



October 17, 2017

To Whom It May Concern:

On behalf of the Children's Defense Fund, please accept my endorsement of the Inspiring Our Youth A Game Inc. application for funding to support a *CDF Freedom Schools*[®] program site for the summer of 2018. Under the direction of Arnold Anderson, Inspiring Our Youth A Game served 50 children last year. We are confident that as the sponsor organization, Inspiring Our Youth A Game will operate a quality program that meets the high standards expected of every official *CDF Freedom Schools* program.

Founded in 1973 as a direct result of the American Civil Rights Movement, CDF is committed to restorative social justice through education and advocacy for our nation's most valuable resource — its children. Since 1995, the *CDF Freedom Schools* program has provided opportunities for quality education, parent engagement, and leadership development for children, young adults, and families in underserved, low-income communities. In partnership with local churches, schools, institutions of higher learning, non-profit and community organizations, *CDF Freedom Schools* connect the complex needs of children and families to resources within their communities. Modeled after the Mississippi Freedom Summer Project, which integrated education and social action through the creation of Freedom Schools in 1964, *CDF Freedom Schools* builds resilience in children and helps them overcome the debilitating realities of poverty and unequal access to educational opportunities. Over the past 22 years, *CDF Freedom Schools* has served over 171,000 children across the country by teaching them how they can make a difference in the world.

The *CDF Freedom Schools* program is founded on an enriching and culturally relevant literacy curriculum that is updated annually by a distinguished cadre of scholars and practitioners in the field of education. The Integrated Reading Curriculum (IRC) employs effective teaching practices and sets high expectations in learning outcomes for all children, especially those from historically marginalized and underserved communities. Moreover, social action projects oriented around civic engagement and activities that help children develop conflict resolution skills work in concert to complement IRC instruction. Through our *CDF Freedom Schools* Parenting Workshops, parents and extended family members are equipped and empowered to be more effective advocates for their children, as well as leaders in their communities. For these reasons, the *CDF Freedom Schools* approach to literacy, youth development, and parent involvement has been recognized by former U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan as a model strategy of child engagement that fosters the development of positive attitudes toward reading and a commitment to lifelong learning, service, and leadership.

In the summer of 2017, *CDF Freedom Schools* programs across the country served more than 12,000 children at 173 program sites in 89 cities and 27 states (including Washington, D.C.). According to *CDF Freedom Schools* staff and alumni, the impact of serving as an SLI while in college is a transformative experience. Servant leader interns, who are passionate about education and want to make a difference in their communities, derive greater meaning from their college experience through participation in the annual Ella Baker Child Policy Training Institute at Alex Haley Farm in Clinton, TN. These students are better prepared for life after college as a result of their personal investment in the lives of children.

Our collaboration with Inspiring Our Youth A Game will strengthen their ability to serve the children and families in the Flagler County area. Should you have any question regarding Inspiring Our Youth A Game Inc.'s partnership with *CDF Freedom Schools*, please contact Richard A. Hooks Wayman, National Executive Director at your earliest convenience. Mr. Hooks Wayman may be reached at (202) 628-8784 or by email (rhookswayman@childrensdefense.org). For more information about *CDF Freedom Schools*, please refer to our website, www.freedomschools.org. Thank you for your time and thoughtful consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Richard A. Hooks Wayman". The signature is written in black ink and has a long, sweeping tail that extends to the right.

Richard A. Hooks Wayman
National Executive Director
CDF Freedom Schools