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## **Cynthia Marshall, long-time executive director of Communities In Schools, transitions leadership to Bill Anderson**

CHARLOTTE – Cynthia Blythe Marshall is retiring as Executive Director of Communities In Schools, Charlotte’s premier dropout prevention program. She will be succeeded by Dr. Bill Anderson, an assistant superintendent with Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools, effective August 1.

Part of the national Communities In Schools (CIS) network, Communities In Schools of Charlotte-Mecklenburg, Inc. was founded 20 years ago and was the first CIS organization in North Carolina. Marshall has served as executive director and its public face since its inception in 1985.

“Cynthia has an incredible heart for children and a seemingly inexhaustible supply of energy,” said Barb Pellin, President of the CIS Board of Directors. “She has been a tireless advocate for children, constantly looking for new and creative ways to help children stay in school and prepare for life. As I have talked to CIS leaders at the state and national level, it is clear that we have been blessed with an Executive Director that every CIS organization in the country would like to duplicate.”

Established with the mission of addressing specific, practical needs of at-risk students, the organization today also oversees mentoring, college and career counseling and scholarship programs. Under Marshall's leadership, CIS has expanded from serving 80 students at a single school in 1985, to providing support to more than 2,000 students in 23 CMS schools this school year, including 180 seniors who received their high school diplomas in June. Currently, there are 225 CIS high school graduates enrolled in 43 colleges and universities who have received more than \$500,000 in scholarships with the assistance of their CIS ThinkCOLLEGE® advisors. The majority of these students are the first in their families to attend college.

“It has been so exciting and such a privilege to see how this community has extended its hands to give children the encouragement and support they needed to succeed,” Ms. Marshall said.

“Working with the volunteers, staff and students has been a blessing. And there is nothing more gratifying than seeing a young man or woman realize a dream and graduate from high school or college.”

During a 2-3 month transition period, Marshall will be working part-time at CIS and plans to serve the CIS state and national organizations in a consulting role.

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“While I will miss the daily interaction with CIS staff, I am excited that the Board has selected Bill Anderson as my successor,” said Marshall. “He is a wonderful educator who understands and cares about students. I am very confident CIS will thrive under his leadership.”

Anderson is currently the Assistant Superintendent for High School Curriculum and Instruction at CMS. He has previously served as principal and vice principal at several middle and high schools in Charlotte and in Shelby, including four years as Principal at Myers Park High School, during which the school was named the seventh best public high school in the nation by Newsweek magazine. He was named NC Principal of the Year in 2001.

“We are extremely fortunate to have someone of the caliber of Bill Anderson coming on board as our new Executive Director,” Pellin said. “Not only is he intimately familiar with CMS and with CIS, but he is an innovator and creative thinker. I’m excited about how he will help CIS continue to grow and serve the children of this community.”

Communities In Schools is the nation’s leading community-based stay-in-school network, helping young people stay in school, successfully learn, and prepare for life by connecting needed community resources with schools. Since 1985, Communities In Schools of Charlotte-Mecklenburg, Inc. has mobilized locally existing resources and coordinated partnerships with health and human service agencies to help thousands of at-risk students overcome academic, social, and economic barriers. In addition to providing support services to students in 23 Charlotte-Mecklenburg public schools, the scope of current CIS programming also addresses college access (ThinkCOLLEGE®), career exploration and workforce development. CIS is funded in part by Mecklenburg County, the United Way of Central Carolinas, corporate and individual support, and a generous grant from the Charlotte Merchants Foundation.

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