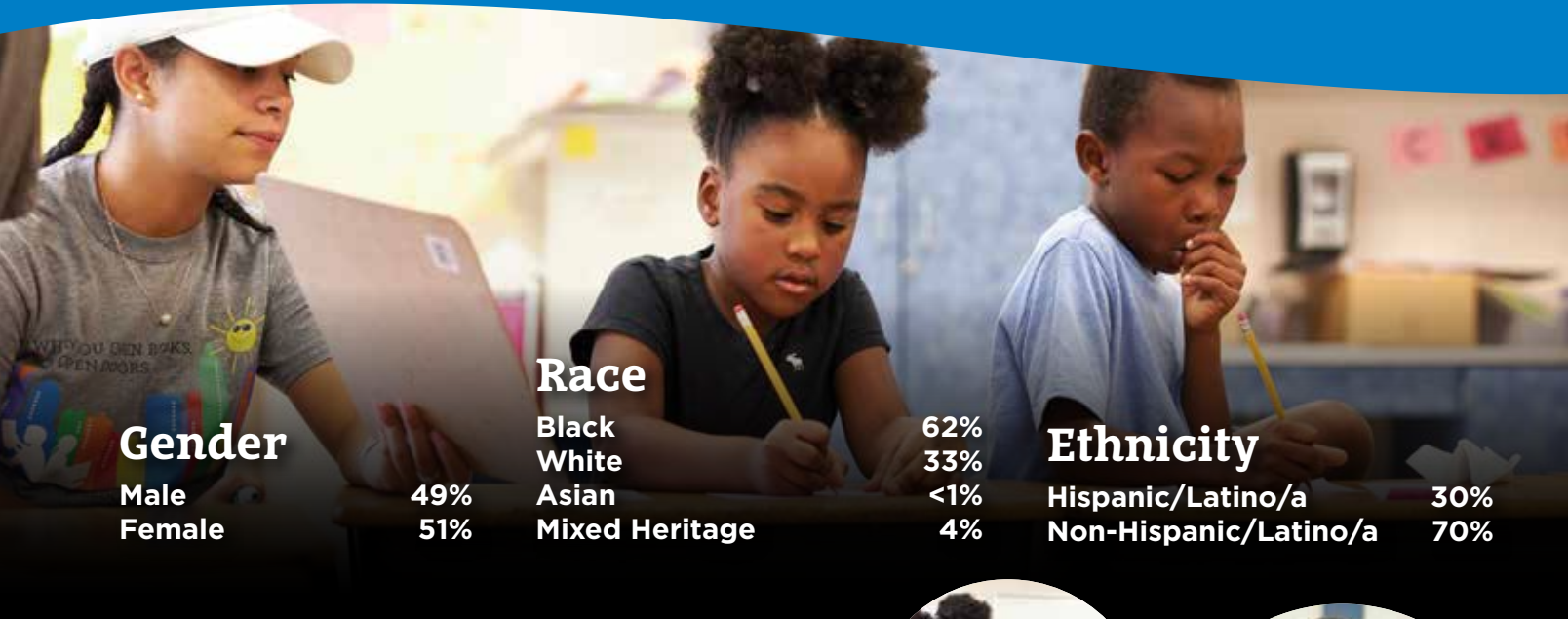
**94%**  
OF PARENTS  
SURVEYED REPORTED  
AN INCREASE IN THEIR  
CHILD'S CONFIDENCE IN  
THEIR READING ABILITY  
AFTER PARTICIPATING  
IN FREEDOM  
SCHOOL

\*MORE THAN  
**85%**  
OF SCHOLARS GAINED  
OR MAINTAINED IN THEIR  
READING ABILITY DURING  
FREEDOM SCHOOL

**87%**  
OF PARENTS  
SURVEYED REPORTED  
AN INCREASE IN THEIR  
CHILD'S LOVE OF  
READING AFTER  
FREEDOM SCHOOL  
ENDED

