

A quarterly newsletter of Communities In Schools, the nation's leading dropout prevention organization

Contents

VOLUME 7 • NUMBER 8 • SEPTEMBER 2011

- 2** President's Message

- 3** Certification Program Creates Fast Track to Excellence for Site Coordinators

Communities In Schools Creates Buzz with New Blog

- 4** Catching Up with Rasheedah Phillips

- 5** Q&A with Lenny Stern

- 6** Communities In Schools Alum Recognized as Jefferson Award GlobeChanger

Now Open: Online Store

- 7** Spotlight on Success

- 8** Accreditation Update

Procter & Gamble Provides the “Goods” to Help Students Succeed

This past summer, Procter & Gamble (P&G) partnered with Communities In Schools and Grammy® Award-winning musician John Legend on a campaign to help bring awareness and solutions to the dropout crisis in America. As part of its philanthropic program called P&G GIVE Education, the global consumer packaged goods company helped raise money to deliver resources to students and their families, and encouraged others to join in the cause by taking simple, everyday actions.

“We’re excited to join forces with Communities In Schools to support the incredibly important work they do in empowering students to live, learn and thrive,” said Kerri Christian, brand manager, P&G. “We know that education is critical to reaching one’s full potential in life, and we’re committed to helping Communities In Schools make success a reality in the lives of millions of students.”

The P&G GIVE Education campaign included several key components. The centerpiece of the partnership was a fundraising effort that the general public supported through the redemption of P&G brandSAVER® coupons. A special “School the Nation” brandSAVER® coupon booklet was distributed in newspapers to more than 56 million homes across the country in July, with discounts for P&G products and featured content on Communities In Schools. For each coupon redeemed, P&G committed to donate two cents to Communities In Schools.

The partnership kicked off with a major media event in New York City featuring Grammy® Award-winning recording artist and humanitarian, John Legend, who filmed a video with Communities In Schools students, teachers, site coordinators, volunteers and school administrators. The national television spot made its broadcast debut on July 19, and a special Facebook video launched online on the same day. For each view of the Facebook page video, P&G donated 25 cents to Communities In Schools.

“I had a great day in NYC yesterday launching P&G’s GIVE Education program to help keep more than 1 million kids in school,” the musician posted on his Facebook page on July 20. Legend appeared on several television shows, including *ABC News*, *Fox & Friends* and the *Gayle King Show*, spreading the message about Communities In Schools, and what Americans can do to support youth to succeed in school and achieve in life.

To maximize the impact of the campaign, P&G’s public relations firm conducted national public relations efforts and targeted outreach in seven markets with a large Communities In Schools presence: Atlanta, Charlotte, Los Angeles, Miami, New York, Philadelphia and San Antonio. Finally, P&G capped off the campaign by making product donations valued at \$500,000 that went toward back-to-school supply drives for students in need. ■

Grammy® Award-winning musician John Legend met with Communities In Schools of Newark students to kick off his partnership with the P&G GIVE Education campaign. (l-r) Desiree Joyner, Dariel Veras, Kassandra Ortiz, Deangelo Armwood and Mariha Sweeney.

Photo by Diane Bondareff/AP Images for P&G



President's Message

What We Did on Our Summer Vacation



Dan Cardinali, president, Communities In Schools

Photo by William Waybourn

Evidence and outcomes.

Those are two of the hot buzzwords in the education policy debate today, and they get thrown around a great deal. As budgets at the local, state and federal level get even tighter, policy makers are looking for programs that are evidence-based and produce measurable outcomes.

At Communities In Schools, evidence and outcomes are fundamental to our work.

Over the summer, when our dedicated front-line staff could have been at the beach or in the mountains enjoying some time off, instead they were hard at work, using evidence to improve the way they deliver services so that we can produce even better outcomes for young people.

Our five-year national evaluation, which wrapped up in March, is re-shaping the way we serve young people, ensuring that we're focusing our efforts on the programs that are most effective. This summer, site coordinators came together in a series of "boot camps" to kick off their path toward certification – a rigorous process of in-person and online learning drawn directly from the lessons of the national evaluation.

The national evaluation and the boot camps are just part of a comprehensive culture of using evidence to focus our services and drive outcomes. Another example of that culture was the extensive summer learning programs that many affiliates conducted. Studies have demonstrated that learning losses during the summer are particularly serious for the young people we serve. So despite tight budgets and tired staff members, our affiliates studied the evidence, understood the need and stepped up to provide services throughout the summer – all in an effort to produce better outcomes for the young people we serve.

