

The Chicago Freedom School 2008 Freedom Fellowship June 2008 – May 2009

Thank you for your interest in the Chicago Freedom School 2008 Freedom Fellowship! The following is an overview of what we do at the Chicago Freedom School and what the Freedom Fellowship is all about!

THE CHICAGO FREEDOM SCHOOL

The **Chicago Freedom School** (CFS) provides a space where young people and adult allies can exchange ideas, build new coalitions, study the work of past movements and deepen their understanding of current social problems. We support new generations of critical and independent thinking young people who use their unique experiences and power to create a just world. Our vision is that, in the spirit of the original freedom schools in Mississippi in the 1960s, CFS will become a place where young people from communities across Chicago can discover their own power to make change – not only for themselves, but also for their communities and the world.

At CFS we seek to:

- Develop and support leadership among youth across Chicago.
- Create a space where youth from across the city can gather to share ideas about social change and justice.
- Educate youth and adults about the history of social justice movements and apply lessons to today.
- Build the capacity of adult allies to understand and support youth-led social change.
- Develop spaces in local communities and schools where intergenerational dialogue about social justice and opportunities for organizing can occur.

THE FREEDOM FELLOWSHIP

The **Freedom Fellowship** is the core initiative of CFS. It is a one-year program that features a summer leadership institute, monthly activism trainings and support for the development of an action goal plan throughout the year. This year, 30 youth ages 14-16 will be selected as 2008 Freedom Fellows. Each Fellow commits to participation in the following:

WEEK ONE – June 30 – July 3, 2008

The first week of the summer institute is one designed to build community among participants. It features workshops that address the questions and showcases current successful youth-led initiatives in Chicago. The first week also includes a transformative anti-oppression training for all of the youth participants.

POPULAR EDUCATION COURSES – July 7 – August 8, 2008 (Mondays – Thursdays)

CFS defines popular education courses as those designed to allow youth to become more aware of how their own personal experiences are connected to larger social issues. The Freedom Fellows study how their lives are impacted by social and political systems, and learn what they can do as individuals and together to create social and political change. In these courses, youth will learn skills in *leadership development, movement building strategy, current issues and research and documentation*. Fellows take one course in each program area.

RETREAT – July 22 – 25, 2008

The fourth week of the summer institute consists of a 4-day *retreat* in a location outside of Chicago. It is during this retreat that youth have an opportunity to look back on what they have learned about themselves since the start of the summer and they begin to construct their personal mission statements. The retreat offers youth a chance to both reflect and plan ahead in a tranquil physical environment. Past fellows have returned to Chicago rejuvenated, focused and ready to develop plans of action.

CIVIL RIGHTS INSTITUTE – each Friday in the summer

The *Civil Rights Institute* helps Fellows understand how social movements happen and how individual action and historical forces combine to create change. The Civil Rights Institute not only features workshops about youth involvement in the Modern Civil Rights Movement, but also includes the study of various social campaigns of the 20th century such as the Chicano movement and the fight for rights for those with disabilities. The Civil Rights Institute will feature a number of field trips to historical sites in Chicago.

WELLNESS SEMINARS – each day in the summer

Each day (except Friday) between the morning and afternoon sections, all of the Fellows meet for a *Wellness Seminar*. We define “wellness” as a process of becoming aware of and practicing healthy choices to create a more successful and balanced lifestyle. During the Wellness Seminars, youth explore the impact of issues, such as self-esteem and money management, on their ability to affect change. All issues in the wellness seminar connect to the central question: HOW CAN WE MAKE HEALTHY CHOICES THAT IMPROVE OUR ABILITY TO BE EFFECTIVE LEADERS?

MONTHLY ACTIVISM TRAININGS – September 2008 – May 2009

The institute will be followed by a year of structured mentoring and training during which Fellows create and implement an Activism Goal Plan aimed at promoting justice in their communities. To help youth develop their plans, CFS will hold 9 monthly activism trainings and one mini-retreat for the Fellows aimed to increase their skills and knowledge in leadership development, current issues and movement-building strategy. Trainings are currently scheduled for the second Saturday of every month.

PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

ELIGIBILITY

Youth applicants must be ages 14 – 16 as of June 1, 2008. The last completed grade must be year 8 or above. However, youth are *not* required to be currently enrolled in school.

