



Our featured student, TiYanna.

CIS NEWSLETTER, FALL 2022

## High school can be scary— not for CIS student TiYanna

During her lunchbreak at CIS Think Summer!, TiYanna sat down with us and reflected on the transition she's making in leaving behind Hillside Middle School to enter her freshman year at Kalamazoo Central High School this fall. Friendly, curious, and thoughtful, this young woman describes herself as "social, determined, and passionate."

### ***What are you most going to miss about middle school?***

Probably the teachers because I've had some really great teachers, like Ms. [Ashley] Poole and Ms. [Holly] Bruning. And I'm going to miss [CIS After-School Coordinator] Ms. Kathy [Williamson] She's a sweetie. She's caring and loves what she does and that's admirable. And [CIS Site Coordinator] Ms. [Jody] Sikkema has helped me a lot through the school years. I'll miss them all. I've also really enjoyed socializing with my friend and have appreciated all the activities that CIS has put together for us.

### ***Is there one particular activity or opportunity that stands out in your mind as a favorite?***

Definitely the Cooking Club. CIS put a lot of work together for that and it was for sure my favorite activity. Lots of kids really like that one.

### ***Did you take anything you learned from Cooking Club and apply it to your life?***

Yes! I ended up taking home the recipes of foods we made and then I made them at home for my family. So like I made pizza from scratch and this ramen bowl recipe that was really good too.

### ***What are you most looking forward to with starting high school?***

I'm looking forward to going to all the dances, as well as the clubs I can join!

### ***What clubs or activities are you thinking about joining?***

Well, at Kalamazoo Central, I'm going to be a cheerleader and I'm also looking forward to joining the dance team. I already do African Dance with Rootead, play softball, and I want to start acrobatics, which is a type of dance, in our community.

### ***That's a lot! You really are a social person, aren't you? Are you apprehensive about anything as you prepare to transition to high school?***

I don't have many fears coming into high school. Probably because I have six siblings who did it before me! However, I do worry about keeping up with my schoolwork. I have a little organization issue.

### ***Have you found that your involvement with CIS has helped in any way with this?***

Yes. If it weren't for CIS, I wouldn't have turned in as much homework in as I did. My grades are better because of CIS. CIS is a safe space and the after school program is structured in a way that allows time for me to work on my homework. Sometimes it can be hard to do schoolwork at home with all the distractions. At CIS After School, I can focus and there are people that can help you if you need it.

***"If it weren't for CIS, I wouldn't have turned in as much homework as I did."***

What I've found most valuable about CIS Think Summer!—this is my second time doing it—is that it keeps me from having a summer slide. That's most important to me, to keep the gains I have made over the school year. With CIS Think Summer!, not only am I able to do this, but I have a schedule, a reason to wake up and get out and do activities that revolve around school learning.

### ***What do you imagine yourself doing ten years from now?***

Still trying to find me. That's a hard thing to do. I will still be exploring what 'me' is. I'll be focused on studying. Because I'm going into medicine to be an anesthetist, I will still have plenty of schooling and a residency to do. ...



Ms. Rachel and TiYanna at CIS Think Summer!

# Student Spotlight



Briyon, 7th grader at Maple Street Magnet Middle School



Hope, 4th grader at Woodward Elementary School

## What is your favorite part of school?

**Briyon:** Gym class because I get to exercise, use the weight room, play basketball and football, and be with my friends.

**Hope:** Lunch and recess are my favorite parts. I can get out all my energy during recess.

## How has CIS helped you?

**Briyon:** They help me with my homework during the after-school program, and I get to join clubs and do activities after school. I really like the outdoor club—we did relay races, picked up trash, and things like that outside.

**Hope:** The after-school program helps me with my homework. And, if I am upset, they cheer me up.

## What are you most excited about for the new school year?

**Briyon:** To see all my friends. Some are in the summer program, but a lot are at school when we go back.

**Hope:** To see my friends, teachers, just everybody.

## Partnering with Kalamazoo College brings focused supports to KPS students

*Collaborating with local partners is a key component of the CIS Model of Support to be effective. One partnership is longstanding and impactful for many kids in our community—the service-learning collaboration with Kalamazoo College. By working together, every year, we successfully place Kalamazoo College students in Kalamazoo schools as volunteers to work with kids and support staff.*

At Woodward Elementary, every quarter, between 15-25 Kalamazoo College volunteers support students in the classroom by offering tutoring, mentoring, and more. The Civic Engagement Scholars coordinate a specific program to offer in-depth reflection on campus to learn and challenge each other on issues such as *privilege, racism, and many other topics relevant to their work at Woodward.*

A group of students from the science department called Sisters In Science come twice a week to host a science experience and mentor 4th and 5th grade girls at Northglade Montessori Magnet School. CIS Site Coordinator Steve Brewer says, “Every year, students are excited for the program, and it has the potential to spark an interest in science for girls who have never thought of themselves as scientists before.”

