

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

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## Teachers Say Communities In Schools Helps Them Enjoy Teaching More

A new survey of teachers shows they believe in the key tenet that Communities In Schools resources and personnel free teachers to do what they do best: teach. A study on teacher satisfaction, conducted by leading research firm ICF International, shows a direct relationship between Communities In Schools' presence in their schools and the teachers' perception of improved teaching effectiveness.

The Teacher Support Study was initiated after findings from the Communities In Schools National Evaluation pointed out a distinct indication across the network that the organization plays a vital role in supporting teachers. That emerging theme was validated through responses from teachers across eight states – Georgia, Florida,

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A recent survey showed that teachers believe they are more effective when supported by Communities In Schools.

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## President Obama Recognizes Communities In Schools as Model Program

President Barack Obama announced to a gathering of national education leaders the steps his administration will take to help reduce the dropout rate. This includes providing \$3.5 billion to improve under-performing schools and \$900 million in school Turnaround Grants. The President made specific mention of Communities In Schools, saying, "...we'll build on the efforts of places like Communities In School that make sure kids who are at risk of dropping out have one-on-one support."

Daniel J. Cardinali, president, Communities In Schools, Inc., was in the audience at the March 1 event sponsored by America's Promise Alliance.

Communities In Schools is part of America's Promise Alliance. Cardinali said he was grateful for the acknowledgment and, inspired by this boost into the national spotlight, said, "We look forward to working with the President and Education Secretary Arne Duncan to meet the President's challenge of achieving excellence in our nation's schools."

Video coverage of the full White House event is available at <http://www.c-spanarchives.org/program/292311-1>, with the President's recognition of Communities In Schools programs shortly after the 27:00 mark. ■

## College Access Website Helps Students Navigate Their Way to a Successful Future

Graduating from high school and preparing for college can be one of the most exciting times in a person's life. But for many students, it is also a milestone that presents challenges – financial

sources for Parents. The Resources for Students section contains information for both middle and high school students and is geared toward their particular needs. Middle school students can begin

to think about planning for college with ThinkCOLLEGE® and Diplomas Now, two initiatives developed in partnership with Communities In Schools and other leading education organizations. High school students can learn about Performance Learning Centers, Communities In Schools' network of non-traditional, college preparatory high schools; apply for a Walmart Foundation Communities In Schools Scholars Program scholarship; and find out about the Communities In Schools Charting for Success curriculum to develop a post-graduation plan of action.

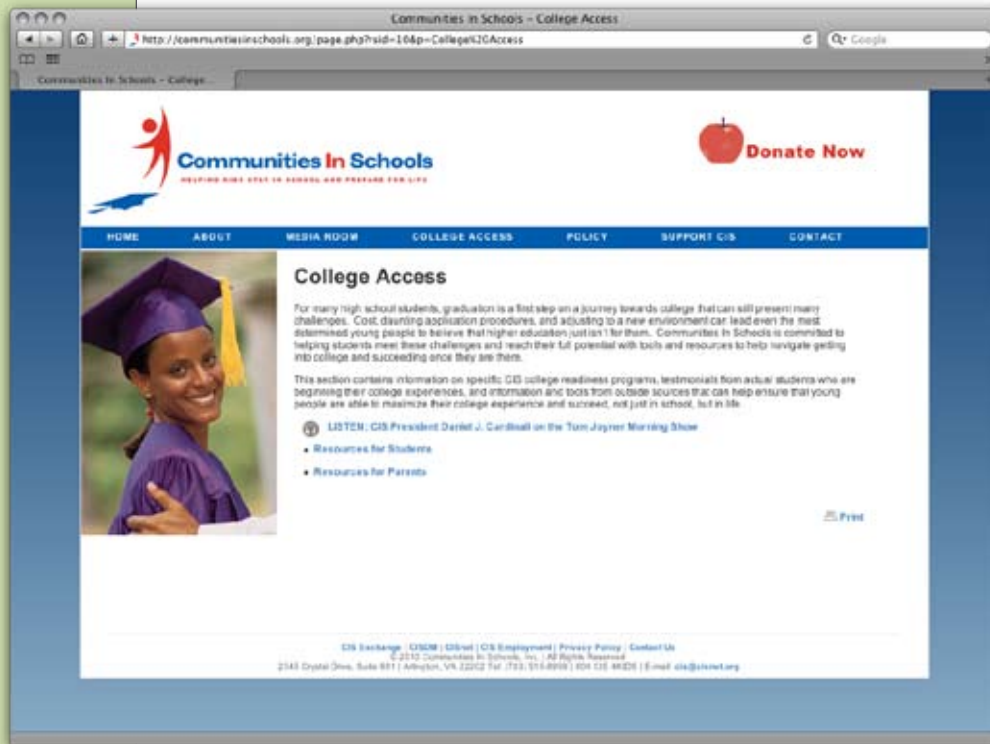
Parents of students often have different questions when thinking about preparing for college. The Resources for Parents section contains links to leading

