



PRESS RELEASE-for immediate distribution

For more information, contact:

**May Johnston, mjohnston@cischarlotte.org
704-943-9447**

OR:

Dr. Bill Anderson, 704-576-6125 (cell)

Cynthia Marshall, 704-607-3093 (cell)

December 18, 2006

New Communities In Schools' college scholarship fund, in honor of former executive director Cynthia Marshall, tops \$100,000

CHARLOTTE – Communities In Schools (CIS) of Charlotte-Mecklenburg, Inc. announced at its December board meeting that a new college scholarship fund, recently established in honor of retired CIS executive director Cynthia Blythe Marshall, has exceeded \$100,000.

“We’re delighted that the response has been so generous, though we had a feeling it would be,” said Dr. Bill Jeffries, president of the CIS Board of Directors. “This is a tribute to all that Cynthia Marshall has meant to our organization and to the children of this community. More importantly, this scholarship fund will enable some very deserving students in our program to attend college, many of whom would not be able to without this assistance.”

Communities In Schools of Charlotte-Mecklenburg is part of the national Communities In Schools network, a dropout prevention program that helps at-risk students stay in school and graduate from high school. Marshall was the founding executive director of CIS of Charlotte-Mecklenburg in 1985, and served as executive director until her retirement on August 1 of this year. To honor Marshall for her 21 years of service and dedication to CIS, the board of directors announced in September the establishment of this college scholarship fund in her name.

Donations to the *Cynthia Blythe Marshall Scholarship Fund* are still being accepted and can be mailed to Communities In Schools, 601 E. 5th Street, Charlotte, NC 28202. *(All contributions are tax-deductible. Please make a notation on the check that it is for the Cynthia B. Marshall Scholarship Fund For more information about the scholarship or other ways you can support Communities In Schools, call Leigh Bogucki, Development Director, 704-943-9440.)*

In other Communities In Schools news, the Board of Directors announced the organization’s year-end results. Key success rates for the 2005-06 school year include:

- CIS provided services to 2,000 students in grades Pre-K -12 at 25 Charlotte-Mecklenburg schools.
- 99% of CIS students stayed in school.
- Average daily attendance was 93%.
- 88% of students were promoted to the next grade.
- 90% of CIS seniors graduated from high school (179 of 199).

- more -

- Approximately one-third (69 students) of CIS graduates received scholarships to attend college. Currently, there are 200+ CIS graduates (including upperclassmen) enrolled in 44 different colleges/universities on scholarships received with the assistance of CIS. The majority of these students are the first in their families to attend college.

“We are very pleased with our 2005-06 outcomes,” said Dr. Bill Anderson, CIS Executive Director, who succeeded Marshall as the organization’s new leader. “I’m particularly pleased with the 90% graduation rate and the stay-in-school rate of 99%. In terms of raw numbers, we had fewer than 6 students drop out. However, there are still a number of schools who need our services. Securing the funding necessary to serve some of the schools who need us most will be a top priority for 2007-08,” Anderson added.

#

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 25 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.