



Communities In Schools®

Kalamazoo



CIS OF KALAMAZOO HAS SUPPORTED STUDENTS FOR 20 YEARS!

We are in schools to help kids stay in school.

Thank you for your support over the past 20 years! We look forward to supporting students for the next 20 years and beyond.

In the past 20 years:



We have increased from **8** schools to **22** Kalamazoo schools.



Over **1.8 million** CIS service hours supported students.

875 students (avg.) receive case management services per year.

802 students (avg.) annually attend the CIS after school programming.

"In 20 years, I want to be a teacher."

- David, 12th grade at Kalamazoo Central High School



"The work of CIS is equity in action. For 20 years, we have given kids access to resources, support and opportunities they need to fuel their potential."

Twenty years means that CIS has now literally supported a generation of students to reach graduation and to fulfill their promise."

-James Devers, CIS Executive Director

"In 20 years, I want to be a nurse!"

- Miracle, 7th grade at Maple Street Magnet Middle School



We are embedded in schools to connect students with resources related to basic needs, academic assistance, physical health, social emotional health, after school and summer programs, and college and career exploration.



An average of 287 individuals volunteer every school year.



Over 303,000 volunteer hours have supported students.

Over 260,000 essential items have been distributed to students.

*Above numbers are calculated based on available data points and averaged across the past 20 years.



"In 20 years, I want to be a car mechanic or engineer"

- Javier, 3rd grade at Edison Academy



Growing Together by Building Student Relationships

Sitting in her office at Hillside Middle School, Communities In Schools of Kalamazoo (CIS) site coordinator Jody Sikkema reflects on her past 20 years as a CIS coordinator. “I worked with one 8th grade student here at Hillside Middle School, during the beginning of the COVID shutdown and learned that he loved seeing my plants in virtual meetings. So, one day I decided to drop off an aloe plant to him. To this day he will send me pictures to show its growth. He would say, ‘Look how much it has grown!’ [Jody now has a big smile on her face] He is now in high

school and about to graduate.”

This school year marks the 20th anniversary of the CIS model of integrated support in Kalamazoo Public Schools. For the past 20 years, our growth has been instrumental in supporting more Kalamazoo kids in unique ways. We are embedded in schools to connect students with resources related to basic needs, academic assistance, physical health, social emotional health, after-school and summer programs, and college and career exploration. The process for delivering these supports has been evaluated and evolved over time, but what never changes are the strong relationships built between students and their CIS coordinators.

In 2002, Jody Sikkema and a friend were working at Parkwood Upjohn Elementary School facilitating conflict resolution groups when the principal of the school, CIS Executive Director Pam Kingery, and CIS Program Manager Jennifer Clark asked them to become some of the first CIS site coordinators. “I knew that I was meant to work with kids,” says Jody, “my personality is to take care of people.”

After establishing the site coordinator role at Parkwood Upjohn Elementary, Jody became instrumental in the growth of CIS by onboarding new schools as a temporary coordinator while they were awaiting their permanent team member placement. She supported Arcadia Elementary, King Westwood Elementary, Washington Writers' Academy, Maple Street Middle School, before landing at Hillside Middle School. Jody says, "I learned that I loved middle school students and wanted to stay here at Hillside."

Twenty years at one company and in one position is rare these days. Jody credits this to the kids. Having them stop by her office and share bits and pieces about their lives. "It is the relationship with the kids and their journey," said Jody, "and I want them to enjoy school and have a comfortable, emotionally safe space."

Looking back, Jody recollects a student in elementary school that appeared isolated and alone during recess. "I decided to ask this young man if he would like to play board games with me. Twenty years later, this young man ran into my daughter. Recognizing my name, he told her that small gesture

had changed his life. That day he needed to know that somebody cared about him. Sometimes it is the small things that you can do to make a difference: like a smile or asking how their day is."

Having an additional caring adult in a student's life is essential to empowering them and helping them realize their potential was inside them all along. Jody says, "In my perspective, the difference maker in supporting students is having faith in them and encouraging them of their abilities. We help students build their confidence and that it is ok to ask for help—everybody needs help."

CIS site coordinators are skillful at making meaningful connections and creating lasting relationships with students. Like Jody's gifted aloe plant, those relationships are therapeutic for students and are sources of healing and comfort when life's challenges emerge. The ointment of the aloe plant is not always visible but can be drawn upon when the need arises. Such is the impact of the work of Communities In Schools. We are there for kids whenever they need us – for the past 20 years, now and in the future.



Kicking off the 20th anniversary!

We joined with the founding members of our board, current CIS board members, City representatives, organizations, and foundations who were the original supporters for CIS of Kalamazoo.

Thank you for your commitment to our work and Kalamazoo kids for the past 20 years!



20 Years Ago ...

The City of Kalamazoo, Kalamazoo Public Schools, and the local Chamber of Commerce imagined a more just and healthy community, one in which every child had a chance to finish school and be ready for college and the workforce.

Collectively, they determined that the Communities In Schools (CIS) model of integrated student services was the most powerful vehicle through which the community could work to empower students to stay in school and achieve in life.

The CIS model is a community's way of saying, "We need to do something differently for our children. Let's join forces with our schools and assure that resources and supports are available to students so they can stay in school and be prepared to learn all they can from their teachers."

In 1999, Pam Kingery was chosen to create the Kalamazoo affiliate of the national organization to help overcome the barriers that derail kids, giving them hope and the belief they can succeed in school, graduate and be prepared for life.

In 2003, two organizations merged: Kalamazoo Public Education Foundation (KPEF) and Kalamazoo Area Academic Achievement Program, also known as KAAAP. (KAAAP was initiated in 1992 by the Kalamazoo Chamber of Commerce and matched elementary students to a mentor committed to seeing the young person through high school graduation.). Upon the completion of this merger, and the desire to implement the national Communities In Schools (CIS) model of integrated students services, the CIS of Kalamazoo affiliate was officially formed.

To this day, the organization has steadily grown: from three employees to over 140, and from serving students in eight schools to 22.





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Save the Date!

Join us on Saturday, June 22nd
at Arcadia Park for our 20th
anniversary reunion picnic.