



December '03

# NEWSLETTER

The Official Newsletter of the Florida Association of Scholarship Funding Organizations

## A Note For Our Readers

Whether you are a corporate donor or a recipient of the Florida Corporate Tax Credit Scholarship, you will likely recognize one or more of the following names:

- Children First Central Florida
- H.E.R.O.E.S.
- Florida P.R.I.D.E.
- YES Opportunities

These organizations raise tax donations from Florida companies and then award educational scholarships to qualifying families with students in grades K-12. It's part of the Corporate Tax Credit Scholarship program launched two years ago to help low-income families have a choice in where their child goes to school.

As you can imagine, along with the joys of awarding scholarships come tremendous fiscal responsibilities. So together, the four groups formed a voluntary organization called the Florida Association of Scholarship Funding Organizations, or FLA-SFO. It was designed to provide guidance to its members to ensure each adheres to the highest level of compliance with the law and follows stringent accounting standards and procedures.

The next step in our growth as an organization is communicating with you – our supporters and Scholarship recipients.

With that said, we are proud to introduce to you the first edition of this newsletter called "Step Up for Students." In each edition, you will find up-to-date news on legislative issues, corporate donors, real-life stories about families helped by the Scholarship, and ways you can get involved in the cause of educating Florida's disadvantaged students.

Join us as we provide a Step Up for Students!

## Coming Soon to a TV Near You

For the first time in the history of the Corporate Tax Credit Scholarship program, we are launching an advertising campaign. The television and print ad series called "Step Up for Students" will showcase the real-life impact that the CTC has on low-income children.

The advertising campaign supports a concerted yearlong initiative launched by CTC supporters to communicate the benefits of the Scholarship program to Florida's low-income families and corporate donors, while also focusing on educational and fiscal accountability. The ad campaign will run through the end of the year in

various Florida media markets including: Tampa/St. Petersburg, Miami/Ft. Lauderdale, Palm Beach, Tallahassee and Orlando.

The Florida Association of Scholarship Funding Organizations is thrilled to announce this initiative, which is funded by the Black Alliance for Educational Options (BAEO) and the Hispanic Council for Reform and Educational Options (HCREO).

Visit our new web site for more information about these sponsors at: [www.stepupforstudents.com](http://www.stepupforstudents.com).

## Now In Print

**"THIS SCHOLARSHIP REALLY SAVED MY CHILD"**

For Ebony Harvey, the Corporate Tax Credit Scholarship Program gave her daughter Darrielle something she thought she could only dream of...a future.

Failing in her old school, Darrielle's Corporate Tax Credit Scholarship gave Ebony the chance to find a new school...a positive learning environment where Darrielle could reach her full potential.

Today, Darrielle's report card boasts A's and B's and she's scored well on her standardized tests. She's even been named captain of her school's step team.

The Corporate Tax Credit Scholarship Program has given Darrielle – and more than 13,000 Florida students like her – a chance to "Step Up" toward a better future.

To find out more, visit [www.stepupforstudents.com](http://www.stepupforstudents.com)

Sponsored by **baeo**  
Black Alliance for Educational Options

"Darrielle's stepped up on her grades, stepped up on her attitude. She's even stepped up at home."  
- Ebony Harvey  
Tampa, Florida

**Step Up for students**  
An initiative of the Corporate Tax Credit Scholarship Program



### Timeline

The Florida Corporate Tax Credit Scholarship program was founded in **2001**. It represents the largest such program in the United States.

A record 16,000 students receive the CTC Scholarship – **June 2003**

Department of Education announces stronger accountability regulations – **October 2003**

Donations are up 77% from last year – **November 2003**

### Donor Corner

A founding participant of Step Up For Students, **CENTEX ROONEY CONSTRUCTION CO., INC.** Centex Rooney has invested over \$9 million in this initiative. Do we hear a round of applause?!

Thanks to company President Al Petrangeli and Centex Rooney, Florida's largest general contractor and construction manager, more than 2,500 low-income children are realizing their maximum potential through education alternatives tailored to meet their individual needs.

Thousands of students and families have benefited tremendously from their contribution. Headquartered in Plantation, Centex Rooney is committed to construction safety, quality, training, and cost control.

Thanks Centex Rooney for your unwavering support.



*Harlem Boys Choir performing at the October 11 fundraiser event*



*The South Florida Boys Choir makes their debut at the fundraiser event as they gear up for the 2004 school year*

### CTC & The Harlem Boys Choir

The Sunshine State continues to be fertile ground for educational opportunity and innovation. In fact, just this month, the Harlem Boys Choir Academy of New York City announced that they are establishing a South Florida Boys Choir Replica Project. The school, which houses world-renowned performers, has a long record of success in New York City, including an incredible 98% graduation and

college attendance rate.

