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# **Focus Group Report Tyree Scott Freedom School Assessment 2010**

**Prepared by Erica Knight, Vanessa Mijo Lee, John Page and Sasha  
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**A M E R I C A N F R I E N D S S E R V I C E C O M M I T T E E  
W E S T R E G I O N**

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## Focus Group Report

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## INTRODUCTION

Since the summer of 2001, a growing number of Seattle area youth, aged 15 – 21, have participated in a week-long educational experience vastly different from anything they experience in school. The Tyree Scott Freedom School is a five-day community organizing workshop which exposes youth to principles of anti racist organizing with the aim of creating social change agents within their communities. The workshops are held for five days during the summer, as well as three days over winter break.

This document contains the findings of a Reflection, Assessment and Evaluation (RAE) team, created to collect, synthesize and report data about the curriculum and methodology of the Freedom School, as well as the impact it has had on the lives of its participants. The RAE team conducted three focus groups during winter 2010. The aim of the recorded focus groups was to elicit honest feedback from participants about their experiences at Freedom School and their thoughts on its strengths and challenges. The first focus group consisted of youth who had attended at least one session of the Seattle Freedom School. The second focus group consisted of adult mentors who were either leaders of youth programs that had sent youth to Freedom School in Seattle or Edmonds, or parents of youth who had attended. Some of these adult mentors had been to Freedom School themselves, and some had not. The third focus group consisted of youth who had attended at least one session of the Edmonds Freedom School. The questions developed and used by the RAE team during all three focus groups are included as Appendices A and B.

The feedback from these focus groups overwhelmingly indicates that Freedom School had a profoundly positive impact on youth attendees, helping them develop into powerful, confident, and well-informed leaders and organizers. . In the analysis of the RAE team, this result was possible first, because the Freedom School's leadership created a welcoming and supportive community. In that environment, attendees were in an ideal position to learn and develop their analysis of race and social justice. Gaining a solid knowledge base encouraged them to find their own voice in speaking out about racism and other oppressions. In turn, this sense of empowerment allowed youth to apply their knowledge and skills to organize in their communities. During the focus group, participants shared which elements of Freedom School worked well for them at each stage of becoming leaders and organizers, as well as elements they felt could be improved. That information is presented below in four sections: Finding Voice, Learning – Content and Methodology, Leadership and Organizing, and The Ideal Freedom School.

## FINDING VOICE

One of the most common themes we heard was that Freedom School helped young people, especially youth of color, find their own powerful voice. For example, a Seattle parent reported that her two African American sons came home from the first day of Freedom School “on fire” and after the program finished, they had a “different sense of pride [and] identity in being men of color.” She noticed they “walk in a different way,” are “more assured,” and are “less afraid to speak up about the truth.” An Edmonds parent noticed a similar change in her child: **“My son came home excited about**

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**being able to express himself and talk about issues. It seemed like he didn't have that opportunity before."**

Freedom School didn't just help youth find their voice; it also provided them with tools to use that voice effectively. Several participants told us that before Freedom School, they had never had the language to articulate their experiences, particularly around race. A student who attended Edmonds Freedom School explained, "I'm always trying to break down barriers. **Now I know what's holding me back and how to approach that because we've all talked about our experiences in overcoming barriers/obstacles.**" A young African American woman in Seattle recalled, "Freedom School gave me the language to talk to white people. This was especially important because I was shy growing up and not open or vocal about my feelings. **[Freedom School] taught me to not be afraid to go against the grain and gave me the connections to have support in my ideas and issues.**"

A young woman of color described how Freedom School gave her the confidence, the analysis, and the tools to fight discrimination at her workplace. She explained:

"I know that if I hadn't been to Freedom School I wouldn't have been able to recognize the little things that are so systemic. Like how they treat people of color in corporations. Thanks to Freedom School I've been able to stand up to people at work, and have the courage to address my feelings and get out of that setting. And as of now I've been trying to file a complaint with the EEOC. **Freedom school validated my feelings on racism 'cause when I was young I was always told that I was being overly sensitive. Freedom school taught [me] that I wasn't wrong and that racism does exist and is one the most dangerous things since its often invisible.**"

