An Unparalleled History and a Compassionate Partnership with Our Families and Communities
Friends of Children of Mississippi (FCM) was originally created to plan and coordinate support for over 60 volunteer centers in an effort to convince the Office of Economic Opportunity (OEO) to reverse its decision to not continue funding the Child Development Group of Mississippi (CDGM).

On October 15, 1966 (the date of termination of the 1966 CDGM grant) a few former CDGM staff members established a new office to aid the volunteer centers. From this office, the CDGM staffers, hand-in-hand with communities across the state, staged a vigorous and constructive movement that eventually led to the resurrection of the CDGM program in 1967.

Volunteer centers that participated in previous CDGM programs were able to attract national support in an attempt to secure further federal funding for the CDGM program. Many prominent organizations, groups and influential individuals supported the resurrection of the CDGM program.

The massive efforts to revive one of the few poverty programs with a strong belief in “maximum feasible participation of the poor” continued throughout the year. All the hard work appeared to have paid off when on December 16, 1966 officials of the OEO and CDGM reached an “Agreement in Principle” which provided funds for a full year’s operation in 19 counties.
Even though it was determined that the Child Development Group of Mississippi (CDGM) would continue to receive funding, the CDGM Board of Directors was notified that the new program could consist of only 14 counties. This decision meant that six counties (Clarke, Humphreys, Greene, Wayne, Neshoba and Leflore) originally included in the CDGM were excluded from the new grant.

The people in these six counties still desired to be an integral part of the CDGM and decided they wanted to prove to the government that it was wrong to not include them. Residents of these communities spent four months in an extremely constructive and positive program that could best serve them—thus, resulting in the establishment of FCM as a volunteer community-based, preschool program.

On January 18, 1967, approximately 80 representatives from the affected counties met in Jackson, MS to discuss their response to being excluded from the CDGM program. This group was forced to come to terms with difficult alternatives after three months of volunteer services. They could:

- Continue to work on a volunteer basis and request assistance as an independent program.
- Be absorbed by another program not of their choice.
- Choose not to participate in a child development program at all.

Despite the absence of resources, the representatives from the six counties elected to organize an independent program. And, since they were all friends and their purpose was to serve children, they decided, “Why not call ourselves Friends of Children of Mississippi?”

**Why Not Call Ourselves Friends of Children of Mississippi?**
Plans were made to reorganize the Friends of Children of Mississippi (FCM) center committees, county councils and Board of Directors. This task was accomplished by February 1967 when the Board of Directors representing Clarke, Humphreys, Greene, Wayne, Neshoba and Leflore counties held their first meeting. Through its elected representatives and volunteer staff, FCM was charged with the responsibility of mobilizing support to uphold the principle that poor communities could no longer accept administrative decisions on issues that profoundly affected their lives and could potentially cause strife to their future development.

After thoughtful discussion, the FCM Board of Directors recognized that even with the determination and burdensome sacrifice from the residents of the six counties, it would not be enough to sustain a preschool program of 1,500 to 2,000 poor children indefinitely.

The FCM Board of Directors, staff and communities had to face the stark reality of determining where, when, and how the program could acquire adequate financing so the hundreds of poor preschool participants could receive the benefits of a quality program. Once more, FCM had to set possible achievable goals that included:

- Reconsidering re-inclusion in the Child Development Group of Mississippi (CDGM) program.
- Negotiating a contractual arrangement with the CDGM.
- Acquiring direct funding from the Office of Economic Opportunity (OEO).
The essential volunteer efforts of the Friends of Children of Mississippi (FCM) program yielded remarkable success during its unfunded 18 months of operation. A minimum of 29 centers were opened with minimal assistance from outside sources. The average enrollment was 1,500 children and 394 staff members.

FCM remained unfunded and relied on donations and contributions. The leadership recognition was very limited because of the financial status of the program. This resulted in the loss of two counties (Neshoba and Leflore).

In support of their centers, the most poverty-stricken people in Mississippi contributed thousands of volunteer hours, food, transportation, facilities, home-made toys and clothing. Sponsored community benefits aided the centers. The lack of money, equipment and comfortable salaries didn’t deter the volunteers’ selfless dedication, innovation and sacrifice for the greater good of the program.

Each day, the centers tried to provide at least one hot meal and one to two snacks. FCM was able to provide on average only $0.30 per week for each child’s food. The staff of 394 persons was paid an average stipend of $0.32 per hour during those long months when the minimum wage was $1.00 per hour.

In seeking support for the centers, the FCM Board of Directors made two formal appeals to the Field Foundation of New York, NY for financial aid. In each instance, the foundation found the FCM proposal deserving of a positive response. The Field Foundation granted the FCM program a total of $425,000. This provided financial assistance for the 18 months.

