



Communities In Schools

Charlotte-Mecklenburg

The mission of Communities In Schools is to surround students with a community of support, empowering them to stay in school and achieve in life.

Communities In Schools believes all students deserve five basic resources:

- A one-on-one relationship with a caring adult
- A safe place to learn and grow
- A healthy start and a healthy future
- A marketable skill to use upon graduation
- A chance to give back to peers and community

SAVE THE DATES



May 23 - June 14
CMS Graduations

June 20
Dine Out For Kids®

Aug 9 - 19
School Tools

Sept 16
Lowcountry

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Newsletter for Friends of CIS | Spring 2017

Spectacular CIS SENIORS!

Graduation season is fast approaching and we are so proud and excited for our seniors who will be receiving their diplomas in June! We wish we had room for more, but below and on page three are profiles of four of our amazing and inspirational CIS seniors. Here's to the Class of 2017!

MIRACLE FARRAR

From a very young age, West Mecklenburg senior Miracle Farrar says she always had high hopes for herself. But school – and life – haven't always been that easy. Born prematurely with a number of related health issues, Miracle was also bullied a bit when she was younger, mainly because she nearly always had the right answer when called upon in class – something other students didn't necessarily appreciate. So she chose to stay quiet to keep from drawing attention to herself.



West Mecklenburg senior Miracle Farrar

But lately Miracle has come into her own. Site Coordinator Jeannette Jackson and CIS TRiO Counselor Alexis Bibbs can't say enough good things about her. "Miracle is really a self-starter when it comes to her education – she keeps me on my toes," said Mr. Bibbs. "She'll bring me a college application, with an envelope and a stamp, and say, 'Now this needs to be mailed by such-and-such date.'"

Miracle's favorite subjects are History and English. This spring she's taking Honors English IV, Honors Spanish III, AP Psychology, and AP U.S. Government & Politics. She is passionate about community activism and political science. Last year she formed a school club, UPLIFT West Meck, and organized a march and a cookout to get students involved and give them a voice, as a means to instill pride in their school, which has sometimes endured negative stories in the press. Oh yes, and she's found time to play on the school's tennis team for four years! All this and she currently has a 4.1 GPA!

Miracle will be the first in her family to attend college – the hardest part for her has been making the final choice, since she has been accepted to 10 colleges and universities! However, she recently made the decision to attend UNC-Greensboro and plans to major in Sociology. Keep your eye on this young lady, as she is clearly a "Miracle in the making!"

See more Spectacular Seniors on page 3

Executive Director Message

WHAT KIDS NEED

CIS Executive Director Molly Shaw gave these remarks at an event in late November, while on maternity leave with her new baby daughter, Kate. Molly and her husband, David Webb, also have a two-year-old son, Max.

My husband and I have a two-month old baby, so I've been at home with her for the past couple of months, helping her to adjust to this world, and helping her little brother, Max, to adjust to her. And I've been thinking a lot about what it takes for kids to thrive – not just survive – but thrive. And three things come to mind:

- Every kids needs to know that they have “ownership” over their decisions and that their decisions affect their future. Whether it's my two-year old son knowing that, five minutes from now, the decisions he makes will affect him. (If he doesn't pick up his toys, he won't get a treat after dinner.) Or for the middle schooler or high school student, knowing that the decisions they make may affect the rest of their life.
- Kids also need to know that they are loved, that someone's in their corner, that they matter to the community... that people who don't even know them care about them.
- And then the last thing seems more obvious, but it's something that I notice in the everyday life of my kids. Kids need to have coordinated, intentional resources that are personalized just for them. I see this when I'm reading stories to my son at night, or when brushing his teeth, or when I take my kids to the doctor. But it goes beyond the basics, to experiences and opportunities. I see it when I drop my son off at swim lessons. Or when I teach him about what the oboe is, because in a few week we're going to see *The Nutcracker*, and he'll see and hear, for the first time, a live orchestra. All kids need resources coordinated around them, just for them. And our CIS kids need the same thing.

