



A Day in the CDF Freedom Schools® Program

As children enter the *CDF Freedom Schools* site at 8:00 a.m., they are greeted and served a **nutritious breakfast** by caring adults. With stomachs full, they move on to “*Harambee!*” a time of informal sharing when children and staff come together to celebrate themselves and each other.

In the classrooms, where servant leader interns facilitate classes of no more than 10 students, children are engaged in reading and theme-based, hands-on activities as outlined in the **Integrated Reading Curriculum**. Reading is a cornerstone of the program. Servant Leader Interns lead the children in reading several excellent children’s books throughout the summer. These books feature heroes, heroines and settings that reflect the children’s own cultural images and history. Classroom activities related to the day’s reading use one or more of a variety of teaching models, including cooperative learning, role playing, and group discussions, and may include reading aloud, paired reading, creative writing, or visual arts. This range of activities ensures that children with diverse experiences, talents, and levels of confidence in reading and verbal expression are actively engaged.

As the morning draws to a close, **Drop Everything And Read (D.E.A.R.) time** is announced and shared by everyone. To emphasize the importance and joy of reading, children and adults alike “Drop Everything And Read” silently for 15 minutes, choosing from a rich selection of reading material available from the *CDF Freedom Schools* site library.

At lunchtime the feeling of family and community spirit continues as the children join adults to eat a **nutritious meal**. After lunch, children participate in *CDF Freedom Schools Afternoon Activities*. These are well-planned music, dance, or other culturally enriching activities that are related to the themes presented in the Integrated Reading Curriculum. Field trips that expand children’s horizons may also fill the afternoons. The children may also engage in social action projects and rehearse for the summer finale, which is performed for parents, friends, and community leaders.

Once the day has ended for the children, *CDF Freedom Schools* program staff will meet for the **Daily Debrief** to process the day’s activities, discuss the day’s successes and challenges, focus on site logistics and planning, and re-energize for tomorrow.

A *CDF Freedom Schools* **Finale** is the culminating event to a summer full of literacy and culturally enriching experiences. The Finale is articulated through visual arts, drama, dance and song. All components of the *CDF Freedom Schools* program, “*Harambee!*”, the Integrated Reading Curriculum, Afternoon Activities, etc., are combined into a showcase for students, parents, and the community as a whole.

Each *CDF Freedom Schools* site can conduct its own Finale, or programs in the same city may join together to present a city-wide Finale. If organizations combine their Finale, always be sure to include all of the children in the production. Local staff members are encouraged to be creative in organizing the showcase. Many *CDF Freedom Schools* sites utilize their afternoon activities as a way to build up to the Finale. Moreover, some sites coordinate their afternoon activities to support their vision for the Finale and to ensure its success.

During the Finale, students should showcase what they have learned each week at the *CDF Freedom Schools* program site. In a creative way, students and staff should demonstrate how they can make a difference, their love of reading, and their positive experiences at the *CDF Freedom Schools* program. The Finale will bring closure to the summer and highlight the children who attend the *CDF Freedom Schools* site.