



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



Oct 20 & Nov 2
CIS Volunteer Orientation

Nov - Dec
CIS Holiday Cards

Nov 29
Giving Tuesday

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Newsletter for Friends of CIS | Fall 2016

BEATING THE ODDS for a Better Future

With support from CIS, students defy the odds to succeed in high school, attend college

TRA'QUAN CUNNINGHAM

From homelessness and just getting through each day, to becoming a high school graduate with all A's and B's headed to college on scholarship... meet Tra'Quan Cunningham, Class of 2016 CIS graduate from West Charlotte High School. Tra'Quan – known as Tra' to his friends – will tell you that he is a prime example of “it takes a village...” He will also tell you that he came very close to becoming another dropout statistic.

“Tra’ has come a long way since I first met him when he was a 9th grader at West Charlotte,” said Tra’s former CIS Site Coordinator, Alexis Bibbs. “I remember the day I met him. To see him today, the difference is just amazing. His attitude, the way he dresses, the way he carries himself... it’s like a different person.”

Tra’s family life was very difficult. He was out on his own as a young teenager and ended up living with a friend, then moved in with a brother, then had to move back to the friend’s house. School was almost an afterthought – it was more about survival and where he was going to lay his head each night.

But help came when Tra’ met Trevor Beauford, who currently serves on the CIS Board of Directors. A youth minister at Friendship Missionary Baptist Church, Beauford met Tra’ when Tra’ was in middle school at the former (now closed) J.T. Williams Middle School. Beauford wanted to volunteer as a mentor and the principal introduced him to Tra’. Beauford has remained in Tra’s life and a few years ago, when Tra’s living situation was at its worst, he took Tra’ in and gave him a stable home environment.

Tra’ got involved in CIS in the 8th grade at Druid Hills, where he met Site Coordinator Suzanne Hunt. Hunt made sure that Tra’ got connected to Mr. Bibbs the following year at West Charlotte. Bibbs and Beauford together saw Tra’s potential and his determination. “I think Tra’ recognized the dysfunction around him [at home] and wanted more, and that’s what drove his decision to not only begin listening to our advice and the things we were telling him, but to really embrace it,” said Bibbs.



Continued on page 3

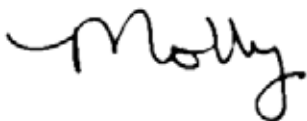
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR MESSAGE

Every new school year brings new challenges as well as new opportunities, and I'm proud to say that our CIS Team handles both with equal fortitude, creativity and optimism. Whatever changes come our way, our staff always keeps the focus on our students, and how any challenges or opportunities will impact them.

Just as we were preparing to welcome students to the 2016-17 school year, we received news of several wonderful opportunities for CIS-Charlotte. We're excited that this means more opportunities and access to services for our students:

- In early August, our TRiO "Talent Search" program was awarded another 5-year grant. Funded by the U.S. Dept. of Education, the TRiO program provides career exploration and college admission support services to low income and "first generation" (to attend college) students. With this new grant, our TRiO program will be able to expand from two high schools (West Charlotte and West Mecklenburg) to four, adding the program at Harding and Olympic.
- And at the end of September, the Communities In Schools national office named 10 CIS affiliates - from nearly 200 affiliates across the country - as "Growth and Impact" communities, of which CIS-Charlotte was one. In fact, we are one of only three affiliates, along with CIS-Charleston and CIS of San Antonio, named as an "Impact" community, which means we were selected for being models of excellence in how we serve the needs of students who may be at risk for dropping out. The three affiliates will be used as research centers to help pilot new initiatives showing how our effective use of integrated student supports (wraparound services) helps students stay in school and graduate.

What fantastic news to help us celebrate the start of a new school year!



Now is a great time to get involved in our schools. We need reading buddies, school buddies, classroom volunteers, business professionals, retirees, individuals and groups... Find out more by visiting our website www.cischarlotte.org or emailing volunteer@cischarlotte.org. See the back page of this newsletter for information about our next Volunteer Orientations, on October 20 and November 2.



Molly Shaw, CIS Executive Director



Mtu Pugh
President, CIS Board of Directors

Welcome New CIS BOARD MEMBERS

Mtu Pugh with Family Dollar Stores will serve as the new president of the CIS Board of Directors for 2016-17. This is Mtu's sixth year on the board and he has served on the Evaluation and Governance committees. Mtu is a graduate of Yale University and holds an MBA from the Kellogg Graduate School of Management, where he

majored in Strategy and Finance. He and his wife, Lisa, have two school-age children and a new baby boy born in April of this year.

