

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

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## New Evaluation Results Rank Communities In Schools One of the Best Dropout Prevention Organizations in America

On February 25, Communities In Schools released the results of a five-year comprehensive evaluation designed to determine whether the organization has an impact on student-level and school-level outcomes. Conducted by ICF International, one of the nation's foremost social science evaluation firms, the study confirmed what Communities In Schools has been doing for the past 30 years – empowering students to stay in school and achieve in life.

Underwritten by The Atlantic Philanthropies, ICF concluded that the application of the Communities In Schools Model to create a community of support around a student resulted in the strongest reduction in dropout rates of any existing fully-scaled dropout prevention program that has been evaluated. It also concluded that the organization is unique in having an effect on both reducing dropout rates and increasing graduation rates, and that the Communities In Schools Model is effective across the country regardless of school settings, ethnicities and grade levels.

"In partnership with teachers, principals and superintendents, Communities In Schools is achieving impressive results in some of the most economically disadvantaged areas of our country," said Dan Domenech, executive director, American Association of School Administrators.

The results of the evaluation were announced by Communities In Schools President Daniel J. Cardinali and guest panelists at the National Press Club in Washington, D.C. Pearson Education, a global leader in educational publishing, sponsored the event and is also underwriting a public policy document based on the evaluation results.



Daniel A. Domenech, executive director, American Association of School Administrators, was among the panelists sharing the good news of Communities In Schools' National Evaluation results at the National Press Club in Washington, D.C.

Photo by Mark Finkenstaedt

"The research findings have fueled an even greater sense of urgency within our network – a commitment to bring the strongest, most evidence-based and rigorously evaluated practices to the young people we serve, and to do it immediately," Cardinali said.

The study results can be found on the Communities In Schools website, [www.communitiesinschools.org](http://www.communitiesinschools.org), under Who We Are/Publications (scroll down to Results). ■

## President's Message

### Challenges and Opportunities



Dan Cardinali, president, Communities In Schools

Photo by William Waybourn

The Communities In Schools network is a \$240 million operation with 70 percent of our income coming from public sources. The coming years will pose major challenges to the Communities In Schools network. Although there are encouraging signs of economic recovery, those signs are much weaker than we had all hoped. Since 2008, states have had to make \$410 billion in cuts to balance their budgets. The next two years are equally uncertain with an estimated \$130 billion shortfall in 2011 and \$140 billion in 2012.

Given the difficult tradeoffs public education leaders will have to make in the face of unavoidable fiscal austerity, the network is highly vulnerable to a contraction in its revenues, and therefore in the number of young people we can serve. Yet, we know that the need is increasing during these economic hard times in the very systems in which we work.

I believe that Communities In Schools is in a strong position to turn these challenges into opportunities for the following reasons:

- **National Evaluation Results:** There is a growing trend to support organizations and programs that deliver measurable results. The results of an independent, five-year evaluation (see cover story) show Communities In Schools to have a unique advantage in both lowering dropout rates and increasing graduation rates.
- **Cost-Effective Model:** Given Communities In Schools' unusually low cost per student and track record of scaling with consistent results, we are positioned to win continued

public and private support, and help local education systems create efficiencies and positive student outcomes.

- **Focus on Poor Young People:** Because there are myriad non-academic challenges disenfranchised young people bring to school, effective strategies to mitigate these challenges and improve student outcomes are more in demand than ever.

It is within this context that Communities In Schools leads both internally, through our Total Quality System standards, and externally, through independent research, to ensure we are creating the greatest impact.

There are three key strategic drivers that inform our activities and create a framework for evaluating our effectiveness:

- **Deliver high-quality education solutions** by supporting a national quality improvement and growth strategy to effectively serve more students in each community.
- **Launch a national public engagement campaign** and build an army of grassroots supporters to grow and sustain our work as well as support education reform policy.
- **Advance legislative priorities** to ensure integrated student services are a fundamental part of public education with ongoing financial support.

I am pleased to report that against all three drivers we are making substantial progress. The economic challenges are bringing out the best in our network and the best in our people. Our commitment to "love kids into change" is unwavering, and will guide us through these difficult times.

Thank you for your continued support of Communities In Schools and the 1.3 million young people we serve. ■

## Celebrities Shine Spotlight on Dropout Prevention

### ICAP® Charity Day Benefits Communities in Schools

These days, it's tough for a celebrity to surprise people. Thanks to 24/7 entertainment news, we've pretty much seen it all. But there's one thing a star can do that will always make headlines: ask people for money.

