



Communities In Schools Works. Who *Makes* It Work?

Founded in 1977, Communities In Schools is the nation's leading community-based organization helping kids stay in school and prepare for life. The CIS mission is to champion the connection of needed community resources with schools to help young people successfully learn, stay in school, and prepare for life. Small, caring teams of social service providers form one-on-one relationships with students and work alongside teachers, volunteers and mentors in the battle to keep children in school.

The success of this approach has been documented repeatedly. Thanks to CIS, young people are graduating from high school and going on to higher education or productive careers. But who *makes* CIS work? Who actually implements this highly collaborative strategy to help kids to help themselves?

Young People and Their Parents

First and foremost, it is ***the students themselves*** who guarantee CIS' success. Last year, nearly two million young people demonstrated that hard work, commitment to learning and a desire to give back to peers and community can equal *success*.

Parents give their approval and support to each child's participation in CIS. They become involved in CIS' mission, volunteer their time and often benefit themselves from parenting classes and other family-skills initiatives brokered into the school by CIS.

Educators

The school superintendent is the crucial player who approves CIS's presence in each community. He or she invites CIS to explore the feasibility of establishing an initiative in the public schools, and acts as an advocate and facilitator for the CIS process.

The school principal leads the school's partnership with the CIS team, chairing meetings to introduce CIS to teachers and administrators, and making CIS an integral part of the life of the school.

Teachers know their students better than anyone else at the school. They refer young people for needed services, create lesson plans with other members of the CIS team and often incorporate a "CIS class" into the school day.

Community Partners

Social service providers, relocated from public and private agencies into the school, form the nucleus of the CIS team. Career and college counselors, health professionals, drug-education specialists and many others all work together to treat each student's needs holistically.

The local CIS board of directors, drawn from both the private and public sectors, provides leadership, experience and public visibility for the initiative. All local CIS affiliates are independently incorporated, thus ensuring that community decisions remain in the hands of community leaders.

-more-

Communities In Schools National Office

277 S. Washington Street, Suite 210, Alexandria, VA 22314
Ph: 800-CIS-4KIDS ▾ 703/518-2545 ▾ Fax: 703-387-4556 ▾ www.cisnet.org
Deborah Veney Robinson, Vice President of Communications

Local businesspeople provide invaluable resources to the CIS affiliate: funding, employee mentors, job-shadowing opportunities, part-time and summer jobs for students, and in-kind donations of supplies and equipment. The chair of most local CIS boards of directors is also chosen from the private sector.

Local government leaders help create access to public agency services for relocation into CIS sites. A mayor, county council chair or school board representative can be a powerful advocate for the CIS process, rallying community support and sending the message that local government is determined to improve our children's chances.

Religious leaders, long accustomed to creating a community of spiritually committed parishioners to address social issues, find a new outlet with CIS. Volunteers from religious congregations play an important role with many CIS affiliates, and churches, synagogues and mosques support CIS by sharing space for after-school activities.

CIS Staff and National Partners

The CIS staff in each community is usually quite small, since CIS teams are created by relocating staff from other agencies. But the small core of paid staff comprising the CIS executive director, individual project directors and administrative staff are indispensable to the initiative's success. These individuals receive in-depth training from CIS training institutes, leading the way in implementing the CIS collaborative strategies.

CIS national partners help bring resources to the front lines for kids and families. The national CIS organization has longstanding partnerships with many government, private and nonprofit organizations. In addition, **the CIS National Board of Directors** is a national advocate for the CIS Network, helping to raise funds and public awareness for CIS's work with children.

Lastly, CIS depends on thousands of **community volunteers** who serve as tutors, mentors and role models for young people. The spirit of volunteerism is essential for any community-based program, and CIS volunteers help forge the vital one-on-one relationships that connect with kids. During the 2003-2004 school year, nearly 56,000 volunteers contributed 2,387,000 hours of service – a dollar value of \$42,369,232. The average CIS affiliate would have to add about \$200,000 to its budget in order to pay for these resources!

Communities In Schools is truly a coordinated, cooperative approach to working with kids. As our name reflects, we bring the community into the schools — and we need every one of our community partners.

Communities In Schools National Office

277 S. Washington Street, Suite 210, Alexandria, VA 22314

Ph: 800-CIS-4KIDS ◊ 703/518-2545 ◊ Fax: 703-387-4556 ◊ www.cisnet.org

Deborah Veney Robinson, Vice President of Communications