



Nourish

verb | nour-ish

: to provide (someone or something) with food and other things that are needed to live, be healthy, etc.

: to cause (something) to develop or grow stronger

Synonyms: *advance, cultivate, encourage, forward, further, incubate, foster, nurse, nurture, promote*

Antonyms: *discourage, frustrate, hinder, inhibit*

Merriam-Webster Dictionary

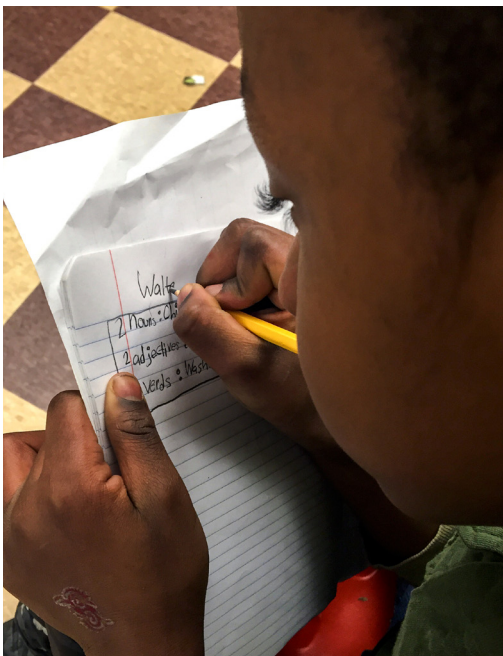
How me a nourished student and I will show you a student who, because of a healthy appetite for learning, lives each day to their fullest potential. Students, just like any of us, must have their basic needs met (ie. food, shelter, sense of emotional and physical safety) before they are motivated to a higher level of need. Hunger, by its very nature, takes bites out of academic success. An emotionally or physically hungry student, worried about where they will sleep, if or where they will get their next meal, can't fully be present in the classroom. Survival, not learning, is utmost on their mind. As third grade Kalamazoo Public School teacher P.J. Bucholtz puts it, "No amount of love in the world can fill an empty tummy." Only food can do that. And it is only because of the efforts of Kalamazoo Loaves & Fishes that CIS Site Coordinators, with the support of many organizations

and volunteers, can get Friday food packs into the hands—and tummies—of our hungriest of children.

CIS staff find that physical hunger is all too real for many of our children. Just as real is emotional hunger, which can, research has shown, leave students feeling depressed, confused, and physically sick more often and longer than emotionally fulfilled students. There is no better emotional food for students than the belief that adults in their school care about their learning and about them as individuals. This emotional satisfaction helps them academically engage and feel an increased sense of connectedness to their school. This is a good thing because connected students are more likely to have higher attendance rates and stay in school longer, increasing the likelihood of academic, occupational, and life success (Battin-Pearson et al., 2000).

Because CIS focuses on the whole child, our partners and volunteers are feeding our children in many ways. By both their caring presence and resources offered, they dish up hope, often offering students a taste of opportunities they might not otherwise have. Some (including CIS Kids' Closet donors) are making sure staple ingredients, like underwear, shoes, food, glasses, coats and more are on the menu.

We are thankful for the ongoing commitment of members of this community who, in their roles as teacher, educator, parent, partner, volunteer, or donor, make it possible for our children to arrive each day to school more focused and hungry to learn.



Conversation with CIS



Jen Randall, CIS Board Member and President at Maestro.

This conversation took place at the super cool digs of Maestro, where Jen Randall is President and part of a team that makes dreams come true every day. Maestro believes that we all deserve a chance at success. For her company, nothing is more elemental than this: Allow everyone freedom and space to succeed by doing what they do best. She also puts this belief into action to benefit Kalamazoo Public School students through her service as a Communities In Schools of Kalamazoo board member.

Tell us a little about Maestro.

Maestro is a software development company that builds tools for some of the world's most advanced companies, like Johnson & Johnson, Twitter, Stryker, and Microsoft—and they count on Maestro to assist them with their learning and sales technologies.

What feeds or nourishes you?

I love being around positive people, people with can-do attitudes, high initiative people, the kind who just love to run after it. I also take care of myself, hitting the gym a couple times a week, getting enough sleep, eating well...

You've surrounded yourself with the types of people you just described right here at Maestro.

Exactly. I'm also fed by creating relationships, fed and nourished by real, genuine relationships, to people that I can connect with and can be vulnerable with as well. Have you read the book *Daring Greatly* by Brene Brown? Her precept is really about finding happiness and being fed by being vulnerable yourself. Brown says that when we shut ourselves off from vulnerability, we distance ourselves from experiences that could bring purpose and meaning to our lives. The happiest people are those who allow themselves to be vulnerable.

For the kids we work with, it's impossible for them to be vulnerable, to take that kind of risk, until they experience their needs being met, feeling safe and secure.

