Celebrating 10 Years of Communities In Schools of New Mexico!
Compassion: As lifelong educators, Bill and Georgia Carson were ready for the challenge. When they discovered back in 1998 that students at Salazar Elementary School weren’t thriving due to a lack of resources, they mobilized friends and fellow United Church of Santa Fe congregants into action. Together, they volunteered in the school, donated thousands of books, and worked to improve student health by raising funds to hire a full-time nurse and a PE teacher. Bolstered by the community support, morale among teachers and students quickly improved, and administrators and parents soon reported increased student success and engagement. The Salazar Partnership was planting the seeds for what would become Communities In Schools of New Mexico.

Care: In 2012, following years of impactful work by the Carsons and volunteers, the Partnership officially became Communities In Schools of New Mexico, joining Communities In Schools' national network. Using Communities In Schools' time-tested and data-driven model, our new affiliate was charged with doing “whatever it takes” to support students within and beyond school walls to empower them to stay in school and achieve in life. From our origins in the Partnership to now, our fundamental work has remained the same: Building strong, trusting relationships with students and their families, and connecting them to a powerful community of support.

Connection: Over the past ten years, in partnership with Santa Fe and Española Public Schools, Communities in Schools of New Mexico has grown its community school strategy—placing staff within schools with the greatest need, adapting our approach to the specific needs of each school community, and carefully tracking outcomes. We are now serving a majority of PreK-12 students (and their families) enrolled in Santa Fe County high-poverty public schools, and we have begun expanding into more communities in Northern New Mexico.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, we witnessed the power of the relationships between our Site Coordinators and students when schools closed: In the face of unprecedented disruption, Communities In Schools was able to both continue providing support to our students and their families and work with community partners to ensure that resources reached those most in need. The impact of these connections is also evident in student’s success: At Capital High, where we have four Site Coordinators, the overall graduation rate improved by nearly 30% over the past ten years, with the students receiving our targeted support graduating at an impressive rate of 87% in 2022.

Looking Forward: While we celebrate this remarkable progress, we are also looking forward, with ambitious plans to grow our reach and impact by empowering more high-poverty students in Northern New Mexico. In the years to come, Communities In Schools will deepen our current programs in Santa Fe and Rio Arriba counties to support students’ social and emotional needs as well as their academic growth.

Communities In Schools is committed to transforming education—access, opportunity, and outcomes—one student at a time, alongside our dedicated community partners, stakeholders, and invaluable supporters.

Thank you for the Compassion and Care you have shown through your support of Communities In Schools over the past ten years. We are proud of the incredible work and Connections our staff and community partners have built. With you, we look forward to continuing to do “whatever it takes” for students and their families.

Please consider growing our impact by making a generous gift, volunteering, or spreading the word about Communities In Schools! Go to CISNM.org/donate to learn the many ways you can support this work.

With gratitude,

Julia Bergen, Executive Director

Rachel White, Board Chair
WHO WE SERVE

Communities In Schools of New Mexico is working in partnership with the Santa Fe Public Schools and Española Public Schools serving approximately 6,500 K-12th grade students. In the map above, the number of Site Coordinators in each school is noted within parentheses.

The need for Communities In Schools is great. According to a 2022 report¹ from our community partner The Food Depot, nearly 5,000 children in Santa Fe at times experience hunger. The mental health impact of the pandemic is also becoming clear, as the first survey of its kind by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) found this year that nearly half of high school students nationwide reported persistently feeling sad or hopeless.

Our own data echo those findings. According to our School Needs Assessments, 77.3% of parents, students, and teachers in our schools assert that students are experiencing emotional distress due to trauma—many of them on top of the challenges of poverty, a language barrier, and other barriers to academic success.

“Communities In Schools support allows teachers to focus on teaching and learning. As a school principal, this program is the one I never want to be without. Communities In Schools makes a difference.”

—Tina Morris, Principal, Aspen Community Magnet School
A Student’s Story

Sarai (pronounced sah-rah-ee) is a junior at Capital High School who came to the United States several years ago from Guatemala with her father, leaving behind her mother and three siblings. Working to adjust to life in a different country and foreign language while deeply missing the rest of her family, Sarai felt lonely and disconnected from her school community.

Pandemic isolation only made those feelings worse. She was often truant, and confessed to a school counselor that she needed to talk to someone. “I found that person at Communities In Schools,” Sarai says.

Erika Reyes, one of our four Site Coordinators at Capital High, connected with Sarai. Sarai decided her goal was to graduate high school and to join the U.S. Army–she wanted to do it for herself, and for her father.

Erika set to work building a community of support around Sarai. Sarai joined Nuestra Jornada, a support group for students experiencing loss and grief. She also joined Girls Empowerment, a group organized and run by Erika and fellow CIS Site Coordinator Maria Gonzales, where inspiring women from the community are invited to speak to students and discuss their career pathways. Erika connected Sarai to the Santa Fe CONNECT Network for additional support, and helped her set up meetings with her teachers and counselor to make sure she was on track to graduate.

On one very difficult day, Sarai remembers, she came to Erika and confided that she was feeling so discouraged that she felt she should give up on her goals and return to Guatemala. Erika sat down with her and they talked through those feelings. “At the end of that conversation, I felt really supported,” Sarai said. “What we talked about that day really stayed with me and motivated me to stay, do better in school, and work on my goal of graduating.”

