

## Children’s Empowerment, Inc. 2009 Annual Report

Children’s Empowerment, Inc. (CEI) is a 501(c)(3) non-profit corporation that provides in-school and after-school academic programs to at-risk middle and high school grade students in Daly City, California. Founded in 1999, we have been working in Daly City since 2000 in partnership with local school districts. CEI focuses on students in underperforming Daly City public schools who want to achieve but face formidable economic, cultural, and linguistic barriers to their educational success.

### CEI’s Program Activities

CEI’s programs provide a continuum of support for local at-risk students at Jefferson High School and at Pollicita Middle School and Benjamin Franklin Middle School, which are Jefferson’s principal feeder schools. In addition, CEI provides a wealth of horizon-expanding enrichment activities for students and financial support for students who cannot afford the fees for college entrance exams. CEI’s program activities currently include the following components:

	Program	Program Type/Beneficiaries
1	Smaller Learning Community	Federally-funded smaller learning community program for 545 Jefferson High School freshmen and sophomores.
2	21 <sup>st</sup> Century ASSETs Program	State-funded comprehensive after-school program for 200 Jefferson High School Students.
3	Jefferson High School Learning Center	After-School Program provides homework assistance and one-on-one or group tutoring to the Jefferson High School student body in CEI’s Homework Center in the school’s Library. Additional services provided to several unique groups.
4	Club Jeff	Physical Education and Healthy Living Program for 200 students from Jefferson High School, Pollicita and Ben Franklin Middle Schools
5	Middle School Learning Centers	After-School Program for 50 Pollicita Middle School and 30 Benjamin Franklin Intermediate School Students
6	Mentoring at Pollicita (M@P)	Federally-funded mentoring program for 60 students at Pollicita Middle School

### This Year’s Program Highlights

This report contains details of what each CEI program has achieved during the recently-concluded 2008-09 academic year follow below, but the following are this year’s exceptional program accomplishments:

- CEI’s after school tutoring program helped 95% of Jefferson’s seniors graduate successfully this year, and 91% of these graduating seniors will be going on to higher education this fall, almost a third of whom (31%) will do so at four-year colleges and universities.
- The percentage of Jefferson High School students able to achieve a passing score in math on the California High School Exit Exam (CAHSEE) increased from 73% to 76%, while the percentage of students with passing scores in English Language Arts (ELA) increased from 68% to 75%.
- 70% of the tenth grade English Language Learners (ELLs) we assisted this year passed the math test and 39% passed the ELA test, which is much more difficult for them to do than for their English-fluent peers. These percentages were significantly better than those for other tenth-grade ELLs.
- Pre- and post-data collected for evaluation purposes from 198 students in CEI’s Club Jeff physical

education and nutrition education program showed that 85% met seven or more state fitness standards.

- There were across-the-board improvements in math and ELA skills in all grades served in CEI's Learning Center program at Thomas R. Pollicita Middle School ranging from 45% to 73%.
- 34 out of 41 high-risk students (82%) at CEI's Learning Center program at Benjamin Franklin Middle School raised at least two or more of their report card grades and 30 out of those 41 students (73%) received passing grades in every subject.
- Forty-two of the sixty-three students (67%) served in CEI's M@P mentoring program at Pollicita Middle School showed improvement in pro-social behavior and fifty (73%) demonstrated improved social connectedness.

### 1. Smaller Learning Community Program, Jefferson High School, Daly City, California

**Background.** Research findings support the notion that high school students are more successful when they attend schools with well trained teachers with small classes. Schools organized like this have been shown to foster student achievement, including grades, test scores, attendance, and graduation rates, as well as reduced drug and alcohol use and improved school safety. In 2006, CEI contributed program design and proposal preparation expertise to help the Jefferson Union High School District (JUHSD) obtain a five-year grant from the U.S. Department of Education to convert Jefferson High School to the Smaller Learning Community (SLC) model. Jefferson High School is gradually being converted over to the SLC model. As of the 2008-09 academic year, all freshmen and sophomores were participating in the SLC program. They will be joined by the school's juniors and seniors in the upcoming academic year.