All that hard work pays off, and this issue of *Inside CIS* offers two examples. The next time you hear the word "outcomes," I hope you'll think about Rasheedah Phillips. She came to Communities In Schools of Philadelphia as a pregnant teenager at risk of dropping out. Today, she's not only a high school graduate, not only a college graduate, but a law school graduate – and she is using her passion and legal training to serve her community of Philadelphia. She's a proud mother, an accomplished lawyer and a Communities In Schools alumnus.

Mordecai Scott is another Communities In Schools alum who today is working at our national office to create a nationwide network of alumni who can support each other, and provide service and leadership in their own communities. His efforts are drawing national attention, and he was recently recognized by the prestigious Jefferson Awards as a GlobeChanger.

At Communities In Schools, we rely on evidence to drive outcomes. Much of the evidence is data, and we use elaborate systems to track and measure our outcomes.

But the best measurement of our outcomes are young people like Rasheedah, Mordecai and tens of thousands of others. That's why we work summers, nights and weekends. ■

Certification Program Creates Fast Track to Excellence for Site Coordinators

Cruz Ramos has been a site coordinator at Communities In Schools of Cameron County in Brownsville, Texas, for the past 16 years. She said she had been ready to retire this November. That was until she attended a site coordinator boot camp in Austin in June.

“This training has helped me refocus on why I love working for Communities In Schools,” said Ramos, who was one of nearly 200 site coordinators to participate in boot camps that took place in Texas, Kansas, Georgia and South Carolina this summer, launching the second participation phase of the 12-month Site Coordinator Certification Program.

During the two-day boot camps, site coordinators alternated between live trainings and online courses led by the Communities In Schools national office training staff. By the end of each session, site coordinators were halfway to graduating from the program, completing at least five of the 12 required courses.

The first of its kind, the certification program is designed to provide site coordinators and the network with a standard set of best practices, and help them increase their effectiveness and adhere to the Communities In Schools model with the highest degree of fidelity.

Communities In Schools state offices nominate site coordinators to enroll in the certification program. Not only is it an opportunity for site coordinators to participate in the highest level of staff development offered by Communities In Schools, but it’s also a chance for them to be recognized for their work.

“We know that the closer we follow the Communities In Schools model, the more students served by Communities In Schools will meet their goals and achieve their dreams,” said Gary Chapman, executive vice president of the national network.

“This certification program allows us to provide our site coordinators with the opportunity to impact their students more profoundly.”



Communities In Schools site coordinators gathered in Austin and other locations over the summer for “boot camp” training that will amplify their impact with students.

Photo by Patti Aldaz-Carrasco

Site coordinators play a pivotal role at Communities In Schools by working inside partner schools and with school staff to identify students at risk of not graduating. By assessing school and student needs and establishing relationships with local businesses, social service agencies, health care providers and other organizations, site coordinators can harness needed resources and implement integrated student services.

With those core functions in mind, the site coordinator certification program includes courses on how to most effectively lead school needs assessments; develop and implement site plans; coordinate student services; and collect, evaluate and report data.

“As a site coordinator, being certified with this program’s knowledge will empower us to speak with any board member or administrator in our district who might want to know about Communities In Schools,” said Ramos. “We can let them know not just what we do, but how the organization is run nationally and its outcomes.”

To date, 430 site coordinators have enrolled in the certification program. The next phase launches in September. ■

Communities In Schools Creates Buzz with New Blog



Communities
In Schools

Beyond the Classroom

The Official Blog of the National Office

The Communities In Schools national office recently launched “Beyond the Classroom,” a blog dedicated to promoting the organization’s point of view and foster discussion on topics such as education reform, mentoring and what we can all do to better the lives of children across America. It’s updated regularly and features amazing stories written by staff, mentors, volunteers and even students.

You can read the latest “Beyond the Classroom” post and comments at www.communitiesinschools.org/blog.

Have a question about “Beyond the Classroom?” Want to contribute? Contact Briana Kerensky, online communications specialist, at kerenskyb@cisnet.org. ■

Catching Up With Rasheedah Phillips

Communities In Schools of Philadelphia Alum Living Her Dream



Communities In Schools alum Rasheedah Phillips inspires others to pursue an education and their dreams.

Photo by Martin Regusters/Leaping Lion Photography

By 9:00 most mornings, Rasheedah Phillips is already at her office and deep into her daily juggling routine. The staff attorney for Community Legal Services in Philadelphia has a to-do list that could wrap around the Liberty Bell. Luckily, Phillips handles multitasking like an artist handles colors. Her experience as a teen mom finessed her command of time management. For years, she's had to manage attending classes and studying, while working part-time jobs and squeezing in time with her daughter.

