



MEDIA RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Support Our Students Seeks Volunteers

Charleston, SC – The *Support Our Students* Tutor-Mentoring Project offered by Communities In Schools of the Charleston Area, Inc. (CIS) is in its sixth year of providing free academic assistance to public school children needing English/Language Arts or Mathematics remediation. At the same time, however, CIS is raising the call for volunteer support from the public for the initiative to meet its planned goals.

Many Charleston County School District elementary schools have a lack of tutoring available after school, and *Support Our Students* helps to meet this need during the school year. The initiative is scheduled on either Tuesdays or Thursdays (depending on the school) immediately following release, for approximately 2 hours. A private nonprofit dropout prevention agency, Communities In Schools has offered *Support Our Students* since 2003. CIS Executive Director Jane Riley notes that intervention with children who are already struggling with reading or math skills is particularly important at an early age. “Studies reflect that by middle school, children who have fallen behind in English or math proficiency are likely to graduate behind peers or to drop out altogether,” Riley says.

The project serves select schools throughout the school district, and volunteers are needed for the following: Edith L. Frierson Elementary (Wadmalaw), Angel Oak Elementary (Johns Island), , Orange Grove Elementary (Charleston), Jennie Moore Elementary (Mount Pleasant) and Mitchell Elementary (downtown). “Schools see the benefit of community volunteers working with children, and administrators invite *Support Our Students* into their schools each year,” she says. “Unfortunately, we can’t afford to staff and coordinate the project in all the schools where services are needed.”

Communities in Schools offers test results of children served by *Support Our Students* as another compelling reason to sustain the project: 5% of the students participating in last year’s initiative experienced an improvement in Palmetto Achievement Challenge Test scores in English/Language Arts after receiving assistance. “Children respond positively to caring adults who spend time with them, and we urgently need community volunteers who care about education to contact us,” Riley adds.

Communities In Schools addresses the academic and out-of-school risk factors that prevent children from graduating. A range of support services that include mentoring, tutoring, life skills training, personal and family counseling, case management and pre-employment skill development are offered through CIS projects. CIS places staff in schools where they have a daily and direct impact on the students. In partnership with the Charleston and Berkeley County School Districts, CIS services are available to over 3,500 students at nineteen area schools. CIS of Charleston has proven successful with a 97% rate of promotion to the next grade level and a 100% senior graduation rate. For information on how to support Communities In Schools financially or through volunteering, please contact Courtney Winders at 740-6793 or through email at cwinders@cischarleston.org.