**The same woman said that before Freedom School, she had always felt the topic of race and racism was "taboo."** Several participants reported that they never felt comfortable or knew how to talk about race until they attended Freedom School. A young woman of color recalled that before Freedom School she was full of "rage" but had no way "to channel that energy." Freedom School provided that, along with an encouraging and supportive community. A young African American man in Seattle stated, "I feel more confident talking to adults regardless of their race about racism. **Before Freedom School I never talked to anyone about race.... I'm not afraid to tell people what I think now.**"

### Highlights:

- Freedom School gave youth, particularly youth of color, confidence and affirmation.
- Freedom School provided vocabulary and tools to talk about race and racism.
- Freedom School inspired youth to question authority and speak out.

## LEARNING – CONTENT AND METHODOLOGY

Across the board, participants reflected that Freedom School is unique for the content as well as its methodology of education.

For many young people of color, some of the most powerful learning was not new *information* so much as a new analytical framework for their lived experiences. For example, a young African American woman recalled, "**the breakdown of the term institutionalized racism felt like they were breaking down my life.**" For her, learning about African American history had always felt

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negative until she had this framework. A parent reported that Freedom School gave her African American sons “definition [and] language for what they’re feeling, how they’ve been impacted by things in their lives.” A young African American man recalled his exposure to a systemic analysis of racism as “terrifying, and very, very real.” An adult mentor described how Freedom School validated the experience of a young Muslim woman and helped her challenge what it means to be a Muslim woman. Several young people of color were particularly impacted by the idea of racism as institutional, not just individual, and its application to familiar systems such as education, media, or public benefits.

Learning about internalized oppression was an important component of the curriculum for youth of color. An African American woman was troubled to see so many participants “laughing when we talked about stereotypes” until the next day, when internalized racial inferiority was introduced. She found this powerful “because as people of color we don’t always see how we perpetuate our own oppression.” An adult mentor noticed that after Freedom School, the girls in her program used the “N word” much less, and if one of them did use it, another girl would “call her out” and explain the history of the word. She was also proud that the girls she worked with (who were some of the youngest participants in that year’s Freedom School) now had language to talk about privilege and if they encountered something racist would not “just say ‘F that.’” Instead, they had developed the skills and analysis to critique issues of racism.

An adult mentor who works with multiracial youth of color in South Seattle reported that before Freedom School, the young men in his program tended to think of racism as “that other community’s problem,” but after Freedom School they can have a meaningful dialogue about it because they understand all communities of color are affected. Learning about Native American history was an important experience for Edmonds youth, who were astonished that this was never taught in school. An adult mentor reported that a Latina participant said to her, **“If they taught history like this in my history class, you couldn’t keep me out of school!”**

At the same time, a Freedom School alumnus who now works with incarcerated youth reflected that the material is not presented in a way that would feel relevant to the high-risk youth in her program. She suggested modifying the curriculum to allow more time for those who need to catch up, focusing on familiar and easily relatable institutions like the media, and continually tying the material back to the participants lives – for example, through a history and analysis of gangs – in order to “help the youth backtrack and understand where they come from and how they got to where they are.”

For white participants, the most common theme was a new realization of privilege. A white adult mentor **“was transformed by hearing experiences of students of color”** – like a thirteen or fourteen year old boy of color who said, “white people are treated better. They have better things.” The adult mentor reflected this was “hard for me to hear,” but important, and as a result of Freedom School she has a “different sense now of how much space I’m taking.” Another white woman who participated as a youth reported that she and other white students were deeply affected by the experience of writing down “what we liked about being white.” However, for people of color, the same exercise (“what do you like about being your ethnicity?”) was an important and positive experience; a young Asian American woman from Seattle felt this activity “gets to the heart of some emotional stuff about racism.” She thought the abbreviated winter Freedom School suffered from omitting this piece because it is important for a discussion of internalized racism, “since [people of color] most often think about what we hate about ourselves rather than what we like.” White participants agreed this exercise was profound and should not be omitted.

