We are facing some of the most exciting – and also troubling – times in recent history. In 2008, with the transition to a new federal administration on the horizon, we saw how our nation became galvanized, rallying around the idea of change on matters of utmost importance – employment and the economy, our role in the global community, health care and college access, to name a few.

Communities In Schools (CIS) is solely focused on a matter we believe is key to all others – changing the face of education by systematically addressing one of America’s most pervasive economic and social justice issues: the dropout epidemic.

What is the face of education in America? In a country where 90 percent of young people attend public schools, roughly 7,000 students drop out of these schools every day. One-third of high school students (and nearly half of all students of color) fail to graduate on time. From the research, we know where the problem is concentrated – predominantly in urban areas along both coasts, as well as in both urban and rural areas in the south. Of the nation’s high schools with the highest number of dropouts and lowest promotion records, 80 percent are located in 15 states. CIS is active in all but one of these states.

We understand this national crisis is creating an incredible cost to society. CIS is among the organizations leading the charge to alter the way education looks. We know that an educated population is the root of economic growth and prosperity, and it is a national imperative to keep students in school.

The CIS Model of providing integrated student services creates a safety net and a system of strategic coordination that no one single program can. CIS uses site coordinators to identify and address unmet needs in a school – leading to higher academic outcomes and, ultimately, increased graduation rates. One thing that makes us so successful is the buy-in from local school superintendents, businesses, volunteers and families who want us as partners in improving graduation rates.

In fiscal year 2008, the CIS national office supported its network and engaged key stakeholders to further its mission of reversing America’s dropout problem:

- We completed a strategic planning refresher with The Bridgespan Group. Our strategic drivers guide our work and enable us to align the right opportunities with our mission.
- We convened a national conference around our 30th anniversary, attended by leaders and practitioners in the CIS network, as well as nationally known guest panelists and keynote speakers.
- We continued our public policy work, with the addition of a national vice president for government relations and through testimony to federal lawmakers on the critical role of integrated student services in improving academic outcomes.
- We rolled out our Total Quality System for CIS affiliates, a comprehensive set of organizational and business standards, policies and procedures that serve as a ‘blueprint’ for the CIS Model.
- With a generous investment from The Atlantic Philanthropies, we continued our independent, national evaluation that quantifies our work and helps us learn where we can do better.
- We invested in our Performance Learning Centers (PLCs), small, non-traditional high schools with demonstrated student success. In 2008, CIS opened five new PLCs.

At CIS, we walk the walk – “raising the bar” from within, and leading our network in the necessary task of ensuring consistency in the CIS Model. In this way, we can have an even greater impact and sustain the organization for years to come.

We are confident that the new administration will provide a catalyst for the education reform so desperately needed. We have a clear vision of how the face of education should look – a rich mosaic of every color, where truly no child is left behind because of the circumstances into which he or she was born. Communities In Schools can assist with the challenge. We are poised to have a voice in that discussion – because we have a disciplined model to make it happen.

On behalf of the CIS national office, we offer our deep gratitude and renewed sense of dedication to the entire CIS family, our partners, supporters and the inspiring young people who are the reason for our existence.
The mission of Communities In Schools is to champion the connection of needed community resources with schools to help young people successfully learn, stay in school and prepare for life. By bringing caring adults into the schools to address children’s unmet needs, CIS provides the link between educators and the community. The result: teachers are free to teach, and students – many in jeopardy of dropping out – have the opportunity to focus on learning.

Communities In Schools believes that every child needs and deserves these “Five Basics”:

1. A one-on-one relationship with a caring adult
2. A safe place to learn and grow
3. A healthy start and a healthy future
4. A marketable skill to use upon graduation
5. A chance to give back to peers and community

Communities In Schools places a school-based coordinator onsite who identifies and brings together in one place – public schools – the resources and services available in the community that students need to be successful.
Why Communities In Schools?

Our nation’s education system is in crisis. It is estimated that every school day, 7,000 students become dropouts. One out of three U.S. students does not graduate from high school. Among students of color, the dropout rate is almost 50 percent.

Dropping out of school is like dropping out of society, and cumulative costs to the public are in the billions. Compared with high school graduates, dropouts are more likely to be living in poverty, unemployed or earning significantly less than graduates, incarcerated, suffering from poor health or dependent on social services.

Multiple academic and social risk factors increase the likelihood that young people will drop out. Some of these include economic or educational disadvantage, limited English proficiency, lack of school readiness, learning disabilities and poverty — with its associated effects such as hunger, lack of basic health care and just being overwhelmed with personal circumstances. The final act of leaving school is often the result of a long process of disengagement. After years of struggling and feeling disconnected, too many children simply give up on the idea that learning or succeeding in school is possible.

And, the dropout problem is not limited to large, urban populations. One can find dropouts in the heartland of America — places like Indiana or Iowa. By all indicators, Iowa is doing better than the rest of the country in terms of high school graduation rates, median household income and unemployment rates. However, the downturn in our economy is hurting everyone, and we know that the ripple effect will be felt across the nation, hitting the heartland hard, too.

In Iowa, where the median household income in 2008 was just slightly under $50,000, many jobs that pay well don’t require a college education. However, last year in Iowa, manufacturing declined by about 2,000 jobs, while approximately 1,500 professional and business-related jobs were lost. During lean economic times, even college-educated workers take jobs that don’t require a degree, and this “domino effect” begins to displace those with less education and fewer job skills (including youth ages 16-19 seeking work experience). In turn, those workers must settle for part-time employment and/or fewer hours. Most affected are young job hunters, especially black males in their early 20s who have no more than a high school education.

In Iowa, as in other parts of the country, the largest reported increases in jobs were in the education and health services sectors (a combined 3,900 jobs in Iowa during 2008). These growing job sectors — as well as others like computers and technology, science and engineering — require some post-secondary education. In our increasingly complex and competitive global economy, an educated workforce is no longer a luxury.

For more than 30 years, Communities In Schools (CIS) has remained committed to addressing America’s dropout problem. In Iowa, and in 26 other states and the District of Columbia, CIS offers a solution. We are the country’s largest dropout prevention organization, and the only one with proof that its efforts improve graduation rates.