websites that answer many of those questions. Know How To Go, My College Options, and the Tom Joyner College Fair can help address issues such as financing a college education, determining the best school and curriculum for the student, and filling out applications.

Communities In Schools of Georgia has done significant work in addressing the needs and challenges of students applying to college, and the College Access website also contains a link to its site.

“Our goal is to be a one-stop shop for all our students as they transition to college and beyond. High school graduation is just the beginning of their journey,” said Gary Chapman, vice president, Field Operations.

Students and their parents can visit College Access by logging on to [www.communitiesinschools.org](http://www.communitiesinschools.org) and clicking on the College Access tab. ■



concerns, daunting application procedures and the idea of adjusting to a new environment – all of which can lead even the most determined young person to ask whether it's worth it. To help answer the many questions students and their families have about the road to college, the Communities In Schools national office has developed the College Access website. The website offers resources and information to help students prepare for college and succeed once they get there.

“College Access is another step in our commitment to making sure young people reach their potential in life. This website offers resources to make higher education accessible to students from a wide range of backgrounds,” said Daniel J. Cardinali, president, Communities In Schools, Inc.

The information on College Access is divided into two sections: Resources for Students and Re-

## National Board of Directors, Leadership Council Expand

The Communities In Schools national board of directors is always on the lookout for new members who bring strong leadership and a philanthropic spirit to the organization. **Kevin Huvane** attended his first board meeting in January, also hosting the event at Creative Artists Agency in Los Angeles. Huvane is a partner and managing director of Creative Artists Agency, an entertainment and sports agency based in Los Angeles, with offices around the world. He represents many of the world's leading actors, writers and directors in film, theater and television, and has been called "one of the most influential people in Hollywood" by *Premiere* magazine, *Vanity Fair* and *Entertainment Weekly*.

Also at the January meeting, **Dr. Rudy Crew**, nationally recognized education leader and innovator, was appointed to the board of directors. Dr. Crew is currently the President of Global Partnership Schools. Previously, Dr. Crew served as superintendent of Miami-Dade County Public Schools, where he oversaw the development and implementation of a strategic plan that produced dramatic improvement in student achievement and other measures. He also served as chancellor of the New York City Public Schools, where he oversaw sweeping education reforms. Dr. Crew has held senior leadership positions at the Stupski Foundation and the Institute for K-12 Education, and serves on the faculty of the University of Southern California's Rossier School of Education and the Harvard Graduate School of Education. Dr. Crew is a noted author and lifelong lover of the arts.

A complete list of the Communities In Schools board of directors can be found at [www.communitiesinschools.org/subpage.php?rsid=24&p=About](http://www.communitiesinschools.org/subpage.php?rsid=24&p=About).

The January board meeting also provided an opportunity for national board members, National Leadership Council members, special guests and staff to gather informally. At a reception and dinner the night before the meeting, attendees were inspired by keynote speaker and National Leadership Council member, Andre Agassi. During his remarks, Mr. Agassi shared his perspective on giving back to the community, particularly around what

motivates him to support education initiatives and Communities In Schools. Agassi was first introduced to Communities In Schools by Elaine Wynn, national board chairman.

The National Leadership Council is a select group of prominent Americans who endorse the vision and goals of Communities In Schools. By lending their time, talent, expertise, counsel and financial support to the organization, these individuals open doors that might otherwise remain closed. Along with the board of directors, members of the Leadership Council play a key role in representing Communities In Schools as the nation's leading dropout prevention organization. Communities In Schools expanded its National Leadership Council recently with the addition of five new members. We extend a warm and appreciative welcome to:

**Chris Allwin**  
General Maritime Corporation

**Sally Quinn**  
Co-moderator of "On Faith"  
*The Washington Post*

**Alex Robertson**  
Tiger Foundation

**Chris Schroeder**  
CEO, Health Central

**Nathan Troutman**  
Troutman Investment Management

Additionally, Communities In Schools would also like to pay tribute to National Leadership Council member **Smith Bagley**, who passed away in December. Bagley was a well-known and respected philanthropist and activist. He had been a long-time supporter of Communities In Schools, instrumental in our early years and influential in later years. Through his investment in the organization, he continues to touch many lives. We are most grateful for Mr. Bagley's support and extend our deepest sympathies to his family.