That's right. It's our job to help them get there.

What, in your opinion, are some ways members of this community can nourish our children so they can find happiness and be successful in school and in life?

Continue to be, or get active. There are lots of ways this community already does a great job of supporting and nourishing youth. I'm extremely impressed with the way Communities In Schools works with organizations around the community to bring services and assistance to kids in the

Board Member: Jen Randall

Kalamazoo Public Schools. Because there are already wonderful opportunities that exist, I would encourage people to plug in with CIS, whether that is through donating to CIS Kids' Closet, volunteering as a tutor, helping CIS make new friends by hosting a friend-raiser or introducing CIS to others, or donating financially. One of my favorite children's books is *It Takes a Village*. That is Communities In Schools. Join the village and help nourish our children.

There are many great organizations within our community. What is it about CIS that attracts you to give of your time and talent to this particular board?

It is, without a doubt, the passionate people that are part of Communities In Schools. Going on a recent site visit to Arcadia Elementary School only solidified that for me. Seeing CIS site coordinator Gulnar Husain in action—the care she has for children—and how the children are really depending on those services they receive from Communities In Schools, is inspiring. You can't help but want to get involved and make a difference.

What feeds success?

Success feeds success. If we are talking about a child, you can't just give a child success. They need to discover it, feel and find it for themselves. Once children have a taste of success—they can crave that for themselves. This is where CIS and everyone else in the community comes into play. We can be that spark that fuels that hunger for hope, helps kids experience success so they can move forward in life, with a healthy appetite for success, along with the skills and tools they need to feed themselves.

What do you think are some of the fables we feed our kids?

Judgment. We're pretty quick to judge each other, and judge critically. Judgment isn't necessarily a fable, but our children can't grow when they're served a steady diet of judgment. Whether we're talking about an individual or a community, it is not our place to judge. We are taught to love and serve others. I believe that it is through the pure love of Christ and service we have the opportunity to change lives.

Read more about Jen Randall and her involvement with Lamb of God on our blog, Ask Me About My 12,000 Kids.



Jen, along with Stephanie Walther (right), presented Kawyie Cooper with a Champ award at the 2014 Champs Celebration.

Stephanie is now with CIS of New Mexico at Santa Fe.

All the Right

Omarion Morgan, a seventh grader at Maple Street Magnet School for the Arts, wants to use The Kalamazoo Promise® to go to college—either Michigan State or Western Michigan University—to become a lawyer or a teacher. “But I noticed at the start of the school year my grades were bad and I wanted to get them up.”

When Omarion puts his mind to something, through effort and hard work, he makes it happen. Emily Demorest, CIS After School Coordinator at Maple Street says that this year “Omarion has made some major changes in his behavior and commitment to school. He has learned to control his impulses and be a role model for other students. It is a joy to have him in the CIS After School Program.”



Omarion Morgan, 7th grade student at Maple Street Magnet School for the Arts.

Omarion first became involved in CIS at Washington Writers Academy. Having time to work on homework within the CIS After School program, which is funded through the Michigan Department of Education (21st Century Community Learning Centers), has been “what’s helped me the most... And people like Ms. Kelsey really help me.” [Kelsey Newsome is a youth development worker with CIS.] “I’m getting better grades now. I am learning more. I’m doing all my homework, getting the opportunity to get it done during after school really helps. I don’t get sent down to RTC—that stands for Responsible Thinking Class—like I used to. And I’m starting to stay on task.”

Omarion is finding that the mindfulness techniques he’s learned this year as part of the CIS after school program are “helping me learn more when I’m in school. Mindfulness” explains Omarion, “is really about helping kids deal with their emotions, like anger. Sometimes these are hard to control. You get mad because somebody’s arguing with you. Mindfulness helps you not to hit back. To tell a teacher, instead...I’m also learning how to relax and that’s important.” So, whenever he starts feeling stressed or angry, “I just close my eyes and take deep breaths. I calm myself down.”

Omarion highly recommends Maple Street as “the place to send your kids to school. Kids can do well here because it’s a comfortable environment to be in.” Just what makes it a comfortable learning environment? “We have a good principal, teachers who make learning fun, and we have CIS.”

His favorite subject? Omarion can’t pick just one. During the school day he particularly enjoys math, social studies, language arts, and English. Cooking club, music, and mindfulness are some of his favorite activities offered within the CIS after school program.

Ingredients

When it comes to a favorite teacher, he is hard pressed to pick only one. “We have really good teachers here. One of my favorites, though, is Mr. [Peter] Aranda. He is funny and he does a good job of teaching us social studies. And Mrs. [Deborah] Jackson. She makes math fun. And Mrs. [Debra] McKee. She teaches English and she’s really nice.”

Omarion Morgan has all the right ingredients for being a successful student. The most important ingredient is the caring adults who surround him at both his home and in school. He is embracing the resources offered to him and working on being the best student he can be.

