RFDC PROGRAMS

• Expanded Learning Initiative
• CDF Freedom Schools
• Youth Development
• Black Child Legacy Campaign
• Parent Education & Empowerment

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RFDC UPDATE (PAGE 1 OF 4)

Co-Founder Thoughts:

2020 has been a year of pivoting! That’s an understatement, but it’s where we start at Roberts Family Development Center. We have adjusted, from daily Zoom classrooms with the students we serve to an abbreviated summer virtual Freedom School, to becoming a regular provider of food boxes. It hasn’t been easy on our students or their families but neither has it been easy on our own staff. These committed paraprofessionals and college graduates have had to cope with distance relationships with their coworkers and have had to navigate building meaningful connections with students with only limited in-person contact through food and material drop-offs. The pandemic has also had a horrible impact on violence in our city, through our Black Child Legacy Campaign Healing the Hood efforts we play a role in trying to eliminate this problem. We know that in the long run preventive measures including our mentoring work will pay off, but in the meantime our intervention work continues to be needed. Internally, we have strengthened our finance unit with the support of Sierra Health Foundation, now serving as our fiscal sponsor. It allows us to focus on our services, while they help with future sustainability and board governance. As we end this year and look forward to the next, we thank you for your support and ask you to continue to assist us by financially supporting our work. It is supporters like you who invest in our efforts and we are forever grateful.

~ In Service and Gratitude, Derrell & Tina ~

“Together we struggle, together we thrive!”

THANK YOU TO OUR PARTNERS & FUNDERS
We continue to renovate our Main Hall, until recently, the facility had only minimal updates since being built in 1937. The space was long overdue for a makeover and it is coming along beautifully, with drywall, paint, and tile up in the kitchen, the only thing left inside are the beautiful wood floors and a few finishing touches. Outside amenities are soon to come. Soon the space will be ready for the 1500+ of children, families, and community members we serve each year. A special Thank You to SMUD for their support on this project and to countless other donors that have supported our efforts throughout this process.
For 7 years, RFDC has served as a CDF Freedom Schools site. In 2020, we again hosted the single largest Freedom Schools site in the nation. The COVID-19 pandemic, lead to a year of innovation for CDF and RFDC. Our program training and programming for scholars was held virtually, due to the stay at home order. In spite of this, we were able to provide our 320 scholars and their families with a rich learning experience via ZOOM. In lieu of traveling to Tennessee, our leadership team created a 45+ hour training that not only taught staff the Freedom School Model but also gave them ways to engage students in the virtual setting. Our Freedom Schools teams hosted a live Harmabee each day on FaceBook for scholars and the community. Our staff members held daily IRC (Integrated Reading Curriculum) lessons through Zoom, focusing on literacy, reading comprehension, and writing. We also hosted weekly virtual field trips for students that included “trips” to colleges, museums, amusement parks, aquariums, the jungle, on safari, outer space, Paris, and Egypt.

RFDC’s Expanded Learning Program is contracting with 4 school districts to provided 490 students with expanded learning options. Our programming consists of a variety of traditional and nontraditional educational supports for our scholars. As a result of Distance Learning, we have shifted our focus to not only include academic support, but we have given a special focus on our student’s social and emotional wellness. Our programming structure includes opportunities for mindfulness through art, journaling, and communication. We help build student’s healthy social connections and outlets to combat feelings of isolation. We have strategically chosen this model to ensure we support the development of the whole child; mind, body, and spirit. Our current services include in-person Learning Hubs, virtual learning groups during the school day, and after school virtual academic tutoring and homework help.

Since September 23rd, our staff members have been providing in-person academic support for 20 scholars from Robla School District through our Learning HUB model. The site maintains all social distancing, PPE, and sanitation protocols to ensure that scholars and staff remain healthy. The purpose of the Learning HUB is to provide extra support to scholars and families who are struggling during distance learning. The program runs from 8 am to 2:30 pm, providing scholars with academic support and access to internet during the school day. When program began, many of the scholars had 50 or more missing assignments that needed to be completed. Today, over 65% our scholars are entirely caught up in their class work. As part of our program, we make it a point to make sure our scholars are aware of ways to keep themselves and others safe while at the Learning HUB, as well as at home and in the community. Our scholars have become COVID-19 Fighters; they know how long to wash their hands, ways to protect themselves and others while outside, the importance of wearing their mask when around others, how to maintain a distance of six feet from one another, and many other ways to stay safe and healthy during the pandemic.
RFDC has served as a leader and essential partner in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic. While RFDC has continued our typical services through Freedom Schools, After School Program, and Black Child Legacy Campaign, we have also undertaken the challenge of innovation and expanding our services. Beginning with innovation, RFDC has worked tirelessly with its staff and partners to create new ways of reaching our youth and families, given the safety restrictions to avoid the spread of COVID-19. This has included developing training and curriculum for working effectively in a virtual environment. It has also included adopting a growth mindset, one that has looked at the innovation and changes as an opportunity for growth and long term viability, and not merely as a stop gap and temporary solution. The result is that RFDC is more pliable today, than ever before. Meaning that we are well positioned to reflexively adapt to a rapidly changing environment both short term and long term. One of the biggest takeaways from the COVID-19 pandemic has been our increased aptitude for providing services beyond youth programming for families. Due to the pandemic, RFDC has provided direct services in the areas of food security, economic stimulus, as well as health & wellness. RFDC has provided over 4500 meals and boxes of groceries to the families we serve. In addition, through our partnership with United Way, Sierra Health Foundation, and the City of Sacramento, we have provided over $45,000 in economic stimulus to families and youth throughout the Del Paso Heights, North Sacramento, and Broadway Corridor communities. Lastly, in response to the tremendous social, emotional, and mental strain that has been associated with the isolation, economic fallout, and general toll of the pandemic, RFDC has invested significant resources towards health and wellness services. Whether it is in providing direct services, serving as a community connector and navigator to services, or training our staff and youth on how to best support each other’s health and wellness, RFDC has pivoted to be responsive to our community on this front as well.

The Black Child Legacy Campaign has continued to live up to its mission as a child and family trauma interrupter in our community. BCLC has supported 70 families in 2020, with a majority of those families experiencing housing, food, and employment insecurity. BCLC has helped RFDC grow our family support services, especially during the pandemic. From April 1 to July 1, we distributed over 950 grocery boxes to families in the community and over 2500 meals through our partnership with Mulvaney’s B&L. Since July 1, we have continued with the grocery boxes, with over 1,100 additional boxes delivered.

As a part of our BCLC efforts, Healing the Hood, has been on the frontlines of responding to the increase in violence our city and community has experienced. With Homicides more than doubling in 2020 and youth homicides (0-18) increasing by over 400%, We have worked in collaboration with other community partners to respond, intervene, and interrupt violence. To date, we have worked with 9 families who have experienced loss as a result of violence, providing counseling services, relocation services, and economic support.