



*10 YEARS OF
COMPASSION,
CARE AND
CONNECTION*



Dear Friends of Communities In Schools,

First of all, THANK YOU! Our entire team is deeply grateful for the strong support that you—our community—has shown for our work and mission: To surround students with a community of support empowering them to stay in school and achieve in life.

Over the past three years of uncertainty and hardship, our commitment to students, families, school staff and community partners has never wavered. Many of our students and families are still struggling with grief and loss from the pandemic as well as experiencing heightened economic and emotional pressure and trauma. We are reminded daily of the significant number of folks living in poverty—struggling to buy food, threatened with eviction and utility shut-offs, and living in subpar housing. With a dedicated full-time Community Navigator now on our team, we are able to quickly mitigate financial barriers for some of our community's most vulnerable families whose school-age children's lives are made more stable by this critical support. We've dedicated more resources for social-emotional learning (SEL) opportunities across all of our schools, ensuring that students feel safe, protected, valued, and able to learn. Every day, our dedicated school-based Site Coordinators work with amazing school principals, school staff, and community partners to ensure all kids have what they need to focus on learning, and thrive.

Anchored in the belief that trusting, caring RELATIONSHIPS coupled with strong community engagement, collaboration, connection, and care transforms lives, Communities In Schools' community schools strategy is working; playing a critical part in the health and well-being of students, schools, and our community.

Thank you for being a part of this work and our journey.

Sincerely,

Julia Bergen, Executive Director, Communities In Schools of New Mexico

**Empowering Students
to Succeed Since 2012!**

Did you know ...

- **100% of the students we serve qualify for free or reduced price school meals.**
- **Our 17 site coordinators bring over 50 programs, groups and initiatives into Santa Fe Public Schools.**
- **In 2021-22, 100% of the schools Communities In Schools serves met or made progress toward their target goal of improving attendance or academics.**
- **87% of Communities In Schools' seniors graduated in 2022.**
- **The graduation rate at Capital High School has risen by almost 30 points since Communities In Schools established the Site Coordinator Program at the school in 2013!**



Carson Honor Society

Each year, the Carson Honor Society Award recognizes Communities In Schools' seniors who have overcome incredible odds and demonstrated exceptional ambition, perseverance, compassion, and resilience on the path to graduation. Last June, three seniors were honored in a lovely ceremony at Capital High and each received an award of \$2,500. We are so proud of these students! Please call us to learn how you can support our 2023 Seniors!

NEWS & UPDATES

Mid-Year Data Report

2022-2023 School Year

- 433 students are receiving targeted individualized support from a Communities In Schools Site Coordinator.
- 1,140 students and families participated in 391 hours of family engagement activities.
- 50,826 meals have been provided to families in need, thanks to our partnership with the Food Depot.
- 112 families were connected to resources through our partnership with Santa Fe County Unite Us CONNECT Network, addressing needs such as employment, housing, utilities, food assistance, transportation, financial supports and other resources.



Surrounding Kids with a Community of Support

By Blanca Ortiz, Site Coordinator at Nava Elementary School

Tumbleweeds Magazine, Winter Issue 2023

On July 28, 2021, Karen's world came crashing down. Her husband, Hugo, came down with COVID and was taken away by ambulance. When he arrived at the hospital, his blood oxygen level was only 20%. Doctors induced a coma. Hugo never woke up.

Karen was devastated and felt completely lost. "I was trapped in a cycle of sadness, a cycle of pain," Karen told me.

When I met Karen, Valentina, and Mario, my first impression was that no one was hearing their story. No one was allowing them to simply speak their pain. They were being directed and told what they should do, but they were not being supported. I did not want to be just another person telling Karen what she should do. I would say, "This is something you can do if you want your children to be more successful. I'm happy to walk through it with you. I'm not expecting you to have the mental and emotional capacity to take this on by yourself. I'm here to support you."

Read the full article at <https://bit.ly/CISCommunityOfSupport>



ON THE RADIO

Have you heard us on the airwaves in Santa Fe? If you missed our recent radio spots, catch up and hear all about our work surrounding students in high-poverty schools in northern New Mexico with a community of support.