In addition to the tremendous assistance from the Field Foundation, many groups, organizations and individuals provided supplemental assistance to the 29 volunteer centers. Tons of clothing, food and donations were distributed to the centers and to poor families living within the FCM service areas.
In 1967, after several years of providing much needed services to the children and families they served, Friends of Children of Mississippi (FCM) finally became a delegate agency with Tougaloo College serving as its grantee.

In 1968, FCM petitioned and was granted an incorporation charter through the state of Mississippi, thus becoming Friends of Children of Mississippi, Incorporated (FCM, Inc.).

During 1979–1980, FCM, Inc. approached Tougaloo College to consider applying for the Request for Proposal (RFP) 11 counties previously operated by the Community Education Extension (CEE) of Mary Holmes College in West Point, MS. Since Tougaloo was a privately owned college receiving no funds from the state, it was in FCM, Inc.’s best interest to petition the college again to serve as grantee of our Limited Purpose Agency (LPA) as a means for sponsorship and protection.

During that time, Tougaloo College did not want to assume that much fiscal responsibility. After failing to secure their endorsement, FCM, Inc. propositioned the Region IV Department of Health & Human Services in Atlanta, GA to become its own grantee.

In 1980, FCM, Inc. declared its independence and became its own grantee, being awarded 11 of 14 additional counties formerly operated by the CEE. Center enrollment increased from 1,200 to 5,500 children and expanded from 22 to 62 centers. Since that time, FCM, Inc. has provided services above and beyond the traditional early childhood development program.

All FCM, Inc. programs, projects, initiatives and services are extended to the public on a non-discriminatory basis.
Certifications
- Five (5) National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) Accredited Centers
- Certifications as a Licensed Proprietary School (License No. C-625)
- Certified as a Registered Phlebotomy Technician Agent in the State of Mississippi
- Certified Nationally for Phlebotomy by the American Medical Technologists (AMT) Allied Health Professionals:
  - Secured partnerships with the Axia College of University of Phoenix
  - Secured a partnership with Tennessee Technology Center, Nashville, TN
  - Secured a partnership with the Tri-Lakes Behavioral Health Center
- Certified by the Delta Workforce Investment Area (DWIA) as an Eligible Training Provider (ETP) in the areas of:
  - Certified Nurse Assistant (CNA)
  - Child Development Associate (CDA)
  - Construction Trades
  - Computer Service Technicians
  - Brick Masonry
  - Drywall Construction
  - Carpentry
  - Phlebotomy (serving Humphreys, Sharkey, Issaquena, Bolivar and Sunflower counties)

Community Partnerships
- Partnerships and 18 Local Education Agency (LEA) agreements with public school districts
- Partnership with BankPlus (Banking: Financial Literacy & Individual Development Account (IDA) assistance; TANF to Work and Ownership (TWO) Project assistance)
- Partnership agreement with the city of Chattanooga, TN for establishing an Early Head Start Model Classroom
- Partnership agreement with five (5) school districts for the “Bridging the Gap” summer transition project
- Partnership agreements with numerous school districts for blended services
- Partnership with Madison County WIN Job Center (Canton, MS) Mississippi Central Planning & Development District and Mississippi Department of Human Services for establishing a Customized Early Childhood Development Center
- Partnership with Guaranty Bank & Trust Company, Belzoni, MS (Humphreys County) establishing IDAs with TWO, participants, Head Start and Early Head Start families
- Region IV Early Head Start/Head Start Model Classroom Lead Agent for Mississippi
- Quality Enhancement Project with the Hazlehurst School District, Hazlehurst, MS (Copiah County); Mississippi Department of Human Services and Mississippi Department of Education
- Partnership between the FCM, Inc. and Mississippi Action for Progress Early Head Start Programs, and The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s (CDC’s) Legacy for Children™ Program

2006–Present:
- 18 new businesses were assisted in getting started. (The average business income from businesses started in 2009 was $41,000.)
- 250 parents enrolled in college

2005–Present:
- 357 parents obtained GEDs or enrolled in Parent Literacy Upgrades and Support (PLUS) classes
- 615 jobs were created or secured; or, the individual moved to a higher grade/paying position
- 382 parents received housing assistance
- 425 parents received job training
- 410 parents were assisted with employment
- 243 parents returned to college
- 271 businesses were assisted in getting started

2001–Present:
- 654 participants have been trained
- Of that number, 99% have secured employment or self-employment

2001–Present:
- 45 parents returned to college

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(Footnote: Eligible Training Provider (ETP) is a training program designed to establish an effective, cohesive system for the provision of quality workforce development services to customers (job seekers and employers) within the Delta Investment Area.)
2010–2011 Family Services

Family Partnerships
- 3,335 Children served in Head Start
- 3,441 Families served in Head Start
- 243 Children served in Early Head Start
- 239 Families served in Early Head Start
- 27 Pregnant females served in Early Head Start

