

## SUCCESSFUL PARTNERSHIPS

As a former teacher, Martha Hawthorne (Decatur County CIS Executive Director) was on to something when she began researching ways to improve math scores in her county. She worked with the Board of Education, and they provided the framework to develop an after-school math program for girls and boys in the sixth grade. Math curriculum coaches developed pre and post measurement tools; and to date, overall results show close to a 20% improvement rate.

Students named the program Xtreme Math and ordered customized shirts for each participant. They are gaining a better understanding of geometry by making cardboard models of

Habitat for Humanity houses and going on field trips to Habitat construction sites. One parent commented that her daughter has become really interested in math since enrolling in the program. She took her family on a tour of a Habitat construction



Kristen Bennett of West Bainbridge Middle School works on her project.

site and pointed out the relevance of the math she learned as it pertained to the houses.

Field trips are common, and the Chamber of Commerce helps identify members who are willing to work with the students and show them how math works in real life. Jim York of York & Associates, a local engineering firm, showed students another practical lesson of how math is used in real life when they visited a water treatment plant and learned how to graph out water temperatures and use decimals in grafting.

CIS of Decatur County is hoping to obtain additional grants and sponsors so that they can expand the program to seventh graders.

# TURNING points

News of Communities In Schools of Georgia

Summer 2006



## High School Students Get More Support



Challenge Day group leader Sela Gaglia emphasizes the slogan on the back of her shirt (Be The Change) as she begins the Challenge Day session.

The Communities In Schools (CIS) Leadership Institute provided high school students an opportunity to stay on a college campus for a week and participate in activities and workshops not traditionally covered in high school curriculums. During Challenge Day students learned that they have to overcome challenges and “Be the Change.” And, the newly appointed High School Graduation Coaches (HSGC) will also help potential dropouts understand that they can change and choose options that will help them succeed in school and life. With the HSGCs’ assistance, students will develop a graduation and achievement plan to meet their desired academic and post-secondary education goals.

The HSGC was proposed by Governor Sonny Perdue and approved by the Georgia General Assembly during the last legislative session. There are 385 high schools in Georgia, and each can employ an HSGC. The goal is to keep students on track academically, thereby increasing the graduation rate and preparing students for today’s global workplace.

The Georgia Department of Education (GDOE) is the lead agency relative to this initiative and has partnered with CIS to provide training and ensure that the coaches are successful. The HSGCs will identify, recruit and engage parents and concerned adults, organizations and government agencies to serve in a variety of ancillary roles in their respective communities. Some of the essential duties include working with CIS, faculty, administrators and parents to provide training opportunities. The community organizations and government agencies will work with the HSGCs to provide applicable resources and programs (including free online SAT prep) and connect them to the students.

The HSGC adds another person to the team to help Georgia increase the graduation rates and help our youth prepare for a productive future.

### CALENDAR OF EVENTS

CIS & DOE High School Graduation Coach Training  
..... Aug. 8-10

Performance Learning Center® Summer Training Make-Up Session  
..... Aug. 29-30

New CIS Executive Directors Training  
..... Sept. 12-14

Performance Learning Center® Services Coordinators and Executive Directors Roundtable  
..... Sept. 19

Performance Learning Center® Academic Coordinators Roundtable  
..... Sept. 20

AmeriCorps Members Training  
..... Oct. 30

### Communities In Schools of Georgia Key Program Areas:

- Mentoring
- Parent Education
- Innovative Teen Education
- Literacy
- Technology and Bridging the Digital Divide
- Youth Leadership Development

### Georgia CIS Local Programs

Albany/Dougherty	Cook	Hart	Putnam
Appling	Coweta	Houston	Rome/Floyd
Athens/Clarke	Crisp/Dooley	Jefferson	Savannah/Chatham
Augusta/Richmond	Decatur	Jenkins	Screven
Baldwin	Dodge	Laurens	Stephens
Barrow	Douglas	Macon/Bibb	Sumter
Berrien	Effingham	Marietta/Cobb	Troup
Bulloch	Elbert	McDuffie	Turner
Burke	Emanuel	Miller	Twiggs
Candler	Fitzgerald/Ben Hill	Montgomery/	Valdosta/Lowndes
Catoosa	Fulton/DeKalb	Treuten/Wheeler	Walton
Cochran/Bleckley	Glascock	North Georgia	Warren
Colquitt	Harris	(seven counties)	Wilkes

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**Communities In Schools is the nation's leading community-based organization helping kids succeed in school and prepare for life.**

visit our website at  
[www.cisga.org](http://www.cisga.org)

CIS of Georgia provides training, technical assistance, and funding to locally managed programs to help young people succeed.

## Guest Columnist



Angelica Gomez

I'm a student at Champion Charter School located in Brockton, Massachusetts. We're part of the Diploma Plus organization, which is partially funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. When I attended an Alternative High School Initiative Conference in Philadelphia, I was introduced to Sam Seidel who works for the Big Picture Company and Tony Owens who is the Student Transition Coordinator for CIS of Georgia. They both gave me the opportunity to attend the CIS Leadership Institute (LI) with seven other special students from different states.

