



Communities
In Schools

Chicago

Communities In Schools of Chicago Tenacity Awards

Each year, Communities In Schools (CIS) of Chicago recognizes hard-working teenagers who don't normally get attention for high-school success – teens who have stumbled academically, struggled with school attendance or behavior, dealt with tremendous personal challenges, or even considered dropping out of school. CIS of Chicago's **Tenacity Awards** are presented to students who are receiving guidance from our highly trained student supports managers, and have found the drive to work through challenges and improve their school performances with our help. By working with dedicated CIS of Chicago staff at their schools, they have become more responsible, accountable and goal-focused to make huge strides in their academic and personal lives.

These students have received Tenacity Awards since we first launched the program:

	Awardees & Their Schools
2014 <i>(5 winners)</i>	Jacqueline Torres, Carson Elementary School Victorious Hillie, Chicago Talent Development High School Diamond Peoples, Hope College Prep High School Kiara Rodriguez, Gage Park High School Jakayla Mason, Westcott Elementary School
2015 <i>(5 winners)</i>	Ronny Ramirez, Carson Elementary School Tiara Anderson, Gage Park High School Dontray Holiday, Hirsch Metropolitan High School Gabriel Abron, Hope College Prep High School Anthony Johnson, Westcott Elementary School
2016 <i>(5 winners)</i>	David Flores, Carson Elementary School Zari Findley, Gage Park High School Marlo McMillian, Hope College Prep Noah Lopez, Rowe Elementary School Jermerica Williams, Westcott Elementary
2017 <i>(8 winners)</i>	Aaliya Cruz, Chavez Elementary School Brianna Green, Dirksen Elementary School Michael Odeneal, Dyett High School Diamond Stokes, Gage Park High School Christian Garcia, Hayt Elementary School Aaliyah Bell, Hope College Prep Gevaris Wallace, Rowe Elementary School Donte Gearing, Westcott Elementary School

Students are singled out for their grit, perseverance and improvement, and are surprised with a certificate of achievement, a small public ceremony at their schools, and a gift card loaded with cash value. The program is fully



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funded by the generosity of CIS of Chicago employees and alumni employees. In 2014, recipients received \$200; in 2015, \$250; 2016, \$250 and, courtesy of donations from the K.W.O.E. Hope Foundation, mini iPads; and in 2017, \$250 gift cards and a “summer fun” exploration gift bag that included games, tickets to live and filmed theatrical performances, and recommendations for free summer activities. Here are two examples of how students used their awards:

- Westcott eighth-grader Jakayla used her gift card to purchase a new backpack and new shoes for school. And then had money left over to spend on a serious new hairdo to boost her self-confidence.
- Kiara, a 12th-grader from Gage Park H.S., purchased the bike she'd be wanting for a very long time. She used the new pair of wheels to get to her summer job and her volunteer activities.