



Communities
In Schools

Chicago

Communities In Schools of Chicago: Our History

Since our founding in 1988, CIS of Chicago has worked to prevent dropout by serving more than 900,000 Chicago public school students, connecting them to essential programs and services to help them overcome barriers to learning and succeed in life. Here's a look back at some of our achievements during the past four decades.

Key Dates

1987-1988

Communities In Schools, the country's largest network of independently operating dropout prevention organizations, establishes an affiliate in Chicago. Alice Palmer, a Northwestern University educator and well-respected community leader, is hired as our first executive director.

1988-1989

We begin working at a high school in North Lawndale, providing leadership and life skill instruction, job readiness training, health and counseling services, mentoring, remedial education assistance and cultural enhancements to the school's most at-risk students.

1990-1994

We expand our reach to 700 students at 18 Chicago public schools.

1994-1995

Our Board of Directors determines that our organization can better serve Chicago youth and families by acting as a bridge that links existing community-based support programming with students and schools in need. This marks the start of our Partnership Program, a program that is still core to CIS of Chicago, and which our organization will provide to 127 Chicago public schools during the 2016-2017 academic year.

1995-1996

We selected our first cohort of schools to receive coordinated student support programs through the Partnership Program. Part of our work involves training school staff to build and sustain effective partnerships with service providers.

1997-1998

Our Partnership Program connects programs and services to thousands of students at eight schools.

1998-1999

We grow our Partnership Program network, partnering with 50 Chicago Public Schools and more than 100 community partner organizations. Janet Hudelin Krupp became our executive director, succeeding Marie Lerner.



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2001-2002

In a single school year, our Partnership Program doubles in size, increasing from 50 to 100 schools. In June 2001, Jane Mentzinger is hired as our new executive director and Lanny Passaro begins service as chair of our board.

2003-2004

The McCormick Foundation funds our Agency Impact Initiative for the first time. The initiative allows CIS of Chicago to expand and deepen its work with service providers to improve the coordination and quality of programs connected to Chicago's children. That commitment continues today through our NAVIGATE training series and our commitment to promoting partner best practices in areas like program design, quality instruction and the preparedness and cultural competence of program presenters

2004-2005

The winner of our first Al G. Ward Spirit of Giving Award, in 2004, is educator Earline Hines. In Spring 2005, the Spirit of Giving Award is presented to The Gift of Sight Foundation.

2006-2007

Kevin Evanich becomes chair of our board. The winners of our Al G. Ward Spirit of Giving Award are Sue Garza, a parent advocate at Addams Elementary School (2006) and the Loyola Pediatric Mobile Health Team (2007).

2008

We connect programs and services to more than 60,000 students and partner with 152 schools — one quarter of the Chicago Public Schools system. The winner of our Al G. Ward Spirit of Giving Award is Dr. Sherron Bibbie, assistant principal and Westcott Elementary School.

2009-2010

Through a special partnership with City Year, Talent Development of Johns Hopkins University, and Union Park Schools, CIS of Chicago pilots what we today call our Intensive Program at a charter school on the West Side. The Intensive Program, which is based on the Integrated Student Supports model that forms the core program model for CIS affiliates across the nation, enables CIS to return to providing direct student supports for the first time since the mid-1990s. The winners of our Al G. Ward Spirit of Giving Award are Lisa Maggiore, a social worker at Marquette Elementary School (2009, now a noted children's author) and Imagination Theater (2010).

2011

CIS of Chicago's board of directors approve a new 5-year strategic plan. It commits the organization to 3 key program objectives: (1) Continuing to link tens of thousands of students annually through the



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Partnership Program and documenting the impact of these connections on student academic achievement; (2) Promoting the quality and impact of student-focused support programs offered by our community partner network; and (3) piloting the Intensive Program in a number of CPS schools to align our affiliate in Chicago with the core ISS program model utilized by more than 150 CIS affiliates nationwide. The winner of our Al G. Ward Spirit of Giving Award is Dorrie Imperiale, a counselor at Graham Elementary School.

2012-2013

During this school year, we add 21 CPS schools to our Partnership Program; we also expand our Intensive Program to three CPS school sites. In addition, we launched our comprehensive NAVIGATE training series. Each year, NAVIGATE trainings promote program best practices to representatives of more than 100 community partner organizations. Other highlights: The celebration of our organization's 25th anniversary and the launch of a multi-year impact evaluation of our Partnership Program to gauge its impact on student academic achievement. The winner of our Al G. Ward Spirit of Giving Award is Writers Theatre, and Director of Program Bartholomew St. John celebrates his 10th year of progressive work with us.

2013-2014

CIS of Chicago expands its Intensive Program to five CPS sites. Current and alumni CIS of Chicago staff fund the Tenacity Awards to recognize one student at each Intensive Program site for overcoming obstacles to learning and improving in school. The winner of our Al G. Ward Spirit of Giving Award is Dr. Patricia McCann, principal of Mays Academy, and we launched our first staff-funded Tenacity Award, honoring a student who progressed in school with support from our school-based counseling team. Ellen Carnahan becomes the first woman to chair our board of directors and Celia Gonzales Lozano, director of planning and strategy, celebrates her 10th year with CIS of Chicago.

2014-2015

Our board of directors and staff adopt a new vision for the organization. The vision of CIS of Chicago is to ensure that every public school student in Chicago graduates from high school prepared to succeed in life. In addition, the staff and board of directors adopt a set of core values to guide the organization in achieving its vision: Impact, Relationships, Social Justice and Integrity. Businesswoman, philanthropist and national board chair of Communities In Schools Elaine Wynn joins Mays Academy principal Dr. Patricia McCann as a speaker at "Dual Lens," a leadership breakfast examining what public schools need. The HEART organization, which teaches students how about leading humane, principled lives, wins the Al G. Ward Spirit of Giving Award.

2015-2016

Results of a gold-standard, multi-year, randomized control trial study of the Partnership Program provides strong evidence that our Partnership Program helps more elementary students to achieve in reading and math. Proficiency in these two subjects are leading indicators for future graduation. CIS of Chicago's current and alumni staff raise almost \$1,500 to support our third-annual Tenacity Award



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winners. The recipient of our Al G. Ward Spirit of Giving Award was Martha Williams, a counselor at Crown Community Academy. Greg Stoklosa begins his tenure as chair of our board.

2016-17

Our new five-year Strategic Plan takes effect. The plan calls for CIS of Chicago to increase our Intensive Program school network to at least 15 schools by fall 2020 as well as increase our Partnership Program from a current 127 schools to almost 160 schools in the same year. Carrying out that plan will result in more than 200 additional students graduating each year and almost 3,800 additional students being proficient in math or reading by the 2020-2021 academic year. We begin the year in office space that's been renovated for greater collaboration and team-building, launch a new website and LinkedIn page, and cheer on staff who help led the first-ever CIS Student Supports virtual summit. We also receive great news from CIS National: We have been selected as one of seven affiliates across the country to receive significant expansion funding over the next several years. The funding will help CIS of Chicago to reach the ambitious program goals outlined in our Strategic Plan even sooner than five years. The 2017 recipient of our Al G. Ward Spirit of Giving Award is...going to be named in June 2017.