Based on a comparative analysis of outcomes for more than 600 CIS and 600 non-CIS schools over a three-year period, findings of an independent national evaluation* conclude:

- Compared with dropout prevention programs where scientifically based evidence has been reviewed by the Department of Education’s What Works Clearinghouse, the CIS Model is one of a very few in the country proven to keep students in school and is the only one to prove that it increases graduation rates.
- When implemented with high fidelity, the CIS Model results in a higher percentage of students reaching proficiency in fourth- and eighth-grade reading and math.
- Effective implementation of the CIS Model correlates more strongly with positive school-level outcomes (dropout and graduation rates, achievement, etc.) than does the uncoordinated provision of service alone, resulting in notable improvements of school-level outcomes.

* The CIS National Evaluation, funded by The Atlantic Philanthropies, is being led by ICF International.
CIS identifies and brings together in one place – public schools – the resources and services available in the community that students need to be successful. These specific services can vary from one region to the next, but in each case they are integrated and tailored to address common needs such as academic support, mentoring, health care, family strengthening, career development, summer and after-school programs, alternative education models, service-learning and more.

CIS focuses on the lowest performing schools and the students most vulnerable to dropping out. Of the nation’s high schools with the highest number of dropouts and lowest promotion records, 80 percent are located in 15 states; CIS is active in all but one of these states. Students served by CIS are ethnically diverse, and most come from economically disadvantaged families; 85 percent of CIS students qualify for free or reduced-price lunches, which is based on (though not equivalent to) federal poverty guidelines.

By making a front-end investment in students who are most likely to leave school without graduating, Communities In Schools increases opportunities for positive life choices and academic success that help prepare our nation’s youth for life after graduation.

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In 2008, Communities In Schools revisited its strategic plan, originally adopted by the board of directors in July 2004. In the beginning of fiscal year 2008, the board of directors approved the six key drivers of this updated plan:

1. Concentrate network efforts on building highly functional state structures as the best possible method of strengthening and expanding local CIS initiatives.

   The CIS national office provided direct cash support of nearly $2.6 million, along with significant technical assistance, executive recruitment and resource development support to the network of state offices. Armed with this support from the national office, state offices, in turn, focused their energy on supporting their local affiliates and delivering measurable results.

   The national office also expanded its relationship with The Bridgespan Group, a nonprofit strategic consulting firm, to include support – valued at more than $500,000 – for a number of CIS state offices. During 2008, the North Carolina, Virginia and Pennsylvania state offices participated in strategic business planning engagements with The Bridgespan Group. Emerging from the Bridgespan process, North Carolina opened three new Performance Learning Centers (non-traditional high schools) and positioned all of its local affiliates to compete for funding from the state legislature. Virginia completed its new plan, received grants from three new major donors and also opened one Performance Learning Center.

2. Support network to meet Total Quality System (TQS) requirements, thereby serving more students at each site more effectively.

   The national office Learning Management and Field Operations teams worked diligently to prepare the CIS network for TQS implementation, which officially began July 1, 2008. National office representatives visited each of the 15 state offices to share TQS implementation tools and resources, and provide technical assistance for the planning process. The focus was on helping affiliates move from informal assessment data to an annual plan for achieving TQS standards.

   Historically, CIS has emphasized the differences among and the customization within each affiliate to meet the needs of youth in the local community. It’s been the hallmark of what we do as a national network – connect community resources with schools and young people, but in diverse ways. In 2008, we began the process of examining what all local CIS organizations have in common, and found there were a number of similarities. Those similarities became the foundation of a common set of standards and evidence-based practices that define what it means to be a successful CIS affiliate. The standards are clearly articulated in the Standards and Evidence-Based Curriculum, launched at the CIS National Conference in the beginning of fiscal year 2008.

3. Lead network evidence-based strategy for proven practices and continuous improvement.

   In 2008, CIS reached the midpoint of its five-year national evaluation, highlighted by the release of key school-level findings. The evaluation is designed to correlate positive student and school outcomes with the CIS Model of providing integrated student services in public schools. The independent, third-party evaluation is being conducted by ICF International, known for its high standards of rigor and comprehensive research design. In June, The Atlantic Philanthropies awarded CIS a grant to complete the final two years of the study, which will include student-level randomized control trials. CIS is confident that the evaluation will aid the organization in establishing itself as a national education leader.

   The first results to emerge from the evaluation indicate that the CIS Model has a positive impact on school-wide outcomes and show that CIS is one of a small group of organizations with research to prove it increases graduation rates and decreases dropout rates. (See related story on page 2.) Results from the evaluation are also critical in our policy efforts to establish integrated student services as a necessary component of school reform.

4. Increase efforts on brand building and internal communications.

   During 2008, Communities In Schools continued to increase its brand awareness and visibility. Media outreach focused largely on major news placements that highlighted
Communities In Schools has grown from a single street academy to a nationwide network of affiliates that currently serve more than one million young people and their families each year.

CIS’ work in education reform, including articles in the *Wall Street Journal* and *The Washington Post*, and coverage in more than 130 online news sites, including Reuters.

CIS concluded its third year of the *Choose Success* national public awareness campaign, which has generated more than $30 million in in-kind media donations since its inception in 2005. All three years of the campaign materials were redistributed in June for a fourth year. During fiscal year 2008, donated advertisement placements totaled slightly more than $10 million. CIS PSAs aired regionally during nationally recognized programming that included “Oprah,” NBC’s “Today Show,” and CBS’ “60 Minutes” and “Late Show with David Letterman.”

In 2008, CIS launched its *One Voice* initiative to facilitate consistent messaging among CIS practitioners throughout the network. Additionally, the new CIS intranet (the CISnet) was launched, making tools, resources and information more accessible to CIS affiliates and state offices.

5 **Significantly increase financial support of the CIS network.**

With the assistance of The Bridgespan Group, Communities In Schools produced a comprehensive *Prospectus for Growth* document designed to help build long-term sustainability of the organization. This was distributed to several key stakeholders and outlines a multi-year plan to aggressively expand the reach and impact of the CIS Model; secure stable, increasing funding for the CIS network; and strengthen CIS state offices.

This will be done through two distinct funds:

- An endowment to provide an ongoing, operating revenue stream for the national office.
- An Impact Fund, to make targeted, one-time investments in the CIS network.

Successful execution of this plan will enable CIS to provide services to almost two million young people and will prevent thousands of them from dropping out.