At Communities In Schools, we work to ensure that every child has coordinated, intentional resources that are personalized for them, so they are able to thrive. I'm thankful that the Charlotte community and in particular, our CIS friends, recognize that kids who aren't our own need and deserve these tangible – and intangible – resources, too. It's important that all kids know that they matter, that their community cares about them. Thank you for your support that allows us to do such meaningful work.



Molly Shaw with husband David Webb and their children, Kate and Max.



CIS Executive Director Molly Shaw (center) with Bank of America's Andrea Smith and Charles Bowman.

CIS Wins Bank of America NEIGHBORHOOD BUILDERS GRANT

CIS-Charlotte was recently named a recipient of Bank of America's "Neighborhood Builders" Award. CIS is one of two local nonprofits receiving the award this year, which provides a grant of \$200,000 over the next two years.

Renaissance West Community Initiative is the other Neighborhood Builders grant recipient.

Bank of America made the announcement at a Giving Tuesday event on November 30, where BofA also announced that it is donating nearly \$1.1 million to 17 Charlotte-area nonprofits that focus on

community development and issues related to economic mobility, such as affordable housing services and family emergency shelters.

Bank of America describes its Neighborhood Builders award program as an important part of the bank's efforts to build thriving communities by addressing issues fundamental to economic mobility. Through the program, two nonprofits each year are selected to receive leadership development for the executive director and an emerging leader, as well as \$200,000 in flexible funding. Since 2004, the alumni network of Bank of America's "Neighborhood Builders" has grown to more than 900 nonprofit organizations across the country and nearly 2,000 nonprofit leaders through the Bank's investment of more than \$180 million.

More Spectacular SENIORS! *Continued from page 1*



West Charlotte senior Joe Teah (left) with CIS Counselor George Metz.

JOE TEAH

When Joe Teah was in the 10th grade at West Charlotte High School, he was arrested – twice. But two good things came of Joe’s time at Jail North: it’s where he met CIS Re-Entry Counselor LaDonte Lee, and Mr. Lee then connected Joe to George Metz, the CIS Youthful Offenders Counselor at West Charlotte High School. Joe credits Mr. Lee for giving him a “wake up call” to turn his life around, and Mr. Metz became an invaluable role model and mentor for Joe once he was back at West Charlotte.

At West Charlotte, Mr. Metz quickly became like a father figure to Joe. “Mr. Metz taught me how to be a man from just simple things, like how to tie a tie,” said Joe. “Most of all, he taught me that the choices I make today will affect me tomorrow.” Joe says Mr. Metz’s consistency and holding him accountable was important support as well. “Mr. Metz was constantly checking up on me in my classes,” said Joe. “Knowing he wanted me to do better and succeed - that motivated me.”

It clearly worked: This fall Joe will be attending N.C. Central University to pursue a B.S. in Computational and Engineering Mathematics. Joe will be the first in his family to attend college.

SANDRA MONRROY

Sandra Monrroy, a South Meck senior, is the first Latina student in CMS to be named to the Regional Women’s Golf Team! A former CIS Site Coordinator encouraged her to try the sport, and she ended up loving it – though she will tell you it is very challenging and demands lots of hard work and practice.

But Sandra is no stranger to challenges. Her family is originally from Honduras, and she did not know a word of English when she started pre-school in this country. Adjusting to a new culture and language was one of her greatest challenges, but Sandra believes the experience has prepared her to face other obstacles along the way.

Sandra is an excellent student with a 3.8 GPA. She has volunteered as a peer buddy with autistic children and wants to work with exceptional children. Ebony Wilson, Sandra’s CIS Site Coordinator, has helped Sandra and her mother navigate the college application process and helped Sandra determine that a career in occupational therapy would be a great fit for her.

“Sandra is sweet, studious, and a strong leader,” said Ms. Wilson. “With or without golf, with her academic record and determination, she is going to do very well.” Sandra is headed to Belmont Abbey College this fall and is the first in her family to attend college.



