



## 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



**August 25**

**First Day of School**

**September 27**

**Lowcountry on the Green**

**Nov. 20 – Dec. 15**

**Order your CIS Holiday Cards**

### CONNECT WITH US



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educate  
collaborate  
graduate

Newsletter for Friends of CIS | Fall 2014

## CIS is “CHANGING THE PICTURE” of Education in America



*The Class of 2014*

*Graduates from Charlotte's Performance Learning Center (PLC).*

Congratulations to our graduating seniors in the Class of 2014! Our high school Site Coordinators and staff celebrated in June with more than 600 CIS seniors as they walked across the stage to receive their diplomas. For many of our students, this accomplishment was earned through hard work and a 'never giving up' attitude, often in the face of overwhelming odds. CIS is proud to have played a part in helping each of these students reach this important milestone.

Graduation this year held an extra note of excitement, as CIS-Charlotte participated in our CIS National Office's new "Change the Picture" public awareness campaign. The campaign officially launched in April, with the rollout of a new national website and several high-profile ad placements, including a digital billboard in Times Square and an ad in The Wall Street Journal.

As graduation neared, all CIS affiliates across the country participated in a coordinated social media effort to celebrate graduation and the Class of 2014. Students "tagged" their graduation day photos, videos, and "tweets" with the hashtag #ClassOfChange, and then all photos and videos with the tag were collected (from Instagram, Twitter, YouTube, etc.) and pooled together into one massive "World's Biggest Graduation Processional." Together, these images and stories created a powerful portrait of how students, families, schools and communities are working with CIS to help "change the picture" of education in America. It can be viewed online at [www.communitiesinschools.org/classofchange](http://www.communitiesinschools.org/classofchange). (See some of our local #ClassOfChange photos on page 3.)

# EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR MESSAGE

We bring you a very celebratory newsletter this issue, on the heels of a very celebratory year for CIS! A new school year is about to begin and we are energized and ready to go, but first I'd like to share with you some of our best and brightest achievements from the past twelve months.

At this time last year, we were gearing up for our annual Lowcountry on the Green fundraiser at the Mint Museum. What a night it was – not only did we exceed our fundraising goal, but we made some great new friends who are now some of our most committed supporters. Mark your calendar for September 27 and make plans to attend “Lowcountry” this year – it's a fun way to show your support for CMS schools and help all kids succeed!

In January, CIS-Charlotte was host to CIS National's “Leadership Townhall,” with CIS executive staff and board members from across the country attending. At the event's awards gala, CIS-Charlotte was honored with two “Awards of Excellence” (just 14 awarded from among 180 CIS affiliates!). During that same week, CIS-Charlotte, in partnership with America's Promise Alliance and nine leading education and youth/human service agencies, held a hugely successful Education Summit, with best-selling author Paul Tough as the keynote.

In April the CIS National office rolled out a fantastic new public awareness campaign, called “Change the Picture,” and we were thrilled to learn that “one of our own,” CIS graduate Jamal Tate, will be featured in it. Look for Jamal soon on billboards and posters ...

CIS is on track to become a household name and Jamal is helping us do it!

Most importantly, we closed out the school year with nearly 600 seniors receiving their diplomas, and celebrated as well with our elementary and middle school student award winners. The very best part of my job is having the opportunity to hug a student who has just graduated or watch a fourth grader receive recognition as “Most Improved.”

And now, looking forward to a new school year, we're fortunate to have five new board members joining our team - including one, Patrick Pope, who is a 2007 CIS graduate. They each bring unique perspective and talents that will greatly enhance our organization and how we can best serve students. I invite you to get involved and join us as CIS leads the way to “change the picture” of education in America!



*Molly Shaw, CIS Executive Director*

## Welcome New CIS BOARD MEMBERS



*David Head,  
President, CIS Board of Directors*

**David Head** is the new President of the CIS Board of Directors. He joined the Board four years ago and has served on the HR and Executive committees. David recently joined Grant Thornton as an executive focused on Business Development and Market Integration. He previously worked with Bank of America

and Accenture where he led business units and worked in Human Resources. A graduate of Wake Forest University, David has lived in Charlotte for over 20 years. He and his wife, Marti, have four daughters, three of whom attend CMS schools.