In 2008, the CIS national office collaborated with local affiliates, providing information and support to increase revenue streams for the network. One example of this was the AT&T Foundation’s signature initiative, AT&T Aspire. The national office notified the CIS network about the opportunity and helped facilitate the application process. The effort paid off – 15 CIS affiliates were among the grantees, receiving a total of about $4 million out of the $29 million awarded in September.

6 **Promote and support the CIS “movement” while building a more cohesive network.**

Communities In Schools has grown from a single street academy to a nationwide network of affiliates that currently serves more than one million young people and their families each year. With one-third of high school students failing to graduate with their peers, and 50 percent or more of minority and economically disadvantaged students failing to complete school, we must not only sustain, but accelerate, the movement that CIS began 30 years ago.

In 2008, the first class of the CIS Robert H.B. Baldwin Fellows completed their projects and began reporting on their findings. In 2005, the program (named for CIS’ founding board chairman) was launched to create a cadre of new leaders to carry on the CIS mission. In 2006, the first group of CIS Fellows was selected, and throughout 2007 they conducted work projects aimed at benefiting the CIS network and creating effective future leadership for the organization. The Fellows’ reports will be available on [http://www.cisnet.org/fellows](http://www.cisnet.org/fellows).

Also in 2008, CIS continued to generate publicity and support for the organization through a series of media interviews associated with the release of CIS founder Bill Milliken’s latest book, *The Last Dropout: Stop the Epidemic!*, published in 2007. The book, which showcases CIS’ role in school success and education reform, has sold more than 22,000 copies.

Finally, at the beginning of fiscal year 2008, CIS held its national conference and 30th anniversary celebration, with the purpose of convening some of the brightest minds in education to develop strategies for ending the dropout crisis.
CIS Influences Public Policy

Lawmakers hear testimony on integrated student services model

Communities In Schools’ public policy platform is based on the premise that any attempts at reforming public education or improving student outcomes will be better if the CIS Model of providing integrated student services is used. Armed with data to prove its effectiveness in providing these services, CIS has attracted the interest of educators, community leaders and legislators.

On April 28, 2008, representatives of the Communities In Schools national office attended a closed meeting with U.S. Senate staffers who work on education policy issues. At the invitation of key Senate legislative staff, including Senator Edward Kennedy (D-Mass.), CIS senior staff members presented research data quantifying the organization’s role in increasing graduation rates, improving reading and math proficiency, and effectively coordinating the delivery of services.

On May 20, the CIS national office again brought its research-based model to the attention of federal lawmakers. With the support of Representative George Miller (D-Calif.), chairman of the Education and Labor Committee, CIS conducted a briefing for House education staff. As with the Senate briefing in April, Daniel J. Cardinali, president, Communities In Schools, Inc., and Susan Siegel, vice president of research, evaluation and learning management for the national office, spoke on the interim results from the CIS National Evaluation and the implications for federal policies aimed at school reform or improved student achievement. (See related story on page 2.)

“Meetings with policy makers allow us to provide background, data and statistics that underscore the critical role of an evidence-based, integrated student services approach to any efforts aimed at improving academic outcomes and reducing the number of dropouts,” said Cardinali. “This work also positions CIS to have a major role in helping to improve public education for the benefit of our nation’s young people.”

These meetings, which followed a larger policy briefing and testimony before the Senate Health Education Labor and Pensions Committee last year, also serve to establish CIS as the ‘best in class’ organization for providing integrated student services.
The historic 2008 presidential campaign evoked feelings of change and new possibilities. As a result, our country continues to explore the roles of race and gender not only in politics, but in society.

In July 2008, 21 representatives from the Communities In Schools network participated in a week-long Aspen Institute seminar on Youth Development and Race Equity in Aspen, Colo. While learning about the structural racism framework and its implications for youth development with children of color, participants saw the relevance and importance of this work to the CIS mission.

It was the first seminar of this type that the Aspen Institute had ever conducted with all of the participants from the same organization. CIS representation consisted of national and local board members, donors and national office senior staff members, in addition to CIS state directors and local executive directors. Some members of this group will make up a CIS national task force on racial equity, charged with finding ways to put into practice what was learned at the seminar.

“Race in America is on the public agenda and on people’s minds. Issues of race and class, as they relate to disparities in education, are integral to the work of CIS. It’s in our DNA,” said Daniel J. Cardinali, president, Communities In Schools, Inc. “The CIS movement was born on the streets of Harlem, primarily targeting young people of color. If we say we care about kids, and the majority of the ones we serve are children of color, how can we not be serious about dealing with the social injustices that exist in public education?”

Cardinali was first invited to attend an Aspen Institute seminar on racial equity in 2006. He returned with a plan to integrate this work into the CIS Theory of Change. The Theory of Change is CIS’ evidence-based premise that providing integrated student services results in positive outcomes for students and schools. Through support from The Atlantic Philanthropies, a customized seminar was developed just for CIS. “CIS has the reach and access to children and families that can really make a difference,” said Cardinali.
CIS Convenes Leaders in Education Reform

National conference creates community for the CIS network

At the beginning of fiscal year 2008, Communities In Schools celebrated 30 years of keeping students in school at its national conference, Leadership for Change: A Nation Without Dropouts, held in Atlanta October 31–November 4, 2007. The conference brought together nearly 1,100 participants from across the CIS network, as well as nationally known guest panelists and keynote speakers including Mrs. Laura Bush, former Virginia Governor (now U.S. Senator) Mark Warner, and David Eisner, then CEO of the Corporation for National and Community Service.

Taking center stage at this gathering of forward-thinking leaders were spirited discussions about dropout risk factors, reauthorization of the No Child Left Behind Act, federal education funding strategies, closing the achievement gap, marketing and public outreach, and many other timely topics. At a pre-conference One Voice meeting, CIS network leadership focused on enhancing the quality and consistency of the organization’s branding and messaging. Pre-conference meetings also featured the launch of CIS’ Standards and Evidence-Based Curriculum, and a refresher on the new Total Quality System for CIS affiliates – both designed to help ensure uniformity across the network for maximum impact and effectiveness.

“At this milestone in our history, it was critically important to convene some of the brightest minds in education,” said Bill Milliken, CIS founder and vice chairman. “With America facing its highest dropout rate in decades, we needed to create a forum where real-world strategies could be shared.”