Sandra Monrroy (right) with CIS Site Coordinator Ebony Wilson.

ALINA GLOVER

During Alina Glover’s freshman year at East Mecklenburg High School, Alina’s mother was laid off from work, resulting in the family’s eviction from their home. The family of four had to live in a motel for two long years before they could afford a permanent residence again. It was a traumatizing experience for the family, and Alina’s school work and confidence suffered.

While it was a happy day when the family moved from the motel to permanent housing, it meant Alina had to transfer to a new school. She dreaded having to make new friends and work with new teachers at this critical time in high school, but her CIS Site Coordinator at East Meck, Nichelle Wilson, assured her that CIS would be there for her at Independence High School, too. At Independence, Site Coordinator Jamall Kinard helped Alina map out her AP and Honors courses, got her involved in school activities, and generally became her mentor and rock of stability at school. Where Alina says she was once “filled with distress and fear,” today she is happy, confident and looking forward to a bright future.

Alina’s “no excuses” attitude plus support from CIS helped her land a scholarship to Wingate University. In another exciting development, Alina and Mr. Kinard will be featured in the new CIS national marketing campaign - look for billboards with their smiling faces in the very near future!



Independence senior Alina Glover and Mr. Kinard cutting up at the photo shoot for the CIS National marketing campaign.

GIVE KIDS A SMILE®

February 3, 2017

On February 3, the American Dental Association's 15th annual Give Kids A Smile Day took place across the city of Charlotte, and across the country. In Charlotte, Communities In Schools, the Junior League of Charlotte, and the Mecklenburg County Health Department partnered with local dental practices to provide free dental services to children in need. Dentists and hygienists provided cleanings and much-needed treatment to 64 students from 14 CMS schools. Now that's something to smile about!

Many Thanks to these

Dental Practices:

CMC Dentistry

Carolina Dental Arts of Ballantyne Village

Carolina Kids Dentistry

Clark Pediatric Dentistry

Ghorshi Family Dentistry

Laxer, Long & Savage

Merlo & Fahrney Dentistry

Park Crossing Dentistry

Pediatric Dentistry of Mathews



Berryhill Students Win STEM CAMP SCHOLARSHIPS



CIS Site Coordinator Clay Freeman with students Neshmi Zapata, Ashley Medina, and Brisa Sosa.

Congratulations to CIS Site Coordinator Clay Freeman and not one - not two - but THREE of his 8th grade students at Berryhill School K-8 who have won summer camp scholarships for programs at UNC-Chapel Hill and N.C. A&T University! Mr. Freeman encouraged all of his 8th graders to apply for the STEM-related camps that will be held on college campuses this summer, but it is outstanding that three from one CMS school were selected.

The NCASFAA (North Carolina Association of Financial Aid Administrators) offers \$1,000 scholarships that cover the full cost of the week-long camps. Students had to write an essay about why they wanted to attend and how the camp would impact their learning. Berryhill's science teacher, Elisabeth Bennett, allowed Mr. Freeman to use class time for a couple of days to help students with their essays.

Winners include Neshmi Zapata and Brisa Sosa, who will attend UNC-Chapel Hill for a camp about YouTube and video production; and Ashley Medina, who will attend an engineering camp at N.C. A&T. What an opportunity for these students - and what an accomplishment to have three winners from one school!



Fay Grasty with Vilma, the student she mentors at Billingsville Leadership Academy.

VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT

Fay Grasty

Billingsville Academy

Fay Grasty has been volunteering as a tutor and mentor with CIS students at Billingsville Leadership Academy (BLA) for six years now, but her connection with CIS goes back MUCH further than that! At a conference in 1983, Fay heard national CIS founder Bill Milliken speak. She was so impressed with him and the philosophy behind Communities In Schools that she immediately called her good friend, Cynthia Marshall, to tell her about it. Cynthia was the incoming president of the Junior League of Charlotte and she contacted Bill Milliken to come speak at a membership meeting. And that was the beginning of CIS in Charlotte! (For those who may not know the full story, Cynthia Marshall became CIS-Charlotte’s founding executive director in 1985, after she raised funds from a number of Charlotte’s top corporations to initiate CIS in Charlotte.)

