

DECEMBER 2009

Communities In Schools of Lakewood

HELPING KIDS PREPARE FOR LIFE.

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A Big Day for Clover Park Kids

-Dave O'Keeffe, Executive Director

On December 7, one hundred-fifty students from Hillside, Evergreen and Tillicum elementary schools boarded CISL busses for Qwest Field in Seattle. They joined 500 other Communities In Schools kids from around the Puget Sound region to enjoy the 15th annual 1st & Goal Event sponsored by the Seattle Seahawks.

This was no "free ride". Students who wanted to participate had to set and reach specific school goals; for example: "To raise my math grades by asking questions when I have the opportunity." (Elena at Hillside); "To encourage others to do their work and raise my social studies grade." (Amber, at Hillside); "Turn in my homework, reading logs and have good behavior." (Hana, at Evergreen); "Work

harder, never get in trouble, listen to the teacher more, and get all my work done." (Braden, at Hillside). Congratulations to each student for the extra efforts!

Former Seahawk, Nesby Glasgow, delivered an outstanding talk, highlighting the importance of thinking positive and setting goals. He explained, "If things don't work out the way you want, don't give up. Rather, say to yourself, 'Next time I'm going to get it right.'" Nesby had the kids repeat that line a few times to bring the point home! For most students, this is their first time at Qwest Field...for some their first trip to Seattle! The smiles on every face as they boarded the bus back to school indicated the event was a "touchdown".



Kids from Tillicum Elementary

Lakewood PD, Mentoring and Kids

This has been a heartbreaking time for the families of the fallen officers, the Police Department and our local community. CISL staff and volunteers send their deepest sympathy to all who have suffered as a result of this violent crime. We are fortunate to have five LPD officers working 1:1 with students through the Champions Mentor Program. By meeting kids in school they send a clear message of care and support...they understand that mentoring changes lives. Here is an example:

One of the students in our Champions Mentor Program grew up in a family with a history of violence. His older brother is in prison, he has been known to play with guns, and has been pressured to join a gang. He has been suspended from school several times, and struggles with his grades. Fortunately, this student has an outstanding mentor who meets with him every week to provide guidance and motivation to make good choices. His mentor has helped him manage his anger and frustration and fight off the negative peer pressure that he experiences every day. Because of his mentor, he is setting goals to stay out of trouble and graduate. Mentoring may be the difference between this person succeeding or failing in life.

Did You Know....

CP Graduation Rates Are On the Rise

Over the past six years, on-time graduation rates have increased from 52.4% to 71%! What makes this all the more significant is the fact that free and reduced lunch status has also increased from 48.5% to 70% since 2004. The increase in graduation rates can be credited to improvements in schools along with the efforts of organizations that work with the schools, such as CISL, Caring for Kids, Boys and Girls Club, GEAR UP, College Success Foundation, Rotary/Lions and Kiwanis Clubs, Greater Lakes Mental Health, Kids At Hope and Lakewood's Promise to name just a few. Schools cannot do it alone. The community must continue to do its part to ensure that every children in Lakewood reaches their full potential.

High School Youth Giving Back

Over the past month CISL has trained eighteen youth to assist teachers in our After-School Programs. The teachers report that the 1:1 help is key to getting kids who are behind in math up to grade level. Ten of our tutors are Hispanic, which makes them ideal role models for their younger peers. Many thanks to Maria Otero, Tutor Coordinator at Clover Park High School, for her ongoing support. She is supervising five students who want to make their work with Communities In Schools a Senior Project. As such, they plan to research the causes and consequences of dropping out, and devote 40+ hours to volunteering in after-school programs. Everyone gains in that equation!



Fall Campaign Update

So far, 48 CISL supporters have contributed \$10,232 to CISL programs. These funds are real investments towards the future success and well-being of hundreds of students in Lakewood. Schools cannot do it alone. Your support is making it possible for CISL to impact more students through our After-School, Mentor and Readiness to Learn Programs.

Many thanks to the Lakewood Rotary Club for their donation of \$2,000 in support of After-school programs. Young lives are changing as a result of Rotarians commitment to education.

Site Coordinators Weigh In

In order to increase student achievement, CISL is placing Site Coordinators at partner schools. Site Coordinators work closely with principals, counselors and teachers to connect students with community resources and programs that help them to stay focused in school. Below are updates written by a few of our Site Coordinators:

Tyee Park Elementary School: *It is an honor to work with staff, volunteers and kids at Tyee Park. The kids are very respectful, eager to learn and fun to be around. They make me smile so much that my cheeks hurt at the end of the day!*