**Program Goal.** Our goal for this program is to support JUHSD in the achievement of SLC objectives, including increases in student attendance, decreases in suspensions, improvements in standardized tests, and increased physical health, mental health, and overall personal resilience.

**Standardized Testing Instruments.** For academic indicators, we use the CAHSEE results for math and ELA and the Standardized Testing and Reporting (STAR) achievement test for science. For non-academic indicators, we use the California Healthy Kids Survey (CHKS).

**This Year's Program Outcomes.** Implementation of the SLC program continued this year with the inclusion of the sophomore class of 255 students. Combined with the freshman class of 290 students, this means that approximately half of the entire student body benefited from the SLC program last year. The school has been divided into three learning communities (named after mountains), Denali, Kilauea, and K2, instructed by teams of teachers assigned to each of them. Lou Silberman, Jefferson High School's Principal, has informed us that there was a significant decrease in student suspensions last year. The percentage of Jefferson High School students able to achieve a passing CAHSEE score in math increased from 73% to 76%, while the percentage of students passing in ELA increased from 68% to 75%. Scores from this year's STAR achievement test for science will not be available until August 2009. The CHKS, a biennial survey previously conducted in 2007, provides data on non-academic SLC indicators, including increased physical health, increased mental health, and increased overall personal resilience. It was administered again this year at Jefferson High School but results are not yet available.

### 2. Twenty-First Century After School Safety and Enrichment for Teens (ASSETs) Program, Jefferson High School, Daly City, California

**Background.** ASSETs is a collaborative effort between the JUHSD and a number of local community based agencies, funded by a five-year state grant. This is CEI's second year as the lead agency for the program. The other community-based organizations that have joined CEI in presenting after school programming for ASSETs are: Daly City Parks and Recreation Department (DCP&R), Jefferson Union High School District Adult Education Division (JAD), Daly City Youth Health Center (DCYHC), Liwanang Kultural Center (LKC), and Youth and Families Enrichment Services (YFES).

Agency	Program/Service	Days/Hours	Unduplicated Students
CEI	Homework Center, Reading Support, CASHEE Prep	MTWT for 3 hrs.	795
DCP&R	Cafeteria Drop-In Center	MTWT for 2.25 hrs.	387
JAD	JUHSD Adult Ed	W for 3 hrs.	70
YFES	Student Advisory Group	Once per month	16
DCYHC	Vocational Counseling	W for 2 hrs.	13
LKC	Liwanang Kultural	F for 3 hrs.	166

**Program Goals.** ASSETs is expected to contribute to the transformation of the Jefferson High School campus into a thriving center of highly-constructive, purposeful student activity that will promote the school’s image as a community asset in Daly City.

**Standardized Testing Instruments.** Standardized Testing and Reporting (STAR) program test results are used to assess improvements in students’ academic performance. We also use on-going assessments from ASSETs instructors and other staff to document positive behavioral changes and on the data in JUHSD’s SASI system to determine participants’ attendance and graduation rates.

**This Year’s Program Outcomes.** Over 995 unduplicated students, 87% of the student body, participated in ASSETs programming last academic year. ASSETs program highlights this year included “The Jeff We Can Believe In,” a “fishbowl” presentation in which a group of student volunteers spoke frankly to a silent audience of teachers, parents, and other students on the sensitive subject of school violence. In collaboration with DCYHC, ASSETs also offered “Parenting Your Teenager” specifically designed to help parents communicate better with their adolescent children and provide them with appropriate guidance and support. CEI’s academic tutoring offered as part of the ASSETs program helped 95% of Jefferson’s seniors graduate successfully this year. We are likewise pleased to report that 91% of the graduating senior class will be going on to higher education this fall. Almost a third of these students (31%) will do so at four-year colleges and universities. A record number of students, moreover, obtained scholarships last year to pursue higher education.

