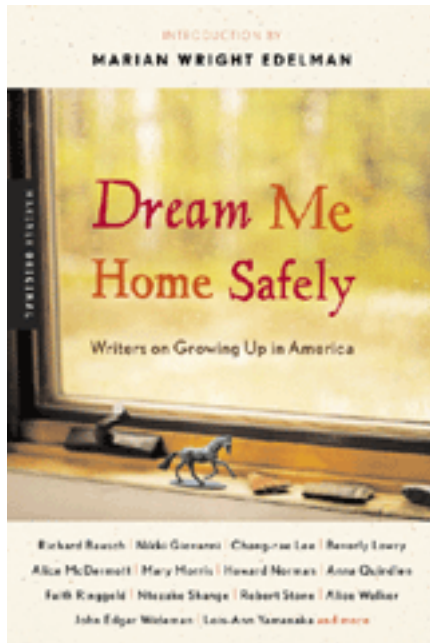


## Press Release



# Dream Me Home Safely

edited by [Susan Richards Shreve](#)

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"An impassioned picture of growing up in America . . . This beautiful compilation proves that 'childhood, of course, never ends.'" — *Publishers Weekly*

"There are sad stories and painful memories in this collection, but also a great deal of hope, as seen in children's resilience, their small kindnesses to other children, the writers' ability to look back through the lens of time at the parents and siblings and houses and neighborhoods they were given and understand what true gifts these things were." — Marian Wright Edelman, from the Foreword

## About the Book

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The experiences of childhood remain surprisingly visceral in memory — bike rides through balmy summer nights, the way your grandmother's hand felt in yours, the precise moment when you realized that the color of your skin might influence another's impression of you. In *Dream Me Home Safely*, a collection of essays on childhood, thirty-four writers share their memories — of family, of friends, of those seemingly small moments (sometimes sweet, sometimes painful) that shape a lifetime.

*Dream Me Home Safely* features essays by some of our finest writers — Alice Walker, Chang-rae Lee, Anna Quindlen, Beverly Lowry, John Edgar Wideman, Nikki Giovanni, Lois-Ann Yamanaka, Anthony Grooms, Ntozake Shange, Joyce Carol Oates, and Faith Ringgold, among others. The result is a series of snapshots — a sort of verbal photo album — of what it means to be a child in America.

*Dream Me Home Safely* tells the story of the many ways children make a place in their family and in the world. With all the insight and skill for which these writers are well known — with poignancy, great humor, and zestful candor — they offer a glimpse of their childhood selves. They share the people, places, and ideas that made them who they are today and

challenge us to consider how our children will remember their own childhoods.

Edited by Susan Richards Shreve with Children's Defense Fund™ founder Marian Wright Edelman, *Dream Me Home Safely* is being published on the thirtieth anniversary of the CDF.

## About the Author

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Marian Wright Edelman, founder and president of the Children's Defense Fund (CDF), has been an advocate for disadvantaged Americans for her entire professional life. Under her leadership, CDF has become the nation's strongest voice for children and families. The mission of the Children's Defense Fund is to Leave No Child Behind® and to ensure every child a Healthy Start, a Head Start, a Fair Start, a Safe Start, and a Moral Start in life and successful passage to adulthood with the help of caring families and communities.

Edelman, a graduate of Spelman College and Yale Law School, began her career in the mid-1960s, when, as the first black woman admitted to the Mississippi Bar, she directed the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund office in Jackson, Mississippi. In 1968, she moved to Washington, D.C., as counsel for the Poor People's Campaign that Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., began organizing before his death. She founded the Washington Research Project, a public interest law firm and the parent body of the Children's Defense Fund. For two years she served as the director of the Center for Law and Education at Harvard University, and in 1973 she started CDF.

Edelman served on the Board of Trustees of Spelman College, which she chaired from 1976 to 1987, and was the first woman elected by alumni as a member of the Yale University Corporation, on which she served from 1971 to 1977. She has received many honorary degrees and awards, including the Albert Schweitzer Humanitarian Prize, the Heinz Award, and a MacArthur Foundation Prize Fellowship. In 2000, she received the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the nation's highest civilian award, and the Robert F. Kennedy Lifetime Achievement Award for her writings, which include seven books: *Families in Peril: An Agenda for Social Change*; *The Measure of Our Success: A Letter to My Children and Yours*; *Guide My Feet: Meditations and Prayers on Loving and Working for Children*; *Stand for Children*; *Lanterns: A Memoir of Mentors*; *Hold My Hand: Prayers for Building a Movement to Leave No Child Behind*; and *I'm Your Child, God: Prayers for Our Children*.

She is a board member of the Robin Hood Foundation, the Association to Benefit Children, City Lights School, and Outward Bound and is a member of the Council on Foreign Relations, the American Philosophical Society, the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, and the Institute of Medicine of the National Academy of Sciences.

Marian Wright Edelman is married to Peter Edelman, a professor at Georgetown Law School. They have three sons, Joshua, Jonah, and Ezra, and two granddaughters, Ellika and Zoe.

## Children's Defense Fund: A History

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**1973** *Children Out of School in America*, CDF's first major report, finds that two million children are not enrolled in school, including 750,000 children with disabilities.