A complete list of National Leadership Council members can be found at [www.communitiesinschools.org/subpage.php?rsid=23&p=About](http://www.communitiesinschools.org/subpage.php?rsid=23&p=About). ■

## A Great Example of What a Young Man Can Be

### A Student Success Story

Given Kevin Beck's serious demeanor, the A's and B's he makes in his classes, and the fact that this 20-year-old college sophomore goes to school while working a full-time job, you wouldn't believe that just a few short years ago, Kevin was a high



Communities In Schools of Arizona helped Kevin Beck get on the path to college and create the kind of life he wanted.

Photo by Kevin Beck

school dropout in Newark, N.J., who had been kicked out of three schools.

What caused this young man to make such a positive U-turn? Family, a new school and Communities In Schools.

Originally from Atlantic City, N.J., Kevin lived in Baltimore with his mom and five younger siblings from the time he was seven until about age

11. "My mom had her hands full with my younger siblings, so I went back to New Jersey to live with my aunt. She's a local television reporter. She worked long hours, which gave me a lot of unsupervised time. I don't need to tell you what types of diversions a teenaged boy can find with time and opportunity."

By high school he was attending classes sporadically. First, he says, it was cutting classes. In 10th grade, he stopped going altogether.

Kevin would be the first to admit it had nothing to do with his ability to learn. "I always had good grades in school," he emphasized. He "began making some bad choices that landed me in a juvenile detention center on the day before Thanksgiving." That brush with the law turned this bright young man around. "I didn't want to live a life with limited options due to limited education and a criminal record."

When he was 17, Kevin moved to Phoenix, Ariz. to be near his mom who had relocated there. He worked full-time and rented a studio apartment, but still lacked a high school diploma. He couldn't see a way to get that diploma, but his aunt kept encouraging him to go back to school.

One day she called to tell him about Metro Center Academy, a self-paced charter school created through a partnership of the Simon Youth Foundation, the Glendale School District and Communities In Schools of Arizona. Intrigued by the school's small size and the fact that he could work at his own pace as long as he kept up his grades, Kevin finally saw a way to finish high school and create the kind of life he wanted.

Like many students across the country, Kevin's introduction to Communities In Schools came through, the school's community resource coordinator, in this case, Lloyd Hopkins. "Kevin's teachers noticed what a bright, likeable kid he was and asked me to mentor him and help prepare him for college," Hopkins noted.

But Kevin was focused on the here and now. He needed a job and he asked Hopkins for help. Hopkins, who was recently promoted to senior director of community reinvestment for Communities In Schools of Arizona, not only passed along openings, he helped Kevin create a resume and build his interviewing skills.

He also opened another door for Kevin, the one marked "college." He began talking about what college could offer and, better yet, the possibility that Kevin could get scholarships that would help him pay for it. "My job was to show students like Kevin that college was within reach if they asked the right questions and worked hard. It isn't that college is too difficult for them, it's that they think it's out of reach."

Hopkins took Kevin on campus visits, helped him obtain scholarship information and work on his applications, and practiced "mock" interviews with him.

On a tour with Hopkins of Glendale Community College, where he is now majoring in pharmacy, and Arizona State University, Kevin realized that college was the right place for him. "I was inspired by the campuses — they were so big and beautiful. And the atmosphere was serious." That seriousness suited Kevin perfectly. "I'm in some night classes with older students who take the classes very seriously and I appreciate that."

## A Great Example of What a Young Man Can Be

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On track to earn his bachelor's degree in two years and preparing for a career as a pharmacist, Kevin uses two scholarships he was awarded to pay for school and works a full-time job as well.

He hasn't forgotten his younger self. With Hopkins' support, Kevin began volunteering for Communities In Schools while he was still at Metro Center Academy, tutoring and helping out with special events as needed. While he has to juggle his volunteering with school and work, Kevin still manages to show up for the students. "Working with younger kids gives him the opportunity to give back and transfer

his hard-won knowledge to them," Hopkins said. "When someone has been through rough times and succeeded, his story really hits home."