When asked why he serves the Charlotte community through CIS, David says “CIS is impacting the lives of our students and their families by being in the schools with them every day. CMS needs strong strategic partners like CIS who have the commitment to help our most challenged youth become successful members of our community as adults. This board and this staff make this commitment come alive for our children.”

We're also excited to welcome these five new members to the Board, who will serve a three-year-term beginning in July 2014:

**Sonya Amos**, Sisters of Mercy of North Carolina Foundation

**Lindsay Conner Carter**, One-on One Tutoring

**Gregory Hobby**, Bank of America

**Patrick Pope**, BB&T Investments

**Jessica Fabrizi Sidhom**, PNC Bank

# World's Biggest **GRADUATION PROCESSIONAL!**

In addition to the PLC photo on the cover of the newsletter, here's a sampling of our local graduation #ClassOfChange photos.

CIS-Charlotte is proud to be a part of The World's Biggest Graduation Processional!



*Clockwise from top left:*

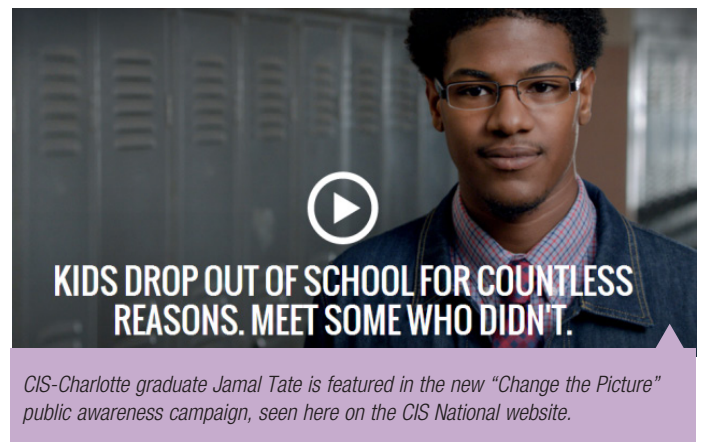
1. Graduates from Phillip O. Berry Academy of Technology.
2. Graduates from our Safe Journey program.
3. #ClassOfChange "Selfie" of CIS Site Coordinator Jamall Kinard and two Phillip O. Berry graduates.
4. Even the teachers and staff at Myers Park High School got in on the act!

## CIS National Launches **NEW PUBLIC AWARENESS CAMPAIGN**

Our CIS National Office launched an exciting new nationwide public awareness campaign in April. The primary goals of the multi-year campaign are to make the CIS brand better known and better understood; energize and motivate all 200 local CIS affiliates; and ultimately, increase engagement and involvement. The "Change the Picture" campaign theme is a metaphor for what the CIS network does for over 1.3 million kids every year – CIS partners with everyone to help change the picture for them, their schools and society as a whole.

The campaign's marketing materials feature the real stories of CIS students, their parents and site coordinators, along with concrete data on the results and effectiveness of the CIS "integrated supports" model. CIS-Charlotte is proud that a CIS-Charlotte graduate, Jamal Tate, is featured in the campaign. Jamal's story is prominent on the new national website and in many of the campaign materials (TV spots, print ads, mall posters, etc.).

Along with national PSA placements, the national office is working to secure pro bono placements in local CIS affiliate markets as well. In Charlotte, there have been mall posters (print and digital) at SouthPark Mall and Carolina Place Mall, and Eastridge Mall in Gastonia. More is expected in the fall and beyond, in the form of billboards, print and digital ads, TV and radio. Stay tuned!