At El Sol, Kalamazoo College volunteers provide classroom support for the teachers by forming small groups or taking on classroom tasks. They participate in a lunch buddy program to provide 1 on 1 mentorship and academic support in reading or math.

CIS Site Coordinator at Woodward Elementary School Jen

## Looking forward to the new school year

The 2022/2023 school year is underway! Thanks to your support, Communities In Schools of Kalamazoo (CIS) staff are in the schools, creating safe and welcoming environments for our kids to succeed and thrive.

CIS of Kalamazoo is pleased to announce that we have expanded into two additional buildings this year along with increased supports in both mental health and academics.

We have expanded into Phoenix High School and Paramount Charter Academy. At both schools, many students in Kalamazoo transfer between them and their home school. We are thrilled that there will be continued CIS support for students enrolled in both schools.

In response to increased demand for in-school counseling services, for the first time we will hire a full-time therapist and a part-time intern therapist. The CIS staff therapists will add to the capacity already provided by our independent and agency mental health partners.

We are working to increase academic supports by offering specialized tutoring. As an example, we plan to reintroduce “push-in” Algebra tutoring at the high schools beginning second trimester. Success in algebra has been identified as critical for students seeking careers in STEM fields.

We look forward to sharing the impact of these new initiatives with you at the end of the school year.



Kalamazoo College student, Maryam Beverly and Woodward Elementary student, Cryssa.

DeWaele says, “Each year the team at K College works diligently to ensure that their work is still at the top of their game—learning as education evolves in the public schools, and offering new ideas to keep the relationship as strong as possible.”

Thank you Kalamazoo College for the many years of partnership!

## One month, 12,000 miles

*Join us anytime during October to walk with purpose in support of Kalamazoo students!*

Walking With Purpose is a month-long challenge to walk as a community—a total of 12,000 miles—to raise awareness and funds for the mission of CIS: to empower students to succeed. Each mile has meaning: we walk in honor of the students who are working toward a brighter future. Our goal of 12,000 miles is symbolic of the 12,000 students that attend the schools that CIS supports. We walk now so that kids can walk later ... at graduation and into the future of their own design.

It takes a community to support our students and it will take a community to reach our goals. Step up to the challenge and walk with us this October! It is never too late to get started. Learn more here. →



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## From our executive director

What do you see when you close your eyes and dream? While the specifics of your answers may vary, they likely have this in common... something that you've seen before! Whether an exact replay of a previous scenario or a kaleidoscope of seemingly unrelated symbols and imagery, our dreams are typically reflections or creations of the many things that we have seen, touched, and felt in our lives up to that moment. The dreams of our students are very much the same.

The more our students see – through experience – the more they can draw from as their own dreams are formed. Because of this, Communities In Schools of Kalamazoo (CIS) complements academic and basic needs supports with a priority on giving our children access to enriching experiences that have the potential to be foundational pieces to dreams that they otherwise would not have had.

CIS coordinates field trips to arts and cultural centers, business locations and college campuses. CIS offers enrichment clubs that give them hands-on and real-world experiences such as writing and recording music, engineering machines to perform tasks, choreographing dance routines, cooking healthy meals, and learning diagnostic skills from doctors and veterinarians – to name a few. CIS invites in a diverse array of professionals and guest speakers so that children can see people who look like them and who lived in their same neighborhoods that are now doing amazing things in our community.

Thank you for your support which has ensured that our students' dreams are not limited by their families' finances, social capital, or neighborhood resources. Your investment into CIS students certainly supports their academic growth, but also the growth of their dreams and their capacity to make those dreams a reality.

James Devers, Executive Director

## News and CIS of Kalamazoo Updates

- Walking With Purpose launched October 1st. See inside for more information.
- Save the date for the 2022 Ugly Sweater Party: Wednesday, December 7th.
- Check out our Facebook page on #GivingTuesday (11/29). Here at CIS we #GiveBack on #GivingTuesday!

## Sign up for our e-newsletter



If you believe in our efforts to ensure that ALL kids stay in school and achieve in life, please visit [www.ciskalamazoo.org](http://www.ciskalamazoo.org) or call 269.337.1601 for more details on getting involved with CIS.

The work of Communities In Schools of Kalamazoo is supported by the Kalamazoo Public Schools, the City of Kalamazoo, the Michigan Department of Education (21st Century Community Learning Centers), local foundations, and donors like you.

Photos in this newsletter were taken by contributing CIS staff, unless otherwise noted.