But 12 years ago, before representing small businesses and helping homeowners who are dealing with foreclosures, Phillips was a pregnant and confused teen on the verge of dropping out of high school. It was then she found support from a program for teen parents administered by Communities In Schools of Philadelphia. In keeping with the mission of Communities In Schools to surround students with a community of support, site coordinators reached out to Phillips to make sure she had access to needed support and resources. In addition to providing her with adequate basic services, such as health screenings and counseling, they made sure she had access to targeted services, those designed for students with specific needs. Phillips was connected to a program called Education Leading to Employment and Career Training (ELECT). She credits the program and Communities In Schools for keeping her in school, helping her graduate and putting her on track to pursue her dream of becoming a lawyer.

"ELECT was like a sanctuary," said Phillips, 27. "I was a confused teenager with all the problems that teenagers have, plus being pregnant on top of that. With ELECT and Communities In Schools, I had counselors I could talk to and a place where I could eat healthy food. And I didn't feel so isolated."

The Communities In Schools administered program, a partnership between the Pennsylvania Department of Welfare and Department of Education, launched in 1992 to bring outside services and resources inside schools for students, so they can stay focused on schoolwork and attendance, and be encouraged to receive their high school diplomas. Mother and baby wellness classes, career and job-readiness training, and access to childcare and transportation are some of what's offered at a number of high schools within the school district of Philadelphia.

"The service is definitely an integral component for student achievement," said Marcus Godfrey, assistant director of ELECT at Communities In Schools of Philadelphia. "Our goal is to help meet their academic and social service needs. And we

do that by providing easy access to support and building a rapport between staff and students."

Even as a 14-year-old pregnant teen, Phillips saw a future with limited career choices.

"It was a difficult time," she said. "I was depressed, discouraged. For a while I thought this was the life that I was going to have." But she did want a better future for herself and her daughter. "Something snapped, and it got me back to being the student I had been, the one who studied and got good grades." A year after missing most of the ninth grade, Phillips was enrolled in a new high school, and with the help of ELECT counselors, recommitted to her education.

"The Communities In Schools counselors were very instrumental in helping me," she said. "They recognized my abilities and encouraged me – they didn't let me quit."

Phillips got her high school diploma and, armed with scholarships, enrolled at Temple University. But the hard part was not over yet. Taking 18 credits a semester and attending summer school, Phillips had to arrange her schedule to fit in studying and mommy time with Lyonna, now 12. She confesses to more than once thinking about wanting to give up. But she thought about her daughter, about breaking the cycle of teen pregnancy in her family and about the stability a career as a lawyer represented – and pushed on. Phillips completed her college studies and graduated with summa cum laude honors in only three years. Then it was on to Temple's Beasley School of Law to complete the last step in fulfilling her goal of having a professional legal career.

Phillips is the first in her immediate family to graduate from college, and has inspired her younger brother, who is also on the path to higher education.

"I always tell young parents to use their circumstances as inspiration, as an excuse to do better," said Phillips. "Yes, you have to work hard, and you have to find a support network. I know that I'm doing a good job. I'm as capable as my colleagues. Don't internalize the negative messages that you hear. You can't allow that to hold you back."

Phillips, who is a member of the recently launched Communities In Schools Alumni Network, has also added community service to her list, making time to give back by speaking to teens and teen parents, offering advice and an encouraging ear, and sharing her inspiring story. Her experience is one example of how Communities In Schools can mean the difference between failure and success in the life of a young person. ■

Q&A With Lenny Stern, National Board Member



Communities In Schools Board Member Lenny Stern

Photo by John Huba

Lenny Stern is one of four founding partners of strategic communications firm SS+K, a creative agency specializing in social engagement. With more than 20 years of business experience, he works to create across-the-board communications solutions, advising clients through times of dramatic change, and developing strategies to inject brands into American pop culture. His clients have included Delta Air Lines, Citibank, Coca-Cola, Harley-Davidson, Obama for America media team, Allstate, GM, Honest Tea, Time Warner and the Lance Armstrong Foundation. In addition to his SS+K responsibilities, Lenny jointly developed CAA Marketing with Creative Artists Agency (CAA), a part owner of SS+K.

A member of Communities In Schools' national board of directors since 2000, he is chairman of the Branding and Marketing Committee, and used his skills and experience to help revisit and relaunch the Communities In Schools brand with the One Voice campaign in 2010. Recently, we had a conversation with the busy executive.

Inside CIS: When and why did you get involved in Communities In Schools?