Family Involvement Activities
- Parent Trainings: (Participation: 2,243 Parents; 79% participated in at least one training session)
  These training sessions were designed to empower parents with skills to take control
  and make sound decisions about day-to-day life situations:
  - “Looking at Life Lessons”
  - CPR and First Aid Training
  - Wellness (Physical Fitness)
  - Credit Repair/Establishing Good Credit
  - Ways to Discipline Children (Behavior Management)
  - Community Resources and Their Services
  - “I Can” Keep My Child Healthy (100% Parent Participation)
  - Arts and Crafts (Make and Take Activities)
- Parent Literacy Upgrade and Support (PLUS) Classes
- TANF [1] to Work and Ownership (TWO) Project
- Male Summits
- Healthy Marriage Workshops (Relationship Building)
- Legacy for Children™ Parent Training Workshops

Program Governance:
- Parent Committee (More than 200 sessions)
- Parent County Council
- Policy Council
- Board of Directors
- Program Governance Retreat: (Participation: 12 Parents and 7 Former Parents; three former parents have transitioned to the Board of Directors)

Focus Session Training
- Early Childhood Education — Parent Education
- Expanding Economic Opportunities
- Building Organized Communities
- Community Development

Parent Volunteer Dyad: 
(Over $1,000,000 Secured): This innovative approach assists the agency in securing non-federal share by empowering parents to reinforce activities taught at the center with their child(ren) at home for at least 15 minutes daily.

[1] Head Start is a comprehensive early childhood development program that serves children 3–5 years of age, inclusive of health, mental health, nutrition, disabilities and family and community partnerships.

[2] Early Head Start is an early childhood development program serving pregnant females and children 0–3 years of age, inclusive of health, mental health, nutrition, disabilities and family and community partnerships.


Community Accomplishments
- In 2009: FCM, Inc. received a Proclamation from the Governor’s Office/State of Mississippi
- In 2009: FCM, Inc. was designated to apply for a Center of Excellence by the Governor’s Office/State of Mississippi
- In 2008: FCM, Inc. received a Certificate of Excellence by the Office of Head Start/Administration for Children and Families, Washington, DC
- Since 1979: 100% of FCM, Inc. teachers have earned at least an AA Degree; 65% have earned a B.S. Degree, and 10% have earned an M.A. Degree
- Since 1966: Over 138,000 FCM, Inc. children have successfully transitioned into public schools
- FCM, Inc. Early Head Start/Head Start and Child/Day Care Institute
- “Breaking the Cycle of Generational Poverty” using an approach FCM, Inc. refers to as the Pathways Out of Poverty (POP) Initiative
- The Enrichment Project
- The Substance Abuse and Awareness Program (SAAP)
- The US Small Business Administration Micro-Loan Program
- The Individual Development Accounts (IDAs) Initiative for building assets
- The Job Bank
- The Ernest White Training Center (Belzoni, MS)
- TANF to Work and Ownership (TWO) Project

Senator Thad Cochran Visiting FCM, Inc’s Riven Oak Head Start and Early Head Start Center During its 42nd Anniversary (2008)

Ms. Donna E. Shalala, Former US Secretary of Health & Human Services Visiting FCM, Inc’s St. James Center (1987)

FCM, Inc’s Board of Directors Meeting

Early Beginnings: FCM’s Volunteer Centers

FCM, Inc’s Family Services and Community Accomplishments
Friends of Children of Mississippi, Inc. (FCM, Inc.) has been at the forefront of the national effort to salvage the lives of young people in contributing to the overall moral, economic, political, social and educational development of the states and in mainstreaming the handicapped. FCM, Inc.’s grassroots approach to helping children and families is cultivated from the nation’s oldest Head Start which was launched in 1965—Child Development Group of Mississippi (CDGM).

Driven from spirit of the Freedom Movement in the 1960s and the pioneering efforts of the late Fannie Lou Hamer, Medgar Wiley Evers, Dr. Aaron E. Henry and many others, FCM, Inc. was a catalyst in the transformation of education in America for children from low income families. From this foundation, FCM, Inc. continues to provide the opportunity to move families to a new level of self-sufficiency and deliver on our nation’s promise that all of our preschool-aged children can share in the American Dream and succeed throughout life.

We extend an open-hand invitation to all to join us in forming partnerships throughout the communities and outlining strategies to develop innovative approaches and processes that positively impact and improve the lives of children and families in Mississippi.

Thank you,
Dr. Marvin Hogan, Executive Director

“Bye-Bye” from FCM, Inc.’s Head Start Children

Friends of Children of Mississippi, Inc.
Head Start/Early Head Start
6425 Lakeover Road
Jackson, MS 39213
601.321.0960 (Phone)
601.987.5900 or 601.981.7575 (Fax)
fcmeagleeye@fcmi-ms.us (Email)