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Participants overwhelmingly praised Freedom School's welcoming, supportive sense of community and personal, collective learning style. Freedom School space is set up in a circle, which many participants said created a non-hierarchical environment where conversations flowed freely. Many youth found this approach more effective than the traditional lecture method.

Many participants emphasized the value of sharing personal stories. Hearing facilitators' individual experiences and perspectives helped them to feel comfortable and safe with the potentially contentious subject of racism. This environment put the participants at ease in discussing complex issues and contributed to their sense that their peers were being authentic. Participants deeply valued one another's contributions and some suggested strengthening that aspect by having youth participants lead pieces of the workshop. Many students appreciated the intimacy of small group discussion and recommended more of those in future Freedom Schools. A young man of color who attended Freedom School in both 2007 and 2009 explained:

**“What made the Freedom School impactful was everybody in the room.** Every time you go to Freedom School you get a different experience. Not just because they are teaching different stuff but because people are giving different types of input and that will branch off into another discussion. It's not the facilitators who make up the Freedom School, it's the people who come and decide to give feedback that make it up.”

A young man from Edmonds felt the group “really got connected when people talked about personal experiences;” in addition to developing relationships, this helped him understand where biases and assumptions come from. A young woman from Edmonds felt the cultural sharing piece brought the participants closer. She found she “could talk to [another student] because I knew a little bit more about her not just because we attended Freedom School, but where she came from, that we had similar problems, traits in common; and I think that really brought a lot of people together.” She and several other youth would like to see more cultural sharing in the future.

Almost unanimously, participants and adults said that interactive exercises were the most powerful and effective teaching methods. One adult pointed out that physical activity – used in the foot race, for example, helps students remember what they learned, while several youth reflected that physical movement helped keep them engaged and energetic. Field trips were a highlight for several youth; in particular, Aaron Dixon's tour of the Central District was a favorite moment for many students, which one young Seattle woman called “one of the most amazing experiences until this day.” Youth and adults overwhelmingly recommended more interactive activities and field trips.

One of the strongest benefits of Freedom School is not *what* the youth learn, but the fact that they learn *how* to learn. For many students, it was their first experience with a participatory style of learning. Several young people described, with some amazement, how it felt to be in a community of people who want to learn, with teachers who are part of that learning community as well. A young woman from Edmonds excitedly explained, “It was not like you're going to sit here, they're going to tell you and you are going to write it down. We have the notebooks and can write whatever we like; it wasn't like every time something was shared we had to write it down. It was organized, structured, but at the same time we didn't have to feel that we were pressured into sharing anything.” Another Edmonds student recalled that on the first day of his Freedom School he saw the diversity and number of people in the room and wondered, “what are we going to talk about and how are we going to incorporate everybody?” He later realized that it was successful because the “whole giant group of people [was] here wanting to learn and connect and really understand what was happening.” He

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compared the environment to a college class – in contrast to his experience of high school, where “teachers have to teach students... they have to get them through high school.”

One adult brought the youth in his program to the Winter 2009 Freedom School; afterwards, one of their teachers told him **the students seemed more “engaged” and “serious.”** When the adult told the teacher about Freedom School, the teacher concluded that Freedom School must have prompted the change in the students’ attitudes and thanked the adult for bringing them to it.

Another adult told us he took two Freedom School alumni to a program at the University of Washington, intended to outreach to first-generation college students of color. The leaders of that program told him they were highly impressed by these two young people; their analysis was “amazing” and they were well prepared for college-level discussion. The adult attributed this to their Freedom School experience.

Other adults described watching the youth they work with learn to “question everything,” and look for signs of bias “in the media [and] the classroom.” Several youth reported applying both the facts and the analytical tools learned in Freedom School to high school and college classes, interpersonal problems, political organizing, and issues at work.

Many youth and adults emphasized the importance of providing sufficient time (at least five days) to introduce and explore the concepts and allow time for them to “sink in.” All who had attended the three-day winter session agreed it felt too “rushed” and yet still left too much out. Some adults pointed out that the vocabulary and ideas were quite complex and intensive, especially for the younger students, and asked that the curriculum start at a more basic level and progress at a slower pace. Adults agreed the developmental gap between the youngest (age 15) and oldest (age 21) participants was challenging and perhaps unworkable.

