

# A C H I E V E

## Helping Families Thrive.

Christopher House provides a family of schools to help low-income, at-risk children and their families succeed in school, work, and life.

We partner with families to provide a continuum of education for students, birth through high-school, as well as adult education programs that help parents create stable, self-sufficient families.

**CHRISTOPHER**  
LEARN DREAM ACHIEVE **HOUSE**

# Dear Families and Supporters,

At Christopher House, we believe **every child deserves access to a quality education that begins at birth**. We believe children deserve to be supported by highly effective teachers, and to grow up in a nurturing home.

Unfortunately, many of the children in the communities we serve face a much different reality. By age three, the children from low-income households know fewer than half as many words as their more affluent peers. This disparity, along with similar gaps in math and emotional development, persists and widens as children get older. **In Chicago today, just 4% of low-income high school students go on to earn a college degree.** This lack of educational achievement limits their career options and perpetuates the cycle of poverty, which has a lasting, negative effect on our entire city.

So we thank you for your support of Christopher House. It is an investment in our city. And, we have the highest respect for parents who come to Christopher House because they want the best for their kids, but whose lack of education and low-income jobs leave them struggling to provide the bare minimum. These are hard-working adults who want to move their families forward. **At Christopher House, we give them the education, tools, and resources to help achieve their goals.** We work with children of all ability levels—often taking those whose needs could not be met by other schools.

Our family of schools directly addresses the challenges of poverty that plague the at-risk communities we serve. We inspire children to dream big and we empower parents to fully engage in their child's education. We work with families as early as we can to foster a culture of achievement centered on college readiness.

- ★ Our renowned **Infant and Pre-Schools** build the hard and soft skills that will help children succeed from kindergarten through college, and beyond.
- ★ Our new **Elementary School** combines rigorous curriculum with wraparound supportive services. We make sure each scholar gets the individualized attention they need.
- ★ Our **After-Schools** broaden the horizons of children and teens, raising their expectations for their own futures, and transforming them into self-assured young leaders.
- ★ We know that learning starts at home, and our **Parent School** offers the guidance and support parents need to build stable, healthy homes for their children.

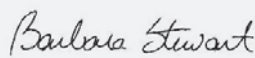
Emmanuel, featured in this newsletter, exemplifies the impact a continuum of education can have when coupled with rich parent engagement.

Thank you for your support of Christopher House! As you can see from these pages, it goes far in helping provide great beginnings for our youngest learners. It helps foster the curiosity that is running rampant in our early childhood classrooms, our After-School, and our Elementary School. It ensures parents have the resources to provide stable and nurturing home lives for their children.

Sincerely,



**Lori Ann Baas**  
Chief Executive Officer



**Barbara Stewart**  
President



Lori Ann Baas | Chief Executive Officer



Barbara Stewart | President

## Helping Families Thrive.

### OUR VALUES

- ★ Commitment to Excellence
- ★ Achievement and Perseverance
- ★ Respect and Compassion
- ★ Equality of Opportunity

### OUR BELIEFS

#### Children and Families thrive when:

- ★ They have access to a high quality education
- ★ Education begins at birth, with parents as the first teacher, and continues through life
- ★ Parents have high standards and set high expectations for their children and themselves
- ★ Professionally trained teachers use strength-based instruction and know their students as individuals

- ★ Parents support their children financially and emotionally
- ★ Evaluations and program adjustments are data driven
- ★ Education includes developing perseverance and social intelligence
- ★ Parents and teachers work together to continuously improve programs

# Our Unique Model Working in Belmont Cragin

## Elementary School Makes Major Progress in First Year

Opening our first Elementary School last fall in Belmont Cragin made this a very exciting year! This school fills an important need in a community where nearly 40% of the population over 25 years old is without a high school diploma<sup>1</sup> and the per capita income is only \$15,472. In Belmont Cragin, more than a quarter of the population's children live in poverty and more than half are classified as below 185% of the poverty line.<sup>2</sup> With limited resources, education can often suffer—we fill a gap to help these children and their families to get the resources they need to succeed.

