



Children's Scholarship Fund

REQUIRED READING

Spring Semester 2025 Newsletter

CSF Summit Draws Partners and Allies

This March, CSF hosted our annual Partner Summit, bringing together representatives from CSF's partner programs nationwide as well as other scholarship-granting and education reform organizations. This year's summit featured a fundraising workshop as well as networking opportunities and panel discussions on school choice legislation, program implementation, and examples of innovative alternative school models and parent outreach programs.

Also at this year's summit, CSF launched its new Guide to Starting a Scholarship Granting Organization - a practical roadmap for establishing and operating a privately funded scholarship granting organization, drawing from 25 years of experience. The guide helps newcomers create sustainable scholarship programs that effectively connect students with educational opportunities while maintaining program integrity and donor trust. Visit bit.ly/CSFSGOGuide2025 to download the guide.

Special thanks to our summit sponsors:

American Federation for Children
AmPhil
Bearing Tree
National School Choice Awareness
Foundation
Oak Rose Group
State Policy Network
yes. every kid. foundation.

See p. 5 for photos

A New Era of Educational Access in New Hampshire



Governor Kelly Ayotte signed into law a universal expansion of New Hampshire's Education Freedom Account program in June.

In June, Governor Kelly Ayotte signed into law an expansion of the state's Education Freedom Account (EFA) program, making New Hampshire the 17th state to offer universal education freedom to families, regardless of income.

CSF has run the EFA program since its launch in 2021, and a growing number of New Hampshire families have used the accounts to choose learning environments where their children can thrive. During the 2024-25 school year alone, almost 6,000 students participated. Considering that CSF received more than 2,000 new applications in the first week after Governor Ayotte's bill-signing, we are confident that number will grow significantly in 2025-26.

Under the new expansion, any K-12 student in New Hampshire can apply, although the law prioritizes students already enrolled in the EFA program and their siblings, students with household incomes up to 350% of the federal poverty level, and those with disabilities or active special education plans.

"New Hampshire parents are grateful and relieved that more doors are finally open," said Kate Baker Demers, CSF New Hampshire's executive director. "They've known what their children needed - and now, thanks to this law, more families can access the freedom to choose what works best."

In addition to the EFA program, CSF administered more than 800 tax credit scholarships this past school year through the New Hampshire Education Tax Credit (ETC) scholarship program.

THE CHILDREN'S SCHOLARSHIP FUND empowers families by providing children in need with scholarships, and by supporting expanded educational opportunities for all children. During the 2024-25 school year, CSF and its partner programs in 20 states are provided scholarships for 35,138 children.

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CSF in the News



"Darla Romfo, president of the Children's Scholarship Fund, said the legislation would be a fundraising boon for her organization, which helps children from low-income families in New York attend private schools. With more money, Romfo would increase scholarship amounts, which typically cover a small portion of tuition.

'I see it as providing more opportunities for families that don't have all the opportunities that a lot of us do,' Romfo said." - "The Tax Bill Would Deliver a Big Win for Private Schools—and Investors," *The Wall Street Journal*, June 21, 2025, <https://bit.ly/CSFWSJ0625>



"For the second year in a row, New Hampshire's Education Freedom Account Program is the most effectively implemented ESA in America. Rather than going through a state department or agency, the Granite State administers its ESA through an independent, non-governmental organization, Children's Scholarship Fund (CSF) NH, bypassing unnecessary bureaucracy." - Ed Tarnowski, EdChoice's Policy and Advocacy Director, quoted in "The 2025 EdChoice Yearbook Superlatives," EdChoice's website, January 28, 2025, <https://bit.ly/EdChoicesuper25>

Hats Off to CSF's Class of 2025!

2,800

CSF Scholars
graduating
8th grade



440

8th grade
grads in NYC



Thousands
more CSF
alumni
graduating
12th grade and
college

CSF Partner Programs Around the Nation

New Hampshire



CSF New Hampshire celebrated National School Choice Week this winter with a school fair that showcased more than 50 schools and education providers. Pictured: CSF New Hampshire Executive Director Kate Baker Demers (right) with prize winners at the fair.

St. Louis



CSF's St. Louis partner, The Today and Tomorrow Educational Foundation (TTEF), hosted its annual Archbishop's Gala in April. Pictured: TTEF Alumna Maria Duran Garcia, a recent graduate at St. Louis University.

Omaha



At Children's Scholarship Fund of Omaha's annual CHANCE Luncheon this May, CSF of Omaha Executive Director Joel Long (left) and CSF of Omaha Board Chair Rob Reed (third from left) posed with Rising Star student award winners (l-r) AJ Roman-Trevino; Jeny Flores; Debra David, and Remington Schneider.

Buffalo



The BISON Children's Scholarship Fund, which serves families in Western New York, recently hosted a Happy Hour fundraiser with its President's Council, a group of young professionals who raise awareness about BISON's work, financially support BISON scholarships, and provide additional learning and mentoring activities.

Philadelphia



CSF Philadelphia recently celebrated its graduating 8th graders with a special CSFP Day at the Ballpark. More than five hundred CSFP students and family members attended the game between the Philadelphia Phillies and the Pittsburgh Pirates, and a CSFP Scholar got to throw out the ceremonial first pitch. The event was sponsored by Fulton Bank and Stradley Ronon.

Colorado



ACE Scholarships, which offers scholarships in Colorado and 12 other states, celebrated its 25th anniversary this May. ACE alumni Dau, Nyankat, and Aluel Doldol, pictured with their mother (second from right), shared their inspiring story of fleeing from South Sudan to a refugee camp in Kenya before coming to the US. After attending private schools with ACE awards, the siblings are launching successful careers, and Aluel recently got engaged.