Fay was actually on staff at CIS for a few years in the late 1980’s, coordinating corporate and community partners interested in volunteering and supporting the schools. After a career in various nonprofits, Fay is now retired and able to devote more time to volunteer. Fay is a long-time member of Myers Park Presbyterian Church, and the church has a partnership with BLA which includes working with CIS.

Fay is excited about a new volunteer training program that CIS launched in January, “Coaching Students to Success,” and said the three-hour training was very well done. “I came away with a lot of tools that will help me work with students in setting goals and helping them achieve their goals,” said Fay. “I have never felt as prepared to work with a student until this training.”

When asked why she volunteers, Fay said she feels we are all called to help one another in life. “The more fortunate we are, the more responsibility we have to give back and contribute where we can to make the world a better place,” she added. “What better way to act on that than by helping a young person be the best they can be and be successful in life. We all have potential. . . sometimes we just need someone to bring that out in us. I feel that is the role of a mentor.”

NEW Volunteer Training

COACHING STUDENTS TO SUCCESS

Have you heard about our new volunteer training program, “Coaching Students to Success”? We held our first training in January and participants have given it great reviews! The purpose is to provide in-depth training for our volunteers to ensure they feel equipped and confident as they build relationships with students, help them develop skills in goal setting, and navigate making decisions. A CIS “Success Coach” will meet with a student preferably every week (minimum of twice a month) during the school day. Contact Yeeva Cheng at volunteer@cischarlotte.org for more information.



FALL TRAINING DATES

- Aug 31** | 5:30 - 8:30pm
- Sept 7** | 9:30am - 12:30pm
- Sept 14** | 5:30 - 8:30pm

ANN CLARK Wins CIS National Award

In March, CMS Superintendent Ann Clark was named the winner in the Superintendent category of Communities In Schools' national *All In For Students Award* for her outstanding success.

The *All In For Students Awards*, created in 2007 by our CIS National office, honors the exemplary dedication of CIS staff, educators, community partners and CIS alumni, who go "all in" for students, empowering them to stay in school, graduate and go on to brighter futures. This year, only one superintendent, one principal, one CIS coordinator, and two CIS alums from across the national network of 155 affiliates received this prestigious recognition.

Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools is the 18th largest school district in the country, with nearly 147,000 students representing 183 countries and 197 languages. With 54% of the student body classified as economically disadvantaged, Superintendent Clark recognizes the importance of providing one-on-one support to students, as CIS does.

"I see CIS as being the wind beneath the wings of a kid," said Clark. "Many of our kids are beating their wings pretty hard every day to stay in the air, and CIS comes along and takes care of the non-academic barriers to a student's successful flight."



Under Clark's leadership, Charlotte is often in the top tier of urban education rankings, and the school district is nationally recognized as a leader in academic achievement and instructional programs.

"Every year I get to go to over 20 high school graduations and hand out diplomas," says Clark. "We've gone from a 66% graduation rate to 89.6% – that's thousands of kids on a very different trajectory. I watch kids go off the stage and I know that without CIS, they wouldn't have a diploma or a plan for next steps. It's thrilling to see what this organization has done for our community."



A group of 25 Safe Journey participants and staff traveled to Raleigh to meet with state legislators, including Jeff Jackson (above), to share their concerns regarding adolescent health issues. The group also met with Representatives Becky Carney and Joyce Waddell.

SAFE JOURNEY Students #SpeakYouthtoPower

On March 7, a group of 25 teen moms and staff in our Safe Journey program traveled to Raleigh to participate in Adolescent Health Advocacy Day (AHAD). Organized by SHIFT N.C. (Sexual Health Initiatives for Teens), AHAD is an educational event for young people across the state to connect directly with lawmakers to share statistics, stories and strategies to improve adolescent health. This year, the event focused on young

people's experiences and needs related to mental health, sex education, and access to healthcare. Safe Journey participants had the opportunity to share their concerns and ask questions with several legislators, including Representatives Jeff Jackson, Becky Carney, and Joyce Waddell. What an wonderful and educational experience for these young ladies!