### 3. Learning Center Program, Jefferson High School, Daly City, California

**Background.** This program is focused on students (chiefly juniors and seniors) who are experiencing difficulty passing the CAHSEE. CEI tutors, who are advanced placement or honors students at Jefferson, provide one-on-one assistance. The program is also open to the general student population for homework assistance and tutoring as needed. The program, offered from 3 to 6 p.m. Mondays through Thursdays, throughout the school year, is an integral part of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century ASSETs Program described above. It is designed to coordinate with and support the SLC program, with separate sections for each of the three SLC learning communities for both the freshman and sophomore classes.

**Program Goals.** Our goals for this program are to serve at least 50 students per day and provide a healthy after-school snack to all participants.

**Standardized Testing Instruments.** The CAHSEE serves as our testing instrument for assessing this program’s success.

**This Year’s Program Outcomes.** A daily average of 60 students benefited from the Learning Center program last year. Nearly two-thirds (63%) of the students served who took the English/Language Arts (ELA) section of the CAHSEE received passing grades, and nearly three-quarters (71%) of them passed the Math section. CEI made a special effort this year to help 33 English Language Learners (ELLs) in the tenth grade pass the CAHSEE. We are pleased to report that 70% of the ELLs we assisted this year passed the math test and 39% passed the ELA test, which is much more difficult for

them to do than for their English-fluent peers. By contrast, among the rest of the schools’ tenth-grade ELLs, just 49% passed the math test and 26% passed the ELA test. Because of these results, Mike Crilly, the superintendent of schools has asked us to offer a year-round CAHSEE prep class next year.

4. Club Jeff, Jefferson High School, Daly City, California

**Background.** Club Jeff is CEI’s physical fitness and nutrition education program at Jefferson High School. Club Jeff operates from 3:15 to 5:15 p.m., Mondays through Fridays, throughout the school year. Students have access to modern gymnastic, cardio, weight room, swimming, tennis, and yoga equipment originally purchased by and donated to the school by CEI with federal government support.

**Program Goals.** Club Jeff’s program’s goals are to serve 200 youth per year on a gender equitable basis, assure that at least 75% of the youth served will meet all ten state fitness standards, and that there will be a 20% increase over baseline performance for certain specific fitness measures.

**Standardized Testing Instruments.** Progress toward meeting the state standards is measured using tools in the Fitness for Life curriculum, a research-based physical education program, using Polar Electro’s TriFIT and PE Manager software.

**This Year’s Program Outcomes:** Our progress towards outcomes is quantified in the table below:

Goal	Measurement	Outcome
Serve 200 Youth per Year on a Gender Equitable Basis	Program Records	We served 205 students last year. Pre- and post-data was collected for evaluation purposes from 113 males and 85 females.
75% of Youth Meet Ten State Fitness Standards	Fitness for Life Curriculum	18% met all ten standards, and 85% met seven or more standards.
20% Increase over Baseline Performance for Fitness Measures	Fitness for Life Curriculum	67% improved in at least two tests (Body Mass Index, biceps strength, flexibility, and mile run). There were overall performance increases in both age groups served (10-13 year olds and 14-18 year olds).

We enhanced Club Jeff this year by adding ping pong and badminton to the list of activities offered. The latter in particular proved to be especially popular, particularly among Asian American students. Forming a team, the students joined a league in which they competed against teams of students in other schools. Students showed up as early as 7 a.m. each day to practice and continued to do so both during lunch and after school. Another popular feature of Club Jeff was the Mission Fusion Dance. Mission Fusion is a year-round program that culminates in a week-long multicultural event featuring different styles of dance ranging from hip-hop to Brazilian capoeira. One participant observed appreciatively, “In dance, I found another kind of exercise, another way to express myself, and another look at life.”

