



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



Nov 14-Dec 14

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December 31

Levine Foundation Matching Grant Ends

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Newsletter for Friends of CIS | Fall 2012

DOUBLE VISION: Levine Challenge Grant offers Generous Opportunity

CIS received great news when it learned that The Leon Levine Foundation would fund a matching gift "challenge grant" of up to \$100,000 for donations received by CIS before December 31, 2012. Any donation made to CIS by a new donor – or a donation that represents an increased gift by a past donor – will be matched dollar for dollar by The Levine Foundation.

"We are thrilled and excited about this generous opportunity," said Molly Shaw, CIS Executive Director. "This grant will have a huge impact on helping us broaden our donor base by attracting new donors as well as larger donations. It will also allow us to meet the community's growing needs and serve more students, as well as continue programming to the 7,000 students we currently serve in Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools."

Your gift will have **DOUBLE** the impact!

Any donation made to CIS by a new donor - or an increased donation by a past donor - will be matched by The Leon Levine Foundation if made before December 31, 2012.

\$ → \$\$

Make a gift online at www.cischarlotte.org or contact Gina Salvati at gsalvati@cischarlotte.org or 704-943-9440.

Strengthening PreK-12 public education and providing post-secondary access for disadvantaged students is one of the key tenets of The Levine Foundation's mission, according to Tom Lawrence, Executive Director of The Leon Levine Foundation. "We believe Communities In Schools' mission to help kids stay in school and graduate, along with the organization's demonstrated track record of success, aligns perfectly with our mission," said Lawrence. "Most important, the entire Charlotte community will benefit if CIS is able to reach more students and provide them with the resources they need to become high school graduates and productive citizens."

Gina Salvati, CIS Vice President of Development and Community Affairs, believes the community will respond and meet the challenge grant's goal of \$100,000. "When those who are new to CIS learn of the breadth and depth of the impact we have on struggling students and the results we achieve, they typically want to make a difference and help us reach these deserving students," said Salvati. "Now with the Levine challenge grant, current and potential donors have even more incentive to make a gift to CIS before the end of the year, knowing that their gift will have double the impact."

So from now until the end of the year, Communities In Schools is seeing double! We hope our current donors as well as friends new to CIS will strongly consider making a donation – or increasing a past donation amount - by December 31 in order to maximize this generous opportunity. Thank you for your support!

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR MESSAGE

In early September, CIS employees were given the opportunity to take a tour of Time Warner Cable Arena in its renovated state to serve as the convention hall for the upcoming Democratic National Convention. Regardless of our individual political beliefs, it was a fun and interesting experience, seeing how the arena was transformed into the convention floor that would be televised throughout the nation.

The “tourists” present that morning were mostly adults, but there were several busloads of children from various schools. Michelle Price, our CIS Site Coordinator at First Ward, had secured a tour for her students and I was excited to see them exiting the arena. I love any chance I have to chat with CIS students.

I asked them how they liked CIS, and they all immediately shouted, “We LOVE CIS!! We L-O-V-E Mrs. Price!!!” (and no, Mrs. Price did not prompt them or have any idea we would see each other that morning!). So then I asked, “What is it you like about CIS and what makes it special?” Melany, a third grader in CIS at First Ward, politely raised her hand and said, “CIS lets us experience once in a lifetime opportunities.” Another child raised his hand and said that he had the chance to go to Discovery Place for the first time through CIS. Melany then raised her hand again and said, “I am from Puerto Rico, and where I am from, we do not have buildings even as big as that one across the street (she pointed to a five-story building). But today, I got to come here and walk through this building,” (she pointed to the arena).

Melany’s response of “once in a lifetime opportunities” stuck with me and I’m proud and grateful that CIS is a leader in providing such

experiences for students in CMS. I think many of us may forget or take for granted certain opportunities and life experiences that have shaped and enhanced our lives. We don’t think about the impact that a simple outing to our uptown district might have on a child, even if it is just about seeing tall buildings for the first time.

If you’ve read the cover article of this newsletter, then you’re aware that The Leon Levine Foundation has presented CIS – and you, our partners and friends - with a very special opportunity to double the amount of donations made to CIS if made by December 31, 2012 (and if the gift meets the criteria of being from a new donor or is an increase over a past amount). Perhaps it’s not exactly a “once in a lifetime opportunity” – we do hope this won’t be the only time you’ll make a donation to CIS! – but it is certainly a very generous and special opportunity for CIS to make great gains in our fundraising efforts, which in turn will provide more of – and hopefully to more students – these “once in a lifetime opportunities” that Melany described.

