ccfc

Campaign for a Commercial-Free Childhood

Annual Report July 1, 2013 - June 30, 2014



Dear CCFC Supporter,

As you'll see in these pages, CCFC had another banner year protecting children from the harmful practice of child-targeted marketing. What you don't see is equally important. Behind the scenes, CCFC is significantly strengthening and expanding its infrastructure.

This year, CCFC formed its inaugural Board of Directors to ensure the organization's long-term sustainability. We are volunteers from diverse backgrounds and professions who share a commitment to work hand-in-hand with CCFC's small, amazing staff toward fulfilling its vital mission. We are each deeply concerned about the commercialization of childhood and collectively proud to be part of an organization that consistently and effectively stands up to powerful, multinational corporations determined to exploit children for profit.

Our work would not be possible without your support, so I want to personally thank you for being there for us and hope that we can continue to count on you in our ongoing efforts to reclaim childhood from corporate marketers.

Sincerely,

Kevin Lee Hepner

Chair, Board of Directors



CCFC Board of Directors (top row left to right): Doreen Downs Miller, Nathan Dungan, Ranae DeSantis, Kevin Lee Hepner, Jan Emlen, John C. Mack. (bottom row left to right): Susan Linn, Tim Kasser, Dipesh Navsaria

Dear Friend,

What does "commercial-free childhood" mean to you? For me, it's a childhood where children's play is shaped by life experiences, hopes, and dreams—not dictated by what's on a screen. Where kids, not corporations, invest toys with life and meaning. Where children attend schools free of any advertising. Where parents wheel toddlers down grocery aisles free from the siren song of cartoon superstars. Where the wellbeing of children trumps the bottom line.

CCFC's work is more important than ever. Marketers continually devise new and more insidious ways to target kids. Today's explosion of digital technologies affords more direct access to ever younger children. And the lines between commercial and non-commercial, non-profit and for-profit are blurring. Schools and other organizations serving kids are increasingly commercialized, lured by the promise of corporate cash or free equipment and services.

I'm proud that CCFC is stepping up to meet these uniquely 21st-century challenges. Amid growing concern about the amount of time children spend with digital games, TV, and videos, we created a new staff position devoted to reducing children's screen time and promoting play. And we had a major victory in our campaign to stop the false and deceptive marketing of screen media as educational for babies.

We're building new and powerful coalitions that put children first. By working together, we defeated an initiative to allow schools to turn over children's most personal information to

companies like Amazon and Dell without any guarantee that the data would be safeguarded. We also helped stop the world's largest toy company from selling kids on big oil.

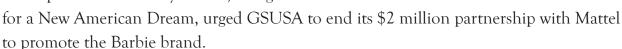
We owe our growth, our strength, and our successes to you. Thanks so much for helping us stand up to corporations whose "kid-marketing" ruthlessly deprives children of the kind of childhood we all know they deserve.

With gratitude,

Susan Linn, EdD Executive Director

Girl Scouts Deserve Better Than Barbie

The Girl Scouts of the USA (GSUSA) have always been a powerful force for good in the lives of girls. Parents trust the Girl Scouts to provide positive role models and foster their daughters' healthy development. That's why CCFC, along with the Center



Barbie:

The quintessential fashion doll is now featured prominently in the "For Girls" section of girlscouts.org, which includes a Barbie-themed web game that is little more than an interactive ad. Daisies and Brownies are encouraged to wear a Barbie patch, transforming their previously commercial-free uniforms into walking advertisements. And this summer, Mattel and GSUSA introduced a Girl Scout Barbie doll—pink capris, high-heeled hiking boots, and all.

More than 6,000 people have already signed our petition calling on GSUSA to end this partnership. Our campaign received extensive media coverage, including USA Today, The Associated Press, The Boston Globe, Today, and dozens of other outlets. Even more important, we are empowering local troop leaders and scouts to speak out and some are actively refusing to participate in any Barbie promotion.



I started my troop to give my daughter and her friends an hour to focus on their sense of self and to help teach them to be leaders. Barbie dolls fill them with the wrong message: that looks and curves are what matter in life.

> - CCFC Member Kim Farina Daisy Troop 76146 Winchester, Massachusetts

Why We Turned Down \$290,000

That's a ton of money for a small nonprofit like CCFC-more than 75% of our budget.

We were initially thrilled to be selected to receive that windfall, a cy pres award from the settlement of a lawsuit against Facebook for using teenagers' names and images in advertisements without permission from parents. When we consulted an independent firm of consumer protection lawyers, however, we discovered that the proposed settlement is worse than no settlement. It harms vulnerable teenagers under the guise of helping them. Its purported protections are largely illusory and it will actually undermine future attempts to protect minors on Facebook. In fact, it is in direct violation of our mission to help parents raise healthy families by limiting commercial access to children.