LS: I learned of Communities In Schools through my business partner at the time, Richard Lovett, from Creative Artists Agency. He wanted me to meet with Bill [Milliken], Ray Chambers and the late Jim Allwin to see how my agency (SS+K) could help the organization. My agency helps bring missions to life for organizations, and Communities In Schools was a "best kept secret" in the education field. While doing the pro bono work

and talking with stakeholders about the inequities in the education system, it tapped my passion. My mom was a social worker in New York City and my dad was a Holocaust survivor who lived with a code of righting wrongs. It was in my blood, and so I joined the board of directors when asked.

Inside CIS: Why do you think Communities In Schools is a "best kept secret"?

LS: Communities In Schools has always been about kids and results – that's inherent in the organization's DNA. More focused on the programs than being forceful talking about the programs. Also, the Communities In Schools model relies so heavily on partnerships that we weren't worried about "taking credit" because we were helping the kids. Finally, our model is highly localized and customized. What works in one city isn't the focus of programs in another town. That all combines to make it a tough story to tell and challenging for people to get their hands around.

Inside CIS: How do you think our new partnership with Procter & Gamble will elevate the profile of Communities In Schools?

LS: Partnerships with world-class companies like P&G lend credibility to organizations like Communities In Schools. Not only are they directly helping kids, they're using their marketing channels to tell our story. It's a more aggressive strategy for Communities In Schools and it's going to allow more kids to be helped as we raise our profile and efficacy.

Inside CIS: From a personal perspective, what are some of your most memorable Communities In Schools experiences?

LS: Years ago, I met a young man from Atlanta and have been fortunate to keep in touch with him. He's visited me in New York and has spoken to my company about the challenges he faced. I'll never forget him saying that just knowing one person cared opened a whole world of opportunity and hope for him. During one of his trips he stayed with me and my family, and he and my oldest daughter stayed up late talking; it opened her eyes to his world and the challenges he faced.

Inside CIS: What do you envision as the future of Communities In Schools?

LS: Communities In Schools will be recognized as one of the pre-eminent organizations that not only helps kids stay in school, but really prepares them for life. We're an innovator in the education field. As a result, millions more kids and their families are going to change not just their lives, but also their own communities. ■

Communities In Schools Alum Recognized as Jefferson Award GlobeChanger



Communities In Schools Alumni Network Specialist Mordecai Scott

Photo by Scott Henrichsen

This past July, Communities In Schools of Charlotte, N.C., alum Mordecai Scott became one of ten Jefferson Award GlobeChanger recipients in recognition of his extraordinary strength in overcoming many obstacles to give back to the community. Known as the “Nobel Prize for Public Service,” the Jefferson Awards are presented each year to honorees recognized for their public service and for reflecting the Jeffersonian ideals of citizen involvement. Outstanding Service by a GlobeChanger is the award category for recipients aged 25 and under.

Growing up in Charlotte, one of eight siblings, Scott moved frequently between shelters and relatives after his parents divorced. His grades

suffered, and by age 12 he was at risk of becoming a dropout. Communities In Schools then got involved, and helped Scott begin thinking that if he applied himself, he could graduate from high school and go to college. He went on to receive a scholarship to and graduate from Davidson College. While at Davidson, Scott was introduced to a small town near Rock Creek, S.C., that had no electricity or running water. To help out, he started a “collect loose change drive” and eventually raised \$2,600 to help the town’s families. That was just the beginning of his commitment to giving back. Communities In Schools was impressed with Scott’s dedication and hired him to work at the national office where he now serves as Alumni Network Specialist, leading an effort to engage the 12 million student alumni who have benefitted from Communities In Schools services.

“I am truly humbled to be placed in the midst of such wonderful individuals who are committed to serving their communities,” said Scott. “I hope that through Communities In Schools I can continue this movement, and live up to the wonderful examples of good citizenship that the Jefferson Award exemplifies.”

Scott now joins Communities In Schools Founder Bill Milliken as a recipient of a Jefferson Award. Milliken’s award in 2009 was in the category of Greatest Public Service Benefiting the Disadvantaged for his 40 years of work helping young people graduate and prepare for life. ■

Now Open: The Communities In Schools Online Store

The Communities In Schools national office is proud and excited to launch the Communities In Schools online store for both affiliates and supporters.

Now you can shop for apparel, merchandise and office supplies, all with the Communities In Schools national or affiliate logos, by visiting the national office’s website or going straight to www.communitiesinschools.org/store.

All of our products, including mugs, T-shirts, bags, notebooks and more, are affordable and of high quality. Proceeds from all online store sales help support our mission to surround students with a community of support, empowering them to stay in school and achieve in life.

The launch of the online store marks the start of a strong partnership with CAM, Inc., one of the nation’s leading promotional products agencies that has worked with other national nonprofits. We are confident in their commitment to excellent service and look forward to our affiliates creating relationships with them too.