Conference participants were inspired by guest speakers such as Mrs. Bush, who said, “Thanks to Bill Milliken for the great idea of CIS and for 30 years of serving kids. In schools across the country, you’re working to address one of the most challenging issues in education – our dropout crisis.”

Robert H.B. Baldwin Fellow Jennifer Durham, Ph.D., presented the findings of her fellowship project on the achievement gap.

Former Virginia Governor (now U.S. Senator) Mark Warner showed his support for Communities In Schools.
(ABOVE) Elaine Wynn, newly elected board chairman, shared a moment at the conference gala with Myles Peterson, son of CIS national staff member Arleen Peterson.

(RIGHT) CIS national office staff greeted friends and colleagues at the welcome program general session; (l-r) Bill Milliken, CIS founder and vice chairman; Wintley Phipps, president and CEO, U.S. Dream Academy; Daniel J. Cardinali, CIS president; Wally Amos, literacy advocate and former CIS national board member.

State and local executive directors from the CIS network had the opportunity to voice their concerns and share strategies during pre-conference leadership meetings.

Mrs. Laura Bush addressed the crowd at the CIS National Conference opening luncheon.
Mark Emblidge, state director of CIS of Virginia, learned a valuable lesson many years ago from Bill Milliken, founder and vice chairman of Communities In Schools, Inc. In the late 1980s and early 1990s, Emblidge worked with Milliken on a variety of CIS national office projects, including the Entertainment Industry Foundation for Communities In Schools. One of the things he observed about Milliken’s story and from watching him work over the years was how important bipartisan support from elected officials is to the lifeblood of an organization.

In the late 1990s, following the success of CIS affiliates in Richmond and Chesterfield, Va., Milliken asked Emblidge if he would head up a state office in Virginia. Emblidge said yes, provided he could put together a solid board of directors. At the time, Mark Warner and George Allen were up-and-coming politicians in Virginia who Emblidge believed would be appropriate choices to lead the CIS of Virginia board of directors. Warner, a Democrat, later became governor, while Republican George Allen served in the U.S. Senate.

“I approached both Warner and Allen, not knowing whether they would have any interest in serving together on the board because, politically, they are polar opposites,” said Emblidge. He sat down individually with each of them to discuss Communities In Schools, and asked whether they would co-chair the Virginia state office board of directors. “Both of them were very interested,” said Emblidge. “During all the years that I worked with them in establishing CIS of Virginia, I really appreciated that they could put politics aside and focus on the needs of kids.”

The state office board of directors took shape with a good mix of business and education leaders. Emblidge brought on three seasoned professionals to staff the CIS state office – two of whom had already worked for CIS of Richmond, “one of the great affiliates in the CIS network,” according to Emblidge. In Richmond, CIS has a presence in about half of all schools, and the school system generously funds that affiliate. “Initially, we had to overcome some obstacles getting into the school system, namely, the frequent turnover of school superintendents,” he said.

Emblidge, who also serves as the president of the state board of education in Virginia and has worked closely with Governor Tim Kaine on education issues for a number of years, believes that CIS has firmly taken root in Virginia. “It’s a great time for CIS at both the national and local levels,” Emblidge remarked. “The spotlight is on graduation rates like it never has been before, and that has been helpful to the students we serve. It reinforces the work Communities In Schools has been doing for 30 years, in partnership with school systems, to help more students graduate and go on to successful lives.”

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Emblidge said that Governor Kaine has been very supportive of CIS initiatives – starting when Kaine was on the Richmond city council and Emblidge first served on the board of education years ago. In addition to the governor’s office, CIS of Virginia is working with legislators to get CIS written into the state budget. This would help support the two existing CIS affiliates (CIS of Chesterfield and CIS of Richmond), plus three developing affiliates in Henrico, Hampton and Portsmouth. In 2008, CIS affiliates in Virginia provided services to almost 14,000 K-12 students in 29 schools in Virginia.

CIS of Virginia has identified the following positive outcomes for students who were case managed by the affiliate. Data reported is for the 2007-2008 school year:

- **Improvement in behavior** – 87 percent of the 1,132 students tracked for discipline problems had fewer incidents of discipline.
- **Improvement in academics** – 80 percent of the 1,064 students tracked for academic performance showed improvement in academic performance.
- **Promotion** – 96 percent of the 1,827 students tracked for promotion risk were promoted to the next grade.
- **Graduation** – 98 percent of 142 eligible seniors graduated.
- **Improved attendance** – nearly half of the 809 students tracked for attendance showed improvement in attendance.
Communities In Schools of Miami

Since opening its doors in 1989, Communities In Schools of Miami has developed a solid infrastructure that brings together an involved board of directors; seasoned staff, including seven site coordinators, four project directors and 30 tutors/camp aides; community partners; volunteers; parents and students. The result is a high-functioning local organization focused on helping Miami-Dade public school students succeed.

During the 2007-2008 school year, the CIS affiliate provided Level One (widely accessible) services to more than 1,400 students, and Level Two (targeted and sustained) services to approximately 2,400 students in six elementary schools, one middle school, one high school and eight alternative learning sites. The organization worked with 172 community partners, and 338 volunteers dedicated more than 25,000 service hours to the CIS mission.

Over the years, CIS of Miami has put together an impressive array of initiatives aimed at removing barriers for Miami-Dade students. With dedicated site coordinators conducting needs assessments and bringing in the right set of coordinated services, CIS of Miami students have access to a wide array of interventions. Current projects include literacy and tutoring, as well as partnerships aimed at reducing violence, keeping kids engaged outside of school and helping high school students do well through alternative learning environments:

- **Miami Reads** – literacy tutoring for economically disadvantaged children in kindergarten through third grade who have reading deficits.
- **Violence Intervention Project** – services aimed at curbing violence in geographic areas of Miami-Dade County most plagued by the problem, encompassing media outreach, civic engagement and law enforcement partnerships.
- **Out of School** – safe after-school and summer programming, with a focus on reading and social skills development for students in kindergarten through eighth grade.
- **Bridges to Graduation** – dropout prevention services offered through four alternative Miami-Dade County public high schools.

The national CIS movement began as a single “street academy” in Harlem – a small, focused learning environment where dropouts could go back and get a second chance at completing their education. With the understanding that not all school systems are created equal and many risk factors may contribute to students languishing in mainstream schools, CIS was a pioneer of alternative learning environments for students who need extra attention.

