



Communities  
In Schools®

Chicago

# Communities In Schools of Chicago Annual Report

2023-24



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# Letter from Our Leaders

Dear CIS friends and supporters,

When we reflect on the 2023-24 school year and the challenges our young people and our city navigated, it's easy to think the problems are insurmountable. But we believe that as the challenges have gotten more complex, the need for CIS of Chicago has grown – because access to education creates opportunity for each and every one of the students we serve.

Our team at CIS is there in the school building, supporting students and schools with the resources that help young people stay on track. Michelle, for example, is one of the many students who benefited from CIS' work.

Fourth-grader Michelle is compassionate and creative. She's curious about nature, loves animals, and enjoys expressing herself through art. At the beginning of her third-grade year, though, Michelle needed some extra help boosting her self-confidence.

She enrolled in CIS' Intensive Program and started meeting with Ms. Hernandez, the CIS team member based at her school. Ms. Hernandez provided one-on-one support, tailored to Michelle's strengths and challenges, and she helped Michelle reframe negative thoughts about her abilities or her friendships into positive ones.

Michelle started writing down notes for herself with phrases like "I believe in myself," "I can do hard things," and "I am loved," and she was able to draw on the self-affirmations when she needed them. Michelle also joined Ms. Hernandez's girls' group, where she further built her self-esteem and developed positive relationships with her peers.

When it came time to recognize a student with a CIS Tenacity Award at the end of the school year, Michelle was top of mind. She had experienced so much growth, not only in her self-confidence, but in her grades, her emotional regulation, and her relationships with teachers and classmates. "Michelle is continuously evolving into a more resilient and confident student," Ms. Hernandez said. "I am so proud of how far she has come and already so proud of how far she will go."

Michelle's story is inspiring, and it's indicative of CIS' impact on individuals' lives. When students have access to support and resources provided by caring adults in their communities, they are empowered to learn and grow.

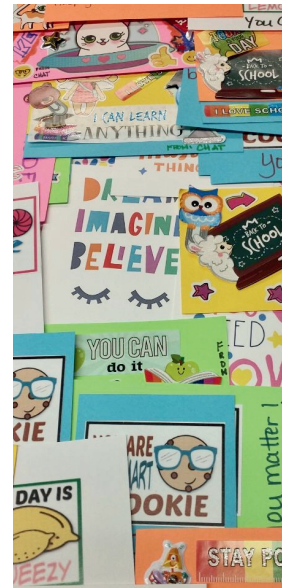
Our impact in the 2023-24 school year was extensive, but our presence was also very personal. We couldn't do this work without your personal commitment to our mission and vision as well. Thank you for joining us in surrounding Chicago's students with a community of support.

**Jane Mentzinger**

CEO

**Mark Brady**

Board Chair



*Names in this story have been changed to protect student privacy.*

# Opportunities for Impact in 2023-24

*Back to normal.* From the outside looking in, it appears that life for Chicago students has returned to life pre-pandemic. But those inside the school building experience a different reality. They know all too well that in the last four years, the challenges faced by our city's young people have only increased.



- Since the pandemic, the rates of chronic absenteeism – or students missing 10% or more of school – hover around 40 percent. This means that 2 out of 5 Chicago students are missing critical days of learning during the school year.
- Mental health issues are on the rise for young people, as is community violence. According to A Better Chicago's 2024 Youth Survey, 94 percent of Chicago youth viewed mental health and well-being as a problem. That same survey revealed that nearly two-thirds of Chicago's young people had witnessed community violence, and a quarter said they witnessed violence weekly.
- National trends also indicate the growing impact of firearm violence on youth. Since 2020, firearm-related injury surpassed motor vehicle crashes as the leading cause of death for youth. In 2024, U.S. Surgeon General, Dr. Vivek Murthy, issued an Advisory on Firearm Violence, declaring it a public health crisis.
- These challenges are compounded by changing demographics in the district. While the rate of economically disadvantaged students stayed steady at 70 percent in 2023-24, the rate of English language learners increased to nearly a quarter of all Chicago students.

*Absenteeism. Mental health challenges. Community violence. Changing demographics.* These issues place increased pressure on schools and teachers as they work to prepare the next generation of Chicagoans for success.

