



**COMMUNITIES
IN SCHOOLS
FALL 2014
IMPACT REPORT**



Unlocking the Full Potential
of Students in New Mexico

“The depth and breadth of emotional trauma that a growing number of kids have to endure — brought about in large part by poverty — impedes their capacity to thrive in school and in life. Until communities begin to seriously address these challenges, our young people will continue to struggle. The long-term socio/economic health of every community depends on adopting positive strategies to ensure kids stay in school, succeed in school and thrive — and Communities In Schools provides the best model for doing just that.”

JULIA BERGEN, STATE DIRECTOR, COMMUNITIES IN SCHOOLS OF NEW MEXICO



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. Now in its third year of operation, Communities In Schools of New Mexico is serving 4,600 students in 10 schools, helping to break the cycle of poverty, school failure and under-employment.

This report outlines the accomplishments of Communities In Schools of New Mexico during the 2013-14 school year, as well as projections for the coming 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.

“At-risk youth face untold hazards in their environments, and one by one these burdens pile up until a student just can’t stand the weight any longer. These students aren’t walking out the front door of their school in protest. Instead, the floor is giving way under their feet.”

DANIEL CARDINALI, PRESIDENT, COMMUNITIES IN SCHOOLS

ABOUT COMMUNITIES IN SCHOOLS OF NEW MEXICO

Our mission is simple, to surround students with a community of support, empowering them to stay in school and achieve in life. Communities In Schools is the only dropout prevention organization proven to both lower dropout rates and increase graduation rates (based on a five-year national study conducted by ICF International and underwritten by The Atlantic Philanthropies). 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, tutoring and much more.



THE STATE DIRECTOR

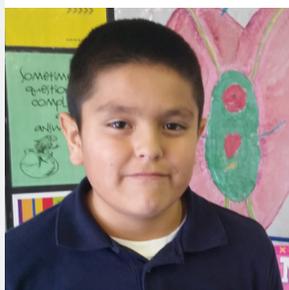
JULIA BERGEN has been leading Communities In Schools of New Mexico since the organization opened its state office in Santa Fe nearly two years ago. Bergen continued the momentum that was generated by two local champions of public education, Bill and Georgia Carson, who reached out to bring the CIS model to their existing non-profit, Santa Fe for Students. She is driven by the realization that far too many students are victims of poverty, food insecurity, violence, homelessness and more. As a result, they come to school traumatized, rattled and hungry — unable to focus and engage in the learning environment. Julia, along with her school-based Site Coordinator team, has integrated the Communities In Schools framework into seven schools in the past two years and attributes their success to their focus on building meaningful relationships with students, families and community partners. “There’s no judgment,” says Julia. “We just want to help. Our staff creates a feeling of safety and a depth of trust that a lot of children and families don’t automatically find at school.” Each student’s unique circumstances are taken into consideration to identify exactly what type of support the family needs. By embracing a comprehensive approach to social services, staff are able to address pressing core issues and establish the stability students need in order to succeed. “Communities In Schools’ support means that more students are equipped to learn and teachers are better able to focus on teaching because students are showing up at school nourished, well rested and ready to learn.”

Communities In Schools recognizes that if basic needs are not met children are unable to learn. Working with each school's staff, 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 SITE COORDINATOR

SHAWNA JONES, Communities In Schools Site Coordinator at El Camino Real Elementary School, previously worked in the Peace Corps as a family and youth advocate in El Salvador, but she says the problems in New Mexico are very much the same. "Many kids here have the same socioeconomic status as if they were living in El Salvador," says Shawna. "Extreme poverty, food insecurity, tense relationships with parents and moving all of the time." Despite the challenges and emotional demands, Shawna does whatever it takes to help the students who come to her, and her unwavering commitment leads to inspiring results. Last year, she met a second grader with angry, aggressive behavior problems. After learning he wanted to be a soccer player like his dad, she created a soccer program for all second-graders — simply for the benefit of this one child. The student channeled his emotions into the competition and became the best player on the team, boosting his self-confidence and earning him new friends. His entire demeanor changed, all of his issues disappeared and suddenly he wanted to be the best at reading and math, too. "The students love her to death — the parents, too," raves Debbie Tapia, a parent volunteer. "It would be very hard without her here, the kids wouldn't know where to go. They need her and we need more people like her to help these kids."



THE STUDENT

MIGUEL LUJAN is a ten year-old 5th grader at Cesar Chavez Elementary School whose grades were all D's and F's. His parents are separated, and he and his younger brother both live with his grandma, who contacted Communities In Schools to initiate tutoring services for Miguel last year. "Getting bad grades made me feel bad and I wanted to do better," says Miguel. "I was trying, but it didn't work at all." In addition to twice weekly tutoring services, Communities In Schools also helps the family with food during the week, snacks for over the weekend and school supplies like backpacks and notebooks. Now, Miguel's grades are up to A's and B's and he has aspirations to go to college and become a Navy Seal. "Miguel is really motivated and he comes to tutoring ready and prepared to do his homework," says Hilda Perez-Vargas, the school's Site Coordinator. "He's really turned things around — not only in his grades, but in his confidence, too. Now he knows he can do the work."

