

**COMMUNITIES IN SCHOOLS SPRING 2014 REPORT**

# **CHANGING THE PICTURE OF EDUCATION IN THE NATION'S CAPITAL**





“Our students face some tremendous challenges, but there are also tremendous resources in this city – we just need to connect the two!”

—ELLEN LONDON, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, COMMUNITIES IN SCHOOLS OF THE NATION'S CAPITAL



**Communities In Schools** is a nationwide network of passionate professionals working in public schools to surround students with a community of support, empowering them to stay in school and achieve in life. For the last ten years, Communities In Schools has served 16,000 students in the Washington, D.C. area alone. This year, Communities In Schools of the Nation's Capital is serving more than 2,000 students on four campuses, helping to break the cycle of poverty, school failure and underemployment.

**This report outlines** the accomplishments of Communities In Schools of the Nation's Capital during the 2012 – 2013 school year. It includes data on the percentage of students who were promoted from one grade to another, graduated from high school, or otherwise improved their performance as a result of their involvement with Communities In Schools; and describes how this success was achieved.

“Children in poverty come to school every day with tremendous burdens that hinder their ability to learn. It's hard to focus on math or reading when you're hungry or sick or worried about where you're going to sleep at night. In those conditions, it can seem like the 'escape valve' has been welded shut from the outside.”

—DANIEL CARDINALI, PRESIDENT, COMMUNITIES IN SCHOOLS

# ABOUT COMMUNITIES IN SCHOOLS IN THE NATION'S CAPITAL

COMMUNITIES  
IN SCHOOLS  
SPRING 2014  
REPORT

“I tell my kids they always have choices:  
I want to help them make the right choices.”

—LOREN ROBINSON, SITE COORDINATOR, HART MIDDLE SCHOOL

Communities In Schools is the only dropout prevention organization proven to both lower dropout rates and increase graduation rates. What sets Communities In Schools apart is the organization's holistic approach to addressing both the academic and nonacademic needs of students. Working with school staff, Communities In Schools site coordinators — who are positioned in schools — identify students in danger of dropping out, assess what resources they need, and then provide those resources through the appropriate community partnerships. These resources include food, clothing, transportation, housing, medical care, mentoring and much more.

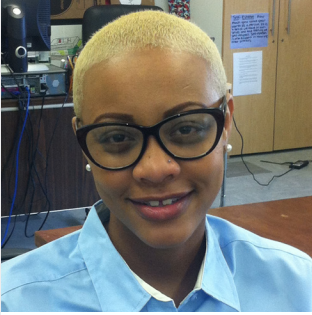
## One of our long-time partnerships is making a tremendous impact on students at Garfield Elementary.

Volunteers from St. John's Church, Lafayette Square and St. Francis Episcopal spend a few hours each week tutoring students identified by their teachers as needing a little extra reading instruction. This regular one-on-one time with a book and a friend has resulted in every student making real gains in reading levels — the gains that can take six months to a year to attain are being reached in six to eight weeks! The students' self-confidence soars, and the pride of accomplishment is accompanied by the bonds of friendship.



### THE STUDENT

**TYRANA E** is getting ready to go to high school, and wants to become a veterinarian. She is waiting to hear if she will get into her first choice, Banneker High School. Right now at Hart Middle School, she has been writing the most amazing, revealing poetry about her young life. She has already tackled issues most of us never will have to deal with in our lifetime. She leans on her site coordinator Loren Robinson for support, who helps with all kinds of things at school; some simple and some not so simple. Communities In Schools has provided her with school uniforms, taken her on tours of high schools and on field trips, but also got her into small groups to help students talk about issues like families, self-esteem and bullying. She is very direct about the issue of bullying — “It's not just the students but some adults that talk about you, too — but Ms. Robinson tells me to stand up for myself.” Loren, the school team and other caring adults are making sure Tyranae has whatever it takes to continue her journey through school to a safe and happy adulthood, where she can take care of animals and keep writing her poems.



### THE SITE COORDINATOR

Two years ago, **LOREN** was working with adults who were dealing with substance abuse and recovery. She ran into a college friend at a shower who was working at Communities In Schools, and they got to talking about their jobs. She told Loren about her work, and Loren was immediately taken by the idea of working with students. She was eager to get back to working with children and youth, and Communities In Schools seemed like the ideal fit for her. It took a few months for her to come on board, but she never wavered from her plan to work at Communities In Schools. That was two years ago, and she has loved coming to work every day since. Loren shares her own experience with her students — because she believes it’s important for them to know she was homeless as a child, had a mother battling addiction and struggled to stay connected to school. She tells them, “These are your circumstances — they are not your life. You can make your own choices and make your life what you want it to be.” Every day her students draw strength from her calm demeanor and high standards in an environment that is often anything but calm. Through it all she assures them they have what it takes to build a bright future — and they have her every step of the way.