Students cannot learn – and they cannot access the resources they need – if they are not **in school**. They cannot grow as individuals if their mental and emotional well-being is not addressed. They cannot envision their future if life seems hopeless.

CIS of Chicago is present in more than a third of Chicago public schools, surrounding students with a community of support. We provide Chicago youth with the one-on-one guidance and resources they need to achieve.

During the 2023-24 school year, our team supported 74,300 students at 238 Chicago Public Schools, more schools than at any other point in our organization's 35-year history. We invite you to learn more about our impact.

# Our Two Core Programs

## Partnership Program, Our Whole-School Approach

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Our Partnership Program helps school leaders and faculty at more than a third of Chicago public schools connect with resources and programs that meet the needs of their entire school communities.

Programs like speaking engagements, field trips, service projects, and tutoring are provided by CIS' network of community partners, all at no cost to schools or students. These programs address six key areas: academic enrichment, arts and culture, college and career readiness, counseling and supportive guidance, health and wellness, and parent and family engagement. They also relieve school leaders and teachers from meeting all of students' varied needs, allowing them to focus on teaching.

Launched in 1988, the Partnership Program is Chicago's longest-running initiative. It fills a gap for educators by connecting their school environments with accessible and relevant resources in their communities and creating more opportunities for their students.



### How we create connections

At the beginning of the school year, our team meets with school leaders to understand their priorities. Some schools are seeking resources that help their students develop conflict resolution skills. Some are interested in field trips that expand their students' horizons. Some want connections to math tutors or eye exams. Whatever their need, CIS' team connects them with local community organizations that help their students succeed.

The programs and resources that CIS connects have been shown to positively impact students' reading and math, both leading indicators of graduation.

### Our Partnership Program's impact

In the 2023-24 school year, CIS' Partnership Program connected 238 Chicago Public Schools with 2,655 programs and services provided by 201 community organizations. We also furnished 10,200 families with items like backpacks, school supplies, and hygiene products that supported students' essential needs.

# Partnership Highlights from the 2023-24 School Year

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## Opportunities for Self-Expression, Advocacy, and Change

When Chicago middle-schoolers needed ways to express themselves after exposure to violence, our team continued connecting them with Do the Write Thing. The national writing program empowers students to examine the impact that youth violence has on their lives and communicate what they think should be done to reduce its occurrence.

In the 2023-24 school year, 711 students participated in the writing challenge, and two students were named Chicago Do the Write Thing ambassadors – Beautiful Pearson from Parker Community Academy and Rylei Thompson from Arthur Dixon Elementary School. In July 2024, Rylei traveled to D.C. and represented Chicago at the national Do the Write Thing Summit. There, she met with state legislators, shared her perspective, and had her written work bound in the Library of Congress.



## Programs that Prevent Bullying

When Palmer Elementary School sought programs focused on bullying prevention, School Partnership Specialist Marlena connected them with Southpaw Strikes Out Bullying, a program through the Chicago White Sox that includes a visit from White Sox mascot Southpaw. The interactive presentation demonstrated positive ways that young people can prevent bullying and stand up for others.

As a way to boost student engagement during the presentation, Marlena also connected Palmer with 300 packs of baseball cards, donated by a CIS supporter and his 12-year-old son. The baseball cards added a unique takeaway to an already informative and important program.



## Performances that Celebrate Cultural Diversity

When Nixon Elementary School was looking for a dance program during Hispanic Heritage Month, CIS' Arts Partnership Specialist Katia connected them with Ensemble Español, a Spanish dance company and CIS community partner. The program, Ritmos de España, showcased three different Spanish dances and educated students about the instruments they used, which included castanets, hands, and feet.

"The performance was great, and the kids had a blast!" said Ariana, the CIS Student Supports Manager based at Nixon. The performers were also able to present the program in Spanish and English, which met the school's bilingual needs.

# Our Two Core Programs

## Intensive Program, Our Individual-Student Approach

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Our Intensive Program embeds a CIS team member, a Student Supports Manager, in schools across the city to provide direct support to students who need it most.