As always, thank you for your belief in our organization and the work that we do. And on behalf of our students, thank you for your strong consideration of making a first-time donation to CIS or increasing a past gift amount before the Levine Foundation grant deadline of December 31. What a wonderful gift that will be for our kids.



Molly Shaw, CIS Executive Director

TWENTY YEARS OF SERVICE

CIS extends best wishes and gratitude to Site Coordinator Barbara McRee, who retired in September. Barbara has “officially” worked for CIS as a full time Site Coordinator for nearly 20 years (since 1993) – but supported CIS students even earlier as a Teen Outreach Facilitator at Cochrane Middle School during the 1990-91 school year. She then served as an interim CIS Site Coordinator at two different schools, prior to coming on board full time with CIS in January 1993. During her tenure, Barbara worked at seven CIS school sites, including Cochrane, Mayfield Alternative High School, Northwest Middle School, Tryon Hills Elementary, Paw Creek Elementary, Westerly Hills Elementary, and finally, Allenbrook Elementary, where she remained for eight and a half years until her

retirement. It was Barbara who, years ago, connected one of her students with serious dental issues to Dr. John Archer, a Charlotte dentist

who then helped recruit other dentists to launch “Give Kids A Smile Day” to provide free dental care to children in need.

Barbara’s dedication and genuine care for her students will be greatly missed, but we wish her all the best in retirement.



Barbara McRee with CIS students from Allenbrook Elementary School.

MEDIA CENTER 'MAKEOVER' for Bruns Academy

Volunteers from AT&T and the community descended on Bruns Academy in west Charlotte two weeks before school started to give the school's media center a complete makeover – and when we say “complete,” we mean stripped-down-to-the-bare-walls, start-from-scratch complete! AT&T sponsors the CIS program at Bruns Academy and AT&T employees have enthusiastically embraced the school, volunteering their time and donating needed items.

For the media center project, AT&T volunteers were joined by members of CCAP (Charlotte Community Affairs Professionals), a professional organization consisting of community affairs executives from different corporations throughout Charlotte. Carlos Sanchez of AT&T and a co-founder of CCAP, invited the group to help. Over the course of three days – including a Saturday – 34 AT&T employees and CCAP members did all the “prep work” of clearing the walls, covering the furniture and books, putting up painter's tape, and priming and painting the walls.

Karen Neal, CIS Site Coordinator at Bruns, said the goal was to create a brighter,



more engaging atmosphere for the students. “The walls were a neutral off-white color and they really needed a fresh coat of paint,” said Neal. “But this group went all out and took the challenge to heart. The result is fantastic and gives the media center an entirely new energy! The students love it!”

The media center makeover was not the only project accomplished that week at Bruns: a group of AT&T Telecom Pioneers (the largest and oldest volunteer organization within AT&T) spent a morning at the school filling 100 backpacks with donated school supplies.

As students arrived for a new school year, they surely felt the love that went into these projects. Thank you, AT&T!



Carlos Sanchez of AT&T (front center) coordinated the media center “makeover.” In addition to AT&T and CCAP volunteers, he recruited his wife, Diana (front, second from left) and their two sons to help (front and back, far left).

WELCOME NEW CIS BOARD MEMBERS

Robert W. “Bobby” Chesney with PNC Bank will serve as president of the CIS Board of Directors for the 2012-13 year. Chesney has been a member of the CIS board since 2008 and has served on the Executive Committee and chaired several board committees, including the Development Committee and the Board of Governance Committee. A graduate of UNC–Chapel Hill, Bobby and his wife, Mary Catherine, have three children.

In addition, CIS welcomes the following new board members who began their three-year terms in July: **Astrid Chirinos** with the Latin American Chamber of Commerce, and **Mike Harrell** with Beacon Properties. CIS also welcomes two former CIS board members who have agreed to serve on the CIS board again, including **Dee Dee Dalrymple**, and **Dwight Jacobs** of Duke Energy.

The following board members rolled off the board in July and we thank them for their service as well: **Sarah Batista**, WBTV; **Patricia Noble**, Childress Klein Properties; and **Tom Tate**, CMS Board of Education. A complete current roster of the CIS Board of Directors is included on the back page of this newsletter.



