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Ohio Youth Services Department Runs Summer Schools Aimed at Reading

Wednesday, July 23, 2014 at 4:55 PM

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It's been 50 years since Freedom Summer, the civil rights movement that focused on getting African Americans, particularly those in the South, to register to vote and become politically active. Reverend Laura Young with the Children's Defense Fund of Ohio explains some of the spirit embodied in Freedom Summer can be found throughout Ohio today in what is known as Freedom Schools. Ohio Public Radio's Jo Ingles has more.

There are 23 schools in 10 different Ohio cities, including three schools in the maximum security juvenile prisons in Ohio, sponsored by the Ohio Department of Youth Services. Young says a main objective of these schools is to help children with their reading skills.

"College student interns are trained by Children's Defense Fund to mentor and implement the curriculum," Young said. "So instead of their regular teacher throughout the year, they have these high energy, creative, cool, hip college students—many of whom came from communities of poverty and minority communities where we target this program—to come and relate really well to the children, and help them see that reading is cool, reading is fun and they are worthy of being educated and learning."

The schools run for six weeks during the summer. Students are fed breakfast and lunch. And in the afternoons, they can go places like swimming pools, science centers and engage in other activities.

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