This tradition continues with the Bridges to Graduation initiative in Miami. These small CIS schools or academies have regular high school curricula. Nearly all of the students in the school are case managed, receiving Level Two services through the assistance of a CIS site coordinator. During the 2007-2008 academic year, Bridges to Graduation served 530 young people at its four academy locations. Overall, the schools enrolled more girls (66 percent) than boys (one of the schools is for pregnant teens and teen mothers). Almost all of the participants were either African American (59 percent) or Hispanic (36 percent). Between 100 and 150 students attend each of the four academies.

“Bridges to Graduation has a 20-year history of helping students succeed in school and graduate,” according to Elizabeth Mejia, executive director of CIS of Miami. Mejia said that CIS has staff assigned to work with students in each of the academies. “These students have a history of poor attendance and poor academic performance. They can self-refer, though they often come to us through a counselor or friend. Students are interviewed before they enroll, so we can confirm that they meet the criteria for needing dropout prevention services – and also that they have a commitment to change,” Mejia noted.

Gina Keane, a 2001 graduate of Corporate Academy South (one of these small schools), has served on the CIS of Miami board of directors for about a year. “One of the great things about this initiative is the community partnerships – all the people brought in who work behind the scenes as well as directly with students,” she said.
Keane completed her undergraduate degree at Florida International University and is in a master’s program for social work.

Bridges to Graduation provides students with the following services:

- Academic tutoring that emphasizes reading, study skills and preparation for the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test.
- School-to-work mentoring in collaboration with State Farm Insurance, Miami Dade College, Burger King Corporation, Royal Caribbean Cruise Lines and other organizations – providing assistance with getting into college, writing résumés and learning about business.
- Career readiness and leadership sessions on such topics as interviewing and employment skills, business communication and professional image. Students also participate in campus tours and job shadow days.
- Health education through a collaborative partnership with Florida International University and other local partners who provide supportive counseling, psycho-educational groups and health promotion workshops.
- Visual and performing arts with a host of partners to engage students in school.

According to an independent evaluation report*, Bridges to Graduation exceeded nearly all of its pre-established participant goals during the 2007-2008 school year. Of the 530 students served, 98 percent remained in school, 95 percent increased their knowledge of work skills and 69 percent of students improved their academic performance (GPA) during the year. The report went on to say “This is a remarkable accomplishment, given the sheer quantity and extensive variety of the services, sites and partners. Dedicated staff, long-term volunteers and consistent oversight all contributed to the…success.” The report also emphasized that Bridges to Graduation “appears to foster strong relationships between at-risk youths and caring adults, an integral precept in CIS’ philosophy.”

It’s a winning formula that CIS has been using for three decades. And it works equally well in mainstream public schools or specialized, non-traditional learning environments.

* Annual Evaluation Report (June 1, 2007 – June 1, 2008), The Thurston Group, Inc. The Thurston Group is a research and consulting firm that is a leading provider of professional and technical services to organizations involved in human services programs. Since its founding in 1986, The Thurston Group has been involved in developing and evaluating social service organizations and programs at local, state and national levels.
Mecca McMillian has a smile that can light up a room. She is a 17-year-old student at the Newark Workforce Development Institute, a Communities In Schools of New Jersey Performance Learning Center® (PLC). Mecca has every reason to smile – she is engaged in school, involved in a number of activities and on track to graduate in June 2009 with a bright future ahead of her. She enjoys reading, writing, attending church and anything related to the fashion industry, especially modeling.

“I know I’ll be great at whatever I do after graduation, even though I’m not sure what it is yet,” she declared with a laugh. She plans to attend college and pursue a degree in business administration, figuring it will help her no matter what type of career she eventually decides upon.

Because she is confident, poised and outspoken, one might never guess that Mecca was once a high school dropout. Like so many other young people CIS serves, Mecca could have been just another statistic. At 16, she dropped out of West Side High School in Newark from boredom, frustration and a lack of focus.

Daphne McMillian, though not pleased with her daughter’s decision, understands why Mecca left her inner-city school. “Mecca is a go-getter and a leader, but lacked the opportunities to excel at West Side,” Daphne said. Mecca became disillusioned with the chaos at her school, had conflicts with teachers and other students, and sometimes made poor choices.

Daphne, a single mom who also has a 19-year-old son enlisted in the Navy, took a leave of absence for several months so she could help Mecca find her way back. When Mecca was referred through the school system to the Newark Workforce Development Institute, a CIS of New Jersey school, she and her mom attended an orientation session. Shortly afterwards, Mecca enrolled at the school and started attending classes in the fall of 2008 when its doors first opened.

LaKeisha Brooks, state PLC executive director, and Andre Taylor, PLC services coordinator for CIS of New Jersey, both work with Mecca on a regular basis. Taylor described Mecca as “being a part of almost everything going on at the school.” Brooks said that Mecca is really coming into her own and is a respectful young lady who not only carries herself well, but carries a message of hope and encouragement to her peers who may also be struggling in school. “Since being here, Mecca has stepped up as a leader without hesitation,” Brooks noted. Mecca has become somewhat of a “rock star” ambassador, sharing the stage with nationally known stay-in-school advocates at public events in New Jersey.

As a PLC student, Mecca receives a great deal of academic and non-academic support, such as tutoring in needed subject areas. Taylor was instrumental in helping Mecca obtain a Johnson & Johnson internship, which helps motivate students and provides them with business skills and professional development through hands-on experience. Mecca also meets with a CIS of New Jersey social worker on a regular basis to help her work through personal issues and stay focused. Additionally, Mecca participates in group and one-on-one mentoring.

Mecca admits to having a lot of the same challenges as anyone else her age. “Communities In Schools helps me overall, not just in school,” she said. Daphne McMillian is also grateful that they found the CIS Performance Learning Center because it gives her daughter the environment in which to shine. And reflecting on Mecca’s statement about being destined for great things, she echoes those sentiments. “I believe that Mecca can accomplish anything she wants to in life, as long as she sticks with it. Mecca is Mecca. She is strong-willed, but I wouldn’t have it any other way. I raised her and her brother to be heard, to have a voice. Mecca has had to deal with all of the usual teen growing pains – peer pressure, friendships, making the right choices. My job is to prepare her for adulthood, and she’s getting there. She’s beautiful inside and outside.”
Because she is confident, poised and outspoken, one might never guess that Mecca was once a high school dropout. Like so many other young people CIS serves, Mecca could have been just another statistic.