Donor Spotlight:

Kevin Heller and Samantha Zeiss Heller

Kevin and Samantha Heller have been members of CSF's Young Leaders Board for ten years, each serving in leadership roles, including as Co-Chair of the Young Leaders Board, a role Kevin currently holds. This year, they joined CSF's President's Council, committing to fund one or more CSF New York scholarships each year. At the Young Leaders Board's annual Party for a Purpose fundraiser in April, Kevin spoke about the couple's loyal commitment to CSF. Here are Kevin's shortened remarks:



Kevin and Samantha Heller, pictured here at a CSF Alumni/Young Leaders Board networking event in 2024, have been members of CSF's Young Leaders Board for ten years, each serving in leadership roles.

I've been truly touched and honored to be a part of the CSF Young Leaders Board.

Sam and I have remained active members of CSF because of not only our shared desire to help children and to help further education in New York City, but because we've seen the incredible work that CSF has done and continues to do, and because we've gotten to involve ourselves with individuals such as yourselves. ...

I can honestly say it's one of the best decisions that I've ever made, not only getting to see the great work in action, but to spend more time with the kids and meet young like-minded individuals who want to help further education within the city.

Young Leaders Board and President's Council Give Back

We are very grateful to CSF's Young Leaders Board and President's Council for raising more than \$150,000 (and counting) for scholarships this school year while also raising CSF's profile and working directly with CSF Scholars and alumni.



Victoria Edmonds (left), a member of both CSF's President's Council and Young Leaders Board, recently delivered 122 books donated by her co-workers at Schrödinger to Principal Suzanne Kaszynski, Our Lady of Lourdes (OLL) School in Harlem, pictured here with two OLL students.

- Thank you to Lucas Balon, Daniel Jabick, Eli Joyner, Gray Joyner, Stephanie Palma, and Ivan Sirotkin for raising more than \$6,700 for scholarships by running this year's United Airlines NYC Half Marathon.
- The Young Leaders Board raised approximately \$6,800 for scholarships at its annual Party for a Purpose this April, while also introducing friends to CSF.
- Young Leaders Board members Josh Farkas, Quinn Hermann, and Thembi Siziba spoke at a Career Day for seventh and eighth graders at St. Elizabeth School in Washington Heights.
- Young Leaders Board member Karina Altamirano and her colleagues from Dell Technologies' Women in Action group hosted a webinar for CSF alumni interested in learning about technology careers.

- Victoria Edmonds, a member of both CSF's President's Council and Young Leaders Board, organized a book drive with her co-workers at Schrödinger and delivered 122 donated books to Our Lady of Lourdes School in Harlem.

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CSF Summit Draws Partners and School Choice Allies



From l-r: Mark Duran, Student First Technologies; Sarah Raybon, ClassWallet; Jackie Guglielmo, ACE Scholarships; Katie Rogers, Odyssey; Lesley Searcy, Step Up for Students; Kate Baker Demers, CSF New Hampshire, and Robert Enlow, EdChoice, at the CSF Partner Summit.



At the CSF Partner Summit, CSF President Darla Romfo led a panel discussion about the potential federal tax credit for donations to scholarship-granting organizations with Invest in Education Coalition's Peter Murphy and John Schilling.



New Catholic School Documentary Features CSF Families and Alumni



CSF Mom Kathia Urbina is featured in *Go Teach*, a new documentary about the vital role of Catholic schools produced by the American Federation for Children. Several CSF families and alumni as well as CSF President and CEO Darla Romfo were also interviewed for the film.

Go Teach, a new documentary about the vital role of Catholic schools, features CSF President and CEO Darla Romfo and several CSF families and alumni from New York and Omaha, including Kathia Urbina, whose daughters Abigail and Angelie have attended St. Athanasius School in the Bronx.

"The minute I stepped into St. Athanasius School, I knew it was the school I wanted for my daughter, so my next step was finding out if I was financially able to cover the tuition," Kathia shared in the documentary.

"They spoke to me about scholarships, about income-based financial aid. So, we started looking [into] CSF, Children's Scholarship Fund. If it was not for CSF, I don't think it would have been possible for me."

Visit <https://supportcatholicschools.com/> to learn more about the documentary, which was produced by the American Federation for Children.

CSF Hosts Palm Beach Event

Earlier this year, CSF hosted an event in Palm Beach, Florida to introduce more people to its work. Speakers included journalist John Fund and CSF New York Alumnus Hansel Lopez, who now runs a digital media firm in Miami. Special thanks to CSF Board Member Remy Trafelet and his wife, Missy, for opening up their lovely home for the event.



At CSF's Palm Beach event, journalist John Fund told the story of how meeting East German schoolchildren before the fall of the Berlin Wall led him to realize the critical nature of education freedom.



Children's Scholarship Fund

The Last Word

"We didn't have a lot of resources, and my mother didn't really know what options existed. Then CSF introduced the notion of a choice in our lives. At least as a kid, I didn't understand the impact that that would have on me. That's how I ended up in Mount Carmel-Holy Rosary School. That was kind of the nexus point for me, where a lot of compounding things started to happen. ... All of a sudden, I'm in a space where I'm being challenged, with a curriculum that is tougher, and all of a sudden, I'm more engaged in my studies."

- CSF Alumnus Hansel Lopez, Cornell University graduate and founder of a Miami digital marketing firm, speaking at a CSF event in Palm Beach hosted by CSF Board Member Remy Trafelet



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