

COMMUNITIES IN SCHOOLS, DUNCAN CHAPEL ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Summary

Communities In Schools is a nationwide network of passionate professionals working in public schools to surround students with a community of support, empowering them to stay in school and achieve in life.

Summary: Communities In Schools provides holistic, school-based services at Duncan Chapel Elementary School to at-risk children in 3rd, 4th, and 5th grades and their families. We provide these services in the form of Afterschool Programs, Case Management and Family Literacy. The Afterschool Program meets 10 hours per week during the school year. Communities In Schools is a drop-out prevention agency that offers a holistic experience, focusing on successfully transitioning students into the next grade level and on academics, enrichment, character education, service learning, physical activity and overall wellness.

Demographics

- *Target Settings:* Rural
- *Target Groups Served:* 87% of children enrolled in the Communities In Schools Afterschool Program at Duncan Chapel are minorities, including African American, Latino, and Asian. 98% qualify for Free and Reduced Price Meals, and 76% live in a home where at least one parent did not graduate from high school. Teachers recommend students for participation based on academic, behavioral, and social needs. Communities In Schools staff also work to engage each child's adult family member(s) in both program and school activities through Home Visits, monthly Family Night Events, and on-going communication.
- *Districts Served:* Duncan Chapel Elementary in Greenville School District.

Research and Evaluation

What national or other research was considered during the development of this program/initiative?

Describe the evidence that shows the program/initiative works.

Like many counties in South Carolina and across the nation, Greenville County, SC, is tasked with finding a solution to the high school dropout crisis. As recently as 2010, only 72.1% of Greenville County high school students graduated in four years (http://www.unitedwaygc.org/high_school_graduation.php). High school dropouts are more likely to commit crimes (American Youth Policy Forum, 2006), more likely to live in poverty, and have a life expectancy 10 years shorter than their graduating peers (Gibbons, 2006). A number of factors contribute to the likelihood that a student will drop out of high school, including not reading on grade level in the third grade (four times more likely to drop out), living in poverty (three times more likely to drop out), having poor school attendance or behavior, being retained in elementary school (64% of retainees eventually drop out), and not being engaged in school (Hernandez, 2011; Herzog and Balfanz, 2005; Alexander, Entwistle, & Horsey, 1997; and Bridgeland et al., 2006).

Communities In Schools of Greenville, Inc. is a local affiliate of a national non-profit agency, whose mission is "to surround students with a community of support, empowering them to stay in school and achieve in life." On the national level, Communities In Schools recently underwent an extensive third-party evaluation, which named the organization to the Department of Education's What Works Clearinghouse for its success in reducing dropout rates and also increasing graduation rates.

The independent, five-year evaluation by The Atlantic Philanthropies of Communities In Schools' work shows that it is one of a very few organizations proven to keep students in school and the only one to document that it increases graduation rates. The evaluation concluded that Communities In Schools' model resulted in the strongest reduction in dropout rates of any existing fully scaled dropout prevention program that has been evaluated; that Communities In Schools is unique in having an effect on both reducing dropout rates and increasing graduation rates; and that the Communities In Schools model is effective across states, school settings, grade levels and student ethnicities. Importantly, analyses indicate that the more fully and carefully the model is implemented, the stronger the effects. (Communities In Schools, February 2011)

Communities In Schools of Greenville impacts the graduation crisis through early intervention and individual support for elementary and middle school students with risk factors for dropping out. At Duncan Chapel Elementary, we use best-practices for afterschool programs, including Project-Based Learning, SC Curriculum Standards, youth choice, tutoring, CATCH (Coordinated Approach to Child Health), and Behavior Modification using Love and Logic, A Framework for Understanding Poverty, and the Teaching-Family Model.

Evaluation: Communities In Schools at Duncan Chapel uses standardized test scores, Report Card grades, Attendance data, disciplinary incidents, surveys/questionnaires, Pre/post tests, NAPSACC and EPAO Observation Tools to measure the impact of our program on its participants. The Site Coordinator maintains the following information on a data management system called CISDM: attendance (both in school and at afterschool program), grades (school report card and standardized testing), and behavior. All of the above are looked at a quarterly basis.

Communities In Schools at Duncan Chapel also participates in a health assessment through LiveWell Greenville, which includes physical activity and nutrition education.

Of the students participating in the Communities In Schools Afterschool Program at Duncan Chapel during the 2011-2012 school year, 100% improved their scores on the Math portion of the MAP (Measures of Academic Progress) standardized test, and 92% improved their scores on the Language Arts portion. 73% maintained or improved to a "C" average on their Report Cards in Math and 85% in Language Arts. 95% of participants had no Out-of-School Suspensions, 100% had fewer than 10 unexcused absences, and 100% were promoted to the next grade level.

Resources

- *Annual Cost*: : \$111,292 which includes an actual budget of \$58,500 and \$52,792 in-kind
- *Funding Sources*: 100% of actual funds are provided by United Way of Greenville County. An additional \$52,792 of in-kind funds are provided by numerous community partners.
- *Staffing Needs*: The Communities In Schools Afterschool Program at Duncan Chapel is staffed by a Site Coordinator/Case Manager, who is housed 30 hours per week at Duncan Chapel Elementary. Three Afterschool Instructors--one of whom is a Certified Teacher--maintain a student to teacher ratio of 11:1. Furman University provides America Reads/America Counts work study students who tutor daily in the Afterschool Program. A part-time Director of Afterschool Programs works off-site to manage fund-raising, technical support, and grant compliance.
- *Infrastructure/Equipment Needs*: Duncan Chapel Elementary School provides space for the Afterschool Program including 3 classrooms, gym, computer lab and Site Coordinator's office. The school also provides internet access, copy privileges, and a dedicated telephone line for the Site Coordinator.
- *Partner Organizations*: United Way of Greenville County, Greenville County Schools and Duncan Chapel Elementary School, Redeemer Presbyterian Church, Fundamentals 4 Success, LiveWell Greenville, America Reads/America Counts through Furman University, Downtown Greenville Rotary Club

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