Our model bridges this gap by providing a continuum of education starting with our scholars at 6 weeks and continuing into elementary classes. After starting last fall with kindergarten and first grade classes, we have expanded to hold two second grade classes this 2014–2015 year and will continue adding one grade level per year. When fully enrolled, the school will provide our rigorous college prep education to 500 scholars; from kindergarten through eighth grade.



### Results from our first year:

**94%**

K-1st grade met national  
math target<sup>3</sup>

**86%**

K-1st grade met national  
literacy goals<sup>4</sup>

**Teachers work with family support services and early childhood teachers to get to know our incoming scholars so we can best educate the “whole child.”**

Christian Hoeffel, Belmont Cragin Founding Kindergarten Teacher

#### INFANT & PRE-SCHOOL



Offering full-day early childhood classes that serve children from 6 weeks to 5 years old. Using the internationally renowned Reggio Emilia approach, our schools advance literacy, motor skills, and social and cognitive development.

#### ELEMENTARY SCHOOL



Providing a continuum of education and wraparound support services for 6 weeks to the age of eighth grade, the school fosters lifelong learners with high standards, perseverance, and a commitment to excellence. Using rigorous curriculum to develop critical thinkers who will succeed in high school, college and life.

#### AFTER-SCHOOL



Pushing not only for academic achievement but for self-confidence, and positive decision making skills. The After-School develops social and emotional skills for K-12 through tutoring, college and career preparation, enrichment activities, and field trips.

#### PARENT SCHOOL



Offering counseling, health assessments, literacy and English skills, and parent workshops the Parent School gives families a support system to ease stress and foster self-sufficiency; starting with the birth process, to educating parents as the first teacher.

<sup>1</sup> Census Data—Selected socioeconomic indicators in Chicago 2007-2011

<sup>2</sup> Illinois Act for Children—Population and Poverty Data by Chicago Community Area, September 2011

<sup>3</sup> NWEA Assessment Results: Math

<sup>4</sup> NWEA Assessment Results: English Language Arts

# 20 Years: Committed to Excellence

## Still Growing in Uptown

**O**ur Uptown center celebrated 20 years this summer. During the block party held for children and families to commemorate the occasion—bouncy castles and face painting included—Karen Ross, Site Director of Uptown for nearly 20 years, spoke about the site. “We have come a long way,” said Karen, “This site has really grown with the community. I wouldn’t want to be anywhere else.”

Our Uptown location opened in 1994 with 14 classrooms and underwent a multi-million dollar renovation in 2009 to expand its Early Head Start program. Today, Christopher House Uptown serves 200 families.

Uptown is one of the most diverse areas in Chicago and, like most of Chicago’s neighborhoods, has a rich history of new immigrant groups giving flavor to the community. Nearly 30% of Uptown’s population is foreign-born, and speak a language other than English at home. The neighborhood boasts large African immigrant populations, as well as a Hispanic community.

This vibrant diversity is reflected in our center: more than 15 languages are spoken by the families we serve there. The primary language for 60% of preschool families at our Uptown center is an African

Dialect. This brings a high need for cultural awareness by our staff of educators and a wide range of translation skills.

In addition to being diverse, the Uptown community has a great need for the education and resources Christopher House provides. Many parents in this area are highly educated in their countries of origin, but struggle to find living-wage jobs here. For example, they work multiple jobs in hotels, as medical aids, and as taxi drivers to try to make ends meet. They hold their children’s education as the key to their families’ futures.

Growing to serve the community, our Uptown center has grown significantly from its initial start as a daycare. Today it offers some of the highest quality early childhood education in the city. Education starting with babies as young as six weeks and partnering with parents and families to ensure they have what they need to succeed in school, work, and life.

When asked about how Uptown has progressed over the last two decades Ross said, “The quality has evolved over the years. We’ve learned quality is not an act, it’s a habit.”



