



Graduating Students, One Community at a Time

Program Description:

Communities In Schools' mission is pretty simple – to surround students with a community of support, and empower them to stay in school and achieve in life. Through a school-based coordinator, Communities In Schools connects students and their families to critical community resources, tailored to individual needs.

By providing students with a one-on-one relationship with a caring adult, a safe place to learn and grow, a healthy start and future, a marketable skill to use upon graduation, and a chance to give back to peers and the community, Communities In Schools has become the nation's leading dropout prevention organization and the only one proven to both decrease dropout rates and increase graduation rates. Every year 1.2 million students drop out of school, losing their path to a better future. By empowering students to stay in school and achieve in life, CIS is building a stronger America, where every person is capable of reaching his or her greatest potential.

In the wake of Hurricane Katrina, the public education system in New Orleans has been transformed. Educational leaders are choosing CIS to be a critical component of their reform strategies because of the pragmatic approach CIS uses to "figure out" what is going on in the life of a student that is causing a barrier to school success, and then finding the community resources to augment the schools' services so that the student will be successful. In 2011-2012, CIS worked intensively with more than 850 students in seven schools in grades PreK-12th; more than 80 percent promoted or graduated, and less than 2 percent dropped out. Those statistics far exceed the local and national averages.

AT&T Aspire funding will enable Communities In School's program to expand to three high schools operating by Collegiate Academies, a charter school operator already being recognized for success in accelerating the educational achievement of students who often begin high school with educational and financial challenges. The upcoming school year will mean working one-on-one with CIS staff focused on helping these students complete school and prep for their futures.



Students:
400



Funding:
\$300,000

- Last year, **more than 2400 students** received a direct service coordinated by Communities In Schools of Greater New Orleans staff.
- **More than 80 percent of students** in Communities In Schools of Greater New Orleans' programs last year promoted or graduated.
- **Only 2 percent of the students** involved in CIS of Greater New Orleans programs dropped out of school.
- Communities In Schools of Greater New Orleans received **more than \$400,000** worth of in-kind donations in their Champs Choice Store this summer and will redistribute the office supplies, school supplies, sports equipment, musical instruments and educational materials to more than 100 schools in the opening months of school.

"CIS helps me feel safe so I can talk about my problems. I can't focus in school when there is so much messiness going on around me. My CIS mentor has helped me figure out how to cope, so I am doing better in school."

A student from the program