The Communities In Schools national office recently participated in ICAP® Charity Day, an international event organized by national board member John Nixon. Nixon's company, ICAP, is the world's leading online trading company. Since 1993, ICAP has dedicated one day each year to giving back to the global community: all broker commissions are donated to charitable organizations.

To help increase commissions, celebrities visit the trading floor at ICAP, and some even perform stock trades. The December event raised more than \$19 million dollars for about 200 charities this year, Communities In Schools among them.

Communities In Schools has been a recipient of ICAP Charity Day proceeds for the past four years. In December, Communities In Schools was represented on the trading floor by actresses Sarah Jessica Parker and Goldie Hawn.

"Sarah Jessica Parker and Goldie Hawn are beautiful people, on the inside and outside," said Communities In Schools' Founder and Vice Chairman Bill Milliken, who attended the event. "I am so appreciative of their efforts to give children across America a chance for a better education and future." ■



Actress Sarah Jessica Parker, shown with Communities In Schools Founder Bill Milliken, helped raise money for the organization during ICAP Charity Day.

Photo by Paul Brissman

## In Appreciation

We would like to thank Altria Group for its generous support of our efforts to bring the Communities In Schools Model to three

high-needs regions – Nashville, Southeastern Pennsylvania and suburban Chicago. ■

## Connect With Us!

Did you know that Communities In Schools isn't just working tirelessly in schools across America, but across the Internet as well?

You can get the latest updates about Communities In Schools' work to improve the lives of students, plus breaking news and information about what you can do to make a difference simply by "liking" our fan page on Facebook. You can follow @cisonational on Twitter as well.

Have you checked out Jumo, the latest in nonprofit social networking from the creators of Facebook? Communities In Schools has a page there too! Our

Jumo profile tracks the work of Communities In Schools and other nonprofit organizations invested in education.

Watch for our new blog, "Beyond the Classroom"—coming soon as a link on the Communities In Schools website homepage. This new foray into social media will be dedicated to promoting the organization's point-of-view on the latest in education, our unique integrated student services model, advocacy and so much more. Check it out at [communitiesinschools.org/blog](http://communitiesinschools.org/blog). ■



## Meet Communities In Schools' Board and Leadership Council Members

Occasionally we profile our volunteer leaders who are dedicated to the Communities In Schools mission. It is through their generous support and collective vision that we are able to bring our successful model to many more deserving young people.

Christopher F. Allwin is Communities In Schools' newest board of directors member. Mr. Allwin's family has a long history with Communities In Schools. His father, Jim Allwin, chaired the national board of directors until his death in 2007. His mother, Maria Allwin, continues to be a generous supporter and a member of the Communities In Schools National Leadership Council. Mr. Allwin currently works for General Maritime Corporation, in the Finance Department. He joined the company in 2009. General Maritime is a publicly traded owner and operator of crude and refined products tankers, located in New York, N.Y. It has one of the largest and most diverse fleets in the world. At General Maritime, Mr. Allwin works on various corporate finance projects, new acquisition strategies and assists with treasury management. Prior to joining General Maritime, he was an investment banking analyst in the Financial Institutions Group at Bear Stearns. Mr. Allwin earned his Bachelor's degree in political science from Yale University and currently lives in New York City.

Rick Rieder joined the Communities In Schools National Leadership Council in October 2007. 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 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.

Mr. Rieder's leadership and generosity have made possible a unique collaboration between Emory University, Communities In Schools of Georgia and Communities In Schools of Atlanta, to address how schools, families and communities are intertwined and simultaneously affect student performance, particularly in urban settings. Mr. Rieder has been the Chief Investment Officer of Fixed Income – Fundamental Portfolios at BlackRock, Inc. since August 2010; he serves as its Head of Corporate Credit and Multi Sector and Mortgage Groups and served as its Managing Director. He is the President and Chief Executive Officer of R3 Capital Management, LLC and as the Head of Global Principal Strategies at R3 Capital Management. Prior to his current positions, Mr. Rieder spent many years in banking and global investments. He has been a Trustee of Emory University since July 2008. Mr. Rieder earned his MBA from the Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania in 1987. He earned a Bachelor's degree in business from Emory University in 1983. ■

## Documentary Spotlights Bill Milliken's Commitment to Students

In honor of Communities In Schools' Founder Bill Milliken's 70<sup>th</sup> birthday and his more than 50 years of service to students across the United States, acclaimed documentarian Albert Maysles (*Grey Gardens*, *Gimme Shelter*) created a wonderful short film about Communities In Schools and its mission to help children graduate and succeed in life.

