

MOMENTUM

A newsletter for friends of Children & Family Urban Movement

WINTER 2015

AIRPLANE DESIGN, BUILDING, AND TESTING

have at times been discouraged at the Breakfast Club. It's hard for the test flights to dodge a room full of children, plates of pancakes, or labor-intensive Lego creations. But one group of aviation wannabes, so intent in the designing and building phases and so earnest in their pleas for a test field, convinced a member of the Breakfast Club staff to find a suitable venue, away from the crowd and hazards. The quiet expanse of the sanctuary in the church building where Children and Family Urban Movement (CFUM) rents space came to mind. Its high ceiling, wide open contours, simple furnishings (read: no breakables), and a congregation with a broad understanding of appropriate use made the sanctuary the ideal paper airplane test field.

Aaron, Augustine, Delfino, Demetrious, J'Shawn, and Samuel—ranging in age from 7 to 10—made their final folds and creases, gathered up their designs and headed to the test field. Five of the airplanes were made from 8 ½ x 11 notepad paper (castoffs from a local law firm) one was made from a butterfly coloring sheet, also standard size. Three designs stretched the full length of the eleven-inch paper, but with different approaches to the folds (how many overall, how many at the nose of the airplane). One was a shorter version of those, with a couple of inches just cut off of the tail. Another was folded into a kind of snub-nosed design, with the nose squared off and significantly heavier. The last (the butterfly coloring sheet) had been cut into a hexagon to begin with and the finished product showed evidence of several tentative folds before the designer committed to his final folds.

In the test field the boys all positioned themselves in the somewhat elevated chancel area at the front of the

sanctuary. One by one they lifted their planes into the air. Each and all of them flew! A couple flew straight and far—all the way to the back of the sanctuary! Another flew straight, but halfway back it took a graceful dive. One flew straight at first and then veered to the right. One lifted up and flew right into the balcony! Another didn't get very far but flew some amazing loo de loops! The boys excitedly retrieved their planes, took their places again at the front of the sanctuary and launched them again and again—a flurry of planes in the air, flying and veering, looping and diving, soaring in every designer's eye.

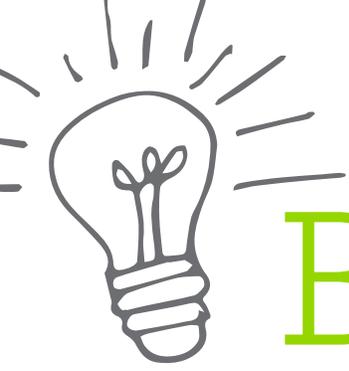
Watching their excitement and enthusiasm, listening to their affirmations of one another and the plans already forming in their minds to improve their designs, I was reminded of a poem I had read recently, "Designed to Fly" by Ellen Waterston. The poem begins with a flight instructor reminding a student that a plane is designed to fly, and ends with the poet reminding anyone who will hear, "**Lives are designed to fly.**"

Aaron, Augustine, Delfino, Demetrious, J'Shawn, and Samuel are only six of the over 200 children and youth who come through CFUM's doors in the course of a week—all of whom are designed to fly! The mission of CFUM—to create a community to support the potential of children, youth, and families through educational success, healthy living, and community engagement—is about supporting the designing, building, and testing of these young lives among us, and seeing them not only fly, but soar! •

Carmen

Creating a community that supports the potential of children, youth, and families through educational success, healthy living, and community engagement.





Learning Begins WITH THE Breakfast Club

THE BREAKFAST CLUB IS THE FOUNDATIONAL program of CFUM. Inspired by the local Black Panthers, who, as a part of the national Black Panther movement, began in the late 1960s to provide breakfast for children in the urban core of Des Moines, the congregation of Trinity United Methodist Church began the Breakfast Club in 1968. Many neighbors, Moulton School faculty, and members of metro United Methodist congregations joined the pastors and members of Trinity in responding to an opportunity to provide for the well-being and encouragement of neighborhood children and their families. When CFUM was created by the congregation in 1992 to carry on the community outreach work that they had begun, CFUM inherited the opportunity to host the Breakfast Club.

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The goal of the Breakfast Club is, as it was when it began, to give children a good start to the learning day. The goal is accomplished by creating a community of peers, volunteers, and staff that a child can be a part of, daily. That community provides welcome for your uniqueness, nutrition for your body, and nurture for your mind.

The Breakfast Club is offered year round, not only during the school year, but during school breaks as well. The doors are open at 6:00 a.m. Monday through Friday. Breakfast is served from 7:00-8:00 a.m. Children are accompanied to school or to CFUM's school break programs by 8:30 every morning.