"I'm excited and proud to be leading the board of such an amazing organization that is working to ensure all kids in CMS get the services and support they need to be successful in school," Pugh

said. "I've seen first-hand how CIS can make a huge difference in a child's life by giving them hope and the tools they need to flourish. All of our board members believe that there is no more important work than supporting this community's children, and the CIS model of integrated supports [within the schools] is the most effective way to do so," he added.

CIS also welcomes these new members to the board. (A complete list of Board members can be found on the back page of this newsletter.)

Lee Brashear, GCM Grosvenor

George Jurch, Continental Tire the Americas, LLC

Pamela Sanchez, Norsan Media

Earnest Winston, Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools

BEATING THE ODDS *Continued from page 1*



Tra' (left) with his mentor Trevor Beauford, who also is a CIS Board member.

"We've had many, many conversations over the years, but if a kid is not ready or willing to take the advice, it just won't work," added Beauford. "At some point, he made a conscious decision to accept our guidance and wanted to do whatever it took to improve his future."

Beauford told Tra', "You need to study... you can't make good grades just by showing up." Tra' started doing his homework faithfully, and soon he was making A's and B's. He threw himself into school life, joining the baseball and track teams, serving on the student council, and was voted Homecoming King.

During his junior and seniors years, Tra' was in the TRiO program (run by CIS), which prepares and assists low income and "first generation" students to attend college. His CIS TRiO Counselor at West Charlotte, LaQuetia Hollis, introduced Tra' to the admissions counselor at Bethune-Cookman University, a good friend of hers, and together they helped Tra' obtain several scholarships.

In early August, Beauford and Tra' spent a few hectic days doing laundry and packing the car, preparing for the 7-hour drive to Bethune-Cookman... and the road to a better future.

TYRAJAH "T.J." LEGIONS

Tyrajah "T.J." Legions was in the 10th grade at East Mecklenburg High School when she found she was pregnant. In school she was struggling academically and she lacked focus and motivation. She also had behavioral issues that sometimes resulted in suspensions.

Entering her junior year at East Meck, T.J. was connected to both CIS and the Safe Journey teen parent program. As various discipline concerns appeared, T.J. received counseling and behavior interventions were put in place. She participated in workshops focused on personal growth and developing life and social skills. She also received academic support through CIS and participated in college and career activities.

"T.J. made enormous strides her senior year," said her Safe Journey counselor, Steffanie Lewis. "Once she felt supported and received

counseling and other interventions, her absences decreased and her attitude improved dramatically. She ultimately became one of our best role models for her peers in Safe Journey."

Of the 30 seniors who graduated from the Safe Journey program in June 2016, it was T.J. who received the "Attendance Award." With help from her CIS Site Coordinator, Kim Jones, T.J. received several college scholarships and she's now a freshman at UNC-Charlotte.



ZORRIAH COLE

Zorriah was born in Detroit, Michigan. His path has been challenging, lacking structure and parental support. Neither of his parents completed high school and more often than not were unemployed. Zorriah and a sibling were placed in foster care where Zorriah remained until midway

through his 9th grade year, when he was reconnected with his father who was living in Charlotte.

Life in Charlotte was an improvement over Detroit; however, times were still financially and emotionally difficult. Zorriah found support at South Mecklenburg High School from CIS Site Coordinator Joe Rothenberg. Zorriah had to repeat the 9th grade due to differences in the Detroit and CMS school systems' academic requirements, but with Rothenberg's encouragement, Zorriah passed 9th grade the following year.

As Zorriah's life began to stabilize, Suzanne Hunt, his CIS Site Coordinator during his junior and senior years at South Meck, says Zorriah developed a strong sense of self-purpose and determination to change the trajectory of his life. He began focusing on school, both his academics and many extracurricular school clubs. Hunt selected Zorriah to serve on the CIS Youth Leadership Team, where he was project manager for their community service projects. By his senior year, Zorriah had a 3.58 GPA and did extremely well in several AP and college level classes. Hunt also recommended Zorriah to the Mayor's Youth Employment Program, which provided him with a summer internship in the medical field.

Now Zorriah is taking his next steps toward beating the odds: he's enrolled at Central Piedmont Community College for the fall term and plans to transfer to a four-year college next semester, where he wants to major in biology or pre-medicine.

AIN'T IT GRAND!

Adopt-A-Grand program at Reid Park Academy

Sometimes the “young” and the “old” have more in common than you might think – and certainly they each have much they can learn from each other. At least that has been the experience for six CIS students from Reid Park Academy and seven older adults, or “grands,” who are active participants at Charlotte’s Tyvola Senior Center.