Bobby Chesney, 2012-13 CIS Board of Directors President

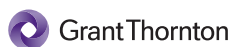
LOWCOUNTRY ON THE GREEN 2012

Lowcountry on the Green on Saturday, September 22, was a huge success with more than 500 community leaders, major funders and donors, volunteers, and friends in attendance to show their support of Communities In Schools. UNC-Charlotte Chancellor Philip Dubois and past CIS Board of Directors President Lisa Lewis Dubois graciously served again as honorary hosts.

We've already received tremendous feedback from guests on the Mint Museum-Randolph Road venue, the scrumptious lowcountry cuisine, Smitty Flynn and the Rivas's wide range of music, the Silent Auction – with more than 40 items – and the general party atmosphere! Mark your calendars now and join us next year for Lowcountry on the Green on Saturday, September 21, 2013!

MANY THANKS TO OUR EVENT SPONSORS

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VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT

Becka Tait, South Mecklenburg

Becka Tait says she was initially inspired to volunteer as a mentor for students after reading the book, *The Last Dropout: Stop the Epidemic!* by Communities In Schools' national founder Bill Milliken. "I was reading and studying about dropout prevention at the time, and after reading Milliken's book, I truly believed that the comprehensive approach he developed was the best model," said Tait. "Shortly after that, my sons' school, South Mecklenburg, became a CIS site."

Tait is now in her fourth year of volunteering as a mentor to CIS students at South Meck and also serves as a CIS Liaison to the school's PTSA. One of her sons has graduated, and her younger son is now a senior, but Tait claims she really enjoys volunteering for reasons that don't necessarily have to do with her sons attending South Meck.

"I believe every person, every student, has value," said Tait. "But for too many students, they have not had enough, if any, people tell them that. By being there in the school, getting to know the students, they can know that when I tell them they have potential, it's based on really getting to know them. And even through the challenges, I get such positive energy back from the students as they progress and achieve."

Tait currently mentors two students, Kayla and Sharon. They meet weekly to discuss the girls' academic progress, their college and career goals, and what they need to be doing now in order to make those goals a reality. She also



CIS volunteer Becka Tait with Kayla and Sharon, the two CIS students she mentors at South Mecklenburg High School.

serves as a wonderful personal resource for questions and concerns they may have, whether related to college and career, or really any topic that may be affecting them.

Michelle Price, the 11th-12th grade CIS Site Coordinator at South Meck, says Tait was the first parent she met on her first day working at South Meck three years ago. "From that point on, she has been our biggest resource

and our biggest advocate," said Price. "She has done everything from making copies to chaperoning field trips to buying winter coats for students in need. Whatever I

need, whenever I need it - she is there for both me and the students. Becka Tait is a CIS site coordinator's dream."

Tait is a pediatrician who has specialized in general pediatrics for underserved and special populations. She is currently the consulting pediatrician at Thompson Child and Family Focus.

"I get such positive energy back from the students as they progress and achieve."

CIS FORMS NEW VOLUNTEER ADVISORY COUNCIL

CIS is excited to announce the formation of a Volunteer Advisory Council. Eight CIS volunteers are leading the way by agreeing to serve on this new council. Members include John Fillette, Katie Garner, Marguerita Johnson, Victoria Johnson, LaShonda Perry, Shalette Robinson, Paridnya Soman-Tamhankar, and Becka Tait. The group has three primary goals: to leverage the talent, skills, and passion of current CIS volunteers to help grow and improve CIS's volunteer program; to provide a voice and volunteer "ambassadors" to help strengthen volunteer-CIS staff relations; and to provide leadership opportunities for volunteers.



Members of the CIS Volunteer Advisory Council include (front) Marguerita Johnson and Becka Tait; and (back) Paridnya Soman-Tamhankar, Victoria Johnson, and LaShonda Perry. Not pictured are John Fillette, Katie Garner, and Shalette Robinson.

MIDDLE SCHOOL KICK-OFF CELEBRATION!

The Middle School Team held its annual back-to-school celebration for students and families on September 29. More than 250 CIS students, parents, and siblings came out to enjoy a day of games, prizes, food, fun, music, dancing – AND valuable information from educational, health, and community service agencies. Many thanks to First Baptist Church for providing the venue, especially as it needed to move indoors to their fellowship hall at the last minute due to weather! But the damp weather did not dampen attendees' spirits – you know it's hard to keep a middle schooler down for long! CIS also appreciates the many agencies who gave their time on a Saturday to support the event.