We decided to take an unprecedented stance that made headlines around the world. We filed a letter to the United States Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit to overturn the settlement and spur the plaintiffs and Facebook to negotiate an agreement that really would protect minors. It's the first time *ever* an advocacy organization turned down a cy pres award in order to oppose a settlement. Though we don't yet know the outcome, the widespread news coverage of our decision, including stories in *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, and *The International Business Times*, has already made a difference. Millions of people now know that Facebook's deceptive privacy policies harm children.

We could do a lot of good with \$290,000, but not at the cost of our integrity, the trust of our supporters, and, especially, the wellbeing of children.

Leadership Award for Susan Linn

On June 2, CCFC's Executive Director,
Dr. Susan Linn, was honored by the
Puppet Showplace Theater of Brookline,
Massachusetts at its 40th Anniversary Gala.
Susan was presented with the Theater's
Creative Leadership Award, both for her
work with CCFC and for her innovative use
of puppets with children.



No More Shell-Branded LEGOs

Commercialism is toxic to children, and not just for the products it promotes. It also sells kids on behaviors and values that are harmful to their development and threaten the sustainability of the planet. That's why we joined our friends at Greenpeace to stop a toxic partnership between LEGO and Shell. In the past two years, more than 16 million Shell-branded LEGO sets were sold at gas stations in 26 countries.

Using toys to advertise any kind of product to kids is wrong. But it's particularly egregious to sell children on Shell, a company whose environmental record and plans to drill in



Courtesy of Greenpeace

the Arctic are rightfully incurring an international barrage of criticism and challenges. Companies like Shell know all too well that fostering powerful emotional attachments to their brand in childhood is the first step to a lifetime of unquestioning loyalty.

We worked closely with Greenpeace to craft their messaging and Susan Linn co-authored a piece for *The Huffington Post* which described why the LEGO/ Shell partnership was so harmful. CCFC members

were among the more than one million people who emailed LEGO and urged them to Block Shell.

In the end, the LEGO/Shell alliance was no match for our powerful coalition: Just three months after we launched our campaign, LEGO announced it would cut ties with Shell. It's a fantastic victory for anyone who cares about children...and the wellbeing of our planet.

Landmark UN Report on Kids

CCFC's Associate Director Josh Golin served as an advisor to a new report from United Nations Special Rapporteur on cultural rights that has positive implications for the health and wellbeing of children worldwide. The Impact of Commercial Advertising and Marketing Practices on the Enjoyment of Cultural Rights makes the important recommendation to "prohibit all forms of advertising to children under 12 years of age, regardless of the medium." The report devotes a special section to how children are targeted in schools and recommends that UN Member States and/or local municipalities "ban all commercial advertising and marketing in public and private schools and ensure that curricula are independent from commercial interests."

No iPad Bouncy Seat for Infants!



More than 13,000 parents, grandparents, educators, and health professionals joined CCFC to demand that Fisher-Price stop selling its notorious Newborn-to-Toddler ApptivityTM Seat for iPad® device. In our 14-year history, no CCFC petition garnered more signatures or generated more passion. The Apptivity Seat was the focus of dozens of scathing articles and opinion pieces, and outraged CCFC members posted

The thought of being strapped down and forced to stare at a screen when you have no other experience in life makes me feel physically sick.

> - CCFC Member Helen Groth, United Kingdom

withering product reviews online.

The seat became such a PR nightmare for Fisher-Price that the company took the highly unusual step of issuing a disclaimer, calling the Apptivity Seat a "niche product" and even urging parents to limit their children's screen time.

And the TOADY Goes To

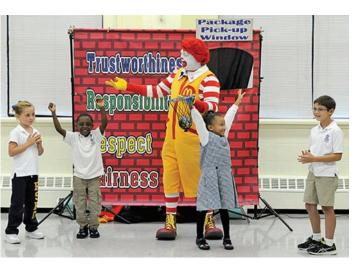
...the 2-In-1 iPotty with Activity Seat for iPad by CTA Digital. The iPotty easily bested its rivals, including the VIP Upgrade Membership by The Real Tooth Fairies and the PLAY-DOH Create ABCs App, to take home the 2013 TOADY (Toys Oppressive And Destructive to Young children) Award for worst toy of the year. It's the third consecutive year a screen-based toy for infants and toddlers won the dreaded TOADY. Last year, Fisher-Price's ApptivityTM Monkey, a stuffed animal with an iPhone in its belly, took home the prize and the Vinci Touchscreen Mobile Learning Tablet won in 2011.



