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Communities In Schools thanks PXP for their ongoing support and commitment to the children of Houston

Since 2010, PXP has generously donated \$150,000 to CIS, enabling 30,000 kids to be served each year. This year's most recent \$50,000 gift, will aid in keeping kids in school on 100 campuses throughout the Houston Area.

Special Thanks to PXP Executive VP and General Counsel John F. Wombwell for his spirit of community and dedication to Communities In Schools of Houston.

**PXP**  
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## U.S. Department of Education selects CIS of Houston as successful program targeting at-risk youth

Communities In Schools of Houston is excited to have been invited by the U.S. Department of Education (DOE) to participate in an important national study that seeks to highlight best practices that help youth at risk of dropping out of high school prepare for postsecondary education. Based on a rigorous nomination process, including conversations with national experts, meetings with officials at the U.S. Department of Education, and a review of existing research, Communities In Schools of Houston has been identified as one of 15 sites across the country at the forefront of tackling this urgent and persistent problem in education, preparing high school students for college.

The study, Strategies for Preparing At-Risk Youth for Postsecondary Success, sponsored by the U.S. Department of Education, will include detailed case studies of each of the 15 nominated sites. Through these case studies, teachers, principals and administrators across the country will have the opportunity to learn from Communities In Schools of Houston's experiences and can identify strategies they might be able to implement to better serve their at-risk youth.

In order to develop these case studies, a national research team will visit the CIS program at HISD's Lamar High School in March. The two-day visit will include interviews with individual district and school staff, key external partners (e.g., higher education institutions, community-based organizations, social services, local businesses, etc.), and focus groups with parents. Ultimately, the project aims to provide information that is useful to other practitioners and policymakers in implementing promising strategies. CIS of Houston considers it a great honor and opportunity to be able to highlight its programs and partnering schools and, ultimately, aid in providing best practices helping high school students prepare for college.

## U.S. Secretary of Education visits Lee High School



L to R: Lee High School Principal Monica Quintero, Education Secretary Arne Duncan, CIS Project Manager Neysa Gavion, and HISD Superintendent Terry Grier

On his way to the NBA All-Star Game festivities, U.S. Department of Education Secretary Arne Duncan stopped at Lee High School to get a firsthand look at the Houston Independent School District's (HISD) reform effort. Lee High School is a part of HISD's "Apollo 20" program, aimed at turning around some of the district's lowest-performing schools.

Duncan was joined by HISD Superintendent Terry Grier, Lee High School Principal Monica Quintero, district and school leaders, teachers, tutors, students and parents for a roundtable discussion. Participants shared their experiences as part of the Apollo 20 efforts and the impact on student achievement so far.

During the visit, Secretary Duncan took a moment to meet Lee's CIS Project Manager Neysa Gavion and express his admiration for Communities In Schools.

**"I love CIS, they should be in every school."** Duncan enthusiastically states.

## CIS' nominee wins partnership award

CIS of Houston CONGRATULATES **Frances Snipes** and **The University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center** on receiving the 2013 TAPE Partnership Program Award for Mentors.

Each year the Texas Association of Partners in Education (TAPE) recognizes exemplary partners and partnership programs across the state. Award winners represent volunteers, community organizations, government agencies, institutions of higher education, businesses, and school districts, whose commitment to education partnerships have made a positive impact on the youth in their community. Francis was nominated by CIS for her efforts as Program Coordinator for the MD Anderson Health Adventures program.

For the past four years, Francis has been the driving force behind the mentor program, recruiting volunteers and coordinating the activities of the student mentees. Begun 16 years ago to show kids how math and science can lead to careers at hospitals, Health Adventures brings in students who are bright and motivated but considered at risk for dropping out of school. The program, a collaborative effort of MD Anderson's Department of Volunteer Services and Communities In Schools of Houston, has served nearly 300 kids since its inception. This year, 20 CIS elementary students have been paired with supportive mentors and introduced to different career opportunities within a hospital setting.

Mentors and students meet one Saturday a month from September thru April each year. Throughout the program year students are exposed to careers in radiation, oncology, human resources, pharmacy, rehabilitation, and much more. In addition, each career module is accompanied with hands on experiences. On any given day, students may have wheelchair races as they learn about rehabilitation services, gown up and try on stethoscopes for a nursing unit, maneuver a robotic arm in an operating room, or make invisible ink as part of a laboratory tour. Most important, each child completes the program with the motivation and encouragement to stay in school and envision a better future.