Last year, Ambrosia Wilson, CIS Site Coordinator at Reid Park Academy, contacted several senior centers to see if they would be interested in partnering with CIS at Reid Park to develop an intergenerational program that would provide some positive and consistent adult mentoring for her third grade students. Kiri Soprano, the Recreation Specialist at Tyvola Senior Center, responded quickly and was very interested in collaborating.

“I had ideas of what the program could look like,” said Wilson, “but it turned out far better than I had imagined. Kiri had great ideas, and best of all, she had several enthusiastic seniors who wanted to sit down with us and help plan a year’s curriculum.”

The seniors Soprano had in mind were all retired professionals, including a teacher, a social worker, and a cryogenics engineer. Together with Wilson and Soprano, they planned activities around such themes as “Grade 3 Past and Present,” “Aging Sensitivity Training,” “Caring & Sharing,” “I Have A Dream” (MLK Month), “Histories of War,” and “Science in Our Lives.” One activity included a field trip to the Knight Sounds Brown Bag Lunch to hear the Charlotte Symphony.

Students were selected for the program based on good behavior and each was matched to a “grand.” From October through April, the students met monthly with their grands to get to know each other and do the planned activity together.



CIS at Reid Park Academy and the Tyvola Senior Center collaborated to create the “Adopt-A-Grand” mentoring program.

One of the seniors, Marsha S., said the program was a “really good experience” for both the kids and the seniors. “It’s always enlightening to be around children and see their reaction to things,” said Marsha. “I think they found out we could be fun to be around, we weren’t just old ‘fuddy-duddies.’”

Senior Carol S. said she thought the experience gave the children a good perspective on sharing and understanding older adults. “Perhaps their association with older adults gave them a new respect and bonding that will help them wherever life takes them and keep them focused.”

“But the best part was the hugs they gave us,” added Marsha.

Soprano said the program was a wonderful experience for the seniors and was rewarding in another way as well: In May, the Adopt-A-Grand program won first place in the “Blaze a Trail Older Americans Month” Contest, sponsored by the Centralina Area Agency on Aging. Senior centers in the 9-county region were asked to complete entries highlighting “innovative programming.” As a first place winner, the Tyvola Senior Center won a \$500 grant.

3,000 SCHOOL UNIFORMS donated by Belk



In August, Belk Department Stores, in coordination with United Way of Central Carolinas, donated nearly 3,000 school uniform items to Communities In Schools and A Child’s Place (ACP). In addition to the generous donation, volunteers from TIAA spent several days sorting and organizing the uniforms in preparation to divide them between CIS and ACP and deliver them to selected CMS schools.

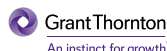
“This is a huge undertaking,” said Courtney Peterson, CIS Volunteer & Community Engagement Associate, “and it would be so much more difficult and time-consuming to get these uniforms distributed to students without help from volunteers. We’re most grateful for Belk’s donation and for TIAA’s support.”

LOWCOUNTRY ON THE GREEN Sept. 17, 2016

Our 8th annual Lowcountry on the Green moved to a new venue this year, The Olde Mecklenburg Brewery in southwest Charlotte - and the new location worked out beautifully for our growing party! It didn't hurt that the weather was fantastic and the lowcountry boil, catered by Reid's Fine Foods, was a big hit. Top that off with craft brews by OMB, a live bluegrass band, a top-notch Silent Auction, and nearly 400 lively guests, and it all made for a very memorable evening! A big THANK YOU is in order for our corporate sponsors, Silent Auction donors, and our Party Hosts, and especially for Event Co-Chairs Lindsay Carter and Ann Tabor.

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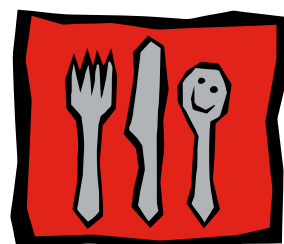
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RECIPE FOR SUCCESS! Dine Out For Kids 2016

A BIG Thank You to all who “dined out” on June 21! We had incredible support this year from the community – YOU! – and of course from our fabulous restaurants and sponsors. Check out lots more photos on our Facebook page! [facebook.com/cischarlotte](https://www.facebook.com/cischarlotte)



1. CIS Site Coordinators Reggie Robinson and Lydia Grier with their students at Sedgefield Middle School, who were some of the “stars” in our Recipe for Success videos! 2. Five Guys Burgers and Fries at SouthPark Mall 3. Midwood Smokehouse