-Vicente Ramos



Lochburn Middle School: *At Lochburn, we provide math tutoring and homework help for over 70 students in grades 6-8. We expect students to be proactive—asking questions, turning in homework, staying on task. The tutoring program is referral-based and the Homework Club is open to all students. Originally, we started out with 3 tutoring classes and 1 homework room, but the demand was so high that we have since added 2 more homework rooms. GEAR UP has been a close partner, providing snacks and tutors. Clover Park and Bellarmine High School also provide awesome tutors. In the next few weeks, we will be contacting parents to see how we can provide support for them as well. I love working with students at Lochburn as they strive for excellence.*

-Dalemeshia Brewer

Oakwood Elementary School: *Our main focus is helping children progress in math and reading. They have set goals for themselves and we love to watch their excitement as they accomplish them. Currently they are working together as a team to reach their goal of a pizza party! One group in particular of six kids has grown in leaps and bounds. They are finally understanding math concepts that they have struggled with for months. They are so excited to advance to the next level and show off their new skills in class.*

We are fortunate to have several wonderful mentors and high school volunteers who instill a love of learning into the hearts of our children. It is amazing to see their confidence and skills grow and improve.

-Christina Villena

CHAMPIONS Mentors

by Doug Baxter, Mentor Coordinator

The Champions

Mentoring Program is in great shape as we close out 2009. This has been a tough year for many kids and families in Lakewood but we are lucky to have caring adults give the best gift of all...their time. Our mentors are doing some amazing things in just an hour a week. They are helping raise the grades of their mentees, building their self-esteem and just plain being a supportive presence in their lives.

We can't thank our mentors enough for the time they give to our kids.

C Caring
H Helping
A Adults
M Mentoring
P Proudly
I In
O Our
N Neighborhoods &
S Schools



A special thanks to Hollianne White. Through one email, word about the Champions Mentoring Program got out all over McChord Air Force Base. This one email has generated close to 30 volunteer inquiries! Many of these potential mentors are bilingual and are male, which makes our partner

schools very happy and fills some big needs for our students.

While getting lots of new mentors might be my gift this holiday season, the best part of working with CISL has been hearing the great stories of our youth. One of our newest mentees was recently asked how his first meeting with his mentor went. He didn't say a word but he didn't have to. His grin from ear to ear said it all.

January is National Mentoring Month! Given the recent events in Lakewood, it is more important than ever to match kids who are struggling in school, or at home, with caring adults. If you know someone who can devote one hour a week to meeting with a child at school, refer them to Doug Baxter at 253-589-7489, dbaxter@cloverpark.k12.wa.us. Applications are available at our website, www.lakewood.ciswv.org

Communities In Schools of Lakewood is keeping Lakewood's Promise.

CISL Targets Springbrook Parents

On November 16 a crowd of parents and kids met at the Centerforce building in Springbrook, located outside the entrance to McChord Airforce Base, for CISL's "Growing Up is Fun!" Family Night. Eighteen families, mostly Hispanic, gathered for a free dinner, children's activities and break-out sessions for parents. The goal was to give parents resources and advice on how to best prepare their children for kindergarten.

Hundreds of children in Lakewood enter kindergarten without any formal preschool experience. In many cases, they are 1-2 years behind their peers when they start school, and must struggle to catch up. ECEAP leaders, Timmie Foster and Santita Rivera, met with parents to talk about parenting skills and healthy childhood development. Volunteers read with kids and helped them with Thanksgiving art projects while their parents were in the break-out sessions.



The "Growing Up is Fun!" Family Nights are significant because they bring parents into contact with specialists who speak both English and Spanish. Each parent receives a "Growing Up Is Fun!" bag full of bilingual educational resources, agency brochures, and children's books.

Comcast and Target are major sponsors for the "Growing Up is Fun!" events and the resource bags. Caring for Kids provides notebooks, crayons, pencils, dental kits and an ABC necklace craft. CISL has organized 6 family nights and given away over 2,500 "Growing Up Is Fun!" bags over the past three years, thanks to this unique collaboration.

Special thanks to CenterForce for allowing CISL to use their facility, Diane Formoso for heading up the event, and the many volunteers who made this an evening to remember!
-Dave O'Keefe

Going Green and Saving \$\$\$

In order to reduce costs and cut down on waste, CISL is offering a paperless copy of the quarterly newsletter to our supporters. Simply call Christina at 589-7489 and she will set things up. Thanks for working with us to be more efficient with our resources!

Welcome to New CISL Board Members

It is a pleasure to welcome three new members on CISL's Board of Directors: Eden Mostoller, State Farm Insurance; Carmen Croppi, Clover Park Technical College; and Martha Texacotitla, senior at Clover Park High School.

CISL Board of Directors Endorses the CP Bond

Board members voted unanimously in support of the CPSD Bond. Passage of the bond on Feb. 9 will send a clear message of support for our children. Details about the bond can be found at www.CloverParkCitizensCommitteeforSchools.com.



Promoting readiness to learn and success in life for our children through a network of parents, volunteers and community organizations working together and focused at school sites.