The film, *Bill Milliken and Communities in Schools: Never Give Up On A Child*, captures Milliken's passion for education reform, and how he has been able to focus that passion into an organization that now gives 1.3 million children across America the resources they need to stay in school. Filmed in different locations across the country including

Atlanta, Los Angeles, New York City, Kalamazoo, Mich., and Spokane, Wash., the film gives us a glimpse into the world of the students, mentors and site coordinators who have all been touched by Milliken's desire to change the world for the better.

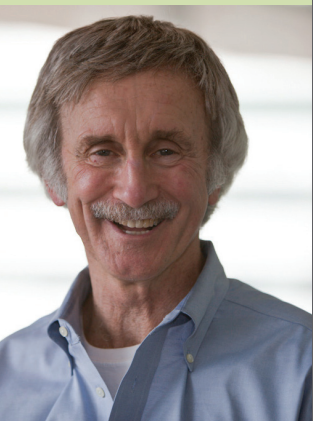
Visit [www.vimeo.com/18471748](http://www.vimeo.com/18471748) to watch the video. ■



Christopher Allwin



Rick Rieder



Bill Milliken

## The Go-To Guy

### Communities In Schools “Unsung Hero” Builds Relationships, Changes Lives

Hockey has a reputation and it's not for sportsmanship, good conduct and respect. But John Magary, a site coordinator with Communities In Schools of Central Ohio, used hockey to teach the students he works with at Arlington Park Elementary School in Columbus about all of those qualities.

Magary's ability to take what he's given, in this case, a partnership with the Blue Jackets, the Columbus hockey team, and turn it into a foundational program for his students is key to his success. Success that earned him an Unsung Heroes Award from Communities In Schools, one of five people to receive the award in 2010. The Unsung Heroes Award is given each year to Communities In Schools employees who demonstrate high levels of commitment, accountability, persistence, coordination and a dedication to equality.

“John has a reputation to all who know him as someone who gets things done, no matter what task he is given,” noted Central Ohio's CEO, Derrick Fulton. “One principal he has worked with said, ‘I never knew there were resources in my community until John came along. Resources are now pouring into the school.’”

#### A Glass Half Full

Magary sums up his job in two words, “relationship building,” from students and parents to school personnel, from volunteers to donors. “Every day is a new opportunity to be a positive influence on somebody or to learn something new from someone I work with.”

Watching those relationships turn into resources for students and their families is a source of great satisfaction for Magary. He recently became involved in a partnership with the Mid-Ohio Food Bank on a pilot program that provides three days worth of food four times a year for every family at Arlington Park. Magary can also go to the food bank to shop for students and families as needed. For the Arlington Park families, the food giveaways and the food provided by Magary from the food bank can make all the difference. “For many of these families, an unforeseen financial drain like a broken-down car can be the last straw. It is sometimes a fragile existence.”

The heart and soul of his work are the relationships he develops with the students who need him most of all. “At the office and in the schools, John's expertise with challenging students is renowned,” said Fulton. “Principals and teachers reach out to him to assist with students who are experiencing discipline issues, not to just to ‘babysit’ but rather to begin a process of changing their behavior to becoming more positive and productive.”

“Kids look at him as a mentor,” observed Rich Ward, father to 10-year-old twins Fredrion and Frediona, and a volunteer in the hockey program Magary coordinates at Arlington Park Elementary. “Kids go to him with questions and he gives good answers. Many of the kids don't have a father figure and he's there for them.”

Magary says he gets great satisfaction out of working with the children others have given up on, the ones who make mistakes over and over again. “I've learned to be patient through ‘so what’ and ‘I don't care’ and behavior that says the same thing.”

Take J.P., for example. “J.P. is bright but he's a work in progress. He's been suspended for extorting money from younger kids and has had other similar behavioral problems as well. I'm working with him on the need for integrity, honesty, dependability and other positive character traits.” J.P.'s home situation is emotionally and financially inconsistent.

At the same time Magary is assertive and honest with J.P. about what he needs to do, he's also his biggest defender. Together with J.P.'s mother and school staff, he is part of a team that provides support for the young man. “Much of the time we need to redefine success so that he first understands it and most importantly, knows how to produce that success again if and when he needs it,” said Magary. “I want him to understand that what he's learning here will serve him the rest of his life.”