- Listen to Site Coordinator Adrian Sotelo and Executive Director Julia Bergen talk on KTRC about our work and our tenth anniversary: <https://bit.ly/CISonKTRC>
- Listen to Julia Bergen and our Board Member Dion Silva on KTRC discussing the challenges our families are grappling with as the cost of living rises: <https://bit.ly/CISonKTRC2>
- Listen to Julia Bergen on KUNM discuss the impossible choices some students face: <https://bit.ly/CISonKUNM>

SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL LEARNING

Last year, children across northern New Mexico returned to classrooms after months of school closures due to COVID-19. The impact of those closures on students' emotional wellbeing has been profound.

This fall, school staff who responded to our Needs Assessment surveys agreed that 73% of students were experiencing emotional distress due to trauma and 60% of respondents noted that they were concerned about student mental health. To meet this critical need, our Site Coordinators have put together a wide variety of programs and peer support groups.

Here is a glimpse into a few events and programs that our Site Coordinators have organized this year:

SEL DAY

Capital High staff member Rachel Flores along with our four amazing Capital High Site Coordinators organized the school's first Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) Day. Teachers were given a slate of SEL activities to choose from to offer their classes, such as breathwork, meditation, and team-building exercises--and the entire school participated! The event included an assembly featuring a performance by local rapper Def-i and DJ 13pieces (pictured here with our team) with an inspiring message for students about pursuing academic and life success.



Thank you to Capital High Principal Jaime Holliday and the entire CHS team for making this day possible

THE MOUNTAIN CENTER

This fall, 12 CIS students from Capital High went on an SEL field trip to The Mountain Center. Students took part in team-building exercises and then put those skills to the test on a challenging ropes course called the Wild High Woozy!



FAMILY NIGHT

Chaparral Elementary School Site Coordinator Becca Hulick worked with school staff to strengthen the school community with the school's first Family Night at La Farge Library. The event included family poetry, pizza, crafts, library cards, and door prizes. Over 150 people came!

"Chaparral is a great place to be! We love our kids and now with CIS, we are better able to meet the needs of our students and families!"

-Chaparral Elementary School Principal Erica Martinez-Maestas

WITH GRATITUDE



DION SILVA
President - Santa Fe Region
Enterprise Bank & Trust

BOARD MEMBER SPOTLIGHT: DION SILVA

Dion Silva has been a Communities In Schools board member since 2018 and serves as our board treasurer. Dion's role with CIS has always been very personal and meaningful to him. His mother, who passed away from cancer, was a social worker and school counselor at Alameda Junior High (now Aspen Community School). "In my own way, in my own role, I try to help students just as my mom did. My role and support for CIS is in honor of her dedication to children and their success," Dion says. This year, in his role as Santa Fe Region President at Enterprise Bank & Trust, he led Enterprise's recognition of CIS's 10th anniversary with a \$10,000 gift. Thank you, Dion, for your inspiring support!

THANK YOU, FUNDERS

Thank you to ALL our donors and funders for supporting our work and giving back. Thank you to these generous organizations who have given since the beginning of this school year:



FUNDER TESTIMONIAL: SANTA FE COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

“Communities In Schools of New Mexico has engaged, inspired, and uplifted countless local children and families. We’re incredibly proud to support them as they continue laying the groundwork for a lifetime of educational success and opportunity.”

—Santa Fe Community Foundation President & CEO Christopher Goett

THANK YOU TO OUR LEADERSHIP: Rachel White, PhD, Board President; Rebecca Estrada, Board Vice President; Dion Silva, Board Treasurer; Natalie Deibel, Board Secretary; Julia Bergen, Executive Director; Elaine Brown, Board Member; Sarah Cook, Board Member; William Feinberg, Board Member; Rachel Gantt, Board Member; Anna Vargas Gutierrez, Board Member; Joyce Idema, Board Member; Todd Lovato, Board Member; Christina Price, MD, Board Member