Site Coordinator authors CHILDREN'S BOOK

Leah Rapley is a CIS Site Coordinator at Hidden Valley Elementary. As a student at Davidson College, she spent a semester studying in Bolivia. WSOC-TV recently interviewed Rapley and the following article is reprinted with their permission.

When author Leah Rapley was completing a research project in Cochabamba, Bolivia, there was a lack of data available on her topic of choice: Afro-Bolivians. "As I started doing research, there wasn't enough information on Afro-Bolivians," Rapley said. "They weren't recognized as an ethnic group in the community."

The lack of information prompted her to raise awareness about the Afro-Bolivian culture through a children's book. *Until the Mirror Smiled Back at Me* is about a young girl who sees pride and beauty in her heritage as an Afro-Bolivian princess, despite the adversities that her culture faces. Rapley hopes the book empowers young readers of all ethnic backgrounds to value their culture.

As a Site Coordinator with Communities In Schools, Rapley connects students and families with community resources that assist with the student's academic and nonacademic needs.

"We have to consider the barriers to a student's education that we can address," Rapley said. "One of those barriers is access to books. Simply providing access is allowing kids to have the opportunity to read, and reading opens up a world of desire to be curious and explore."



Editor's Note: The book may be ordered online for \$5 plus shipping at www.kidsbooksbolivia.org. Proceeds are used to subsidize low-cost books and book donations to Bolivian children, schools, libraries, community organizations and literacy programs.

CONGRATULATIONS!



Congratulations are in order for these six CIS Site Coordinators! They were recently promoted to our new "Site Coordinator II" position. Their selection was based on experience and leadership, especially the ability to relate well with staff and be an excellent resource for training and best practices. L to R are Kimberly Barringer (Albemarle Road Middle), Jamall Kinard (Independence High School), Erin Morris (Walter G. Byers School), Karen Neal (Bruns Academy), and Kim Jones (East Mecklenburg High School). Not pictured is Indiana Torres (Albemarle Road Elementary-Immigrant Services).



2015-16 ANNUAL REPORT *Celebrating 30 Years of Changing Lives*

Our 30th Anniversary Annual Report for fiscal year 2015-16 is now available online at www.cischarlotte.org/annual-report

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Charlotte-Mecklenburg

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DINE OUT FOR KIDS® Tuesday, June 20



Dine Out For Kids®

Be sure to mark your calendar for Tuesday, June 20 and make plans to “Dine Out For Kids” with friends and family! More than 80 participating restaurants will donate a portion of their sales that day to benefit CIS and our mission to help kids stay in school and achieve in life. Visit www.cischarlotte.org to see a list of participating restaurants!

CIS SCHOOL SITES, 2016-17

Elementary Schools

Albemarle Road
Allenbrook
Billingsville
Hidden Valley
Highland Renaissance
Merry Oaks
Montclair
Nathaniel Alexander
Rama Road
Sedgefield
Shamrock Gardens
Statesville Road
Winterfield

PK - 8 Schools

Ashley Park
Berryhill
Bruns
Druid Hills
Reid Park
Walter G. Byers
Westerly Hills

Middle Schools

Albemarle Road
Cochrane
Coulwood
Eastway
James Martin
Martin Luther King, Jr.
McClintock
Ranson
Sedgefield
Whitewater

High Schools

East Mecklenburg
Garinger
Harding University
Independence
Myers Park
Olympic
Performance
Learning Center®
Phillip O. Berry
South Mecklenburg
Vance
West Charlotte
West Mecklenburg

CIS also provides services to students in the Renaissance West community; youthful offenders at Jail North/Central; and to teen mothers and their babies through our Safe Journey program.