This semester there are 126 children, pre-school through fifth grade, enrolled; an average of 90 children attends. Most of the children who attend the Breakfast Club have parents who need to be at work before the school opens

and providing before school care on the wages they make is a challenge. There is no fee for the Breakfast Club.

Breakfast Club participants attend Moulton Elementary School across the street. Moulton is a school providing English Language Learner (ELL) services to children. Of the 474 children enrolled at Moulton, 200 receive ELL services. 53% of the students at Moulton are proficient in reading, 54% in math, 87% of the students are minority, last school year the school experienced a 50% mobility rate.

Every day Breakfast Club staff includes Hilary Burbank, the Breakfast Club Supervisor; Demetreus Griffin, K-5 Program Coordinator; and Drake work study students. Twenty volunteers show up every week—several of them on multiple days of the week. Twelve of those volunteers are retired; eight go to work after their volunteer service at the Breakfast Club. Virtually all the cooking for the Breakfast Club is done by volunteers. Longevity is a characteristic of Breakfast Club volunteers—some serving decades by now, two—Chuck Howieson and Tony Salem (both of whom come two days a week)—have been volunteering for more than sixteen years. Additional volunteers come more occasionally from local businesses, congregations, and colleges.

Making Choices for a Better Future

Every day at the Breakfast Club participants have choices to make—an important aspect of the morning. There are breakfast food choices—cereal, instant oatmeal, milk are offered every day. Other options are included throughout the week, among them—fruit, pancakes, eggs, sausage, breakfast sandwiches, French toast, granola, juice, biscuits and gravy, breakfast burritos. There are also activity options to choose from—board games, card games, building with Legos or building blocks, spinning tops, dressing up Ms. or Mr. Potato Head, coloring, drawing, jumping rope, hula hooping, make believe games with your friends. Participants can create their own morning experience.



Every Wednesday at the Breakfast Club is Power Breakfast—a morning dedicated to the power of literacy! At the heart of the morning are tables full of donated books for the reading and the taking. Children are encouraged to select a book to not only read during Breakfast Club, but to take home to build their personal library (research shows that children who have books in their homes are better readers). Fourteen children are currently reading weekly with the same reading mentor for forty-five minutes, an effort facilitated through a collaboration with Everybody Wins Iowa! Additional volunteers read with children in a less structured effort. Older children read with younger children, small groups read together. There are word-based games and activities available. Fourth and fifth graders participate in a variety of literacy-based group activities.

Throughout the year Breakfast Club celebrates fun days like National Bubble Wrap Day or National Peanut Butter and Jelly Day or National Cocoa Day; historic anniversaries like Ms. Rosa Parks' arrest or the photo of the earth taken by Apollo astronauts or the first flight; birthdays like Langston Hughes, Dr. Seuss, Beethoven, Van Gogh; whole months like Black History Month, National Poetry Month, Hispanic Heritage Month; celebrations we create ourselves like Poetry by Heart Days or Snowflakes in July Day or Connect Four Tournament Week! Whatever it takes to start the day ready to learn!

An Even Better Breakfast Club

Ways that the Breakfast Club experience could be enhanced include more reading mentors and volunteers for Power Breakfast on Wednesdays, volunteers who would teach/share an activity, create a seasonal craft project, introduce a new game (cribbage is high on the list), offer a concert (introducing children to musical instruments or a type of music), share

a hobby or a travel experience, bring a celebration of your choosing to the morning, imagine with the CFUM staff other ways to give children a good start to the learning day.

Ongoing needs for the Breakfast Club include recruiting additional volunteers—our volunteer philosophy for the Breakfast Club is that you can't have too many, donations of food—including fresh fruit, cereal, instant oatmeal, juice, milk, yogurt, eggs, breakfast meat, donations of new or gently used books of interest to kindergartens through fifth graders; donations of games for that same age-range.

The 2015 budget for Breakfast Club is a little over \$93,000. With an average of 90 children attending that breaks down to about \$1000 per year per child, \$87 per month per child, \$22 per day per child. CFUM receives one grant that is dedicated to the Breakfast Club—an \$8000 Matthew 25 grant from the Central District of the Iowa Conference of the United Methodist Church. The remainder of the funding comes from contributions from individual and organizations.

It has been said that there is no better place to begin one's day than at the Breakfast Club! A good start to the day, to the learning day, to weeks and months and years of learning days makes a difference in the lives of learning children and the community that accompanies them in those early morning efforts!

To learn more about the Breakfast Club and how to become involved please visit the CFUM website at www.cfum.org or contact K-5 Program Director, Janelle Mueller, at janelle@cfum.org or K-5 Program Coordinator, Demetreus Griffin at demetreus@cfum.org or 515-282-3242. ●

CFUM at a Glance!