#### A Great Leveler and Teacher

When Magary had the opportunity to create a partnership with the Columbus Blue Jackets ice hockey team, “yes” was the first word out of his mouth. In fact, he said with a smile, one of the strengths he brings to his job is an inability to say no. “I never say no to anybody, well, hardly ever, and never take no for an answer.”

The program began when the Blue Jackets adopted Arlington Park Elementary School. One of many contributions the Blue Jackets made to the school was to create a hockey program that moves kids from street hockey to ice hockey. Ice hockey is an expensive sport, Magary explained, and the children at Arlington Park wouldn't be able to participate if it weren't for the Blue Jackets team and other community partners.

It's great to see the kids having fun on the ice, he said, but the heart of the program is what it teaches the kids without them even realizing they're learning something. “The program exposes them to kids from the suburbs, in private schools, from other cities and states. They all learn from each other. Playing a sport is a great leveler.”



John Magary

Photo by Levine & Associates

## The Go-To Guy

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During practice, Magary often serves as the referee, a position that gives him the opportunity to teach the kids about sportsmanship and fairness. “Sometimes, I make bad calls on purpose so the kids can practice how to handle their anger and get on with the game.”

### Making the Grade

Ward has seen his children change dramatically since working with Magary and participating in the program. “If the kids get in trouble in school, then they can’t play hockey. My daughter was very hot-tempered and aggressive. Her grades were really down but since she’s been in hockey, they have gone up.”

His son, he noted, loves hockey so much that it has motivated him to change his attitude. A bright young man, Fredrion often ran into behavior problems while trying to look after and protect his twin sister. But since getting involved in hockey, Ward said, you can see the difference. “His grades have always been good but he handles himself better now.”

Ward says that Magary and the hockey program helped Fredrion to understand that if you keep at something, you’ll get better and better at it.” For Fredrion, Magary is the go-to guy, the person who helps him “with reading and math and stuff. He’s a great guy. I like him because he can teach me a lot of things about hockey.”

Now one of three team captains, Fredrion has matured into that leadership role, said Magary. “We [his parents, school administrators, teachers and I] have seen him focus on controlling his temper and following directions. He’s excelled academically over the past year. I believe that Fredrion is motivated academically in part due to the emphasis we place on academics as a prerequisite to belonging to the hockey program.”

Using all the tools at his disposal, Magary strives to instill in his students the sense that they can not only do what he does but that they can surpass him. “I’m not their parent but these are my kids in a sense.” ■

## Legislative Day Aims to Keep Communities In Schools in Texas

On January 26, Communities In Schools of Texas staff, volunteers and students gathered at the state capitol building in support of the organization’s efforts to stay in Texas’ new education budget. Texas supporters were joined by Communities In Schools President Daniel J. Cardinali, Texas Senator Jane Nelson and State Representative Myra Crownover for a legislative advocacy day, where they asked the government to consider the nonprofit organization and all the children it serves across Texas when planning the budget.

To alleviate the state deficit, Texas needs to make financial cuts. Millions of dollars allocated to school districts and the work of Communities In Schools in Texas are at stake.

Texas has an unacceptably high dropout rate and ranks among the lowest out of 50 states in high school graduation. Three out of ten students statewide do not graduate from high school.

“If Texas slashes the education budget, thousands of students already at risk of dropping out will lose their access to needed community resources, including social and health services, mentors, after-school programs and many other services Communities In Schools provides,” said Daniel J. Cardinali.

With a state investment of only \$236 per student each year, Communities In Schools is a wise use of



Communities In Schools of North Texas staff were among those advocating for the organization in Austin. (l-r) John Nguyen, chief information officer; Connie Kim, program manager; Kathryn Hudnall, board member; Jordan Diamond, intern; Aimee Crane, program manager; Noemi Escobedo, intern; and Correne Lynch-Fierro, Little Elm area coordinator.

Photo by John Nguyen

taxpayer money. A single class cohort of dropouts costs the state \$10 billion, primarily in lost wages. So in these challenging economic times, Communities In Schools is a cost-efficient solution that saves the state and school districts money while giving Texas children a shot at a brighter future.

“We are looking at other approaches to fund our local affiliates in Texas,” Cardinali said. “Whatever happens, we will find a way to continue serving the students and families there who need us most.” ■



## Spotlight on Success

### News Briefs from the Network

**Communities In Schools of the Charleston Area**, S.C., reaped the rewards of its 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of The Chocolate Affair gala and auction in February. Hundreds of guests attended the elegant event that began with the judging of desserts donated by local restaurants and chefs. The fundraiser set a new bidding record that allows approximately 100 at-risk students to attend summer camp.