COMMITMENT

Fellows must commit to one full year of participation with the Chicago Freedom School. During this year, youth will be required to complete the following components:

1. **Personal Mission Statement** – the personal mission statement connects what the youth has learned about his/her own identity, passions and interest and how s/he may use these to make a change in a community
2. **Issues of Focus** – each Fellow creates a list of issues which are personally important and why s/he believes these issues must be addressed to create a just world
3. **Personal Action Goal** – each Fellow must set a single goal to address an injustice related to one of their issues of focus
4. **Set of Strategies** – each Fellow creates a set of at least three strategies that can be used to address his/her personal action goal.
5. **Action and Reflection** – each fellow must try one of the strategies for reaching his/her action goal and reflect on the experience in writing and with the social justice mentor

STIPEND

Youth participating in the 2008 Freedom Fellowship receive a stipend of **\$1,200** for the year. They will receive \$700 during the summer in two installments, \$100 one month after the summer ends for deposit into a bank account they open or currently have, \$200 in January 2009, and \$200 in May 2009 upon completion of the program.

APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

Youth interested in applying to be Freedom Fellows should submit:

- Completed application form.
- Completed responses to the essay questions.
- The names and contact information of two adults (ages 21 or over) who are not members of the applicant's family (optional).

MAIL COMPLETED APPLICATION TO:

Chicago Freedom School, 719 S. State St., Ste. 3N, Chicago, IL 60605, ATTN: Hilda Franco

****DEADLINE: Monday, April 21, 2008****

Please keep the first two pages of this application for your reference.

QUESTIONS? Please call 312.435.1201 or email hilda@chicagofreedomsschool.org

APPLICATION FORM

BACKGROUND INFORMATION (PLEASE PRINT)

Full Name _____

School (if applicable) _____

Date of Birth _____

(The 2008 Freedom Fellowship Program is open to youth ages 14 – 16 as of June 1, 2008)

Email Address _____

Neighborhood/Area of Chicago in which you live: _____

Street Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Home phone number _____ Cell (or other) _____

How did you hear about the Chicago Freedom School?

Have you attended any Chicago Freedom School events? If so, which one(s)?

The Freedom Fellowship Summer Leadership Institute begins June 30, and ends August 8, 2008. The institute will be in session from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Four days will be spent at a retreat outside of Chicago. Participants are expected to attend the full summer institute and at least 6 out of the 8 monthly trainings from September 2008 – May 2009. Please check below all that apply.

___ I can commit to attending all six weeks of the Summer Leadership Institute.

___ I can commit to attending each day, all day, 10 am – 4 pm, during Summer Leadership Institute.

___ I can commit to attending the Saturday monthly trainings throughout the year.

Is there anything that prevents you from making one or more of the commitments? What other responsibilities do you have?

PERSONAL INFORMATION

The Chicago Freedom School seeks a diverse group of people—people who represent different ethnicities, abilities, sexual orientations, language skills, and socio-economic backgrounds. We ask for (but do not require) your demographic information to get a better understanding of who will be participating in the CFS. We seek the participation of those traditionally marginalized, including women, people of color, people who are LBGTQ (lesbian, bisexual, gay, transgender and questioning), and people with disabilities.

Race/Ethnicity _____ Gender _____

Language(s) Spoken _____ Learning or Physical Disability _____

Sexual Orientation _____ Economic Background _____

Other Qualities _____

ESSAY QUESTIONS

Please type or print your responses on a separate sheet of paper and attach to the application form. We ask that you try to write 1 – 2 paragraphs in response to each question.

1. Why do you want to be involved in the Chicago Freedom School?
2. Describe an injustice affecting your community. What have you done OR could you do to contribute to the solution? (Community can mean family, neighborhood, school, race/ethnic group, sexual orientation, etc.)
3. What will your life look like in May 2009 after a year with the Chicago Freedom School?
4. Please feel free to add any other information you would like for us to know.

REFERENCES

OPTIONAL. Please list the contact information of two personal. Your references should be adults ages 21 or over who are not members of your family.

Name _____ Phone number _____

Email Address _____

Name _____ Phone number _____

Email Address _____