



## FOR IMMEDIATE DISTRIBUTION

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### **Communities In Schools of Clark County recognizes outstanding community Volunteer, Community Partner, and Educator for annual “Champions for Children” Awards**

*Awardees have made significant contributions to students of Clark County during the 2015-2016 academic year.*

**Jeffersonville (November 15, 2016)** – Communities In Schools (CIS) of Clark County presented awards to individuals and businesses in the community who made significant contributions to students of Clark County during the 2015-2016 academic year. These “Champions for Children” Awards were presented at the first annual “Readers to Leaders” breakfast, held at Kye’s in Jeffersonville on November 15. Champions for Children awards are given in the categories of Volunteer, Community Partner, and Educator. The recipients are individuals or groups, who through their work or their actions, strive to improve the lives of children throughout Clark County. We are extremely proud to present this year’s award winners:

**Volunteer: NEXGEN** – Early in 2016, Leadership Southern Indiana (LSI) reached out to CIS of Clark County about their program NEXGEN, a leadership group for high school juniors. This program focuses on the NEXT GENERATION of community leaders. LSI placed a group of NEXGEN volunteers within the CIS of Clark County afterschool program at Clarksville Elementary, where they assisted with homework help and enrichment activities. During the volunteer experience, we quickly realized the strong leadership skills of Alexander Nash and the great commitment by Sydney Fischer, both students at Christian Academy in Indiana. In addition to the hands-on volunteer work, the NEXGEN group organized a book drive to support our 3,2,1 READ program and contributed \$425.00 from Leadership Southern Indiana to CIS of Clark County. Alexander and Sydney continue to volunteer at Clarksville Elementary’s afterschool program. We are grateful for this partnership with LSI, NEXGEN, and with Alexander and Sydney in particular.

**Community Partner: Steel Dynamics** – There are countless statistics that support the importance of getting books into the hands of children. For the past 9 years, Steel Dynamics has been instrumental in providing brand new books for children throughout our community. Employees of Steel Dynamics compete to see which crew can collect the most books – and the result is a donation of thousands of

brand new books to CIS each year. The books are used for CIS's "3,2,1 READ" program, which matches a community volunteer with a struggling 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, or 3<sup>rd</sup> grade reader. In the years since this partnership began, Steel Dynamics has put over 20,000 books in the hands of children across Clark County. This makes them a champion of literacy AND a Champion for Children!

**Educator: Dr. Kim Hartlage** – When Dr. Kim Hartlage joined the CIS of Clark County Board of Directors in the spring of 2014, not only did the organization get an amazing board member, but we also got a tremendous partner and true advocate in the school system. As the Assistant Superintendent of Elementary Education for Greater Clark Schools, Kim's knowledge and leadership in education have made her an invaluable resource to CIS. By orchestrating opportunities for CIS Directors to speak with groups of principals and future principals, Kim has really helped to strengthen the relationship CIS has with the schools. She has sparked interest in the CIS Model among many teachers through her own work teaching graduate classes to groups of future educators. Kim has been a tremendous blessing to CIS of Clark County and is no doubt a true Champion for Children.

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### **About CIS of Clark County**

Communities In Schools (CIS) of Clark County has been operating in- and out-of-school programs and services in Clark County's neediest elementary schools since 2002. By bringing caring adults into the schools to address the children's unmet needs, CIS of Clark County provides the link between educators and the community. The result: teachers are free to teach, and students – many at-risk of becoming high school drop-outs – have the opportunity to focus on learning. Each year, CIS of Clark County touches the lives of over 4,500 students and their families.

***Mission:*** *The mission of Communities In Schools of Clark County (CIS of Clark County) is to surround students with a community of support, empowering them to stay in school and achieve in life.*

CIS of Clark County is a local affiliate of the national organization, Communities In Schools. CIS National is the largest dropout prevention organization in the United States, and the CIS Model has proven to be effective across broad spectrums of communities nationwide.

For more information, visit [www.cisofclark.org](http://www.cisofclark.org), and CIS National at [www.communitiesinschools.org](http://www.communitiesinschools.org).