With the support of her mom and CIS of New Jersey’s Newark Workforce Development Institute PLC, Mecca McMillian is back in school and focused on helping others.
Despite turbulence in the nation’s economy, Communities In Schools saw a year of measured, steady financial outcomes during fiscal year 2008. CIS attracted new donors on the corporate side, and maintained existing relationships with several foundations, corporations, government agencies and individuals. The CIS national office generated $10.7 million in revenue plus nearly $5.4 million of in-kind media donations. Its revenues, without regard to the in-kind donations, exceeded its budget by $2.7 million.

Sustained financial performance, coupled with a clear focus on the organization’s strategic drivers, have created a number of opportunities. The CIS national office continues to produce results that have established its strong reputation among supporters in the corporate and foundation communities, as well as with individual donors. As a result, the national office is poised to support its network in serving greater numbers of students and to make a measurable impact on the nation’s dropout rate.

The CIS national office continues to produce results that have established its strong reputation among supporters in the corporate and foundation communities, as well as with individual donors.

**SUPPORT AND REVENUE**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Contributions</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Foundations*</td>
<td>$5,207,531</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corporations**</td>
<td>6,670,663</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individuals/Family Foundations</td>
<td>1,245,340</td>
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<tr>
<td>Grants – Governmental Agencies</td>
<td>2,328,773</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other Revenue</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Investment Income</td>
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</table>

**Total Support and Revenue**                      **16,098,105**

**EXPENSES**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program Services</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Research, Evaluation and Learning Management</td>
<td>3,449,843</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Awareness and Communications**</td>
<td>7,103,753</td>
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<tr>
<td>Network Operations</td>
<td>5,061,766</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CIS “Movement”</td>
<td>430,748</td>
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</table>

**Total Program Services**                         **16,046,110**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Supporting Services</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>General and Administrative</td>
<td>325,537</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fundraising</td>
<td>1,280,229</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Total Supporting Services**                      **1,605,766**

**Total Expenses**                                 **17,651,876**

**CHANGE IN NET ASSETS**                           **(1,553,771)**

| Net Assets, beginning of year                   | 11,462,862|
| Net Assets, end of year                         | **$9,909,091** |


* Does not include family foundations.

** Includes media donations from CIS’ 10 key media markets with a cash value of $5.4 million.
Communities In Schools, Inc.
Statement of Financial Position
Year ended September 30, 2008

ASSETS
Cash and cash equivalents .................... $4,986,213
Cash held for restricted purposes ........... 95,135
Investments .................................... 327,370
Pledges receivable, net ........................ 5,241,315
Government grants receivable ................. 78,377
Other assets .................................. 16,899
Furniture and equipment, net ................. 40,235
Total assets .................................. $10,785,544

LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS
Liabilities:
Accounts payable and accrued liabilities .... $806,796
Deferred rent .................................. 54,347
Capital lease obligation ....................... 15,310
Total liabilities ............................... $876,453

Net assets:
Unrestricted .................................. 985,869
Temporarily restricted ......................... 8,923,222
Total net assets ................................ 9,909,091

Total liabilities and net assets ............... $10,785,544
Communities In Schools is actively committed to measurement, learning and accountability, and has invested significant resources in both internal and external initiatives to support this work. The national office collects annual reports from all CIS affiliates and state offices to track the reach and penetration of the CIS Model nationwide. Based on this self-reported data from CIS affiliates across the country, 80 to 90 percent of students tracked by affiliates show improvement in graduation and retention rates, academic achievement, promotion to the next grade level, attendance and behavior.

Building upon this body of data, the national office embarked on a rigorous, third-party evaluation to provide conclusive evidence that CIS is having an impact on public education (see story on page 2):

For Communities...
- 194 local affiliates in 27 states served more than 3,250 education sites.
- Nearly 2.3 million students had access to services through CIS, and nearly 1.2 million students received direct services.
- Approximately 53,000 volunteers (including board members) contributed more than three million hours of their time.
- The average cost per student was $180.

For Young People...
- 78 percent of students tracked for poor attendance improved their attendance.
- 89 percent of students tracked for behavior problems had fewer behavior incidents.
- 78 percent of students tracked for suspensions had fewer suspensions.
- 80 percent of students tracked for academics showed improvement in academic achievement.
- 82 percent of all tracked CIS students were promoted to the next grade.
- 78 percent of tracked eligible seniors graduated from high school.
- 97 percent of tracked students remained in school.

Data excerpted from the 2006-2007 Results from the CIS Network.
Nearly 2.3 million students had access to services through CIS and nearly 1.2 million students received direct services.
Communities In Schools is able to do its work at the ground level by creating public awareness, and engaging partners and supporters at the national level. We would like to salute some of our partnerships that have helped us meet new opportunities and challenges, including long-range sustainability of the organization.

Pictured with Elaine Wynn, CIS national board chairman, is Nicole Gallant, programme executive with The Atlantic Philanthropies. Ms. Gallant attended the CIS board of directors reception and dinner in New York in September. In June 2008, The Atlantic Philanthropies awarded CIS a substantial grant to complete the final two years of its national evaluation, which will include student-level randomized control trials with three Communities In Schools affiliates. The national evaluation quantifies how CIS addresses and impacts the dropout epidemic.

In September 2008, Wal-Mart Foundation awarded the CIS national office a multi-million dollar grant for its successful Performance Learning Center (PLC) initiative. The grant will provide staffing and program support for PLCs such as the Newark Workforce Development Institute in New Jersey.
Carolyn Berkowitz, vice president of community affairs at Capital One and president, Capital One Foundation, participated in a Corporate Funders leadership panel during the CIS National Conference. Capital One was the underwriter of the network-wide CIS conference held in Atlanta near the beginning of fiscal year 2008.

In January 2008, Communities In Schools board chairman Elaine Wynn and her husband Steve, who oversees Wynn Resorts, announced plans to make an inaugural gift of at least $25 million toward the CIS endowment fund. The endowment is intended to create a stream of unrestricted income for national office operations and is part of a larger strategy to generate ongoing investments in the CIS network.

