

The Secret Fellowship of Freedom Riding Jedi Wizards

Your Honorary Membership!



Congratulations on joining the SECRET SOCIETY OF FREEDOM RIDING JEDI WIZARDS.

We're obviously joking about this being top secret. But a sense of humor is important.

Why the name? Because we believe it takes courage, commitment to a higher calling, and teamwork to make the changes that we need to make to the world today if we are to survive and thrive as communities and as a democracy in coming decades.

Who better exemplifies these virtues than:

- The Freedom Riders of the Civil Rights Movement, who rode the Greyhound buses into the heart of the Deep South in order to desegregate public facilities;
- The Jedi Warriors of Star Wars, the good Wizards of Harry Potter, and the Fellowship in Tolkien's Fellowship of the Rings. Fictional, yes. But all three series wildly popular because the heroes of these movies embody these virtues of courage, commitment to a greater good, and a willingness to work for the long term in the face of short-term adversity.

What we are trying to accomplish *is* hard. It's not a good feeling when somebody walks by you as if you don't exist. It's hard to speak to a stranger who seems intent on ignoring you. But like the people and characters symbolized by the wrist band, we are in it for the long term, with courage, commitment and a sense of fellowship both for our immediate team and for people in general. And like the leaders of the Civil Rights Movement, we have a vision of a better world – even though it sometimes feels far away.

Our goals are as simple and practical as they are big and transformative: In the DC metro area of more than 3 million people, we CAN get a tutor or mentor for EVERY DC STUDENT WHO NEEDS ONE... and eventually PG and surrounding counties. The odds are that this will truly TRANSFORM educational outcomes in DC in both public and charter schools. And, equally important, it is likely to lead to positive change in our civic culture – a way past the divisions and poor leadership that seem endemic today. It will teach ALL of us that by working together, we can get beyond our politics of blame and dysfunction to constructively tackle the major problems of our generation.

We can choose the future we wish to create. As Robert F. Kennedy put it: "The future is not a gift: it is an achievement. Every generation helps make its own future. This is the essential challenge of the present."

John Lewis and other Freedom Riders couldn't guarantee success when they boarded those buses to the Deep South, Rey and Finn fought against the odds in Star Wars but we admire them because they tried to make a difference. We are trying to do the same today.