Several youth and adults recommended reaching out to a greater variety of learning styles: for example, small workshops, breakout sessions, peer-led instruction, multimedia presentations, and more interactive exercises and field trips.

Many youth and all adults requested more opportunities and resources to follow up after Freedom School and continue the learning begun there, ranging from age-appropriate recommended reading lists to peer-to-peer training and technical assistance for youth-led organizing.

**Highlights:**

- Curriculum is eye-opening for participants of all races; it can be empowering or affirming for youth of color, and startling or unsettling for white youth.
- Important aspects of the curriculum include the systemic analysis of racism, internalized oppression, invisibility of whiteness and white privilege, and untold histories of people of color.
- Welcoming environment and collective approach foster sense of safety, comfort, closeness, and authenticity.
- Collective, participatory pedagogy is critical to holding students’ attention and helping them feel comfortable. Interactive exercises and personal sharing are particularly effective.
- Youth learn how to learn, especially in terms of discussion and critical thinking skills.
- Recommendations:

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- Should be at least 5 days long.
- Present information more simply and slowly.
- Cater to all learning styles.
- Incorporate more interactive exercises, field trips, and small group time.
- Make material more relevant to youth of diverse backgrounds.
- Develop leadership through peer-led sections and peer-to-peer training.
- Provide follow-up education, resources, and organizing opportunities.
- Be more intentional about building relationships and community among participants.
- Invite more community members to present or speak.
- Offer presentations in the community.

## **LEADERSHIP AND ORGANIZING**

Youth participants demonstrated a desire to channel the lessons learned at Freedom School into action, and discussed how Freedom School facilitated that. As a Seattle youth said, “Freedom School talked about the reality of getting pissed off about racism and how to deal with that.” Participants' responses indicated that the Freedom School's facilitation of welcoming community, effective teaching methodology, and space for participants to find their own powerful voice allowed for a fourth important result of Freedom School: the development of organizing and leadership skills.

When asked how Freedom School had impacted their lives, many youth participants replied that they used the analysis, confidence, and skills they learned at Freedom School to tackle challenging organizing projects at their high schools. This seemed to be particularly true for participants who attended the Edmonds Freedom School. For example, a high school student in Edmonds is working with the Hispanic Group at her school to address the needs of Latino families and students. She states that in her community, most Hispanic families do not receive adequate information from their children's schools due to language barriers. To address this disparity, the Hispanic Group reaches out to Spanish-speaking families to make sure they are receiving the information they need to be fully involved in their children's education. This student has also been meeting with the Career Center counselor at her high school and organizing to bring representatives from various colleges to speak with Latino students to ensure they are aware of the opportunities available to them after high school.

Other Edmonds high school students have started and led student groups that address the experiences and concerns of students of color. One youth participant said that Freedom School gave her the confidence to revive the United Nations club at her school. An adult mentor, whose children attended the Edmonds Freedom school, said she observed students who had attended Freedom School taking the information they learned there back to their schools and using it to create change. She noted the example of an Edmonds student who, despite opposition from adults, worked for two years to start a Latina/o focused student group at her school. The adult participant stated,

**“What really motivated the young lady who made it happen...was Freedom School. She just would not take ‘no’ for an answer. And every time they would throw something at her she would come back and find a way to deal with it because after going through Freedom School she realized how important it was to have that space for students. And now she's made it happen and it's one of the strongest clubs at the school.”**

Youth participants also shared examples of how Freedom School gave them the skills and information they needed to speak up about race and racism in the classroom setting. A Seattle participant used the definition of racism learned at Freedom School in a college class. Another Seattle

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participant said that he felt more comfortable speaking with teachers and other adults about race after attending Freedom School and feels good knowing that adults can tell that he knows what he's talking about. An adult mentor told us how Freedom School empowered young woman of color in Edmonds to have another student removed from her class because of his racist comments. The adult mentor said, **“because of Freedom School she realized that not only was [the racist comment] not right but that she could take action, she didn’t have to accept that.”**

Another adult mentor described student organizing at a high school in the Marysville School District. Latino students, using the analytical framework they had learned at Freedom School, initiated discussions about immigration reform at their school. The adult mentor believed that Freedom School taught them, “what information to seek and how to have a conversation about that with their peers and with their educators, the teachers and staff people.” She observed, “It was pretty powerful,” and noted that the students involved in the discussions began coming to school more often because they wanted to talk about immigration reform and figure out what kind of action to take.