At Communities In Schools, we work with everyone to change the picture of education for more than 1.3 million kids nationwide every year. We do this by

- 1. keeping kids in school**
- 2. doing whatever it takes to eliminate barriers and**
- 3. never giving up, on anyone**

Communities In Schools of New Mexico

2013–14 School Year Highlights

- Four elementary schools, two middle schools and one high school were served.
- During the 2013-14 school year, 3,765 students received Integrated Student Supports from Communities In Schools of New Mexico. All 3,765 students received Level One* or school-wide prevention services, and 320 students received Level Two** targeted and sustained interventions.

PROMOTED

95%

ATTENDANCE 56%

ACADEMICS

78%

BEHAVIOR

93%

- **95%** 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.
- **56%** 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.
- **78%** 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, include improving class grades, overall GPA, standardized test scores, or homework completion.
- **93%** of the students in grades K–12 who received targeted and sustained services with a behavioral goal met their goal and decreased their suspensions. Overall, 44.3% of these students were suspension-free while participating in CIS.

*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.

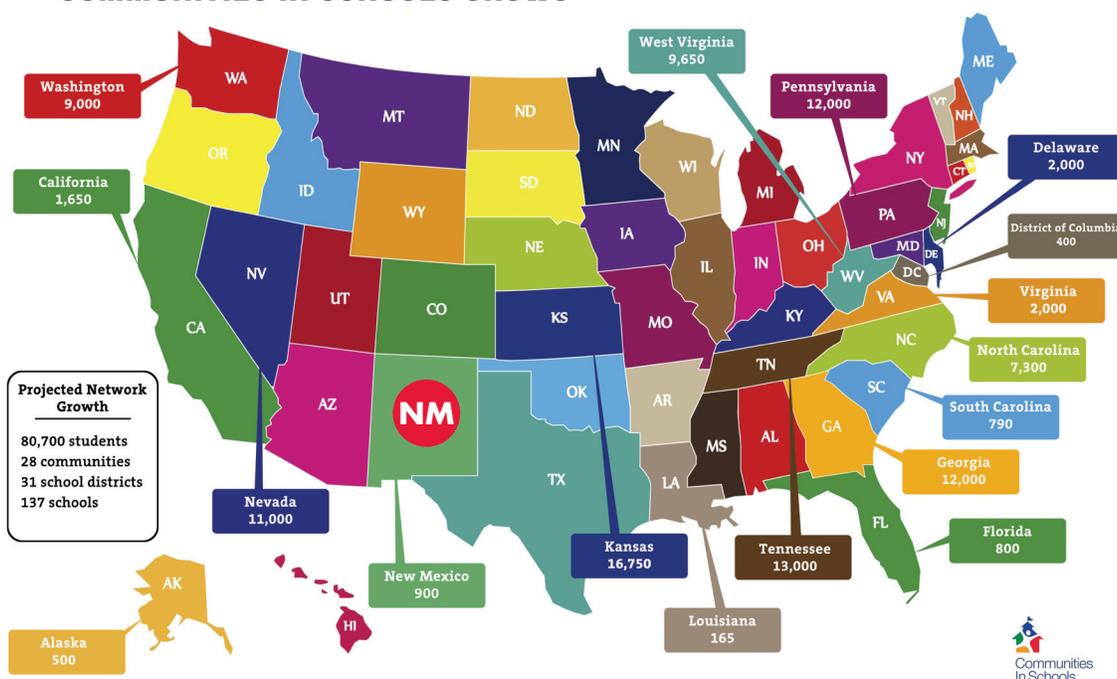
PROJECTED GROWTH IN THE COMING YEAR

In order to meet increasing demands, the Communities In Schools of New Mexico now in its third year, is expanding in the 2014-2015 school year to serve:

- 3 NEW SCHOOLS
- 900 MORE STUDENTS

The expansion increases the number of schools currently served by Communities In Schools of New Mexico from 7 to 10 and now means that a total of approximately 4,600 students will benefit from the support of trained Site Coordinators working inside those schools.

COMMUNITIES IN SCHOOLS GROWS



“Some of these kids just want to feel loved. You can give them food or help them with math, but if you give them a smile and tell them you’re happy that they’re there, it’s monumental for them. I strive to be the most positive person on campus because I know that’s what’s going to make them want to come to school.”

SHAWNA JONES, COMMUNITIES IN SCHOOLS SITE COORDINATOR,
EL CAMINO REAL ACADEMY