5. Learning Center Programs, Thomas R. Pollicita Middle School and Benjamin Franklin Intermediate School, Daly City, California

**Background.** CEI’s Learning Center programs at these two Daly City middle schools offer underperforming students the only place they have after school that is a safe environment in which to learn. Besides tutoring, CEI challenges these younger students educational games that help develop their self-esteem and their ability to work with others. CEI also provides a variety of healthy sandwiches, snacks, fruits and drinks each day. The tutoring programs are carried out by a team of advanced placement and honors students from Jefferson High School, the destination school for most of these middle school students. All of them are themselves ethnic minority students who have successfully overcome adversity in their pursuit of academic accomplishment. CEI has also

contracted with the Department of Kinesiology at San Francisco State University (SFSU) to operate our Fitness and Fun program for the middle school students. College interns provide an hour per day of physical activities and games in a structured program. Fitnessgram tests are used to assess State of California fitness levels for middle school aged children.

**Program Goals.** The goals of these programs are to provide one-on-one and group tutoring to at least 50 sixth, seventh and eighth grade students per day and to provide all participants at these two middle schools with a healthy, after-school snack.

**Standardized Testing Instruments.** We use the Degrees of Reading Power (DRP) form G-6 to assess students’ English language skills and a grade-appropriate math test that includes arithmetic problems, basic geometry, fractions, and basic statistic problems, for mathematical skills.

**This Year’s Program Outcomes.** The tables below contain the latest program outcomes for the two Learning Center programs.

**Thomas R. Pollicita Middle School**

Goal	Measurement	Outcome
To provide one-on-one and group tutoring to at least 50 students per day	Program Records	We served a total of 33 – 6 <sup>th</sup> Graders, 15 - 7 <sup>th</sup> Graders and 11 - 8 <sup>th</sup> Graders enrolled with an average daily attendance of 50 students.
Provide a healthy after-school snack	Program Records	We provided all attending students with snack servings each day. <i>For many students, this was their main meal of the day.</i>
Improve Academic Performance	English Language Arts: Degrees of Reading Power Form G-6	Sixth graders improved by 52%. Seventh graders improved by 62%. Eighth graders improved by 73%.
	Math: Grade Appropriate Math test	Sixth graders improved by 63%. Seventh graders improved by 45%. Eighth graders improved by 70%.

The biggest program accomplishment at this location was the improvement shown by 6<sup>th</sup> grade ELL students. At the beginning of the program, most of these students could barely speak English, but by the end of the program they were able to read and write as well as speak English impressively.

Fitness and Fun program also proved to be a nice complement to the academic program. SFSU intern Sim Hothi reported that “compared to the beginning of the year, the students are having fewer arguments and they are much better at staying active for the hour that we set aside for outdoor physical activity. Students encourage one another to have fun and play fair. The activities have helped shy students become more social. Students are forming friendships across grade levels as the younger ones have no trouble playing with the older students and vice-versa.”

**Benjamin Franklin Intermediate School**

Goal	Measurement	Outcome
To provide one-on-one and group tutoring to at least 30 students per day	Program Records	We served a total of 16 - 7 <sup>th</sup> Graders and 31- 8 <sup>th</sup> Graders enrolled with an average daily attendance of 47 students.
Provide a healthy after-school snack	Program Records	We provided all attending students with snack servings each day.

Improve Academic Performance	English Language Arts: Degrees of Reading Power Form G-6	Seventh graders improved by 64%. Eighth graders improved by 50%.
	Math: Grade Appropriate Math test	Seventh graders improved by 27%. Eighth graders improved by 35%.