(l-r) Bradbury H. Anderson, vice chairman and CEO of Best Buy, and Paula Prahl, senior vice president of communications, public affairs and corporate responsibility, Best Buy, chatted with Bill Milliken, CIS founder and vice chairman, at the Best Buy Foundation’s reception during the Democratic National Convention. CIS national office representatives attended the Best Buy Foundation receptions held in conjunction with both the Democratic and Republican conventions. The receptions highlighted Best Buy Foundation’s corporate philanthropy, and CIS was one of the invited organizations based on its mission and work with young people. The Last Dropout: Stop the Epidemic!, Milliken’s latest book, was included in the gift bags provided for attendees.
Communities In Schools gratefully acknowledges the individuals, corporations and foundations whose support, both financial and programmatic, was invaluable during fiscal year 2008.

**Contributors**

**GIFTS OF $100,000 OR MORE**

**Individuals and Family Foundations**
Anne Cox Chambers
George H. Johnson
James W. and Kathleen M. Youngren

**Corporations and Foundations**
The Atlantic Philanthropies
The Bank of America Charitable Foundation, Inc.
Cox Communications, Inc.
ICAP ICAP
National Mentoring Partnership
The Nicholson Foundation
Philip Morris USA, Inc.
Wal-Mart Foundation

**Federal Government**
Corporation for National and Community Service
Department of Justice, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention

**GIFTS OF $50,000 TO $99,999**

**Individuals and Family Foundations**
The Herb Alpert Foundation
Robert H.B. and Dorothy T. Baldwin
The Moss Foundation
Jason G. and Donna E. Weiss

**Corporations and Foundations**
Discovery en Español

**GIFTS OF $25,000 TO $49,999**

**Individuals and Family Foundations**
Allwin Family Foundation
The Stephen Case Foundation
The Drexler Family Foundation
John and Ann Gardner
Geraldine R. Dodge Foundation (Robert H.B. Baldwin)
Moldaw Family Support Foundation 2 of the Jewish Community Endowment Fund

**Corporations and Foundations**
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Integrated Marketing Services

**GIFTS OF $10,000 TO $24,999**

**Individuals and Family Foundations**
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Jean Cox
Leslie Fielden
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Lance Freed
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The Annie E. Casey Foundation
Creative Artists Agency
eBay
Green Stamp America Inc.
The Hodson Trust
Holland & Knight LLP
ICF International
Majestic Realty Foundation (Mark Percy)
MetalMark Management LLC
The Oliver Group LLC
The Opus Foundation
Travel Industry Association

This list reflects contributions received through September 30, 2008. Because it would be impossible to list all those who have contributed in various ways to Communities In Schools, this list is limited to those who have contributed funds of $1,000 or greater. Every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of the list; we apologize to any of our friends we may have overlooked.
National Leadership Council

The National Leadership Council is a select group of prominent Americans who endorse the vision and goals of Communities In Schools; who make an annual donation to the CIS national office; who are willing to help open doors to other sources of support; and who at times are asked to offer their guidance and counsel.

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Steffi Graf
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Rockpoint Group, LLC

Honorable Mark Warner

Jason Weiss

Chairman and CEO
Wynn Resorts

James W. Youngren
Chairman, Board of Directors

Long Live the Kings
CIS State Offices and Local Affiliates†

▲ ALASKA (5)
CIS of Alaska (Anchorage)
CIS of Anchorage
CIS of Bethel
CIS of Juneau
CIS of Mat-Su
CIS of Nome

▲ ARIZONA (2)
CIS of Arizona* (Phoenix)
CIS of Tempe

CALIFORNIA (3)
CIS of the San Fernando Valley and Greater Los Angeles
CIS of Los Angeles West
CIS of San Francisco 49er Academy

▲ DELAWARE (1)
CIS of Delaware (Dover)

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA (1)
CIS of the Nation’s Capital

▲ FLORIDA (13)
CIS of Florida (Tallahassee)
CIS of Broward County*
CIS of Bradford County
CIS of Gadsden County
CIS of Hillsborough County*
CIS of Jacksonville*
CIS of Leon County*
CIS of Miami*
CIS of Nassau County*
CIS of Okeechobee County*
CIS of Palm Beach County*
CIS of Northwest Florida
CIS of Putnam County
CIS of St. Johns County*

▲ GEORGIA (51)
CIS of Georgia (Atlanta)*
CIS of Albany/Dougherty County*
CIS of Appling County*
CIS of Athens/Clarke County
CIS of Atlanta*
CIS of Augusta/Richmond County*
CIS of Barrow County*
CIS of Baldwin County
CIS of Ben Hill County*
CIS of Burke County*
CIS of Bulloch County*
CIS of Candler County*
CIS of Cherokee County*
CIS of Cochran/Bleckley County
CIS of Colquitt County*
CIS of Cook County
CIS of Coweta County*
CIS of Crisp/Dooly Counties
CIS of Decatur County
CIS of Dodge County
CIS of Douglas County*
CIS of Effingham County*
CIS of Elbert County*
CIS of Emanuel County*
CIS of Fitzgerald/Ben Hill County*
CIS of Glascock County
CIS of Glynn County*
CIS of Hancock County*
CIS of Harris County*
CIS of Hart County
CIS of Houston County
CIS of Jefferson County*
CIS of Jenkins County*
CIS of Laurens County*
CIS of Macon/Bibbs County
CIS of Marietta City/Cobb County
CIS of McDuffie County*
CIS of Miller County
CIS of North Georgia*
CIS of Rome/Floyd County*
CIS of Savannah/Chatham County
CIS of Screven County
CIS of Stephens County
CIS of Sumter County
CIS of Troup County*
CIS of Turner County
CIS of Twiggs County
CIS of Valdosta/Lowndes County
CIS of Walton County
CIS of Warren County*
CIS of Washington County*
CIS of Wilkes County

ILLINOIS (2)
CIS of Chicago
CIS of Aurora

INDIANA (3)
CIS of Clark County
CIS of East Chicago
CIS of Wayne County

IOWA (11)
CIS of Cedar Valley

▲ KANSAS (7)
CIS of Kansas* (Lawrence)
CIS of Grant County*
CIS of Harvey County Partnership
CIS of KCK/Wyandotte County*
CIS of Marion County
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CIS of New Orleans