Dine Out For Kids®



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Aria Tuscan Grill	Eddie's Place	Nothing but Noodles
Bad Daddy's Burger Bar	Famous Toastery of Dilworth	Paco's Tacos & Tequila
BRAVO! Cucina Italiana	Five Guys Burgers and Fries	Reid's Fine Foods
Brio Tuscan Grille	Harper's Restaurant	Tupelo Honey Café
Brixx Wood Fired Pizza	HMSHost – Charlotte	Sonny's Real Pit Bar-B-Q
Burger 21	Douglas International Airport	Stockyard Restaurant
Café Monte	Johnny Burrito	TRUE Crafted Pizza
Charlotte Knights Baseball	Mama Ricotta's	Upstream
City Smoke	McAlister's Deli	Village Tavern
Crêpe Cellar Kitchen & Pub	The Melting Pot	YAFO Kitchen
Dilworth Neighborhood Grille	Mert's Heart & Soul	
Dogwood Southern Table & Bar	Midwood Smokehouse	

Lotta Foundation + A Lotta Coats = A LOTTA LOVE

CIS is deeply grateful to The Lotta Foundation for their recent donation of 109 winter coats for CIS students at Statesville Road Elementary School. Lotta Foundation founders Christina and Titus Bartolotta have provided help for CIS at Statesville Road before, and in a recent conversation with Torrie Burgess, our CIS Site Coordinator there, they learned that a large number of kids came to school last winter in freezing temperatures with no coat. Before you could say “32 degrees,” the Bartolottas got the word out and collected gently used coats from friends and neighbors, and then laundered them all before delivering them to the school.

“This is wonderful,” said Burgess. “I’ve got coats in all styles and sizes, and now every one of my students can have a coat if they are in need.”



SCHOOL TOOLS Rules!

Twenty Years of Providing School Supplies to Kids in Need



The School Tools campaign kicked off on August 10 at the NASCAR Hall of Fame Plaza. School Tools "Student Ambassador" Amir Olumoroti, a CIS senior from West Charlotte High School, was a featured guest who spoke to the crowd about his experience in CIS and the value of donated school supplies. Also on hand for photos and fun were WSOC-TV anchors Erica Bryant and Scott Wickersham, Mayor Jennifer Roberts, NASCAR driver AJ Allmendinger, and mascots from all of Charlotte's major league sports teams.

This year marked the 20th anniversary of the School Tools Campaign and it's exciting to see that it's still going strong and is bigger than ever! Originally initiated in 1997, the campaign has become the largest in the region, covering 22 counties and providing school supplies to more than 3 million children to date. CIS is proud to partner with WSOC-TV and their Channel 9 Family Focus partners (Ashley HomeStore, E.R. Plumbing Services, Hendrick Honda, and Showmars), and Classroom Central to promote the campaign and get supplies into the hands of children in need. And we especially say "THANK YOU" to the community for supporting the campaign so generously over the years!

New this year, a CIS senior from West Charlotte High School, Amir Olumoroti, was selected to serve as "Student Ambassador" for the campaign. Amir is an outstanding CIS student (now graduate!) from our TRiO program which identifies and prepares "first generation" students to attend college or other post-secondary education. Amir spoke to the crowd at the School Tools Kick-off on August 10 at the NASCAR Hall of Fame Plaza, sharing how much his CIS and TRiO mentors meant to him, and how grateful he was for simple things like school supplies. Amir is deferring college for now to serve in the U.S. Marine Corps and left for boot camp at Parris Island in September. We are so proud of you, Amir!

CIS Site Coordinators: Everyday SUPER HEROES

We may be a bit biased, but we really loved the theme of CIS of North Carolina's state-wide staff training conference this year: *Call of Duty: Everyday Super Heroes* – because that is exactly what our Site Coordinators are to their students and families. The two-day conference, held August 10-11 in Charlotte, brought CIS employees from all over the state together to learn from guest presenters and each other. The primary focus was on training and strategies for Site Coordinators to implement in their programming for students, such as identifying at-risk students and "tiered" interventions, strategies for behavior management and reducing chronic absenteeism, situational leadership styles, and building interagency collaboration and relationships. The conference kicked off with a welcome from Earnest Winston, Chief of Staff with Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools and a CIS-Charlotte board member.



Carla Gaymon is certainly a CIS-Charlotte "Everyday Super Hero!" Gaymon is the CIS Site Coordinator at Allenbrook Elementary. LaDonte Lee (right), is a Super Hero to his students who are youthful offenders in the reentry program based at Jail North.

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Tutors, School Buddies/Mentors, Reading Buddies, Classroom Volunteers, Career Speakers....There are many ways to make a difference in a child's life – and our students need YOU! Find out more at one of these upcoming Volunteer Orientation sessions, held at the Children & Family Services Center, 601 E. 5th Street. Please RSVP to Courtney Peterson, volunteer@cischarlotte.org.

Oct 20
11am – 12pm or
6:00 – 7pm

Nov 2
11am – 12pm or
6:00 – 7pm

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

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Druid Hills
Reid Park
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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.