Kevin also speaks to other Communities In Schools audiences. He recently told his story at a Communities In Schools national board of directors meeting and is scheduled to speak at a Communities In Schools of Arizona fundraising breakfast, said Hopkins. He sums up Kevin's life and accomplishments in one simple sentence: "He's a great example of what a young man can be." ■

## Talitha Halley: From Communities In Schools to U.S. Congressional Page

Communities In Schools proudly salutes Talitha Halley, a student served by Communities In Schools of Houston.

Talitha was sworn in on January 24th as a Congressional Page in the U.S. House of Representatives Page Program.

Talitha was born in Louisiana and moved to Texas with her mother in 2005 after Hurricane Katrina. Communities In Schools began connecting her with needed resources when she entered the 9th grade. Now a junior at Sharpstown High School in Houston, Talitha boasts a 3.3 GPA, is a member of the varsity volleyball team and serves as her class student council representative.

Talitha was selected in December to serve as a Page in the office of Rep. Al Green (D-Texas). In

that role, she will live, work and study in Washington, D.C. for the spring semester. In addition



Talitha Halley (center) and her mom Geneva Halley (left) were greeted by Amena Ross, scheduler/legislative correspondent for Rep. Al Green (D-Texas), prior to Talitha taking the Congressional Page oath.

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to participating in the educational component of the Page Program – classes in math, social studies, science, languages and special Washington seminars – Talitha's responsibilities as a Page will include a wide range of administrative duties, such as delivering legislative correspondences within the Congressional complex, monitoring phones in

member cloakrooms and occasionally preparing the House Floor for sessions.

After completing the Page Program in June, Talitha looks forward to returning to Houston, applying to colleges in the fall and eventually pursuing a career in politics. ■

## Spotlight on Success

### News Briefs from the Communities In Schools Network

**Communities In Schools of Charlotte-Mecklenburg**, N.C. received a C.D. Spangler Foundation award to support the organization's dropout prevention efforts at West Charlotte High School. The award was part of a multi-million-dollar grant

The **Communities In Schools national office** is teaming up with Kids In Distressed Situations (K.I.D.S.) to meet the most basic needs of many of our students. K.I.D.S. – which helps disadvantaged young people and their families by providing



Charlotte native C.D. Spangler visited students at West Charlotte High School. Mr. Spangler supports Communities In Schools' dropout prevention efforts at the school.

Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools/Nancy Pierce Photo

new clothes, shoes, books and other items – will work with Communities In Schools local affiliates to provide the items most needed in their communities and among their respective student populations. Communities In Schools of Nevada was the first to roll out the partnership with an announcement in February at a joint press conference with K.I.D.S. leadership. A national rollout of the partnership will follow, based on the results of a needs survey. ■

to several educational institutions and nonprofit organizations. Mr. Spangler, a Charlotte native and former Charlotte-Mecklenburg Board of Education member, made the announcement himself.

**Communities In Schools of Jacksonville**, Fla. AmeriCorps Duval Reads! literacy tutors volunteered with the Haiti relief effort at Bethel Baptist Church. Twenty tutors, along with the program director and support staff, collected monetary donations and packed food, water, clothing and other essentials for delivery to Haiti following the devastating earthquake in January.



Communities In Schools of Jacksonville volunteers and staff helped pack relief supplies for Haiti.

Photo by Kerry Corley Dawley for Communities In Schools of Jacksonville

## New Class of Fellows Carries the Torch

Named after Communities In Schools' founding board chairman, the Robert H.B. Baldwin Fellows Program brings together current and emerging leaders to learn from each other and conduct research that will strengthen Communities In Schools. Through full- or part-time fellowships, the Fellows focus on issues surrounding leadership retention, development and transition in the nonprofit sector.

Thanks to a grant from MetLife Foundation, three new Fellows have been selected for six-month fellowships. "We are pleased to support the distinctive work of Communities in Schools, and particularly its Fellows program," said Dennis White, president and CEO of MetLife Foundation. The Fellows assure that proven leadership and the wisdom gained from experience are resources for building the organization's future.

### The new Fellows are:



**Maxine Elliott**, former executive director of Communities In Schools of Robeson County, N.C. and consultant to both the North Carolina state office and the national office. A 15-year veteran of the Communities In Schools network, Elliott is focused

on executive leadership development, particularly the professional development needs of Communities In Schools executive directors.