**88%**  
OF SCHOLARS ARE  
KNOWN TO QUALIFY  
FOR FREE OR  
REDUCED PRICE  
LUNCH

# SCHOLAR DEMOGRAPHICS



## Gender

Male	49%
Female	51%

## Race

Black	62%
White	33%
Asian	<1%
Mixed Heritage	4%

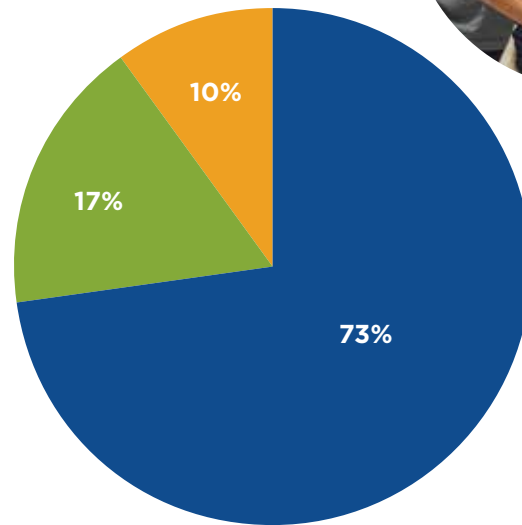
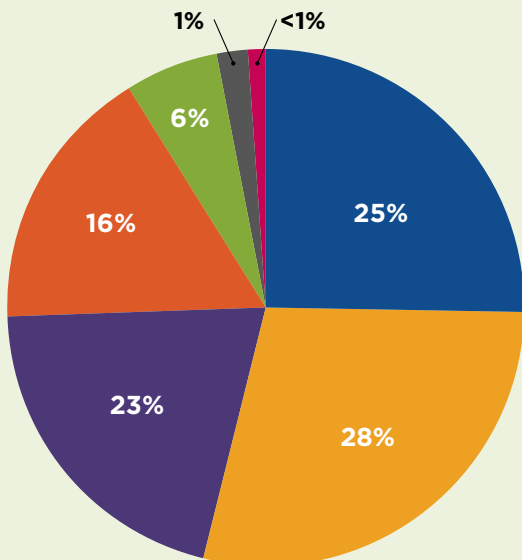
## Ethnicity

Hispanic/Latino/a	30%
Non-Hispanic/Latino/a	70%

## REVENUE

Faith and Community Partners	\$724,846
Foundations	\$819,120
Individuals & Families	\$697,132
Corporations	\$486,424
Special Events	\$177,044
Other	\$29,189
Public Support	\$6,750

**TOTAL \$2,940,505**



## EXPENSES

Program	\$2,179,283
Fundraising	\$517,523
Administration	\$296,199

**TOTAL \*\$2,993,005**

Freedom School Partners is a 501(c)(3) organization. Financial information about the organization and a copy of its license are available from the State Solicitation Licensing Branch at 919.807.2214. The license number is SL002429. The License is not an endorsement by the State. A copy of the complete audited financial statement will be available at [freedom-schoolpartners.org](http://freedom-schoolpartners.org).

\*Includes one-time expenditure for technology and infrastructure enhancement.



# Our History

## 2000-2003

Freedom School Partners (formerly Seigle Avenue Partners) received start-up funding from Foundation For the Carolinas' *Building Youth Initiative* and Seigle Avenue Presbyterian Church.

## 2004

Freedom School Partners (FSP) was selected by the Children's Defense Fund (CDF) to join community organizations around the country and serve as a local sponsor for CDF's six-week, literacy-rich summer program called Freedom Schools. That year, in addition to maintaining its successful afterschool program in the Piedmont Courts neighborhood, FSP launched its first CDF Freedom Schools® program for 100 students.

## 2004-present

Freedom School Partners has developed a model of partnership with community organizations to expand Freedom Schools across Charlotte. Site partnerships have included a variety of faith-based organizations, corporations, universities, neighborhoods, and other community organizations.

## A LOOK AHEAD TO SUMMER 2020

Freedom School Partners will serve at least 1,000 scholars and operate Children's Defense Fund Freedom Schools® summer programs from June 22- July 30, 2020.

### 2020 FREEDOM SCHOOL SITES

- Alexander Graham Middle School in partnership with CrossRoads Corporation
- Berewick Elementary School
- Christ Lutheran in partnership with McClintock Partners in Education
- CN Jenkins Memorial Presbyterian at Druid Hills Academy
- The Grove Presbyterian
- Highland Renaissance Academy in partnership with Covenant Presbyterian
- Marie G. Davis Middle School in partnership with Myers Park United Methodist
- Martin Luther King, Jr. Middle School
- Oakhurst STEAM Academy in partnership with Providence United Methodist and St. Gabriel Catholic
- Pinewood Elementary School in partnership with Myers Park Baptist
- Providence Day School
- The QC Family Tree at St. John's Baptist
- Rama Road Elementary School in partnership with Christ Episcopal
- Renaissance West STEAM Academy
- Shalom Park



MORE THAN  
**1,000**  
SCHOLARS