# GRADUATION = CELEBRATION!

Communities In Schools kicked off the high school graduation season with its annual **“Celebrating Our Graduates”** event on April 29, where CIS senior award winners and scholarship recipients were recognized and treated to a special luncheon. A highlight of the program is the CIS Leadership Award, presented annually to a CIS senior who has excelled in leadership, academics, and community service. This year’s winner, selected from among all 600+ CIS seniors, is Diamond Grier from East Mecklenburg High School. *(See article below about Diamond.)*



## Many Thanks to Our Event Sponsors



**Deloitte.**

## YEAR-END AWARDS FOR ALL AGES

In addition to the Celebrating Our Graduates event for seniors, all of our program teams – Elementary, Middle, 9-10 High School, Project LIFT, and Safe Journey – held year-end recognition events for students who have shown great improvement in academics, attendance, or behavior. Parents are invited to share in the celebrations, which deepens their connection to CIS and their child’s school community.



*“This Kid Rocks” (Project LIFT Team) top award winner Brandon Ballard (right) of Ashley Park School.*

## DIAMOND GRIER, CIS Leadership Award Winner

She may be a bit quiet and reserved, but Diamond Grier is one dedicated young lady. This year’s winner of the CIS Leadership Award is dedicated to her school work; her mother, who has raised her on her own; her part-time job as a cashier at Harris Teeter; to those less fortunate; and to her own future.

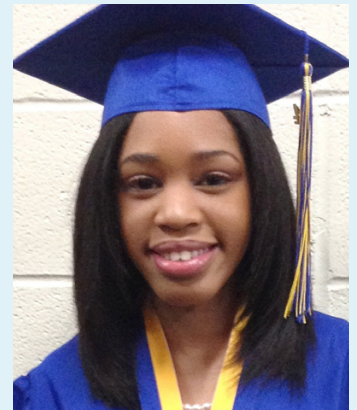
“Even with her quiet manner, I sensed leadership potential,” said Nichelle Wilson, Diamond’s 9th-10th grade CIS Site Coordinator at East Mecklenburg High School.

“Yes, Ms. Wilson pretty much pulled me from the back and threw me to the front,” laughed Diamond. “I didn’t realize at the time, but she was giving me opportunity – the opportunity to develop leadership skills I didn’t know I possessed.”

Diamond has always been a good student – that’s an understatement for one with a 4.0 GPA and straight A’s her junior and senior years. But she hit a rough patch in the transition from middle school to high school. Her grades fell and her mother became concerned. Ms. Grier knew about Communities In Schools because her nephews were involved at East Meck in previous years. “CIS and Ms. Jones [Kim Jones, CIS 11th-12th Site Coordinator at East Meck] had such a major impact on both my nephews, so I made sure to get Diamond enrolled.”

Diamond says CIS has had a major impact on her as well. “I can talk to them [CIS Coordinators Wilson and Jones] about anything,” said Diamond. “But mostly I think they’ve helped build my ambition. They taught me what to look for in a college, what questions to ask, how to find financial aid. I feel like they’ve been a parent, a teacher, and a guidance counselor all rolled up into one.”

Diamond is headed to UNC-Greensboro this fall and is very interested in computer science and technology. Armed with several college scholarships, a laptop as the prize for the CIS Leadership Award, and her quiet but focused ambition, we’re sure she’ll make her mark!



# FIRST “TEES FOR TUITION” SCHOLARSHIP Awarded to CIS Senior

On May 16, Emnit Birega, a CIS student from Garinger High School, was awarded the first ever “Tees For Tuition” college scholarship — a full scholarship valued at \$15,000 to the college of her choice. LPL Financial Institution, with support from multiple corporate sponsors, hosted its first charity golf tournament in October 2013. LPL designated Communities In Schools of Charlotte as the tournament’s beneficiary, with the intent that a current CIS senior from Garinger High School receive the event proceeds as a college scholarship. LPL has partnered with CIS-Charlotte for several years and has developed a strong relationship with Garinger. The selection committee narrowed the field to three finalists, ultimately selecting Emnit as the inaugural Tees For Tuition winner.



Emnit Birega (left) with CIS Site Coordinator Jeannette Jackson.