Another Edmonds high school student talked about his experience organizing with the Gay Straight Alliance, a student group that works to educate and organize around homophobia, gender identity, and sexual orientation issues. This student organized his classmates to attend a school board meeting where he and two other students spoke to the board, asking for approval to share their information with district middle schools. The board had previously told the GSA such information was not “age-appropriate” for middle-school students. But as a result of these organizing efforts, “we got change.” The school board changed its mind and the GSA was allowed to share information in middle schools. In addition to becoming leaders and organizers at their high schools, youth participants spoke about how Freedom School empowered them to take action against racism in their jobs and larger communities. One youth participant of color from Seattle talked about confronting her white, male general manager about racist practices she observed at her work place. An adult mentor told us that Freedom School empowered a youth of color to report racial profiling by mall security to the management, and caused another to start seeing himself as “an agent of change” and inspired him to become a teacher and return to his community. An African American woman who attended the first Freedom School in 2001 still draws on that experience, a decade later, in her work with incarcerated youth. “I’m still having those conversations,” she explained. “A lot of the work I do today stems from what I learned at Freedom School.”

Youth participants also indicated that after attending Freedom School, they spoke more about race and oppression issues amongst their family and friends and consciously worked to make space for these issues to be grappled with. One youth participant from Edmonds noted that she makes a point of keeping in touch with the friends she made in Freedom School, in addition to organizing other friends and family members to attend Freedom School who have not attended before. She spoke specifically about conversations she has had with her god-sister, in which they talked about how seeing people at their most vulnerable, as they are seen in Freedom School, is what allows people to come together and recognize their commonalities. Another youth participant from Edmonds also talked about feeling passionate about wanting to share what she had learned at Freedom School with her close community, which prompted her to talk about it with the people close to her and to try to convince them to also attend. A third Edmonds youth participant spoke several times about sharing what she had learned about race in Freedom School with her brother, as well as with some of the people who come into the Edmonds Community College multicultural office where she volunteers. A fourth youth participant reflected that Freedom School taught her effective skills for speaking with other people about racism. In particular, she learned to be gentle with herself and others, to remember that people are in different stages in their thinking about race, and to focus on meeting people where they are at rather than

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aggressively trying to change their minds. Youth and adults pointed out that facilitators teach through their actions as well as their words, and cited examples of Freedom School facilitators modeling mutually respectful behavior. One young man reflected that he had never seen a disagreement handled in that way before.

In addition to offering concrete examples of Freedom School-inspired organizing in the past and present, both youth and adult participants also shared ways in which they believed young people's experiences in Freedom School would lead them to future leadership and organizing efforts. For instance, one of the white adult participants said that her children, who are black, lived overseas during their early childhood and were therefore unprepared for the racism they encountered when they moved to the United States. She said that Freedom School helped them to understand racism, and influenced her daughter's decision to attend Howard University. Her daughter is now a community organizer and will continue to organize against racism into the future. A youth participant from Edmonds stated that Freedom School was instrumental in her decision to dedicate her life to working towards racial equality, and another Edmonds youth said that the skills she learned at Freedom School will continue to affect the way she works, the career path she chooses, and the way she talks to people about race and social justice.