For questions or comments about the store, please contact Chris Flynn, director of internal communications, at flynnc@cisnet.org; or Erica Rafferty, network communications specialist, at raffertye@cisnet.org. ■



Spotlight on Success

News Briefs from the Network

Communities In Schools of the Dallas Region celebrated its 25th anniversary in June with a celebration called “Kids Come First.” The gala was held at the Omni Mandalay in Irving, Texas. Last year, Communities In Schools served an estimated 11,500 children in the Dallas area. Founded in 1985, the affiliate now helps more than 60 schools in 10 different school districts.

Communities In Schools of North Texas was awarded \$8 million over the next five years from the Texas Education Agency for the 21st Century Community Learning Center Cycle 7 grant, a program that provides at-risk students with opportunities for learning beyond the normal school day. This grant will allow the affiliate to open 10 new after-school programs to serve students at risk of dropping out in Lewisville and Denton Independent School Districts. The after-school programs will provide academic enrichment to increase student success, as well as support for parents, which will include adult ESL classes, financial literacy training, tax preparation assistance training and Free Application for Financial Student Aid (FAFSA) preparation training from the United Way of Denton County and Wells Fargo Bank. College readiness activities will be provided through the University of North Texas.

Communities In Schools of Auburn, Wash., recently received recognition from the Washington Association of School Administrators (WASA) Metro Region 110 for supporting students of Auburn. The award is presented in May to a community member or group in recognition of contributions to education. Recipients are non-WASA members and are recognized at the regional level based on their benefit to students, leadership, motivation, success, history of service, recognition by others and cooperation/coordination with a local school district.

Communities In Schools of Georgia was one of the grant recipients of The Walmart Foundation’s State Giving Program. In June, the program awarded its first cycle of grants to nine local nonprofit organizations in Georgia who are making a difference in the communities they serve. The funds are given annually in two rounds and used to establish new programs or elevate existing initiatives focused on education, workforce development and economic opportunity, environmental sustainability, health and wellness, and hunger. The grant will help the state office fund the creation of a Leadership Institute, which is designed to provide local executive directors,

school site staff and board members with additional training as they work with kids served by Communities In Schools.

Communities In Schools of Leon County, Fla., was the beneficiary of the Ride Our Future motorcycle race. The fundraiser started and finished at the Veterans of Foreign Wars on U.S. 1 South. Parents, neighbors, business leaders, mentors, tutors and volunteers were all involved.



Motorcyclists rode in a benefit to raise funds for Communities In Schools

Photo courtesy of St. Augustine Record

Communities In Schools of Charlotte-Mecklenburg, N.C., received a major grant through a partnership with Project LIFT. Funding will be used for dropout prevention efforts in eight of the most challenged West Charlotte schools. Project LIFT was created in January 2011 to develop a state-of-the-art model for closing the achievement gap and increasing graduation rates.

Communities In Schools of Pitt County, N.C., hosted their Communities Investing in Students power luncheon in August. The luncheon was the first held by the affiliate that included local businesses, churches and other nonprofit agencies. The goal was to let the community know that they are needed if efforts to reduce the dropout rates are to be successful. This was also a fundraiser to raise monies for the affiliate programs. East Carolina University Head Football Coach Ruffin McNeil was among those attending. Local meteorologist Kweilyn Murphy served as the emcee of the event. The affiliate has been serving the North Carolina area for the past 18 years. ■

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ATTENTION LOCAL AFFILIATES!

Help us tell your story to a national audience. Send story submissions to salamatm@cisnet.org or reavist@cisnet.org. Please include "Inside CIS Story" in subject line.

Accreditation Update

Local Affiliates Meet Quality Standards to Improve Student Outcomes

Five Communities In Schools local affiliates were accredited under the Total Quality System (TQS) this past summer. Communities In Schools launched TQS in 2008, with the goal of promoting uniform quality and improved outcomes for students being served by the organization. TQS establishes a common set of operational and business standards adopted by the Communities In Schools national office. These standards, based on nonprofit best practices, define what it means to be a successful Communities In Schools affiliate serving students.

These affiliates join the more than 40 other Communities In Schools affiliates who have been reviewed and received their accreditation. There are nearly 200 local affiliates in the Communities In Schools network in 25 states and the District of Columbia.

Congratulations to the board of directors, executive leadership and staffs of the following five most recently accredited affiliates. ■

- Communities In Schools of the South Plains (Texas)
- Communities In Schools of Laredo (Texas)
- Communities In Schools of Wilmington (Del.)
- Communities In Schools of Auburn (Wash.)
- Communities In Schools of Fitzgerald/Ben Hill County (Ga.)