



For Immediate Release

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Polaris Students Travel to Birmingham, Alabama to Dine with the Foot Soldiers of the 1964 Children's March

Students will interview Shirley Floyd and other Foot Soldiers in their Civil Rights expedition

CHICAGO, IL. (April 22, 2014) — [Polaris Charter Academy](#) fifth and sixth grade students will travel 10 hours to Birmingham, Alabama on April 29th through May 2nd to meet with Civil Rights activists and their relatives and see historical Civil Rights monuments firsthand. Students have also interviewed renowned historian [Timuel Black](#) and activist and playwright [David Barr III](#) as part of the expedition.

Shirley Gavin Floyd of the Civil Rights Activist Committee in Birmingham, Alabama brings together some of the original Foot Soldiers of the Children's March in 1963 for students to learn about their experiences and commemorate their stories in a performance at the end of the trimester. The Children's March, also known as the [Children's Crusade](#), was a march by hundreds of school students in Birmingham, Alabama on May 2nd through 5th of 1963, during the American Civil Rights Movement's Birmingham Campaign. Students of all ages walked downtown to talk with the mayor about segregation in the city, facing police dogs, fire hoses, and potential arrest during their nonviolent protest. The march gained national attention and prompted President John F. Kenney to publicly fully support racial equality and led to the passage of the [Civil Rights Act of 1964](#).

Polaris 5th and 6th graders will explore historically significant landmarks during their trip to Birmingham, including the [16th Street Baptist Church](#), where the four young girls were killed in a bombing, [Kelly Ingram Park](#), which was a major location for the Children's March, and the [Birmingham Civil Rights Institute](#). The purpose of the trip is aligned with Expeditionary Learning's value to provide students with a hands-on learning experience. Students have studied multiple civil rights movements and events in American history as case studies to answer guiding questions of the curriculum: What is the impetus of change? What responsibility do we have for ensuring the rights of others? How do you stop or fight injustice effectively? Students will use the information they learn and reflections from the stories they hear to create poems, writings and other original pieces in their final product.

[Polaris Charter Academy](#) is the only public Expeditionary Learning (EL) elementary school in Illinois and the first school in the Midwest to be recognized as a Mentor School by the EL network. Students "learn by doing" as they conduct fieldwork, speak with experts, work collaboratively, and create authentic, high-quality end projects for audience beyond the classroom.

[About Polaris Charter Academy](#): the mission of Polaris Charter Academy is to educate students to be self-motivated, creative, critical thinkers, with the ultimate goal of shaping life-long learners and citizens with a strong sense of personal and civic responsibility. While on sabbatical in the fall of 2005, three Golden Apple Award-winning teachers identified the common thread of their best practices in teaching: they all gave students the opportunity to "learn by doing." With this common ground established between them,



Michelle Navarre, Tracy Kwock, and Roel Vivit's vision came to fruition as Polaris Charter Academy opened its doors in the fall of 2007.

For additional information and the latest on Polaris Charter Academy, please visit: www.pcachicago.org.
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