Finally, when asked about how Freedom School could be improved, some participants noted that the organizing aspect should be more explicit and clear; for example by posting the goals of Freedom School in the room and referring back to them, providing a concrete definition of community organizing, and offering specific and relevant organizing opportunities. Most participants responded that Freedom School could vastly extend its positive impact by providing a structured way for youth participants to meet regularly and organize together after their session ends. One youth participant from Seattle, who has been involved in Youth Undoing Institutionalized Racism, highlighted the value of coming together to organize with the same people with whom she attended Freedom School, noting that they could be powerful organizers together because they had already built strong relationships in Freedom School. Another Seattle youth said she would be more likely to stay involved with organizing efforts if she received regular updates about what was happening in the community, something that could be achieved through regular meetings.

An adult mentor whose sons attended the Seattle Freedom School emphasized the importance of capitalizing on the energy to create change generated by Freedom School promptly after the program ends. She reported that her sons came home from Freedom School with new information but were unsure of what to do with that information and wondered, "**How do I dig deeper? How do I get more people on board?**" She felt that ideally Freedom School would reach out to him and support him in deciding how to use the skills and information he learned at Freedom School. To that end, she suggested a forum or "debrief" organized by Freedom School in which youth attendees come back together to "process and actually identify the ways in which they have applied [their Freedom School education] to their everyday learning or their everyday existence." This suggestion was echoed by other adult mentors, some of whom had specific ideas about organizing projects youth could work on. For example, a white adult participant, who attended Freedom School himself as a youth and now mentors youth who attend, suggested that youth might choose to organize to include literature by Howard Zinn in their school curriculum. Finally, the mother whose sons wanted to do more suggested a "peer-to-peer train the trainer program," with the Freedom School organizers providing technical support to youth alumni in order to train other youth in racial justice analysis and organizing.

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**Highlights:**

- Youth use the analysis and leadership skills learned at Freedom School to address racism and other injustices, start and lead student groups, and affect change in their communities.
- Freedom School encourages youth to discuss race and racism with family and friends.
- Participants anticipate that the skills and analysis they learned at Freedom School will lead them to organize for racial justice in the future.
- Recommendations:
  - Make organizing a more explicit goal or component of Freedom School.
  - Provide structure for youth who attended Freedom School together to meet regularly to organize with each other after each Freedom School program has ended.
  - Organize relevant campaigns with winnable goals to apply Freedom School lessons to action and develop new skills.
  - Provide technical support to Freedom School alumni to train other youth.

**THE IDEAL FREEDOM SCHOOL**

To encourage long-term visioning, the RAE team asked focus group participants to imagine what the ideal Freedom School would look like if time and resources were unlimited. Participants' responses are summarized below.

**Vision from youth participants:**

- Freedom School would be a real school with its own buildings and teachers.
- More and more youth would hear about and attend Freedom School. More people would make it stronger and more effective.
- The larger community would be included in Freedom School. It would expand beyond being just for youth and beyond being just about education.
- Freedom School staff would solicit the viewpoints of more people in the community to collect ideas about how to improve Freedom School.
- Freedom School alum would prepare and give presentations about Freedom School at schools and work places and invite people to attend. This might help white youth feel more welcomed to attend.
- Youth who had attended Freedom School would give presentations in middle schools about some of the concepts they learned about at Freedom School. This would further expand the reach of Freedom School.
- Freedom school facilitators, and possibly youth alum, would be inspirational speakers at school assemblies.

**Vision from adult mentors:**

- Freedom School would be a full time, accredited, alternative school.
- It would be mandatory to include Freedom School curriculum at all public schools, especially in world history and American studies classes.
- Freedom School would be a two-week program with year-round support. "We're letting [the students] down because we give them this new reality and then say 'good luck with that.' I wish we could support them year-round."
- There would be more support targeted at South end students.

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- There would be more support targeted at North end students.
- Freedom School staff would hold monthly educational events (such as showing a film like Unnatural Causes) that would include prepared discussion points and food.
- There would be more organization and support around social networking amongst Freedom School alum. For example, one of the adult mentors in Edmonds created a FaceBook page to help alum stay in touch.
- Freedom School would expand to become a national program.
- There would be a nationwide network of youth who had attended Freedom School from various school districts. It would be similar to the nationwide group called UNITY, comprised of Native American youth representing their various tribes.
- Freedom School alum would form a youth board and have real decision-making power. Youth would lead while receiving mentorship and modeling from adults.
- Freedom School would be as big as the People's Institute for Survival and Beyond.
- Freedom School would expand to small towns.
- Freedom School sessions would always be at least five days long, which is "important in order to have enough time for concepts to sink in."
- Freedom School staff would host an overnight retreat for youth. Freedom School would partner with larger organizations that run summer camps, such as the YMCA.
- Freedom School would partner with the Institute for Community Leadership.