You can learn more about Omarion and find out how he did on the pop quiz we gave him by going to the CIS blog post “Pop Quiz: Omarion from Maple Street” at Ask Me About My 12,000 Kids.



Omarion with CIS Site Coordinator, Emily Demorest, and Lenise Williams (center.) Cafeteria Coordinator by day and Youth Development Worker in the afternoons, Lenise runs “Cooking Club,” one of the most popular enrichment activities within the CIS After School Program at Maple Street Magnet School for the Arts. From breakfast dishes, to healthy snacks, to a trio of sauces to accompany hot wings, Ms. Williams is teaching students how to nourish themselves by developing their cooking skills. Her recipe for her delicious (and easy!) banana bread can be found below.

Easy Banana Bread

- 3 bananas, well mashed
- 1 C sugar
- 2 eggs, beaten
- 1/2 C vegetable oil
- 2 C flour (1 cup can be whole wheat)
- 1 tsp baking soda
- 1/2 tsp salt



Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Mash bananas in mixing bowl. Add sugar, eggs and oil, mixing well each time. Sift dry ingredients together and add to banana mixture. Pour in greased 5x9 loaf pan and bake 56-60 minutes.

Food Fit for a Queen

CAST, which stands for Coping and Support Training, has been running strong at Kalamazoo Central High School for the past three years and is funded by the Youth United Way. Two groups are being held this year, one facilitated by long time CIS partner, Rina Battani, Clinical Supervisor of Family & Children Services and the other by Artrella Cohn, CIS Director of Secondary Sites. One tool students are trained in is STEPS: Stop. Think. Evaluate. Perform. Self-Praise.

When faced with a trigger these are the STEPS to take for a more healthy, positive result. Artrella explains. “Students find that when a situation occurs that in the past has triggered an unhealthy response, working the STEPS allows them the space to choose a healthy response. So, instead of choosing to hit, smoke, curse, or skip class, the student is choosing to walk away, make it to class on time, journal their feelings, listen to music, or talk to a safe and caring person.”

One student recently shared that she was present when an argument ensued between her friend and another person. “I watched my friend become increasingly angry to the point of almost becoming physical,” she said. “I told my friend to STOP and THINK. I led him over to another sitting area and walked him through the STEPS. I told him it wasn’t worth going back to jail for. He thanked me. I told him he should be proud of himself for calming down.”

Artrella points out that “as students regularly practice these STEPS to care for and nurture themselves, it becomes part of the fabric of their being. They can’t help but share it with others.”



Team building at Kalamazoo Central High School strengthens hearts and minds.

One Last Bit

No 'nourish'-themed newsletter would be complete without mentioning Kalamazoo Loaves & Fishes, an organization that nourishes some of the hungriest of our children. A CIS partner since 2004, Kalamazoo Loaves & Fishes has expanded from serving 50 children a week at one school—Milwood Elementary—to providing weekly food packs to 680 students across 11 elementary schools, as well as supporting food pantries at El Sol elementary and the high schools.

In addition to providing a valuable additional food resource to our elementary students through the food pack program, Kalamazoo Loaves & Fishes works to reach out to the families of those students to encourage them to use the community food pantry system which provides a four-day food supply monthly to any family in need. CIS, students and families, thank them for their generosity and support, as they work to ensure that no child in our community goes hungry.



Literacy Buddies at Kalamazoo Loaves and Fishes.

This year, Literacy Buddies is supported by State Farm, Old National Bank Foundation and the Sally Appleyard Trust.

If you believe in our efforts to ensure that ALL kids stay in school and achieve in life, please visit www.ciskalamazoo.org or call 269.337.1601 for more details on getting involved with CIS. On our website you will find ways to support local youth through volunteer opportunities, ways to make a gift, event information, and our Kids' Closet Wish List.

Photos in this newsletter were taken by Don Kingery (CIS Volunteer): page 3 and contributing CIS Staff.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this newsletter or would like to sign up for the e-newsletter, contact Jessy Oprea (CIS Fund Development and Marketing Coordinator) at joprea@ciskalamazoo.org or call 269.337.1601 ext. 217.



Communities In Schools of Kalamazoo
125 Exchange Place
Kalamazoo, MI 49007

www.ciskalamazoo.org
Ph: 269.337.1601
Fx: 269.385.5806

NON-PROFIT ORG
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
KALAMAZOO, MI
Permit No. 411



Nourish

Amanda Higgins, CIS Volunteer, leads a Healthy Eating Club at Northeastern Elementary. In between her classes at Western Michigan University where she's studying to be a Physician Assistant, Amanda teaches ten 1st graders about healthy eating habits and students get to try healthy food options. "Amanda has been wonderful and has shown the students many foods that they normally would never have experienced!" says Missy Best, CIS Site Coordinator at Northeastern.