A native of Ethiopia, Emnit immigrated to the U.S. with her mother when she was 7 years old and spoke no English whatsoever. Her mother sacrificed much to come to this country in order to give her daughter an excellent education and the opportunity for a better life. By middle school, Emnit was fluent in English and excelled in the classroom, despite cultural and social hardships. With support from CIS in high school, Emnit continued to excel in her academics, including placement on the A-B Honor Roll every semester in high school. Emnit enjoys writing short stories and blogging, and plans to major in Journalism at UNC-Greensboro this fall.

Many thanks to CIS Board member Andy Kalbaugh, Managing Director with LPL Financial, the entire LPL team, and their event sponsors for providing this incredible opportunity for a CIS student!



LPL Financial employees present the check to Emnit (far right).

## Corporate Partners Give TIME AND ‘TLC’ TO CIS

Communities In Schools recently received some extra attention and “TLC” from two separate events involving lots of enthusiastic volunteers from Deloitte and Wells Fargo. On Friday, June 6, local Deloitte employees participating in the company’s annual “IMPACT Day” headed out to Sedgefield Middle School and Myers Park High School to take care of some much-needed painting and landscape projects. As part of Wells Fargo’s fourth annual Day of Caring event, Wells Fargo employees gave up their Saturday on June 7 to volunteer at several nonprofits across the city, including CIS at Highland Renaissance Academy. We’re grateful to be the recipients of some serious sweat equity from these generous corporate partners!



TOP: Deloitte IMPACT Day Volunteers at Myers Park High School  
BOTTOM: Wells Fargo employees at Highland Renaissance Academy

# CIS West Charlotte Grad Named GATES MILLENNIUM SCHOLAR



Nancy Contreras-Quinteros,  
Gates Millennium Scholar

Nancy Contreras-Quinteros, a CIS graduate who was a member of our TRiO Talent Search program at West Charlotte High School, is one of just four students in Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools to receive a prestigious Gates Millennium Scholarship this year. The scholarship provides full tuition for undergraduate and graduate school, as well as special leadership and experiential opportunities.

Nancy has participated in CIS since middle school at Wilson Middle and credits her CIS counselors for helping her be the first in her family to attend college. She worked closely with LaQuetia Hollis, our Talent Search Counselor at West Charlotte, to navigate the college application process. She's planning to major in Biology (pred-Med) at Appalachian State University this fall and ultimately hopes to attend medical school to become an obstetrician-gynecologist.

"Nancy is extremely self-motivated, and a very respectful, very humble all-around good kid," said Ms. Hollis. "I have no reservations whatsoever of how she will do at Appalachian State and on into the future."

## DINE OUT FOR KIDS Celebrates 15 Years

Thank you for helping us celebrate 15 years of Dine Out For Kids® on June 17! With more than 88 restaurant locations and lots of social media buzz this year, it was a fabulous event that helped raise funds and awareness about CIS and our mission. Thank you for making every bite count, and we look forward to dining with you next year!



Dine Out For Kids®

### MANY THANKS TO OUR CORPORATE SPONSORS:



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### MANY THANKS TO OUR PARTICIPATING RESTAURANTS

Alexander Michael's  
American Burger Company  
Applebee's Neighborhood Grill & Bar  
Aria Tuscan Grill  
Bad Daddy's Burger Bar  
BRAVO! Cucina Italiana  
Brio Tuscan Grille  
Brixx Wood Fired Pizza  
Burger 21  
Bytes Café  
California Pizza Kitchen  
Charlotte Knights Baseball-  
Chima Brazilian Steakhouse  
City Smoke  
Crepe Cellar  
Dilworth Neighborhood Grille  
Dressler's  
Eddie's Place  
Five Guys Burgers and Fries

Harper's Restaurant  
HMSHost - Charlotte Douglas  
International Airport  
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Mama Ricotta's  
McAlister's Deli  
The Melting Pot  
Mert's Heart & Soul  
Midwood Smokehouse  
Mimosa Grill  
Nothing but Noodles  
Paco's Tacos & Tequila  
Showmars  
Sonny's Real Pit Bar-B-Q  
Taste Café  
Toast Café  
TRUE Crafted Pizza  
Upstream  
Village Tavern