Launched in 2009, the Intensive Program is CIS of Chicago's individualized approach, allowing our team to delve deeper into the needs of individual students and provide direct services to young people across grade levels.



### How we provide tailored support

Each of the CIS Student Supports Managers in schools supports a caseload of 50 students. Our team members work with their unique school communities to identify students who need extra help with their attendance, behavior, grades, or social and emotional skills.

Student Supports Managers then meet with students, one-on-one and in groups, to help them set goals, and they give students the tools they need to make progress on their goals.

This work helps students come to school and stay in school. It also helps them develop self-awareness, social skills, and responsible decision-making that propels them to continued success.

### Our Intensive Program's impact

In the 2023-24 school year, CIS' school-based team provided 1,517 students at 38 school communities with guidance, goal-setting, and tailored interventions.

These services were delivered at a time when students needed extra support. Instances of school and community violence or lockdown at CIS schools increased by more than 140 percent in 2023-24, compared with the previous year. And instances of students needing behavioral health support increased by more than 40 percent at CIS schools.

These services also had a direct impact on student graduation and promotion rates. Of the students who received ongoing assistance from Student Supports Managers, 99 percent either graduated or were promoted to the next grade, and fewer than 1 percent dropped out.

# Intensive Highlights from the 2023-24 School Year

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## Individual Student Support

Four days a week, CIS Intensive Team members are in the school building, meeting with students one-on-one. When eleventh grader Taylor was having a difficult time building trusting relationships and finding places where they felt safe and comfortable, our team member Bethany provided a safe space. She discussed with Taylor ways to build their self-acceptance, express their emotions, and ask for help when needed. Bethany also provided a space for regular check-ins about grades.

When Taylor was asked why it's important to have someone like Bethany at their school, they said, "People often need help but aren't able to receive support outside of school. Meeting with [Bethany] made me realize that I can find people I am comfortable talking to and create new bonds with people."

## Group Facilitation

Our CIS Student Supports Managers in schools also lead small groups, across grade levels, where students can develop social and emotional skills, express themselves in positive ways, and build relationships with their classmates. Some groups are created for certain grades where extra support is needed. Some are focused on mental health support, friendship-building, or study skill development. At one CIS school on the Southwest Side, Student Supports Manager Liz facilitated a group for middle school girls. The topic of discussion often focused on building and sustaining relationships – with friends, with family members, and with teachers.

At another CIS school, Student Supports Manager Bernadette launched an art club for students not connected with other after-school activities, like athletics. Students met once a week, and they told Bernadette that the art club gave them a space to feel calmer and express themselves.