October 11 marked the first fundraiser for the South Florida Boys Choir Academy, which is renovating warehouse property in Perine, Florida, and transforming it into a private school. Two million dollars in private funding has already been secured for this project.

While the new school's doors are not scheduled to open until Fall 2004, the musical training of our South Florida boys has already begun. At least 150 students will attend when the school opens, with enrollment eventually reaching 300. It is anticipated that all of the students will attend on Corporate Tax Credit Scholarships or A+ Plan Opportunity Scholarships.

*Horace Turnbull, Brother of the Founder of the Harlem Boys Choir*



## Family Corner

The Step Up For Students campaign features unscripted real-life testimonials of families receiving CTC Scholarships in Florida. Ebony Harvey, a single mom, and her daughter Darrielle, are the first family to be featured in the campaign.

Life has been anything but easy for this mother/daughter team, who represent the nearly 13,000 students whose lives have been impacted by the Scholarship this year. Overwhelmed and longing for acceptance, Darrielle struggled to keep up in an overcrowded and under-staffed school located 45-minutes from her home. With her mother's hands full with her hearing-impaired baby sister, Darrielle got caught up in the wrong crowd, and was fighting instead of learning.



*Darrielle and Ebony*

The Corporate Tax Credit Scholarship gave Darrielle the opportunity to excel in an environment that best fit her needs. The Anointed Word Academy in Tampa, Florida, has helped her transition from an underachiever to an overachiever, and turned a fighter into a learner.

Look for Darrielle and Ebony in the coming weeks, or view the commercial on [www.stepupforstudents.com](http://www.stepupforstudents.com).



## Wanted: Student Writers

If you're one of the 13,000 students that receive the Corporate Tax Credit Scholarship this year, we want to hear from you! Let your inner-journalist shine by becoming a student-contributing writer for our Step Up For Students Newsletter. It's easy.

In 200 words or less, email us your story at [stepupforstudents@yahoo.com](mailto:stepupforstudents@yahoo.com). Ideas may include:

- A personal triumph
- An accomplishment at school
- How a particular teacher has helped you
- Local/National awards

Not every entry can be chosen, but those selected should explain how the Corporate Tax Credit Scholarship has helped you. If your story is chosen, your school will receive a \$100 donation and you'll receive some cool gear, like t-shirts or movie passes.

In your email, be sure to include:

- Your first and last name
- Age
- Contact phone number
- School name

Be creative – interview teachers, friends and family, and above all, have fun!

## Legislative Update

In an effort to meet the exploding public school enrollment, the Florida Legislature recently moved \$38 million from the Corporate Tax Credit Scholarship program to public school funding for this year only. As a result, \$50 million will be available for CTC Scholarships this school year, and it will return to \$88 million again in 2004-2005. The good news is that year-to-date pledges from corporations are up 77% versus the same period last year.

While we are eager to provide educational choices for low-income families, it's important to show our support for public schools as well. We will also continue to work hard to demonstrate the fiscal value that the CTC program brings, as well as its impact on Florida's dismal graduation rate.

Meanwhile, the waiting list of students who want Scholarships is still long, so if you know a company that might want to redirect their tax dollars this year, call (786) 314-5609. And please take some time to call your legislator and express your support for the CTC Scholarship.

## PR 101

Public Relations builds credibility. When the news media writes or speaks positively about a topic, their "third-party endorsement" carries tremendous weight. Now is your opportunity to "Step Up For Students" and serve as a catalyst for continued positive change.

Call our Step Up For Students Newsletter Hotline at (305) 572-2159, or drop us an email at [stepupforstudents@yahoo.com](mailto:stepupforstudents@yahoo.com) to report stories you think are newsworthy regarding the CTC Scholarship, your school, or a special student.

## Defining Definitions

**CTC: The Corporate Tax Credit Scholarship Program, also called "Step Up for Students."** It's a program that helps low income families obtain scholarships of up to \$3,500 for public or private school education. Scholarship dollars come from Florida corporations that redirect up to 75% of their tax liabilities to a scholarship funding organization. 100% of dollars are used for Scholarships.

**FLA-SFO: The Florida Association of Scholarship Funding Organizations.** Organizations dedicated to helping schools and parents understand their rights and obligations under the Step Up for Students Program. The association is committed to ensuring that its members adhere to the highest level of compliance with the law and follow stringent business and accounting standards and procedures.