### Communities In Schools recognizes that if basic needs are not met, children are unable to learn.

Working with each school’s administration, Communities In Schools identifies students who lack basic needs such as food, clothing and shelter, and utilizes community resources to assist with meeting these needs. Other whole-school offerings include parenting programs, grief and loss counseling, and bullying prevention programs.



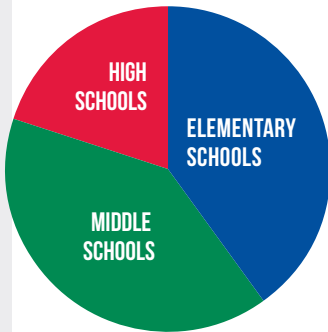
### THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Having worked in the fields of youth development and systems-building for 12 years in the District of Columbia, **ELLEN** had seen noble ambitions fall short due to the lack of strategic collaboration, data and proven program models. The opportunity to work with Communities In Schools was an answer to the question of how to improve outcomes and graduation rates for D.C. youth. She sees it as a matter of fairness and creating a level playing field. “People come from all over the world to work and live in D.C. — it’s very competitive. That makes it all the harder for our kids to find their way to meaningful careers. And the disparity in education and income within our city can be heartbreaking.” She found an organization that will not abandon the District’s young people, but instead is giving them a chance to achieve and become a part of society. She and the board of directors are building strong partnerships to raise the bar for youth development programming, civic engagement, corporate citizenship and educational support in our nation’s capital.



All of Communities In Schools' work is guided by the “Five Basics” — a set of essentials that every child needs and deserves:

- A one-on-one relationship with a caring adult
- A safe place to learn and grow
- A healthy start and a healthy future
- A marketable skill to use upon graduation
- A chance to give back to peers and community



THE NATION'S CAPITAL SCHOOLS SERVED BY COMMUNITIES IN SCHOOLS

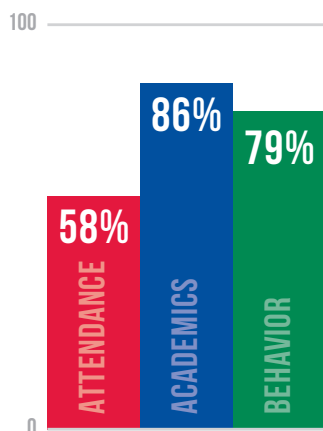
### Communities In Schools of the Nation's Capital

## 2012 – 2013 School Year Highlights

- › 2 elementary schools, 2 middle schools and 1 high school were served.
- › Approximately 1,712 students received integrated student supports from Communities In Schools of the Nation's Capital; 1,479 students received Level One\* or school-wide prevention services and 233 students received Level Two\*\* targeted and sustained interventions.

› **100% of seniors receiving targeted and sustained services (and for whom data were available) graduated.**

› **89% of the students in grades K – 11 who received targeted and sustained services (and for whom data were available) were promoted to the next grade.**



› **58%** of the students in grades K – 12 who received targeted and sustained services with an attendance goal met their goal. For some students, the goal was to increase the number of days they attended and for others it was to maintain their attendance levels.

› **86%** of the students in grades K – 12 who received targeted and sustained services with an academic performance goal met their goal. These goals, which are tailored to each student, may have included improving class grades, overall GPA, standardized test scores, or homework completion.

› **79%** of the students in grades K – 12 who received targeted and sustained services with a behavioral goal met their goal. This relates to school behavior and can include: improving classroom behavior and reducing disciplinary referrals for fighting, disruptive or disrespectful behavior (bad language, talking back, etc.).

“I know I can always go to Ms. Robinson. She helps me through a lot — she helps all of us.”

—TYRANAE, STUDENT, HART MIDDLE SCHOOL

\*Level One services, also known as whole-school preventative services, are provided to all students, regardless of their risk for developing serious problems. Examples of these services include health fairs, attendance initiatives, anti-bullying campaigns, parent engagement activities/events, and motivational speakers.

\*\*Level Two services are targeted and sustained interventions provided for specific students over an extended period of time. These services are provided based on individual student needs and include services such as one-on-one academic tutoring, mentoring, coordination of medical or dental resources, and counseling.