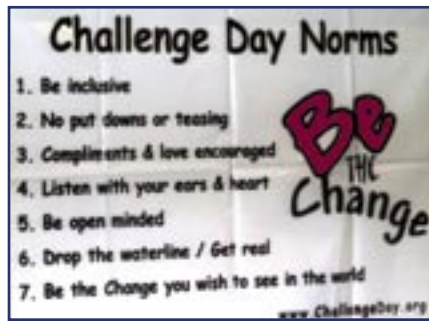
On our first day we were introduced to a motivational speaker who helped us break out of our comfort zone with a game. Throughout the LI, everyone encouraged me and other participants to step out of our comfort zone. We did numerous leadership, trust, and loyalty activities to help us reach beyond our usual comfort level. The whole week was like that – full of ways to improve ourselves and become leaders. Workshop highlights and activities included following our "A" game, dressing for success, avoiding simply ridiculous behavior, causes of conflict, behaviors in conflict, how to say what you mean, and smart choices. We also learned that the right response to life is "let it go; move on" and "smile and let it go." We all learned that there are many definitions of respect, but it's all on you to follow your own. The definition that I learned was that respect is positive, mutual and reciprocal.

I would like to end with a quote that I heard throughout the week: "A vision without action is just a dream, action without a vision is merely a passing of time, but a vision with action can change the world."

## DID YOU KNOW ? ? ? ?

- There will be **five new Performance Learning Centers®** (PLCs) opening in August in Ben Hill, Cobb, Douglas, Laurens, and Savannah/Chatham counties. The PLCs are small non-traditional high schools geared toward students who are not succeeding in the traditional school setting. For more information, visit our website at [www.cisga.org/PLCinfo.html](http://www.cisga.org/PLCinfo.html) or call 404-888-5784.
- **Federal funding was approved** for several CIS programs. Specific funding amounts will be determined in House-Senate conference committee negotiations. **Congressman Charlie Norwood** helped obtain funding for CIS of McDuffie County; **Congressman Tom Price**, CIS of Marietta City/Cobb County; **Congressman Lynn Westmoreland**, CIS of Coweta County, and **Congressman Jack Kingston**, CIS of Glynn County.
- **CIS of Laurens County** was chosen as one of the 10 organizations nationwide to receive funding from the Barbara Bush Foundation. The \$65,000 grant will be used to promote local literacy efforts.
- CIS has partnered again with **Borders** and **WXIA-TV** to improve students' reading skills by providing and promoting back-to-school books. During August, customers of the 14 metro area Borders stores may purchase a book and donate it to CIS of Atlanta (Fulton/DeKalb), Augusta/Richmond, Clarke, Cobb, and Douglas.

### Youth Challenge Day's Mantra



According to student surveys from the Leadership Institute (LI), Challenge Day was one of the most popular sessions in the weeklong summer program. Challenge Day helped students understand that they can "Be the Change" through empowerment, mutual support, awareness, honesty, and integrity. The daylong program provided participants with tools to tear down the walls of separation and inspire them to study and work in an encouraging environment of acceptance, love and respect.

The LI is in its sixth year and is successful with the help of our sponsors, **Costco Wholesale, GE Energy, Wal-Mart** and the **Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation**. Approximately 200 students stayed on Emory University's campus and participated in activities and workshops not traditionally covered in high school curriculums. Most of the students came from Georgia, but there were some from other states including Minnesota, Pennsylvania and Rhode Island.

Other LI sessions included Charting for Success, Turning Points (which included habits of highly effective teens, goal setting, dress for success and building relationships), and a career fair. Over 40 business and college representatives took time out of their busy schedules to talk to students about career options and the educational requirements and skills needed to be successful.

## PRESIDENT'S COLUMN



Neil Shorthouse

Good news travels fast. That's why we are seeing rapid expansion of the Performance Learning Centers® in Georgia. These schools allow dropouts and potential dropouts to enroll in a PLC and graduate with a regular high school diploma. So far more than 1200 of them have done so – just since the first one opened in 2003. This August five more PLCs will open, bringing the total to 27 in Georgia, and our first out-of-state expansion in Charlotte, NC.

More school and community leaders are deciding the good news they hear about PLC students is worth exploring for their own students struggling for academic success.

PLCs' success resides in the common sense methods school leaders, kids and parents appreciate: smaller classes, self-paced, effective technology, high expectations, strong individual support, personal responsibility, plus help from the community through mentors, internships, service learning and dual enrollment opportunities at local or technical colleges.

The good news extends beyond PLCs to High School Graduation Coaches now being placed in every one of the state's almost 400 high schools. The Georgia Department of Education has asked CIS to apply its lessons from the PLCs and decades of work with kids and families to help it and local high schools dramatically increase graduation rates.

Hundreds of students are returning to PLCs and, for the first time, are stepping into the new PLCs in Ben Hill, Chatham, Cobb, Douglas and Laurens counties. We are certain as these students develop, discover, and demonstrate academic skill, they'll generate lots more good news.



The dinner "A Team" (from left) Malloray McLendon, MeShae Hankerson, Andre Bradley, Monica Reason, Josheau Sisneros, and Ronald Wilbur (top) did a fantastic job providing welcoming and closing remarks, conducting the invocation, and introducing our guest speaker. Additionally, Malloray wrote and read a poem, and Ronald sang a gospel song.



State School Superintendent Kathy Cox tells the students at the LI dinner not to let fear stop them from setting goals high and developing a plan to obtain them.



CIS staff member Tina Duckett gets students enthusiastic during one of the workshops.



Greg Fulton, Time Magazine Atlanta Bureau Chief, talks to students during the career fair.

CIS LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE

Visit [www.cisga.org/LeadershipInstitute.html](http://www.cisga.org/LeadershipInstitute.html) for student quotes.