

SUCCESSFUL PARTNERSHIPS

Dan Hunter (Academic Coordinator) and Mimi Middendorf (Services Coordinator) of Classic City Performance Learning Center worked hard to obtain partnerships with Jittery Joe's Coffee, UGA's College of Education, and the Secretary of State's Office.

Jittery Joe's provides coffee and snacks to the PLC students and staff, district school administrators who are housed in the same facility, and visitors. Students' math skills improve as they run the cash register, tally up weekly sales, handle inventory and determine what items need to be ordered based on sales. The store profits go into a fund to pay

for student events. UGA seniors and Jittery Joe's training director advise and meet with the students.

The UGA College of Education Partnership Design Team voted to partner with the PLC for the next three years. One of their assignments was to have UGA journalism seniors work with the staff and school council to develop a marketing plan. They've been conducting research and will



Blake Tillery, UGA Student, talks about his experience running for Athens-Clarke County.

provide the PLC with information and marketing tools that will help promote the PLC and get the community involved.

The Secretary of State's Office conducted a training session with selected PLC students to get them ready for the Youth Poll Worker Program. The session helped students understand the importance of voting, how to become an involved citizen through running for public office, and what's needed when serving as a poll worker. During their session, they heard from the mayor, a local judge, a Secretary of State representative, and a student who ran for public office.

TURNING points

News of Communities In Schools of Georgia

Spring 2006



CIS Day at the Capitol



Governor Sonny Perdue takes time out to greet SAM winners and other CIS visitors.

CIS Day at the Capitol and Student Achievement Month (SAM) allow legislators to hear from students regarding how CIS is making a difference in their lives. Legislators also have a chance to talk to executive directors and other CIS staff regarding how CIS stands relative to the legislative budget.



Fredrick Bailey

Fredrick Bailey, CIS student from **Troup County**, talked about how CIS has provided him with many services and changed him in more ways than he could ever imagine. Bailey entered a CIS program when he was in 7th grade and in need of glasses and assistance with his homework, family issues and anger management. "My site coordinators went the extra mile and got glasses within a 2-week time period and also helped me with my homework and computer skills. As I moved into high school, I was assigned a good mentor that supported me every step of the way, and I became a peer leader. I participated in a number of activities and was a United Way guest speaker at one of their meetings. All of this helped me with my anger problems and family issues. If it wasn't for CIS, I probably would have dropped out of school," said Bailey.

Chairman of the House Education Appropriations Committee, Ben Harbin, stated that organizations like CIS that bring the private and public sectors together can be successful. He went on to say that it's good to have legislators' support, and he appreciates the work that CIS does. Harbin added that CIS receives a little legislative money but raises most on its own. He acknowledged the work CIS has been doing for years in the community and the assistance CIS is providing with the governor's new initiative to reduce the dropout rate.



Representative Ben Harbin

Harbin made the following comments to Bailey: "Expect great things because you have been given a great opportunity to be successful. And there is a little obligation in there. Once you become successful, guess what, you've got to help those other kids and make sure they become successful."



(l to r) Reps. Brooks Coleman, Jan Jones and Ben Harbin

Vice Chair of the House Education Appropriations Committee, Jan Jones, talked about the reason the House voted to include seed money for three new CIS Performance Learning Centers in their new budget. The money was increased by the General Assembly to open five new PLCs. Jones said that CIS does a great job, and it was confirmed when the audit was performed last year. She also talked about CIS' training capabilities. "You will be helping with statewide training. This new initiative that the governor has developed will put one dropout counselor in every high school. We see the results of CIS. You've got the ability and organizational skills to take this dropout counselor concept that the governor has put in place and make sure that they are in fact helping us to retain kids so that they can graduate," said Jones.

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	Treutlen/Wheeler	Walton
Cochran/Bleckley	Glascok	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.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

CIS State Offices Training
..... May 15-17

Georgia Commission for Service and Volunteerism Closing Ceremony for AmeriCorps Members
..... May 20

CIS/AmeriCorps Training and Recognition Day
..... May 30

CIS Leadership Institute
..... June 5-9

Performance Learning Center® Summer Training
..... June 26-30

visit our website at
www.cisga.org



Michael Mills
Wal-Mart Regional
Director, Media &
Community Relations

“There is no silver bullet for anything. But education is the silver bullet for everything.” That was my mindset for the first meeting with CIS leaders who wanted our assistance locally and statewide. After the meeting, CIS’ record of improving Georgia’s graduation rate and producing a qualified workforce was instantly clear.

But CIS’ greatest accomplishment – providing hope to Georgia’s children – wasn’t clear until after judging the SAM competition. Student essays passionately showed how CIS programs provided hope that graduation and a better life were possible. This was brought home at the awards luncheon, when I sat with Brandon Mable, a SAM award winner from the Americus-Sumter Performance Learning Center® (PLC). He committed to telling his peers about CIS and why staying in school was necessary – proof that CIS touches the lives of young people in profound ways.

So it was easy to convince Wal-Mart leadership that supporting CIS was a great investment. Each Wal-Mart is a “store of the community,” working with local residents to design stores and merchandise that fit local needs. It also means giving locally and building connections between our associates and community leaders/organizations. Each Wal-Mart donates thousands of dollars and in-kind contributions to local communities annually.

Our goal is to link each Georgia Wal-Mart and SAM’S CLUB with an existing CIS program. And we also hope to support creation of new CIS programs across the state. We started the partnership at the SAM luncheon by providing computers, printers and gift cards for each winner. We look forward to helping CIS reduce Georgia’s dropout rate and bring hope to Georgia’s kids.