Sarai always showed tremendous strength and perseverance, says Erika–and her hard work paid off. She improved her attendance and gained new confidence. “From the timid girl who had difficulty advocating for herself,” Erika says, “Sarai is definitely now able to speak up for herself and ask for support when she needs it.”

96% of school staff respondents agreed that Site Coordinators make a positive difference in students’ lives, according to our 2022 School Staff Survey.
A Community Story

Every year, our wonderful volunteer tutors make an impact on students’ lives and learning. A unique connection is made when a volunteer can teach a student in their native language, as well as relate to their lived experiences, because they grew up in the same community and attended the same schools. Here are three stories about these volunteers this year making a difference.

**Clarissa** is a beloved bilingual math tutor at her alma mater, Capital High School. One of her Spanish-speaking students testifies, “she has been a great math tutor, and a great friend. Thank you for giving me the best tutor and teacher I have ever had.”

“Tutoring at Capital High has been an honor. As a Capital High graduate, class of 2010,” Clarissa says, “this school has a special place in my heart. Being able to tutor such amazing students in both Spanish and English on the subject I enjoy the most—math—has been a great experience.”

**Irma**, a junior at Mandela International Magnet School (MIMS), is prized as a bilingual science tutor at Capital High School. Irma is an ambitious student in her own right, pursuing the challenging Diploma Program at her International Baccalaureate high school while also making time to volunteer with Communities In Schools. She wants to give back because she feels fortunate to be able to pursue such a rigorous educational path. In addition to Capital High, Irma hopes to volunteer this year at Sweeney Elementary, which she attended.

“Irma has impressed me since I first met with her,” said Adrian Sotelo, the Site Coordinator who connected Irma with students at Capital High. “She was here to do the work and do it well, and she approached the work with an inspiring growth mindset. For example, she worked with a monolingual student who needed biology tutoring, and Irma took on the task while taking a biology class herself. She used her own class notes, putting heads together with her student when the material was new to her and working it out together.”

“Volunteering with CIS to me means giving back to the community through the kids that are building it,” says Irma. “I love sharing the feeling of when everything clicks, and being able to be a part of that means the world to me.”

**Cassy**, a senior at MIMS, has always been a strong student. She was selected by Breakthrough Santa Fe, a Communities In Schools community partner, as having the potential to be the first person in her family to go to college. Last year, Cassy chose to give back to students at her former middle school, El Camino Real Academy, as a bilingual math and science tutor.

“The most meaningful thing about working with CIS is getting to experience that moment when the student you are working with finally gets it,” says Cassy. “It’s like this switch flips in their heads, and their eyes light up, after what they have been struggling to understand finally makes sense.”
Our Impact
2021-2022

- Services provided for 6,500 students
- 13,458 direct service hours
- Over 50 programs, groups, and initiatives
- 93,000 meals delivered to families
- $18,216 provided in emergency funds to 40 families
- 100% of schools with academic goals met or made progress toward their target
- 87% of CIS seniors graduated
- 80% of CIS students improved school attendance
- 71% of CIS students made progress with social and emotional learning
Communities In Schools is making a positive difference in our students’ lives because students who in the past were labeled as ‘likely to drop out,’ are now not only staying in school, but showing engagement and happiness while at school.”

— Teacher at Capital High School

Our Impact

The proof is in the data.

Since starting our Capital High School Site Coordinator program in 2013, schoolwide programs and groups led by our Coordinators— as well as many of our wonderful community partners and hardworking school staff—have contributed to Capital High School growing its graduation rate by nearly 30% over the past decade.

Groups and programs available to all students include:

• After-school tutoring
• Basic needs support (groceries, clothing, school supplies)
• NM Dream Team, an immigrant youth-led group working on leadership development and empowerment
• Jaguar Connection, a program created by CIS Site Coordinators for middle school students to visit and enroll at Capital High
• XY Zone, a peer support group for boys led by CIS Site Coordinators to advance social-emotional learning
• And many more!

Schoolwide programs organized by our Site Coordinators — such as holiday festivals, parent-teacher events, sports teams, and community art projects — further contribute to schoolwide camaraderie, support, and achievement.

Our impact is particularly impressive among our students receiving targeted supports. These students are those at highest risk of dropping out—facing challenges like family poverty, incarcerated parents, food insecurity, language barriers, and more. We have consistently seen graduation rates above 80% with this group of high-risk students, many of whom would have dropped out without the strong relationship they built with a Site Coordinator.
Thank you to everyone who donated so generously to support our students and our work this year.
We are grateful for the generous support of the above foundations and corporations that made donations of $500 or more between July 1, 2021, and June 30, 2022.
FINANCIAL SNAPSHOT

Revenue: $1,968,325

- Individual & Business: 35%
- Foundations: 39%
- Public Schools: 21%
- Government: 5%

Expenses: $1,838,359

- Program: 80%
- General & Admin.: 6%
- Fundraising: 11%
- Outreach: 3%
Our Mission:
To surround students with a community of support, empowering them to stay in school and achieve in life.

Join us! Support our work with a generous donation, or volunteer your time to support our students with their academic goals as well as basic needs.

Make a gift at www.CISNM.org/donate, and inquire about volunteering with Kate Mitchell, our Volunteer Program Manager, at kmitchell@cisnm.org.

Thank you for your generous support!

Contact us:
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“Communities In Schools has provided many of my students through the years with clothing, supplies, social resources, food, and kindness with love. Communities In Schools is a gem. THANK YOU!”

— Santa Fe Public Schools Teacher