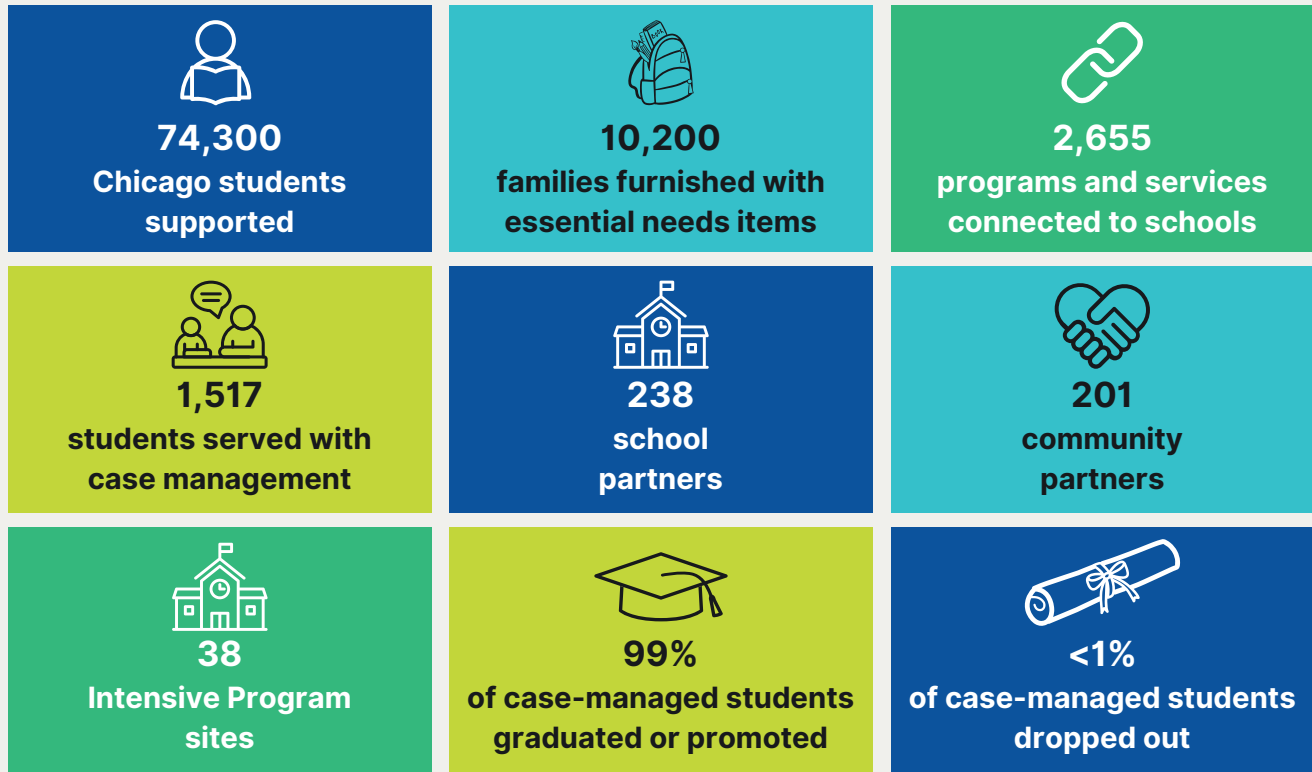
## Resource Connection

Another aspect of the CIS Student Supports Manager role is connecting their school community with resources provided by CIS' community partner network. When team member Jacob recognized a need at his school for community, he empowered the young people to create positive change. Jacob launched No Place for Hate, a student-led school climate improvement program, to address identity-based bullying. The student team coordinated a kindness mail initiative and hosted a training for fourth and fifth graders where students reflected on their own identities and explored personal biases.

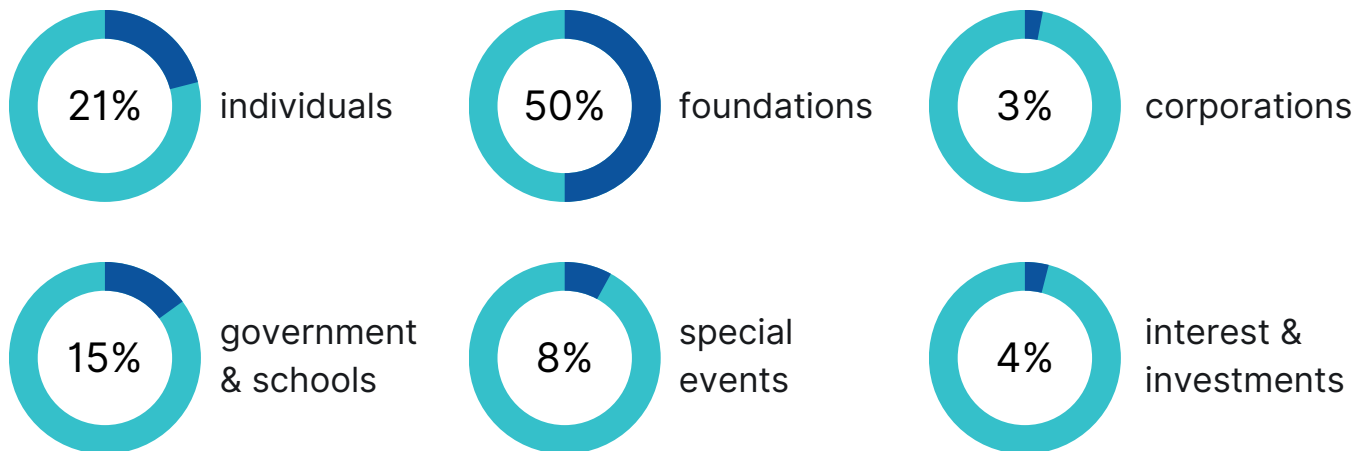




# Our Impact in 2023-24



## Fiscal Year 2024 Revenue – \$8.3 million



# Financial Summary FY24

July 1, 2023 - June 30, 2024

## REVENUE

Individuals	\$1,726,938
Foundations	\$4,189,343
Corporations	\$233,817
Government and Schools	\$1,236,133
Special Events	\$608,907
Interest and Investments	\$295,865