▲ MICHIGAN (7)
CIS of Michigan (Holland)
CIS of Detroit*
CIS of Kalamazoo
CIS of Lenawee*
CIS of Mancelona
CIS of Ottawa
CIS of Saginaw County’s Promise*
CIS of Tecumseh Area*

MISSISSIPPI (2)
CIS of Greenwood Leflore*
CIS of Jackson

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CIS of New Jersey (Newark)
CIS of Cumberland County
CIS of Newark*
CIS of Passaic*
CIS of Union County

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CIS of New York

▲ NEVADA (2)
CIS of Nevada (Las Vegas)
CIS of Northeast Nevada*

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CIS of North Carolina* (Raleigh)
CIS of Asheville*
CIS of Brunswick County*
CIS of Cabarrus County*
CIS of Caldwell County*
CIS of Cape Fear*
CIS of Carteret County
CIS of Charlotte-Mecklenburg*
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CIS of Cleveland County*
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CIS of Gaston County
CIS of Granville County*
CIS of Greater Greensboro*
CIS of High Point*
CIS of Lee County
CIS of Lexington*
CIS of Lincoln County*
CIS of Madison County*
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CIS of Mitchell County
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CIS of Randolph County
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CIS of Rutherford County
CIS of Swain County
CIS of Thomasville*
CIS of Transylvania County*
CIS of Wake County
CIS of Wayne County*
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CIS of Columbus*

▲ OKLAHOMA (1)
CIS of Ardmore

OREGON (1)
CIS of the North Coast

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CIS of Laurel Highlands*
CIS of Lehigh Valley*
CIS of Philadelphia*
CIS of Pittsburgh-Allegheny County*

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CIS of South Carolina* (Columbia)
CIS of Barnwell County
CIS of Charleston
CIS of Cherokee County*
CIS of Chester*
CIS of Clarendon County
CIS of Dillon County*
CIS of Dorchester County
CIS of Greenville*
CIS of Kershaw County*
CIS of Lancaster County*
CIS of Lee County*
CIS of The Midlands*
CIS of Saluda County

▲ TEXAS (23)
CIS of Texas (Austin)
CIS of Bay Area*
CIS of Baytown*
CIS of Bell-Coryell Counties*
CIS of the Big Country
CIS of Brazoria County*
CIS of Cameron County*
CIS of Central Texas*
CIS of Corpus Christi*
CIS of Dallas Region*
CIS of East Texas*
CIS of El Paso*
CIS of the Golden Crescent*

CIS of Randolph County
CIS of Robeson County*
CIS of Rockingham County
CIS of Rocky Mount Region*
CIS of Rowan County*
CIS of Rutherford County
CIS of Swain County
CIS of Thomasville*
CIS of Transylvania County*
CIS of Wake County
CIS of Wayne County*
CIS of Whiteville*
CIS of Wilkes County*

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CIS of Virginia (Richmond)
CIS of Chesterfield*
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CIS of Portsmouth*
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CIS of Washington* (Seattle)
CIS of Auburn
CIS of Federal Way
CIS of Kent
CIS of Lakewood*
CIS of Orting
CIS of Peninsula*
CIS of Puyallup
CIS of Renton*
CIS of Seattle
CIS of Spokane*
CIS of Tacoma
CIS of Whatcom*

WEST VIRGINIA (2)
CIS of Cabell County
CIS of Greenbrier County

† Visit www.cisnet.org for a complete listing of state office and affiliate office addresses and contact information.

▲ CIS state office also located here.
* Chartered CIS local affiliate. Chartered affiliates have demonstrated the highest standards of affiliate management and accomplishment.
♦ Developing affiliates are newly formed CIS organizations implementing the standards to become designated as fully operational affiliates.
( ) Number of local affiliates; does not include state office.
A Message from the Founder

From the historic presidential election to the economic challenges facing so many Americans, 2008 was a year of remarkable changes.

Where does Communities In Schools fit into this? The answer is education. Education is the engine that drives a successful society: it bolsters the economy, empowers people to pursue their dreams, helps lift our citizens out of poverty and makes the world a more tolerant place. Access to quality education is one of the great justice issues of our time — one of the major dividers between those who have and those who have not.

Unfortunately, for millions of children in this country, academic achievement is not a priority, there are no caring adults, neighborhoods are dangerous, jobs are scarce and services are fragmented. Students are hemorrhaging out of our public schools in such places.

One thing is for certain: placing a bandage on the wound is no more than a temporary fix.

CIS works with educators and policy makers to address the underlying factors contributing to the dropout epidemic. Our approach not only stops the bleeding, but brings health back to an ailing education system that “structures out” millions of students. All young people are capable of learning, but too many of them arrive at the school door lacking the basics that most of us take for granted — positive role models, a safe place to be, medical care and even the expectation that they will finish high school and continue on to college.

Communities In Schools is creating a shift in how we move toward a nation without dropouts, by making a quantum leap from charity to change. We do this by calling upon lawmakers not simply to throw dollars at one deserving agency or another, but to invest in and reward collaborative efforts that bring about genuine institutional change.

In its 30-year history, CIS has become the largest dropout prevention network in America. CIS created and has honed the concept of integrating and coordinating the services students need. This model takes into account barriers to learning and levels the playing field so that all students can get the education they deserve.

This past year, I spent a lot of time traveling around the country and promoting our book, The Last Dropout: Stop the Epidemic!. I went into all types of communities — large and small, urban and rural, affluent and working class. And, I kept finding a few things over and over. First, I was energized by the number of people who care deeply about this issue of dropping out. It cut across class, race, income and geographic groups. Then, I was amazed at how many people really believe this is something we can fix. Of course, I believe that, too. If I didn’t, I wouldn’t have dedicated my life to this work.

The next step is to galvanize that passion and hope, and turn it into action. And, we need your help to do that.

We need your continued support as we take our case to policy makers on Capitol Hill. In some states where CIS has a strong presence, such as Texas, a paradigm shift in the education system is already occurring; state budgets now include funding for the model of integrated student services. They know it’s effective. Most importantly, so do the students we are privileged to serve each year — unlikely success stories who, with the help of CIS, have gone on to graduate, having successfully built a foundation for a productive life.

Bill Milliken
CIS Founder and Vice Chairman
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All of the young people pictured in this publication are students served by Communities In Schools.

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