**THANK YOU Frances and MD Anderson for your continuous support of the Health Adventures program and the students of Communities In Schools – We Can't Do It Alone!**



*Frances Snipes (c) accepting award from TAPE representatives.*

## CIS is Giving Kids a Reason to Smile



On February 7th, CIS' Project MOVE Dental took 124 students to the **The University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston (UTHealth) School of Dentistry "Give Kids a Smile Day"**, which provided them free restorative dental care. Students from CIS sites at Ridgecrest, Berry, and Buffalo Creek Elementary Schools, and, for the first time, Alief-Taylor High School were able to receive the much needed dental care. Dental health is fundamental for all children, yet tooth decay continues to be one of the most common childhood diseases. Left untreated, tooth decay can have serious implications for a child's long-term health and well-being, leading to absenteeism or the inability to function in the classroom.

Pre-screening for the annual event took place during Project MOVE Dental van visits to the campuses to provide exams and cleanings. The UTHealth School of Dentistry then coordinated additional restorative care at the Give Kids A Smile event. Faculty, staff and senior dental and dental hygiene students from the UTHealth School of Dentistry volunteered to provide the critical dental services. Dental care is extremely costly, however CIS connects and navigates students to this much needed care, at no cost to the parents. The support given to the students for Give Kids a Smile Day is estimated to be worth more than \$20,000.

CIS is pleased to have such a seasoned partnership with UTHealth School of Dentistry. Over the past twelve years, tens of thousands of students have received free dental care worth more than \$1,000,000.



# A special thank you to our Donors (11/1/12 – 3/30/13)

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## Spring Oaks MS: Onward Bound!



CIS Spring Oaks students and volunteers

Twenty-four CIS students at Spring Oaks Middle School joined thousands of other Houston Area students at the **Houston Hispanic Forum's 27th Annual Career and Education Day**. The Forum is Houston's premier resource for Hispanic students and families as they pursue educational and career goals, and the field trip is part of Spring Oak's school-wide, year-long College and Career push. Activities at the Forum included meeting with college representatives, learning about careers, exploring financial aid options, reviewing the college admission process and participating in student-parent workshops. CIS Project Manager John Vargas explains, "The ultimate goal for the day is for students to walk out of the event with the tools they need to prepare and develop a plan that will put them on the pathway to college."

Special thanks to Spring Oaks' Parents and Staff who helped facilitate the day's activities.

# CIS Elsik Artist Sculpts Her Future



## Kudos to CIS Elsik High School's Verence Bautista!



Verence received a Gold Key Award for her submission (Angel Del Infierno) to **The Scholastic Art & Writing Awards of Harris County**. The award is the largest and most prestigious recognition program and source of scholarships for creative teens in the U.S..



[www.cishouston.org](http://www.cishouston.org)



# Kids Matter

Empowering kids to stay in school and achieve in life. **SPRING 2013**

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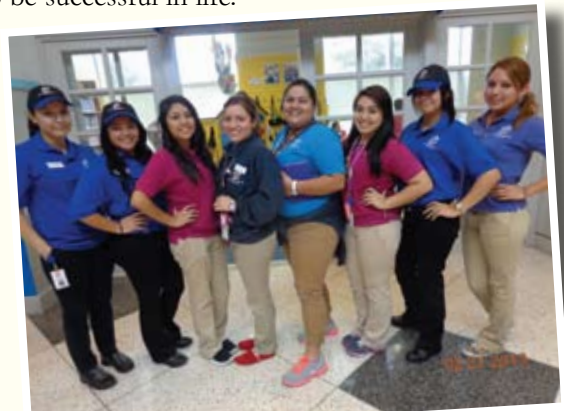
## Milby High Schoolers embark upon the Children's Museum

For nearly six years, CIS @ Milby High School has partnered with the Children's Museum of Houston (CMH) to employ motivated Milby students. The positions, which range from ticket booth sales to catering, are initially seasonal but can transition to long-term depending on the student's performance.

Most of Milby's students stay on year-long. Youth gain valuable experience with resume writing, dressing, and interviewing for the positions – but that's just the beginning. "The students who are hired learn team building, self esteem, responsibility, accountability, and a host of other skills and traits that will help them be successful beyond their position at CMH," explains Milby Project Manager Rene Gonzalez, "We want our kids to be successful in life."



CIS Milby's new CMH employees (l to r): Irma, Carlos, and Amanda



CIS Milby's new CMH employees (l to r): Irma, Sonia, Daniella, Cecilia, Sayri, Jennifer, Gloria, and Alma