Rich Farrell, chairman of the board, and Jane Riley, executive director, attended The Chocolate Affair to benefit Communities In Schools of the Charleston Area.

Photo by Reese Moore, Charleston Magazine

South San Antonio Independent School District's dropout prevention efforts will get help with a generous grant from Chase to **Communities In Schools of San Antonio**. The district's class of 2009 had a dropout rate of nearly 20 percent, according to data from the Texas Education Agency. The grant from Chase will fund two dropout prevention programs, Early Warning Systems and the XY-Zone. Both programs will identify those most at risk of dropping out and then address their individual needs. The XY-Zone focuses solely on working with young men at high risk of dropping out.

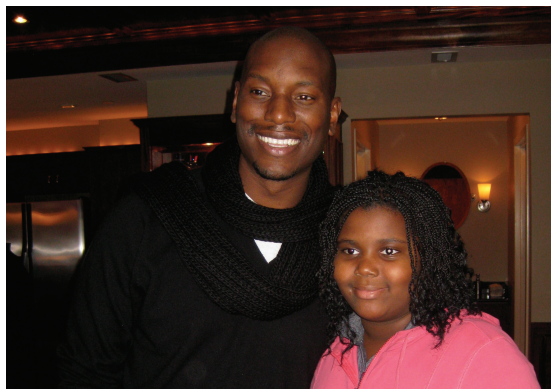
The FirstSchool Garden Program, operated by **Communities In Schools of Moore County**, N.C., received a generous grant from Blue Cross Blue Shield of North Carolina Foundation. Through the grant, Communities In Schools will be able to expand the classroom curriculum, bolster family involvement, enhance professional development with teacher training through a Sandhills Community College partnership, cultivate teen health ambassadors and facilitate farm-to-school initiatives.

**Communities In Schools of Charlotte**, N.C., hosted an event aimed at helping local students transition from boys to men. The program, called "Man Up," was held at West Charlotte High School. It was a summit designed for young men, focusing on taking responsibility and preparing for life. With help from

area fathers, father figures and male role models, students were taught some of the tools needed to be successful in school and life.

The Garth Brooks Teammates for Kids Foundation announced a grant to **Communities In Schools of Nevada** that will extend funding to Clark County students dealing with issues such as lack of self-esteem, violence, lack of parental involvement and many other issues that stem from poverty. The Teammates for Kids donation will allow Communities In Schools of Nevada to continue the project for a year and place 17 University of Nevada at Las Vegas counseling practicum students at 11 schools in the Clark County School District.

A group of students from Ferebee-Hope Elementary School and Hart Middle School, served by **Communities In Schools of the Nation's Capital**, got a chance to meet actor Tyrese Gibson during the Georgetown/Utah State basketball game at the Verizon Center in Washington, D.C. in December. More than 60 students were selected to watch the game with the actor from box seats donated by Capital One. The event was a reward for accepting Mr. Gibson's challenge to enroll in Communities In Schools' 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Center Extended Day Programs. More than 300 students are enrolled in extended day programs at both schools.



Actor Tyrese Gibson and Essence Brit, a student at Ferebee-Hope Elementary in Washington, D.C., shared a moment during the Georgetown/Utah State basketball game.

Photo by Tobeka Green

The **Communities In Schools national office** congratulates the first cohort of 46 site coordinators to graduate with flying colors from the new Site Coordinator Certification Program. Site coordinators representing 36 Communities In Schools local affiliates provided valuable feedback on the new program, and completed all 12 required courses to further their understanding of the key role they play in the Communities In Schools Model. Underwritten by PepsiCo, the rigorous, interactive program is designed to ensure that site coordinators have core knowledge and training to help them effectively deliver services to students at risk. ■

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## ATTENTION LOCAL AFFILIATES!

Help us tell your story to a national audience. Send story submissions to [salamatm@communitiesinschools.org](mailto:salamatm@communitiesinschools.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) in January and February. 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 and best practices that define what it means to be a successful Communities In Schools affiliate serving students.

These affiliates join the 28 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 affiliates that received accreditation in January and February. ■

Communities In Schools of Cleveland County, N.C.

Communities In Schools of Laurel Highlands, Pa.

Communities In Schools of Los Angeles West

Communities In Schools of Robeson County, N.C.

Communities In Schools of San Antonio, Texas

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