# 5,000

Children and families served annually

# \$17,551

Average household income

**Children who attend high-quality preschools have higher test scores, fewer behavior problems and lower rates of grade repetition.**

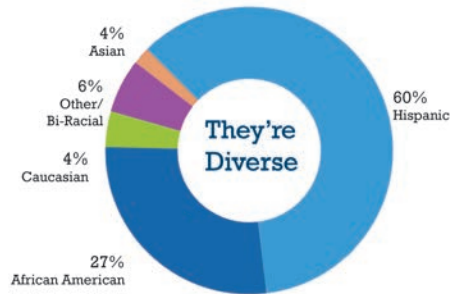
“The First Eight Years” Annie E. Casey Foundation Kids Count Policy Report 2013

# Who we serve

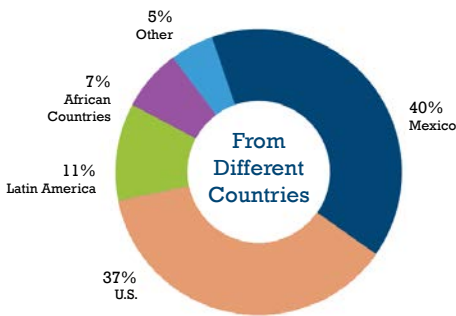
## Communities



## Race



## Country of Origin



## Household Parents

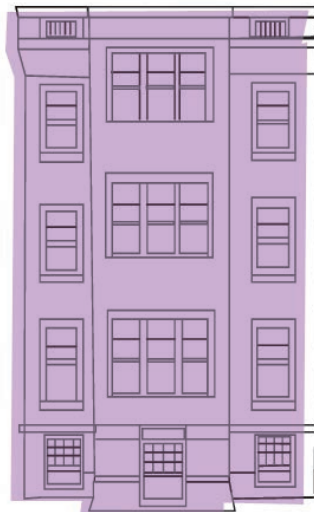
**60%** of our families are led by single parents.



## Renters

**94%**  
Renters

**6%**  
Homeowners



## Join our Holiday Program

The holiday season is a special time for families to bond and laugh, but for many it can also be a stressful time. The pressure to provide special meals and gifts can be especially hard on low-income families that already struggle. With an average income under \$18,000 and the majority of our families being led by single parents, Christopher House has a program help to alleviate this stress and give a special season.

## The Food Drive:

- ★ We collect food and goods to give families a special basket filled with everything they need for a wonderful Thanksgiving meal, and then some.
- ★ The list describing the needed items for these families can be found at [christopherhouse.org](http://christopherhouse.org).
- ★ We collect items from November 10th-21st at our site in Belmont Cragin.
- ★ Financial donations can also be made at [christopherhouse.org](http://christopherhouse.org) and we can purchase needed items.

## Family to Family:

- ★ We pair donors with a family or multiple families to provide gifts and goods for the December holidays.
- ★ Once paired, donors will receive the family's or families' wish list.
- ★ Items can be dropped off at our Belmont Cragin Elementary School December 1st-19th
- ★ Visit [christopherhouse.org](http://christopherhouse.org) for more information about joining Family to Family.

**With a 25% growth in children and families served this past year, your support is needed more than ever.**



# College Bound Education

**R**esearch shows the pay gap between college graduates and everyone else has reached a record high, and the true cost of going to college is about *negative \$500,000*—in other words, college is cheaper than free when you factor in graduates' earnings over time compared to those with just a high school education.<sup>5</sup> But getting to college starts long before we even learn to write our name.

Our schools put the goal of a college degree at the forefront in all levels of education to give our scholars the advantages that all students should have in their academic endeavors. High expectations and high standards are what we believe in and we push our students to thrive in their studies. At our Belmont Cragin Elementary School we encourage all our young scholars to attend and graduate college. All the classrooms are named



Our kindergarteners on their college visit at DePaul University!

after universities, and each classroom visits a college campus each year; instilling the goal of college graduation from the start.

For the scholars this year, these were the first college campuses they had been to, and for a great number, the first their parents had been to as well. College visits are also a part of our After-School program. This summer

alone the program visited five campuses! We also are very proud to report that all of this year's Youth Leadership graduates are enrolled in college this fall—and they just so happen to be universities they visited with Christopher House! 100% of our Youth Leadership Graduates enrolled in college compared to the National average of just 50.9% for low-income high school graduates.<sup>6</sup>

## TRIP HIGHLIGHTS

For the scholars this year, these were the first college campuses they had been to, and for a great number, the first their parents had been to as well.