K-5 Programs

Dr. Seuss' Birthday will be celebrated across CFUM K-5 programs on the very day of his 111th Birthday: March 2! Each family will receive a copy of the classic If I Ran the Zoo! Join the celebration by engaging your imagination to provide an appropriate meal for Breakfast Club or snack for The Haven, to decorate the day before, to help with activities on the big day during Breakfast Club, or by sponsoring the purchase of the book for 75 families (purchased in volume from Barnes and Noble \$12).

The Haven after school program currently has 70 children enrolled, with an average attendance of 59 (68 children are on a waiting list). It has been exciting to have nine regular middle school volunteers on Mondays—youth involved with the Backyard Boyz and Whyld Girls on other days—many of whom attended The Haven in elementary school. More volunteers are needed! Specifically, The Haven staff is looking for seven reading mentors to read on Tuesday afternoons with individual K–4th grade students. On Wednesdays the time kids spend at The Haven is doubled because of early dismissal! Volunteers are needed to assist with program components like a new math initiative with third graders. The volunteers leading Clubs at The Haven could also use assistance. This round of clubs includes Computers, Money, Drama, Food, and Little Rock (various activities with kindergartners and first graders).

Awesome Spring Days school break program is just around the corner—March 6–13. The theme is “Around the World.” Plans are being made to invite the world into CFUM through conversations with world travelers and newer lowans; by exploring the experiences of others through field trips to Jordan House, the State Historical Building, and the Forest Avenue Library; by noticing the worlds that live in us and the worlds in which we live. “Tour guides” are needed to tell their traveling stories to small groups. “Ambassadors” are needed to introduce small groups to their native culture. Patrons are needed to help fund two buses at \$400 each to transport children to new worlds in their own backyards. Lunch Buddies are needed to support the cost of lunches—\$100 per day for lunch and snack for 70 participants.



To learn more about CFUM K-5 programs and how to become involved please visit the CFUM website at www.cfum.org. If you would like to support CFUM K-5 programs in any of the specific above ways, please contact Program Director, Janelle Mueller, at janelle@cfum.org or Program Coordinator, Demetreus Griffin at demetreus@cfum.org or 515-282-3242.

Gender Specific Programs (grades 6-12)

Middle school **Backyard Boyz** and **Whyld Girls**

continue to consider how they want to design their futures as they create “Letters to My Future Self.” They will spend spring break finalizing the letters and creating presentations to be shared at the

annual “Meet the Leaders” event on April 30th (5:30 p.m. at Plymouth Congregational United Church of Christ). Volunteers are needed to support their spring break work by providing lunch for 30 participants and four staff, March 16–20. A community is needed to support their futures by putting April 30 on the calendar—a night to witness their commitments to themselves and their futures.

A Participant Advisory Council (they will be looking for their own name) is being formed among the Backyard Boyz and Whyld Girls to more formally exercise their leadership in program development. They will meet the first Wednesday of each month at the beginning of program time.

On the horizon for the Backyard Boyz and Whyld Girls—building on the 50th Anniversary this year of the Selma to Montgomery March—is to learn more about the history and ongoing struggle to secure and maintain civil rights and human rights. Their learning experience, which began

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CFUM at a Glance!

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in January by watching together the critically acclaimed movie "Selma," will continue during spring break, the Summer Literacy Program, and culminate in a trip to Atlanta this summer. Although details of the trip are just being worked out, it is certain that they will be looking for patrons for their travels.



To learn more about CFUM Gender Specific Programs for middle school and high school students, and how to become involved please visit the CFUM website at www.cfum.org. If you would like to support Gender Specific Programs in any of the above ways, please contact Program Director, Vince Lewis at vince@cfum.org or 515-244-5007.

Supper Club

The contract process is starting for the next year June 2015 - May 2016. Supper Club groups provide, cook and serve the food for 150 people. The new kitchen is available for cooking. There are still open dates for this contract year: March 31, April 2, May 7, 14, 21. If you would like to take a trial run at one of those dates, please contact Bernadette Egger at Bernadette@cfum.org or 515-282-3242.



More ways to support the movement...

The **Score Fore Golf Tournament** is scheduled for June 15 at the Legacy Golf Club. The proceeds from the golf event support the Awesome Summer Days program! Think summer and register your team now! Sponsors for the event are also being sought. Check out the details at www.cfum.org. or contact Linda Danielson at linda@cfum.org or 515-282-3242.

If you haven't been to the CFUM website (www.cfum.org) lately you may not know that donating to CFUM online has become easier. Check out the new **DONATE** button on the website. CFUM now has the ability to receive your donation securely with a credit card or through PayPal. Donations may be made as a one-time donation or as a recurring donation. Specific areas of support may also be selected—general fund, scholarship funds, or events.