Showmars



Toast Café



# An Opportunity to **GIVE HOPE**

Through United Way, Campus Crest Real Estate Management donates 43 bicycles to CIS

For many folks, favorite childhood memories often include a bicycle, perhaps one with butterfly handle bars, tassels and a “banana” seat. But for many children in CIS, having a bike of one’s own seems an unlikely pipedream. Yet just in time for summer, 43 CIS students received an extra special surprise – their very own bicycle! The brand new bikes were “built” (put together) and donated by employees of Campus Crest Real Estate Management, working with United Way to identify children in need.



*Five CIS students at Reid Park Academy, including these three sisters, were among those receiving a new bike. CIS Site Coordinator Reggie Gilkesson (center) says many of his students are overwhelmed with adult responsibilities and rarely have the chance to “just be kids.” Gilkesson was grateful for the opportunity to give his students this tangible symbol of childhood, a new bicycle of their own.*

CIS Site Coordinators were thrilled to receive the bikes – really just about as excited to give them away as the children were to receive them. For many of our families, a bicycle is far beyond their reach when immediate needs such as food and housing are pressing. As one CIS Site Coordinator put it, in a note of thanks to the donors, “Those bikes represent hope, but hope is faith that can change to reality, especially when we can be a blessing to others who are in need. Thank you, thank you, thank you, for allowing me an opportunity to give hope.”

Many thanks to Campus Crest employees and United Way, for helping some of our students have amazing adventures this summer with their very own bicycles!

## For the Record... **SAFE JOURNEY GRADUATION**

Let us state – for the record – that creativity was king (or queen?) at Safe Journey’s graduation celebration on May 29! The event’s “For the Record...” theme was carried out by our Safe Journey staff in multiple clever ways, from the album “covers” that served as programs, to the vinyl 33rpm



*Keepsake “photo album”*

keepsake “photo albums” that decorated the tables. But the creative touches never overshadowed the event’s primary purpose – to honor and celebrate the 21 graduating seniors in our Safe Journey/APP (Adolescent Parenting Program). Against the considerable challenges that teen mothers face, these young ladies proved to themselves and their families that they could reach this important goal while also learning how to be outstanding parents to their children.

Two of this year’s Safe Journey graduates were interviewed by the media. Keandra Boyd, who was also Safe Journey’s R.I.S.E. Scholarship Award winner, is the first in her immediate family to graduate high school – and now she is headed to college at N.C. A&T University this fall. Fox 46 Carolinas did an in-depth profile on Boyd. WFAE Radio (90.7 FM) attended the graduation rehearsal and interviewed graduate Christian Jones and Safe Journey social worker Kelly Bryant. Both the Fox 46 and the WFAE interviews can be seen (or heard!) on our website at [www.cischarlotte.org](http://www.cischarlotte.org) (Look for the Safe Journey Graduation 2014 article).



*Safe Journey graduate Keandra Boyd*

## Board of Directors

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Communities  
In Schools

Charlotte-Mecklenburg

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Charlotte, NC 28202

CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED



CHARLOTTE  
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SAVE THE DATE!  
**September 27**

## Annual "Lowcountry on the Green"

Time to "get your lowcountry on!" Please join CIS and friends on Saturday, September 27 for our 6th annual Lowcountry on the Green "back to school" lawn party! A live band, dancing, silent auction, and THE best lowcountry cuisine you've ever tasted awaits you... **Order tickets today** at [www.cischarlotte.org](http://www.cischarlotte.org) and help CIS students and staff have a great start to the school year!

## CIS SCHOOL SITES, 2014-15

### Elementary Schools

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

### PK - 8 Schools

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

### Middle Schools

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

### High Schools

East Mecklenburg  
Garinger  
Harding University  
Hawthorne  
Independence  
Myers Park  
Performance  
Learning Center®  
Phillip O. Berry  
South Mecklenburg  
Vance  
West Charlotte  
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Jail North/Central – CIS also provides services to youthful offenders housed at Jail North and Jail Central

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