This Clown Doesn't Belong in Schools

Our children's education is sacrosanct. Let the schools remain a haven and sanctuary from the nonstop marketing messages we are ALL bombarded with on a daily basis.





CCFC is leading an international campaign to end McDonald's exploitative practice of sending Ronald McDonald into schools. Last May, McDonald's CEO, Don Thompson, told shareholders, "We have been marketing responsibly." He later added, "We don't put Ronald out in schools." It sounded great, but it simply wasn't true. Under the guise of promoting everything from reading to healthy lifestyles, Ronald regularly appears at preschools and elementary schools across the United States and around the world.

This summer, we sent a letter, signed by an international coalition of 48 public health, education, and children's organizations, urging Thompson to stand by his word to his shareholders. More than 10,000 people signed petitions demanding Ronald-free schools. Now, we're tracking every one of Ronald's appearances and reminding McDonald's on social media that the world's most famous junk-food mascot has no place in schools.

Changing Policy

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) has proposed new guidelines that could help limit junk-food advertising in schools. It's a laudable effort, but the guidelines inadvertently green-light the practice of in-school marketing. CCFC filed comments highlighting the reasons why ending all marketing in schools is preferable to just limiting junk-food ads. We urged the USDA to include the following in its guidelines to schools: "From a 'whole-child' perspective—one that supports students' cognitive, social, and emotional development, as well as their physical wellbeing—schools should be commercial-free zones."



Protecting Student Privacy

In a big win for students and families, we helped put an end to inBloom, a Gates Foundation initiative to help corporations profit from students' most sensitive and confidential information. Parents across the country rose up against inBloom's plans to store student data—including names, detailed disciplinary and health records, test scores, racial identity, and special education status—on a data "cloud" and share it with for-profit companies.

We're proud of the role we played in stopping inBloom. In our home state, we organized parents

and coalition partners like the Massachusetts ACLU and PTA to prevent inBloom from taking hold. In Illinois, Colorado, and other states, we provided technical support to local activists and encouraged our members to email education officials and speak out at school board meetings.

This important victory is one step in what will be a long fight to protect students' privacy. Public schools are particularly attractive targets for corporate marketers because they collect a wealth of personal



information from students. CCFC will continue campaigning to stop marketers from accessing and exploiting students' confidential data. In Massachusetts, we're working to pass comprehensive student privacy legislation that we hope will serve as a model for other states. Nationally, we're working with a new coalition, Parents for Student Privacy, to stop corporate data miners from invading our schools.

Keeping Ads Off School Buses



State bills to allow advertising on school buses were introduced in New York, Indiana, South Carolina, and Georgia—and we stopped all four! If you're keeping score at home, that's seventeen straight school bus ad bills that CCFC has defeated since 2012.

The End of the Road for Your Baby Can Read!

The Federal Trade Commission finally put an end to Your Baby Can Read!, the \$200 video series for infants as young as three months. It's a great conclusion to CCFC's threeyear campaign to hold the makers of Your Baby Can Read! accountable for false and deceptive advertising. In addition, Robert Titzer, the company's founder, is now prohibited from using the phrase "Your Baby Can Read," making unsubstantiated claims about the performance of any product that teaches reading, and endorsing any product without a reasonable basis for its marketing claims.

Screen-Free Week 2014

CCFC's international celebration of life beyond the screen!













Healthy Kids in a Digital World

Reducing children's screen time and promoting hands-on play are longtime priorities for CCFC. With the explosion of digital entertainment aimed at very young children, the need is even more urgent. This year, we created a brand-new staff position to spearhead all of our efforts to help families unplug and foster the creative play that children need to thrive.

We're so pleased to introduce Sara Adelmann, whose combined background in early childhood education and advocacy uniquely qualifies her to lead our screentime initiatives. With a grant from Kaiser Permanente, she's working to reduce children's screen time with leaders in early childhood, including the National Black Child Development Institute, the National WIC Association, and the New York City Early Childhood Professional Development Institute. In the coming year, with a grant from the Herman and Frieda L. Miller Foundation's Innovation Fund, she will be working with the Family Nurturing Center in Boston to create a model program to help parents develop healthy screen-time habits for young children.



Sara Adelmann, Screen Time Project Manager.

The guiding principle behind CCFC's work aligns with a deep-rooted belief of mine-that children deserve a childhood free of roadblocks to their healthy development. It concerns me that widespread use of screens is taking time away from creative play and other essential experiences. New technologies are exciting and provide many benefits to our work and personal lives. However, in a rush to be globally competitive and on the cutting-edge of the technology revolution, we are losing sight of what hands-on play and genuine social interaction provide for children—a foundation for future learning, creative thinking, problem-solving, and more.