Most of the students who attended the after school program at Benjamin Franklin come from the school’s “non-[performing] list,” the most at-risk students. By the end of the program, most students were no longer included on the list. 24% of participating seventh graders and 50% of participating eighth graders increased their GPA this year. 34 out of 41 students raised at least two or more of their grades from their second to the third quarter report cards. That’s 82% of students served at this location. 30 out of those 41 students received passing grades in every subject. Ms. McKittrick, a school Reading and Language Arts teacher, commented, “CEI has done a wonderful job helping students improve in school. You have all of our challenging students. I don’t know how you do it, but you’re doing a wonderful job. Thank you!” The CEI site supervisor for the program noted that “Once we started helping the students they began help each other. Some students even ask how to become tutors themselves.” One parent commented, “Thank you for helping my son to do better in school and for improving his attitude and behave better.” An eighth grader commented, “I like the program because of all the cool tutors. I want to become a tutor myself.”

7. M@P (Mentoring at Pollicita) Program, Thomas R. Pollicita Middle School, Daly City, California

**Background.** CEI’s M@P mentoring program at Pollicita, presented in collaboration with the Jefferson [Elementary] School District (JSD) and Asian American Recovery Services (AARS), Inc., supported by funding assistance from the U.S. Department of Education.

**Program Goals.** The goals of this program are to provide school-based mentoring services to 60 at-risk 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade students annually, to improve students’ academic performance, reduce their suspensions and unexcused absences, and improve their school connectedness.

**Standardized Testing Instruments.** M@P uses three sets of methodological tools: (1) Grade Point Average (GPA) and attendance data from JSD’s management information system; (2) standardized mentoring program forms and instruments; and (3) other standardized forms to collect additional information about student performance, specifically the Hemingway—Measure of Adolescent Connectedness to assess mentee’s social connectedness (to school and other social institutions).

**This Year’s Program Outcomes.** Sixty-three student mentees were served in this, the second year of the program (84% of objective). A one-to-one mentee-to-mentor ratio was maintained throughout the program year. Fifty-two (83%) of the matches met at least three times per month for an average of four hours. Fifteen (24%) of the mentees improved their GPAs this year. Unexcused absences from school decreased by 11%. Forty-two of the mentees (67%) showed improvement on the key pro-social behavioral indicator. Fifty of the mentees (73%) demonstrated improved social connectedness.

**Enrichment Activities**

In addition to what are by now our “routine” extracurricular activities like Ropes Courses for all 290 freshmen students and awards nights for exceptional student performance, CEI sponsored a number of exciting, special events this past academic year. In conjunction with the Close Up Foundation, CEI helped send 20 Jefferson students to Washington, D.C. to visit the U.S. Congress, the Smithsonian Institution, and meet Diane Feinstein and Barbara Boxer, the two senators from California. Eight

students participated in a Sojourner Civil Rights Tour of sites in the southern United States associated with the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s. Six students attended the Black Student Union Conference in Los Angeles with assistance from CEI. CEI assisted twenty students and three teachers from the school's Science Department to attend an overnight naturalist outing at Point Bonita. We also offered a number of activities this year designed to get students thinking seriously about higher education. Campus visits were offered to Stanford University, University of California Berkeley, University of California Santa Cruz, and University of California Davis, San Francisco State University, California State University Chico, and Skyline College. Finally, CEI paid \$516 for Advanced Placement (AP) test for honors students. These students would otherwise not have been able to afford to pay for these tests. We even funded the printing of several issues of the *Tom-Tom*, the student newspaper, when publication became imperiled because of school budget cuts.

This summer CEI has sponsored two students to attend Junior State of America, a public speaking and leadership skills program at Stanford University, at a cost of \$1,000 each, and six students to attend a program at U.C. Berkeley's Academic Talent Development Program, at a total cost of \$2,980.

CEI's 4<sup>th</sup> Annual Awards Night for freshmen, sophomore and junior classes was held at the end of the year to recognize outstanding students and their achievements with 300 people attending (see attached CEI Newsletter).

### **Conclusion**

This has been another exciting year for CEI, its students, and their families, with very satisfying program outcomes. Your generosity has made all of this possible. Thank you for your continued interest in an invaluable financial support of our programs.

Spencer Holeman  
Executive Director  
Children's Empowerment, Inc.