## **CONCLUSION**

For a decade, the Tyree Scott Freedom School has had a profound impact on the lives of multiracial youth and, through them, their families, friends, classmates, teachers, and communities.

Our focus group members were consistent in praising the Freedom School's greatest strengths:

- relevant and incisive curriculum
- collective and interactive method of instruction
- welcoming and safe environment

Those strengths have yielded high returns:

- increased self-confidence and willingness to speak up
- critical thinking skills
- love of learning
- community organizing and leadership skills

Judging from the overwhelming praise given by these alumni and adults, the Freedom School has a positive future ahead. It can improve in the short term by incorporating some of the more immediately feasible suggestions contained in this report, such as more interactive exercises and follow-up communication and resources. Freedom School also has the potential to grow into a different type of institution, something permanent and sustainable; a vision which is shared by nearly everyone we talked to. That Freedom School deeply inspired each of these individuals is apparent from the excitement that arose when we asked them about their vision for the ideal Freedom School. If supported, that inspiration will continue to grow and recreate itself.

## **Appendix A**

### **FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONS FOR YOUTH**

1. What do you remember most about Freedom School?
2. What would you have liked more of; less of?
3. Has Freedom School impacted your life? If so, how?  
Prompts if necessary:
  - a) Did it lead you to become involved in activities you might otherwise not have been involved in?
  - b) Did it change the way you think about racism? How?
  - c) Did it change the way you think about social change? How?
  - d) Did it help shape you as a leader in your community? How?
4. Have you applied what you learned at Freedom School? If so, how?
5. Do you see Freedom School impacting your life in the future? If so, how?
6. What about Freedom School made it an impactful experience?  
Prompts if necessary:
  - a) Curriculum
  - b) Facilitation
  - c) Methodology of Instruction
  - d) Group Dynamics
  - e) Field Trips
  - f) Guest Speakers
7. Was there anything you disagreed with?
8. Did Freedom School feel like a welcoming, inclusive space? Was there any time it did not?
9. How can Freedom School be improved?

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10. What would have been the best way for you to stay engaged?  
Prompts if necessary:
  - a) Putting into action what you learned?
  - b) Getting support in dealing with racism?
11. What is your long-term vision for the ideal FS?

## **Appendix B**

### **FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONS FOR ADULT MENTORS**

1. How did you and/or your child learn about Freedom School?
2. If you attended Freedom School, what do you remember most about it?
3. If you didn't attend, what is your impression of what youth learn at Freedom School?
4. Do you believe Freedom School impacted your child's life or the lives of youth who participated in your program? If so, how?  
Prompts if necessary:
  - a) Did it lead them to become involved in activities they might otherwise not have been involved in?
  - b) Did it change the way they think about racism? How?
  - c) Did it change the way they think about social change? How?
  - d) Did it help shape them as leaders in their communities? How?
5. Have you observed your child/the youth in your program applying what they learned at Freedom School?
6. Do you see Freedom School impacting your child's life/the lives of youth in your program in the future? If so, how?
7. What about Freedom School appeared to make it an impactful experience for your child/the youth in your program?  
Prompts if necessary:
  - a) Curriculum
  - b) Facilitation
  - c) Methodology of Instruction
  - d) Group Dynamics
  - e) Field Trips

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- f) Guest Speakers
- 8. Do you think curriculum/methodology were appropriate for the age/maturity of youth participants?
- 9. What if anything do you believe could have improved the Freedom School experience for your child/the youth in your program?
- 10. What would be the best way to keep youth engaged?
- 11. What is your long-term vision for the ideal Freedom School?