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<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>\$8,291,003</b>
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## EXPENSES

Program	\$5,609,813
Management and General	\$818,563
Fundraising	\$1,376,867

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<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$7,805,243</b>
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## BALANCE SHEET 6/30/24

### ASSETS

Cash and Investments	\$6,862,112
Receivables	\$7,268,804
Other	\$874,159

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<b>Total Assets</b>	<b>\$15,005,075</b>
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### LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS

Liabilities	\$1,075,243
Net Assets	\$13,929,832

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<b>Total Liabilities and Net Assets</b>	<b>\$15,005,075</b>
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# Supporting Our Communities

CIS of Chicago remained committed in 2023-24 to supporting our community in ways that bolstered our shared investment in student success.



## Mental Health First Aid

Our team of Mental Health First Aid providers trained 122 teachers, administrators, program directors, and other caring adults in the certification course. Mental Health First Aid trainings equip adults with the tools to recognize and respond to young people in crisis, and they help create a safety net around our youth so adults will 'say something when they see something.'



## Violence Prevention Catalyst Team

In December 2023, our organization, in partnership with Together Chicago, launched the Violence Prevention Catalyst Team. Chief Partnership Engagement Officer Robin Koelsch helped facilitate the team, which brought together representatives from 30 different schools and community organizations.

The team explored ways to strengthen school-based strategies that provide students with a strong sense of belonging and safety. Their work in the 2023-24 school year created a foundation of learning and engagement for continued growth in years ahead.



## School and Community Partner Training

Our Partnership Team continued to host meetups and trainings for partners that helped them develop important skills, ensure their curriculum met student needs, and created space for collaboration.

In 2023-24, 192 community partners and 172 school partners attended CIS trainings. Community partner sessions covered topics like trauma-informed writing, inclusive teaching practices, and constructing a collaborative program. School partner sessions included the annual Resource Fair, where school leaders met with high-capacity community organizations and scheduled programs in real time, and a session on self-care practices.

# Recognizing Our Students and Our Partners

CIS of Chicago celebrates our young people and the partners who help bring our work to life with two annual awards: the Spirit of Giving Award and the Carnahan Family Tenacity Awards.

## The Spirit of Giving Award

The Spirit of Giving Award recognizes a community partner and a school partner that have consistently gone above and beyond to positively impact students. In 2024, the Spirit of Giving Award was presented to: Wellness4Every1 (community partner category) and Principal Lawrence Spaulding (school partner category).



### Wellness4Every1

Partnering with CIS of Chicago for six years, Wellness4Every1 has long been a consistent and well-respected community partner. Their team is communicative, transparent, and accommodating to the needs of CIS schools.



### Principal Lawrence Spaulding

Principal Spaulding has collaborated with CIS to schedule in-school career speakers, arts residencies, and field trips for his students at Julian High School. He's also connected with CIS' network of fundamental needs partners.

## The Carnahan Family Tenacity Awards

The Carnahan Family Tenacity Awards honor one student from each of our Intensive schools who has overcome challenges, and with the help of their CIS support person, has made significant progress towards their goals. **Meet some of the 2023-24 Tenacity Award winners:**



### Lupita

Lupita worked with Student Supports Manager Liz to find some healthy ways to cope with her emotions and express herself, and she ended the year strong. Lupita was a leader in the classroom and in her CIS girls' group.



### Semaj

At the beginning of the school year, Semaj needed some help with academic motivation. He joined Student Supports Manager Olivia's life skills group and gained skills to cope with daily stressors and resources for self-care.