I am thrilled to join the CCFC staff and community and hope that, together, we can help preserve childhood and help all children lead less commercialized lives.

Spreading the Word

Our voices were heard in hundreds of media outlets around the world. Susan Linn's writings on play and on media violence were published in The New York Times, and her piece on reducing children's screen time was featured on CNN.com. Josh Golin wrote about the need for strong privacy protections in The Boston Globe. Sara Adelman promoted Screen-Free Week on radio stations across the country. And our campaigns and concerns about the commercialization of childhood were featured on Today, ABC News, CBS News, National Public Radio, and in The Washington Post, The Economist, USA Today, The Atlantic, and The Associated Press, to name just a few.



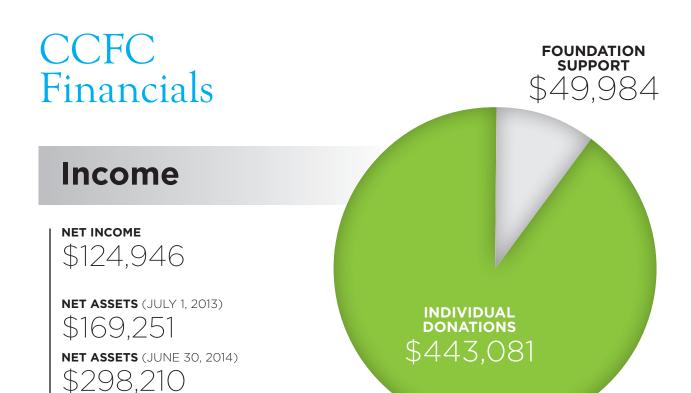
Why We Support CCFC

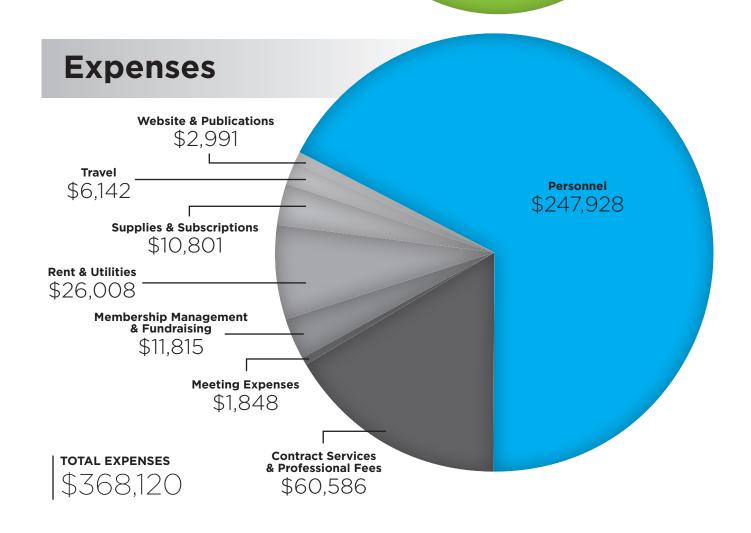
by Aparna and Joel Brown

As parents raising a young daughter, we often feel at odds with the materialistic values that permeate our culture. That's why we're so grateful to have CCFC in our lives. We know we're not alone. It's hard for the voice of a single family to be heard, but when CCFC publicly questions the veracity of corporate claims and pushes back against the status quo, they represent a vast community of families like us—and they make a difference.

While having a community that shares our values helps us raise our own child, the more fundamental reason we support CCFC is for millions of children we don't even know. We're grateful to CCFC on behalf of kids who ride commercial-free school buses every day. For the new parents who don't need to worry about whether they should purchase expensive videos to "teach their babies to read." For the schoolchildren whose personal data will not be sold to the highest bidder. Their interests are protected because there is a champion out there fighting for them.

We support CCFC so all children can lead lives that are less commercialized, less invaded by advertising, less sexualized, less "corporatized." We are honored to help ensure that children's right to a commercial-free childhood is defended.





Our Supporters

We are grateful to our supporters, whose generosity allows CCFC to continue its important work reclaiming childhood from corporate marketers. Below is a list of our fiscal year 2014 (July 1, 2013–June 30, 2014) donors.

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Our Mission

CCFC supports parents' efforts to raise healthy families by limiting commercial access to children and ending the exploitive practice of child-targeted marketing. In working for the rights of children to grow up—and the freedom for parents to raise them—without being undermined by corporate interests, CCFC promotes a more democratic and sustainable world.