DID YOU KNOW ? ? ? ?

- CIS will conduct **Dine Out For Kids**, in partnership with the **Georgia Restaurant Association**, on Thursday, **June 8**. For detailed information and participating restaurants in your area, visit www.dineoutforkids.com.
- The **Georgia Association for Alternative Education** presented the first Neil Shorthouse Award to its namesake at the group’s annual spring conference in Augusta. The honor will be presented every year to the person who had the most impact in promoting alternative education in the state.
- CIS is an inaugural member of a new coalition, **STAND UP**. It’s a coalition of more than 50 organizations, districts and schools around the country, calling on all Americans to demand excellent high schools that prepare every student for college, work and citizenship. **STAND UP** is supported by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. Visit www.standup.org to obtain valuable information and resources.
- **Brandon Nunnally**, a Renaissance PLC student in Macon, participates in a reading assistance program, Children’s Literacy Advocates. He worked with a fifth grade special education student and helped improve his reading skills from first to third grade level. No professional educator had been successful with this child.

Franklin County Partnership Mobilizes Community

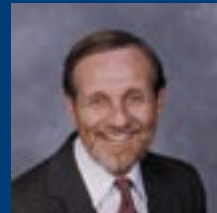


The Franklin County Partnership is a 2006 implementation CIS affiliate. Communities in the implementation stage must go through a CIS process that involves the following seven steps: determining local needs, identifying resources, developing an integrated plan and support system for students, presenting plans to the local school superintendent and school board, hiring and training a director/team to implement plans, raising funds to match CIS grants to support programs, and tracking and reporting on students served.

Renae Johnson, Executive Director, is off to a good start. There were 25 people who attended the meeting, including Franklin County Superintendent Dr. Rick Ayer, representing eight different agencies. The attendees identified improving education, reducing the dropout rate, affordable after-school programs, quality child care, and parental education as some of the immediate community goals.

The partnership plans to form ad hoc committees to complete tasks, create research teams that will seek out resources and grants, and continue to work together to meet the needs of their community.

PRESIDENT’S COLUMN



Neil Shorthouse

Counting really counts. It seems that every day greater importance is placed on numbers. We see it in political polls, athletes’ statistics and certainly throughout government.

Last October, the Georgia House of Representatives informed us that they would be conducting a “performance audit” on Communities In Schools for the periods 2000-2005. The audit was conducted by the Georgia Department of Audits and Accounts and released in February 2006. It produced three important findings: (1) that for each dollar the state provided, CIS affiliates generated, on average, an additional \$24.14 – nearly all cash for a broad range of programs and activities; (2) that by the most conservative estimate, CIS students who were prevented from dropping out would have more career options, increased earning capabilities, and would save the state money by paying more state and sales taxes over their lifetimes – nearly double the amount of the state grant in 2005; and (3) that dropout rates for students receiving sustained services from CIS were lower than the state average for all but one of the last five years.

Based on these findings, the 2006 Georgia General Assembly doubled the amount of money granted to CIS to strengthen the Department of Education’s work to increase graduates and reduce dropouts.

CIS local affiliates and the CIS state office are strongly committed to data collection and evaluation. The partnership that we continue to cultivate with the General Assembly and the Department of Education allows us to increase our service to kids, families and schools yearly – stuff that really counts.

2005 SAM STATE WINNERS

Top Row (l to r): **Chris Register – Athens/Clarke Co.** (Creative Expression); **Jeffrey Weaver – Troup Co.** (Creative Expression); **Rhonnett Merriweather – Albany/Dougherty Co.** (Public Speaking); **Brandon Mable – Sumter Co.** (Written Expression)
Front Row (l to r): **Anna Hutcheson – Emanuel Co.** (Written Expression); **Keonia Harvey – Colquitt Co.** (Written Expression); **Carlando Marshall – Burke Co.** (Creative Expression); **Candace Allen – Troup Co.** (Computer Technology); **Khadijah Lutz – Colquitt Co.** (Computer Technology); and **Jakovia Williams – Jenkins Co.** (Computer Technology)



STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT MONTH (SAM) CELEBRATION



Rhonnett Merriweather gave a phenomenal speech, including some in Japanese, which she speaks fluently.



Chris Register’s PLC rap enlightened the crowd as attendees listened and read the words at the luncheon.



Bill Woodruff congratulates Candace Allen as Neil Shorthouse looks on.

The Student Achievement Month (SAM) contest showcases students who are often overlooked and expected to underachieve. Students expressed through four categories how CIS made a difference in their lives. The four categories were written expression, public speaking, computer technology and creative expression. This year’s contest had over 300 entries from elementary, middle and high schools throughout Georgia. In order to win the state competition, students advanced through local and regional competitions. **Augusta State University, Georgia State University, Mercer University (Macon Campus), Ogeechee Technical College, and Valdosta State University** judged regional entries. Each state level winner received a **new computer, educational software, and a digital camera** at the awards luncheon. **Bill Woodruff, Deputy Administrator for Policy of the U.S. Office of Juvenile Justice & Delinquency Prevention**, provided congratulatory remarks and helped present the prizes. Students were also recognized at the State Board of Education (SBOE) meeting by **Superintendent Kathy Cox** and SBOE members.

SAM sponsors included **Wal-Mart, Georgia Natural Gas, the U. S. Department of Health & Human Services – Maternal Child Health Bureau, AGL Resources, AlphaSkills, SAM’S CLUB, and THP Printing**. Photography was done by **Marilyn Suriani Photography**.