# Investors in Our Work

During the 2023-24 school year, CIS supporters showed up for Chicago's young people. They hosted students at their corporate offices for our Inspiring Futures program and helped them explore new career paths. They visited their schools and heard from them directly about the challenges they face and the support that CIS provides. They stayed informed about current issues affecting our schools. And they came together for our Annual Fundraising Event and showed their support. We are thankful for their continued partnership.



**“The Ulta Beauty Charitable Foundation (UBCF) supports the well-being of women and teens so they can unleash their possibilities, including mind, body, and community well-being. We are proud of our partnership with Communities In Schools of Chicago and the work they do to support those who need it most in our community.”**

*– Jodi Caro, General Counsel, Chief Risk & Compliance Officer, Ulta Beauty*



# Leaders in Learning Donors 2023-24

## \$500,000+

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Bon and Holly French

## \$250,000–\$499,999

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Anonymous

Craig and Elliana Bondy

Cook County Justice Advisory Council (JAC)

Paul M. Angell Family Foundation

## \$100,000–\$249,999

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Anonymous

Don and Laura Bielinski

Bill Nygren Foundation

Mark and Jamie Brady

Communities In Schools National Office

Kevin and Joan Evanich

Foglia Family Foundation

GCM Grosvenor

Hudson Group

Lumpkin Family Foundation

Brad and Jen Meyers

Danny and Jennifer O'Shaughnessy

Polk Bros. Foundation

The Reva and David Logan Foundation

Vivo Foundation

## \$50,000–\$99,999

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Mark Anderson

Anonymous

The Brinson Foundation

Crown Family Philanthropies

Finnegan Family Foundation

Foundation for Human Development

Alvin Marley

Panda Cares, the philanthropic arm of Panda Express

Collin Roche

Sacks Family Foundation

David and Kate Schuppan

VNA Foundation

## \$25,000–\$49,999

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An anonymous donor advised fund at The Chicago Community Foundation

Edmond and Alice Opler Foundation

Ishbia Family Foundation

Jackson National Community Fund

Kemper Educational and Charitable Fund

Kirkland & Ellis

Brian and Cindy Moncrief

Peoples Gas Community Fund at The Chicago Community Foundation

PwC

Mrs. Barbara Scott

The Shippy Foundation

Brian Spaly

Steans Family Foundation

Topfer Family Foundation

W.P. & H.B. White Foundation



## **\$10,000–\$24,999**

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Adams Street Partners, L.P.  
AF Group  
Alvarez and Marsal  
Anonymous (2)  
Antares Capital  
Regina and Luke Bakalar  
Michelle Renee Brown  
Mary Capasso  
Capital Group  
Jodi and Ruben Caro  
Aaron and Natalie Cohen  
Sean Cunningham  
Janel Daley and Charlie Gruber  
Ben and Cory Daverman  
The Davis Family – Laura and Tony Davis and  
Linden Capital Partners  
The Duchossois Family Foundation  
The Egerter Family Foundation  
Enova  
Exelon  
Therese and Jim Fauerbach

Golder Family Foundation  
Golub Capital  
Richard and Pamela Gunst  
John and Margaret Hawn  
Insurance Industry Charitable Foundation  
Jet Support Services, Inc  
Dorothy and Jack Jiganti  
Lewis-Sebring Family Foundation  
Mayer Brown  
William McIntosh  
The Mihas Family Charitable Fund  
John and Pam Pierce  
Elizabeth Price and Lou Yicese  
The Pritzker Organization  
Proskauer Rose  
Ropes & Gray LLP  
Robin P. Selati and Jill Selati  
The Siragusa Family Foundation  
Jim and Catherine Ann Welch

## **\$5,000–\$9,999**

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Alexander Ross Group  
Alexis and Jerry Bednyak Foundation  
Aon Foundation  
Ares Management  
Susan and Jon Ballis  
Neil and Sharon Book  
The Chicago Community Trust  
Christopher Cartwright  
Edith Chen and Greg Miller  
CIBC Bank  
Cigna Healthcare  
Vinay Couto and Lynn Vincent  
Don & Wanda Tracy Fund of the Community  
Foundation for the Land of Lincoln  
Durable Packaging  
The Elsie Fund  
Ernst & Young LLP  
Paul and Mary Finnegan  
Footlocker  
Barbara and Todd Ford  
Bob and Rose Fealy  
Nick and Kari Galassi  
Mike Gamson