A few questions from the kindergarteners to college students on their tour of Northwestern University:

**“Do you still have sight words?”**

**“Do you still read?”**

**“Do you live with your mom?”**

# Real, Measureable, Lasting Results

## INFANT & PRE-SCHOOL

# 95%

Preschoolers increased their social emotional skills—preparing them for Kindergarten<sup>7</sup>

# 84%

Parents with children in early childhood education increased the amount of time they read with their child<sup>8</sup>

## ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

# 30%

Growth in students K-1st grade meeting the national norm in literacy scores<sup>9</sup>

# 50%

Growth in students K-1st grade meeting the national norm in math scores.<sup>10</sup>

## AFTER-SCHOOL

# 98%

After-School kids were promoted on time to the next grade

# 100%

High school seniors were accepted and enrolled into college

## PARENT SCHOOL

# 1,785

Hungry children and parents given food

# 90%

Parents participated in a parent support group

<sup>5</sup> David Leonhardt. *Is College Worth It? Clearly, New Data Say.* NYTimes, 2014

<sup>6</sup> nces.ed.gov

<sup>7</sup> Derived from: 95% of 0-5 year olds increasing their GOLD social emotional scores from fall 2013 to Summer 2014

<sup>8</sup> Of the 292 participant responses.

<sup>9</sup> NWEA Assessment Results: English Language Arts Scores from Fall to Spring K-1st grade

<sup>10</sup> NWEA Assessment Results: Math Scores from Fall to Spring K-1st grade

# Emanuel's Home Away From Home



**Between Christopher House and his family, Emanuel really got a leg up.**

Tim Dish, Christopher House Mentor

**T**his summer one of our interns was more connected to Christopher House than the average student looking to be a part of our mission. He's been coming here for years.

19 year old, Emanuel credits Christopher House for a lot. "It's ridiculous how much Christopher House has helped us." Having immigrated to the U.S. from Nigeria with his parents and 5 siblings, Emanuel came to Christopher House just shy of 6 years old. Emanuel, now a confident and grounded college student at Purdue, still visits Christopher House—interning or not—whenever he's home.

Starting in the early childhood education classes at Uptown, Emanuel continued onto Christopher House's After-School, where he received academic support and took advantage of enrichment opportunities that helped him grow.

In seventh grade, he began attending Youth Leadership—our college and career preparatory program for middle and high school students.

He credits the program with keeping him focused, and teaching him to take advantage of every opportunity Christopher House offered.

This included stepping out of his comfort zone to go with Christopher House on a summer canoe adventure in the Boundary Waters of Minnesota. "Never in my life would I have thought I'd be in the wilderness for eight days!" he reflects.

**100% of our Youth Leadership high school seniors were accepted and enrolled into college.**

In his senior year of high school, our program matched him with a mentor, Tim Dish. Tim now mentors Emanuel's younger brother and continues to be a resource for him as

well. "Between Christopher House and his family," Tim says, "Emanuel really got a leg up." Tim not only helped Emanuel through the college and financial aid application process, but also helped him to focus on his goals.

Emanuel's commitment and drive paid off when he was accepted to and enrolled in Purdue University. Pursuing a kinesiology degree with the goal of becoming a physical therapist, he starts his junior year this fall.

He is a role model for the Christopher House students, and an inspiration for the rest of us.



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# CHRISTOPHER HOUSE

LEARN DREAM ACHIEVE

Christopher House has been helping children and families succeed for over 100 years. Our family of schools – Infant & Pre-School, Elementary School, After-School, and Parent School – help families thrive, become stable and self-sufficient, and achieve their goals in school, work, and life.

We set high standards and use data to guide programming to provide the highest quality education and services to our Chicago families.

Stay up to date with all our growth, data results, and achievement by following us on Facebook and Twitter. Sign up for our e-mails at [christopherhouse.org](http://christopherhouse.org)  
We want all to **Learn. Dream. Achieve.**