CIS is "IN THE HOUSE!"

CIS was excited to be selected as an exhibitor in the Mayor's Legacy Village as part of CarolinaFest, a family festival presented by the "Charlotte in 2012" Host Committee leading up to the Democratic National Convention. More than 30,000 people attended the day-long event in uptown Charlotte on September 3. CIS had a very special display, consisting of a unique three-dimensional 4' x 8' "house," which was the idea of CIS Site Coordinator Rebeca Carvajal. Rebeca and Renee' Leak, CIS Director of 11-12 High School Services, worked together to design the house, which is intended to



Some of the CIS staff who helped at CIS's CarolinaFest exhibit included Rebeca Carvajal and Kian Furnace (seated) and Angela Beavers and Larry Kinard (standing).

represent the "foundation of support" that CIS gives to students. The imprinted hands all over the house each feature a word or phrase describing the types of support CIS provides.

A number of CIS staff spent the Labor Day holiday representing CIS at CarolinaFest, remaining at the exhibitor booth and the "CIS House" – despite the stormy weather – to speak with festival goers. The CIS booth also featured a wonderful new video about CIS that was produced over the summer by the CIS High School team and Hermit Media Productions. Lots of students and staff were involved – check it out on our website at this link: www.cischarlotte.org.

LIGHTS! CAMERA! ACTION!

It's felt a little like Hollywood around here lately! Two new videos about CIS-Charlotte have been produced in the last few months. Visit our website (www.cischarlotte.org) or our YouTube channel (www.youtube.com/user/mayforcis) and give them a look!

- **American Graduate Day Video** – An interview with Molly Shaw, CIS-Charlotte Executive Director, that was originally broadcast on WTVI on Sept. 22, 2012, as part of the PBS event, "American Graduate Day."



- **CIS Overview Video by Hermit Media Productions** – The CIS High School Team worked with Hermit

Media to produce a video over the summer. Lots of staff and students appear in the video, giving a fun, upbeat look at what CIS and our students are accomplishing today.



How Can We Thank You? LET US COUNT THE SCHOOL SUPPLIES!



Many thanks to our School Tools partners, WSOC-TV and Classroom Central, for all of their hard work to collect and distribute thousands of school supplies to our students and others across the county (and region)! We also greatly appreciate the countless individuals, companies, and groups who collected and donated supplies in August and September. In addition, CIS-Charlotte students benefited this fall from the Wal-Mart "Build a Backpack" program coordinated through CIS of North Carolina. Together, we are ensuring that all of our students have the supplies they need to begin the school year with pride – and for that we are truly grateful! Thank you!



Geoffrey Canada, founder of the Harlem Children's Zone, was the keynote speaker on October 11 at an event hosted by SchoolWise and Sugar Creek Charter School. Left to right are David Head, CIS Board member; Geoffrey Canada; and Molly Shaw, CIS-Charlotte Executive Director. Canada mentioned CIS in his remarks, noting it is one of several "fine organizations in Charlotte working together."



CIS recently received a \$7,500 grant from BJ's Charitable Foundation. The grant will help fund programming costs for CIS elementary school sites. Pictured are Susan Prys (left), General Manager of the Charlotte-Pineville BJ's Membership Club, and May Johnston, CIS Community Relations Director.

Cynthia Marshall Named to CIS-NC BOARD

Cynthia Blythe Marshall, CIS-Charlotte founding executive director, has been selected to serve on the CIS-North Carolina (CISNC) Board of Directors. After serving 21 years as CIS-Charlotte's first executive director, Marshall retired in 2006, but has remained active in supporting Communities In Schools locally as well as across the state and the country. Marshall will serve a three-year term on the CIS state board.

In other CIS of North Carolina news, CISNC President and CEO Linda Harrill is retiring at the end of the current calendar year. Harrill, who founded the state office in 1989 and has been its leader for the past 23 years, will transition to a consultant role with CISNC as Senior Advisor of Education and Innovation. CISNC is conducting a nationwide search for a new President/CEO and hopes to have a new leader by January 2013.



Cynthia Blythe Marshall, founding Executive Director of CIS-Charlotte, has been selected to serve on the CIS-North Carolina Board of Directors.

Board of Directors

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Rama Road
Shamrock Gardens
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PK - 8 Schools

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Jail North/Central – CIS also provides services to youthful offenders housed at Jail North and Jail Central