Helon Hammond  
Hinsdale Junior Woman's Club  
Bart Holaday  
The Jay and Rose Phillips Family Foundation of  
Minnesota  
JPMorgan Chase  
Alan and Michelle Kaplan  
Katten Muchin Rosenman LLP  
Brandon Lage  
Eric Larson  
Jim Parsons  
Protera  
Michelle Damico Raemont  
Seyfarth  
Natalie Tessler and Ricky Ginsberg  
UBS Financial Services  
United Airlines  
Victory Park Capital Advisors  
William Blair & Company, LLC  
Winston & Strawn LLP  
Edward and MaryAnn Wood

## **\$1,000–\$4,999**

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Jeannie Affelder and Jeff Weissglass  
Anonymous (2)  
Sam Arra  
Claudia Banks  
Mike BeDell  
Bell Family Charitable Gift Fund  
Dr. Sherron J. Bibbie  
Shaun and Andy Block  
Kory Blumer  
Bernadette Broccolo  
Janet and Tony Castelluccio  
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David Hiller  
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Amy and Marty Kaplan  
Michelle and Ryan Kilkenney  
Kovler Family Foundation  
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Lois Morrison and Justin Daab Fund  
James and Jean McClung  
Russell Monco

Aja Moore  
Kellie Nau  
Mitch Newman  
ORBA  
Colleen and Stephen Padnos  
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Robert Parsons and Victoria Herget Family  
Foundation  
Robert R. McCormick Foundation  
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the Community Foundation for the Fox Valley  
Region  
Andy Shackelford  
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Elizabeth Vaughan  
Barbara West  
Mr. and Mrs. Robert A. Westropp Jr.  
Eric Wilkins  
Jamie Woodward  
Douglas Wynne  
Natasa Zivak





# Board of Directors 2023-24

Our Board of Directors works directly with [our leadership team](#) to help advance CIS' mission of empowering Chicago students to achieve in school and in life. We are grateful to the following board members for their service during the 2023-24 school year.

NAME	POSITION	ORGANIZATION
Mark Brady, Board Chair	Retired Partner, Investment Banking	William & Blair Company, LLC
Jim Welch, Board Vice Chair	Co-CEO	Nexgen Packaging LLC
Michelle Brown, Board Treasurer	SVP of Operations and Customer Excellence	Encore
Brian Moncrief, Board Secretary	Managing Director, Credit Group	Ares Management Corporation
Dr. Sherron Bibbie	Retired Principal	Chicago Public Schools
Don Bielinski	Managing Partner	SMB Interim Management LLC
Craig A. Bondy	Founder and CEO	Bondy Capital LLC
Mary Capasso	EVP, COO, and General Counsel	PPM America, Inc.
Lan Nguyen Chaplin, Ph.D.	Professor, Medill School	Northwestern University
Janel Daley	Vice President, Business Development	Protera
Miranda Davis	Medical Management Specialist	BCBS-IL
Jonathan Guryan	Lawyer Taylor Professor of Education and Social Policy	Northwestern University
Ryan D. Harris	Partner	Kirkland & Ellis LLP
John M. Hawn	Retired, Former Director of Operations	YUM! Brands, Inc.
Ralph R. Leslie	EVP, CFO, & COO	Pew Charitable Trusts
Bradley H. Meyers	Managing Director	GCM Grosvenor
Jim Parsons	Retired President	The Brinson Foundation

# In the News

- **CBS: Chicago's Hidden Gems: Middle School Student Honored for Essay on Violence (August 18, 2023)**
- **ABC 7: Communities In Schools of Chicago Trains Adults to Recognize Youth Mental Health Problems (November 7, 2023)**
- **Chalkbeat Chicago: I Lost a Friend to Gun Violence When I Was in High School. Now, I Counsel Chicago Students Facing Similar Pain (January 16, 2024)**
- **Crain's Chicago Business Commentary: How to Help Students Find Their Way Back to Regular School Attendance (June 24, 2024)**



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