In 2014 CFUM received just over \$9,700 from **employer matching funds**. Check with your employer to see if they provide matching funds for monetary donations and/or for volunteer time. ●

Less is More in New CFUM Newsletter Approach

The mission of Children and Family Urban Movement (CFUM) is most compelling! The programs that flow from that mission are rich and varied. The results and benefits of the programs are clear and unending. The lives that are enriched, both participants and partners, are beyond knowing. It is a challenge to communicate all that happens at CFUM on any given day, in any particular season, throughout an entire year. For the last sixteen years, a quarterly newsletter has been an attempt at communicating something of the breadth and depth of CFUM. This year we are going to shift the approach a bit. **A briefer, differently focused CFUM newsletter will come your way six times a year** (in print for those who prefer that mode, and also electronically). Each newsletter will highlight a CFUM program; news about other CFUM programs will be focused primarily on how you can become involved. Between newsletters communication will happen primarily online. The new and improved CFUM website is the constant in communication—kept up to date with all the news about what is happening at CFUM. If you are a friend of CFUM on Facebook you will see frequent postings about what might be happening at CFUM on any given day. We will be interested in watching how all the pieces work together. **We want to hear from you—tell us what works for you, what you wish you knew more about, what you could live without.** As always CFUM seeks to move forward to achieve that most compelling mission: *to create a community to support the potential of children, youth, and families through educational success, healthy living, and community engagement.* Anyone reading this is a part of that vital created community! ●

CHILDWATCH

THE CHILDWATCH PAGE OF THE NEWSLETTER

remains in this new approach to communication because the community being created by CFUM to support the potential of children, youth, and families must have it. Much of what we communicate about CFUM in this newsletter and elsewhere focuses on the potential, the triumphs, the glories within and among the children, youth, and families related to CFUM. The potential, the triumphs, the glories are why CFUM exists, what is witnessed every day at CFUM—like the boy aviators and their success on the test field. But we must also acknowledge the other reason that CFUM exists—to help mitigate the factors that keep potential from fully forming, to moderate the challenges that keep too many children, youth, and families who live with the stresses of poverty from getting off the ground, from flying, even soaring! The CHILDWATCH page of the CFUM newsletter encourages us as a community to address the factors, the challenges in the larger community that keep children, youth and families from taking off.

In January the Blue Angels of child advocacy (as in fierce, precise, take your breath away advocacy), the Children's Defense Fund (CDF), released a report entitled "Ending Child Poverty Now." Contracting with the nonpartisan, independent Urban Institute to generate real numbers on the costs to implement improvements to existing policies and programs and the number of children who would benefit, CDF shows how relatively modest changes in policies we know work can be combined to significantly reduce child poverty now.

Download the "Ending Child Poverty Now" report and share it widely:

<http://www.childrensdefense.org/library/PovertyReport/EndingChildPovertyNow.html>

The latest census reports show that almost 15 million children live in poverty in the United States, 6.5 million live in extreme poverty. In Iowa, 200,000 children live in poverty and 51,000 in extreme poverty (Kids Count report). The

condition of poverty is the single greatest producer of "drag" in a child's life—the force that opposes forward movement. How can we reduce the "drag" of poverty in the lives of children and generate more "lift" for the lives of children?

The Ending Child Poverty Now report suggests it can be done through common sense and economic sense. The report estimates that every year we keep 15 million children in poverty costs our nation \$500 billion. Not only does child poverty cost far more than eliminating it would, we could be making common sense choices that better reflect more just values. Values that insist that food, shelter, quality early childhood education, and an equitable education for all children should take precedence over policies that shelter U.S. corporations from paying a fair federal income tax and excessive spending for military weapons that often do not work. If we built 485 fewer of the planned 2,500 F-35s that still don't work reliably and are over budget we could fund the \$77 billion required to lift 60 percent of our children from poverty now as their minds and bodies are developing.

As a new Congress gets settled in, as the Iowa Legislature continues its session, as prospecting possible Presidential candidates make their way into Iowa small towns and urban cores, may we become the Blue Angels of advocacy for the children of Iowa. May we show up where the policy makers show up—every place from coffees to rallies—and insist that the decisions made that affect the well-being of children in our state and nation be made with both common sense and economic sense that reflect our values. And make it possible for our children to get off the ground, fly, soar!

A poem learned by lots of kids over lots of years at CFUM is Langston Hughes' poem "Dreams." It goes like this. Hold fast to dreams/for if dreams die/life is like a broken-winged bird/that cannot fly. Hold fast to dreams/for when dreams go/life is like a barren field/frozen with snow.

In this and every season may our children be able to count on us to do everything within our power to help them hold fast to their dreams and fly! ●

–Carmen, carmen@cfum.org