- 1974** The first CDF state office opens in Mississippi to remedy exclusion of children with special needs, to organize parents, and to mount successful legal challenges.
- 1975** The Education for All Handicapped Children Act (now the Individuals with Disabilities Act) guarantees that all disabled children have a federal right to education.
- 1976** Staff from CDF visit more than five hundred jails across America; *Children in Adult Jails* published.
- 1977** EPSDT (Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnosis, and Treatment): *Does It Spell Health Care for Poor Children?* challenges poor state enforcement of children's Medicaid.
- 1978** *Children Without Homes* documents conditions for more than 500,000 children living away from their families.
- 1979** Advocacy by CDF prevents \$200 million cut to childcare.
- 1980** The Adoption Assistance and Child Welfare Act is enacted to protect more than 500,000 children in the child welfare system by encouraging family reunification or adoption.
- 1981** First CDF National Conference is held; Child Watch Visitation Program begins.
- 1982** CDF Action Council publishes first Nonpartisan Congressional Voting Record on children. A CDF lawsuit wins dental care for 300,000 Texas children eligible for Medicaid.
- 1983** The CDF Children's Survival Bill sets a baseline agenda for Congress on investment in child welfare that results in significant restoration of funds, following earlier budget cuts in children's programs.
- 1984** First major expansion in federal Medicaid for children is enacted after four years of CDF advocacy; 500,000 children receive health care.
- 1985** Five-year prenatal care campaign is launched, to combat infant mortality and low birth-weight outcomes and to prevent teen pregnancy.
- 1986** Federal Medicaid expansions make health coverage available to three million pregnant women and children under five in poor families.
- 1987** The Immunization Status of American Children reveals declining vaccination rates for children. The federal budget increases spending on children by \$700 million.
- 1988** Federal immunization funding increases by 50 percent, helping a million children. The Family Support Act provides twelve months of health coverage and childcare to families making the transition from welfare to work.
- 1989** Advocacy efforts led by CDF result in an increase of \$152 million for Head Start.
- 1990** First Beat the Odds® event is held in Los Angeles. A Child Care and Development Block Grant is enacted, providing childcare for about 430,000 low-income children.

**1991** The Black Community Crusade for Children® (BCCC) forms the Black Student Leadership Network® to train thousands of young leaders.

**1992** Thousands of religious congregations of all faiths join the first National Observance of Children's Sabbaths®.

**1993** The BCCC launches the Freedom Schools project, based on the concept of the 1964 Mississippi summer Freedom School movement and incorporating reading, conflict resolution, cultural and historic enrichment, and parent involvement.

**1994** CDF purchases Haley Farm in Clinton, Tennessee, as center for spiritual renewal, leadership development, and intergenerational, interdisciplinary, and interracial communication.

**1995** *Progress and Peril*, describing the crisis among America's black children, is published by CDF/BCCC.

**1996** At the Lincoln Memorial, CDF convenes Stand for Children, the largest mass demonstration in support of children in U.S. history.

**1997** The State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP) provides \$40 billion over ten years to cover five to ten million uninsured children nationwide.

**1998** To ensure that children are gaining access to health care, CDF begins extensive tracking of SCHIP implementation in states. Child Care Now! Campaign is launched.

**1999** The CDF report *Children and Guns* describes the impact of gun violence on children.

**2000** Marian Wright Edelman speaks at the Million Mom March on Washington, which CDF endorses.

**2001** The landmark Dodd-Miller comprehensive Act to Leave No Child Behind (S. 940/HR 1990) is introduced.

**2002** The Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act is signed into law after years of CDF advocacy.

**2003** CDF hosts the first presidential candidates' forum on children, at which all Democratic candidates appear. President Bush declines the invitation.

## Contributors

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**Marian Wright Edelman** Foreword

**Julia Alvarez** *Ars Politica*

**Tina McElroy Ansa** *The Center of the Universe*

**Robert Bausch** *My Father's Dance*

**Bebe Moore Campbell** from *Sweet Summer*

**Alan Cheuse** *Rowing in Amboy*

**Stuart Dybek** *Thread*

**Patricia Elam** Parenthood: A Life Sentence  
**Carolyn Ferrell** A Child's Garden of Verse  
**Merrill Joan Gerber** from *The Kingdom of Brooklyn*  
**Nikki Giovanni** Saturday Days  
**Stephen Goodwin** Transgressions  
**Patricia Griffith** The Spiral Staircase  
**Anthony Grooms** Christmas, Alabama, 1962  
**Jeanne Wakatsuki Houston** Ba-chan's Superstition  
**Chang-rae Lee** Mute in an English-Only World  
**Beverly Lowry** Memphis Years  
**Michael Patrick MacDonald** Spitting Image  
**Mary Morris** The Bluff  
**Bich Minh Nguyen** Toadstools  
**Howard Norman** Birds at Night  
**Joyce Carol Oates** The Gravedigger's Daughter  
**Lisa Page** Psychedelic Shack  
**Michael Parker** Movie Where You Don't See the Monster Until the End  
**Alexs Pate** Innocence Found  
**Anna Quindlen** Summer Coming  
**Nina Revoyr** Foreigner in Marshfield  
**Faith Ringgold** The Boy Nobody Knew  
**Ntozake Shange** Growing Up in St. Louis  
**Susan Richards Shreve** Three Women and Me  
**Susan Straight** Crick  
**Elizabeth Strout** The Swimming Pool  
**Alice Walker** Childhood  
**John Edgar Wideman** Sitting  
**Lois-Ann Yamanaka** JohnJohn's World