**Judy Frick**, former executive director of Communities In Schools of Wichita/Sedgwick County and consultant to the Kansas state office. With more than 17 years of Communities In Schools experience, Frick's project is related to succession

planning and executive transition management for state offices and local affiliates.



**Carole Levine**, former deputy director of the National PTA and former regional coordinator for Communities In Schools of Chicago. Levine previously served as vice president of expansion and technical assistance for the Communities In

Schools national office, and spent 11 years working with state offices and local affiliates across the country. Her fellowship is focused on developing a talent recruitment pipeline for the Communities In Schools network.

The three new Fellows began their six-month terms in December with a series of meetings and orientation sessions at the Communities In Schools national office. Information about the Fellows and their reports will soon be available on [www.communitiesinschools.org/fellows](http://www.communitiesinschools.org/fellows). ■

## Teachers Say Communities In Schools Helps Them Enjoy Teaching More

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Texas, Michigan, Washington, North Carolina, Pennsylvania and Ohio – that together contain nearly 80 percent of schools served by Communities In Schools. The Web-based survey was completed by 1,527 respondents. “Teachers and others on the front line of education face many challenges inside and outside school that can negatively affect their feelings about how effectively they are serving young people. This survey data shows that Communities In Schools creates a link among educators, students and their families, allowing teachers to focus on teaching and students to reach their full potential,” said Susan Siegel, vice president, Research, Education and Learning Management.

Among the main findings was that nearly two-thirds of the survey’s teacher respondents said Communities In Schools helped them effectively address chronic risk factors such as poverty, students who are unprepared to learn and a lack of parental involvement. They also believed that Communities In Schools helped students acquire learning resources, improved student attitudes toward learning, increased engagement with learning and improved student behavior.

Roughly half of the respondents also believed that partnering with Communities In Schools helped reduce suspensions and tardiness that can affect teaching effectiveness.

Additionally:

- Seventy-two percent said they were better able to improve student achievement because of the coordination of services that Communities In Schools provides.
- Seventy-one percent said that the organization brought more community resources into schools.
- Seventy-one percent said that their jobs would be more difficult without a relationship with Communities In Schools.

While numbers are important, written comments offered additional insight. The following are quotes from teachers who responded to the survey. While they were contributed anonymously, they show that educators believe Communities In Schools makes a difference.

*...“I am excited to know that there is another hand at the table of education working collaboratively to ensure that one more student is given the opportunity to succeed. Communities In Schools is that other hand.”*

*...“In the 11 years that I’ve worked at this school, Communities In Schools has been a major support to the students and faculty, providing social services, guidance and leadership in our community outreach efforts.”*

*...“The personnel from Communities In Schools have become an essential part of the fabric of our school. They are professional and committed. They support the total school program and are very effective in communicating with parents. Students seek them out because they know the love and concern is authentic and unconditional. We (the school) are better for the partnership.”*

Read the Teacher Support Study on our website. Visit [www.communitiesinschools.org/teachersupportstudy/](http://www.communitiesinschools.org/teachersupportstudy/). ■



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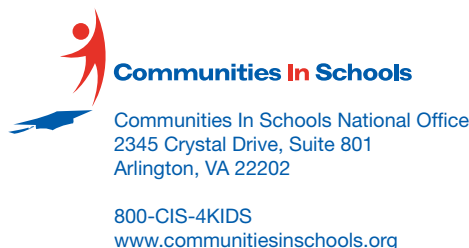
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Help us tell your story to a national audience. Send story submissions to [salamatm@cisnet.org](mailto:salamatm@cisnet.org) or 703-837-4567 (fax).

## In Appreciation



Communities In Schools would like to thank Procter & Gamble (P&G) and longstanding partner Costco Wholesale for engaging with us in an exciting new partnership. A cause-related marketing campaign through P&G's "Live, Learn and Thrive" initiative is designed to drive awareness of the nation's dropout epidemic, while also building greater recognition of Communities In Schools. The campaign, launched in January, includes advertisements and editorial placements in *The Costco Connection* that feature P&G's support of Communities In Schools. P&G also awarded Communities In Schools a grant for its dropout prevention work. Both P&G and Costco are committed to social

investment that includes education initiatives; Communities In Schools is one of only three nonprofits in North America to receive the annual "Live, Learn and Thrive" grant. ■