Christopher House has been helping children and families succeed for more than 100 years. Today, Christopher House’s family of schools prepares at-risk children and their families for success in life, school, and the workplace.

Our continuum of high-quality schools serves children from infancy through high school, and includes programs that help parents create stable, self-sufficient families. Working in partnership with parents, we provide a rich academic environment that also builds qualities that make the difference later in life – self-confidence, social skills, and perseverance.
For decades, Christopher House has been a resource for young mothers to provide their babies with the best start in life they can. Implementing research-based strategies including home-visiting and doulas; staff partner with teens to create healthy homes, and learn about their babies’ social/emotional, cognitive and physical development. Further, the program supports teen mothers to stay in school and to get at the causes that may have led to their pregnancies.

"Sexual abuse and teen pregnancy tend to go hand in hand," says Associate Director of Teen Parenting, Bridget Lally, "so we offer workshops to understand healthy relationships, learn how to strengthen their ability to protect their children, and to create mother-child bonds that will bring the best outcomes for mom and baby."

In fact, this year more of our teen moms than ever have enrolled their babies in our early childhood programs; ensuring that they give their children high-quality education, while they are able to finish their own schooling.

The state budget impasse has resulted in significant cuts to our work with teen parents. While remaining staff are currently working hard to maintain the resources we provide, moving forward tough decisions will need to be made.

Our current strategic plan is committed to decreasing our dependency on government funding and growing our private revenue by 75% over the next three years. Private funding allows us to provide a continuum of education from birth through high school, and ensure parents have the tools and resources to be the best parents they can be. It is how we employ family advocates and social workers, and it gives parents and children who are just one generation away from escaping the cycle of poverty the stability to stay focused and to persist in reaching their goals. Your support makes this all possible.

Through challenging times, the community that is Christopher House is ever eternal. And, I simply cannot thank you enough for being part of this community.

Sincerely,

Lori Baas

A LETTER FROM OUR CEO

Christopher House celebrates its 110th anniversary this year! We have grown as an organization and as a community from our first days as a settlement house. A huge turning point in our history was in the 1960s when we became one of the first Head Start programs in the country. This expansion of our commitment to Chicago’s families shaped many of our choices, including government funding as a crucial aspect to our operations.

While the state of Illinois has been in an economic spiral for many years, the past nine months seem like an all-time low. We were relieved in November when state leadership reversed changes to the childcare subsidy, but the inability to find more solutions in Springfield has led to the poorest of our community being hit the hardest.

We have had to suspend our adult education classes, and reduce staff dedicated to creating better outcomes for teen parents and their babies. Remaining staff have volunteered to take on more work to avoid turning away new mothers in need. I am inspired by the passion and commitment of my staff, but I know their current workload is not sustainable; and painfully, tough choices lie in front of us.

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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

Partnering with Teen Parents

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- Bridget Lally, Associate Director
  Teen Parenting

INFANT & PRESCHOOL
Internationally renowned, full-day early childhood schools—serving children from six weeks to five years old—advance literacy, motor skills, positive social behavior, cognitive development, math skills, and the soft skills that are critical for long-term success.

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
Education from birth through eighth grade; where students, teachers, and parents form a community committed to excellence, achievement and perseverance, respect and compassion.

AFTER SCHOOL
Tutoring, field trips, college and career prep are offered for students K-12th grade, in addition to developing the social and emotional skills they need to be successful in school, and have the resilience to persevere through challenges.

PARENT SCHOOL
Educates parents to be a child’s “first teacher,” and creates a strong support system for new parents. In addition, free individual and family counseling, health assessments, and parent workshops are provided to support the family.
Celebration of Reading

Reading opens up our imagination, exposes us to the unknown, sparks our creativity, and builds our vocabulary. Children who have access to books are given a passport to a world far beyond their everyday experience.

And, undeniably, research proves that children who read and are read to, perform better in school; in fact, there is a direct correlation to the number of books in a child’s home and their success in school.

Christopher House’s Read-A-Thon is collecting donations to build literacy skills, as well as classroom and home libraries.

We invite you to join our students, parents, staff and community in a celebration of reading! From our kick-off party on Dr. Seuss’s birthday, March 2nd, to March 18th, the James & Jean Stewart Campus will read to reach 5,000 hours.

Coming to join the reading fun already, as volunteers and “Rockstar Readers,” are Amodocs, U.S. Cellular, Holland & Knight, United Airlines, and United Scrap Metal – learn more about how you too can support our young readers at christopherhouse.org!

2016 read-a-thon

The only behavior measure that correlates significantly with reading scores is the number of books in the home.

Books Matter

We are doing everything we can to give children from low-income families what they need to succeed in school, the workplace, and life. Books and reading are fundamental.

1:300
The ratio of age appropriate books per child in low-income neighborhoods; compared to 13:1 in middle-income neighborhoods.¹

61%
Percent of low-income families with no books in their homes for their children.²

4,000–12,000
Average number of new words children learn each year as a result of reading books.³

2 TIMES
Having books in the home is twice as important as the father’s education level.²

Recent Achievements

The Losos Impact Award was presented to the Teen Parenting Program for their doubles exemplary work and training parents to be the best they can despite any circumstances.

Michael Jordan chose Christopher House as one of 23 charities in Chicago to donate to in 2015 saying: “The work these groups do each and every day to help kids is inspiring. I feel strongly about the importance of teaching and mentoring, of helping kids with disabilities and illnesses and providing opportunities for at-risk youth.”

The Chicago Benchmarking Collaborative has recently been featured in MIT Sloan Management Review and subject of a case study by the Network for Nonprofit and Social Impact at Northwestern University resulting in a Stanford Social Innovation Review article.

Boeing invested $100,000 to continue our work with the Chicago Benchmarking Collaborative and to further establish the model as replicable.

The Literacy Crisis: False Claims, Real Solutions, 1998.

² Research in Social Stratification and Mobility, 2010
³ Scholastic: Classroom Libraries Work!

The more that you read, the more things you will know.
The more you learn, the more places you’ll go.
— Dr. Seuss
Each year we honor one outstanding Christopher House family for their incredible work toward their growth and stability. This year, we honor the Hale’s — Sharon, Adeline, and Alexander. They are our 2016 Family of the Year due to mom Shavon’s inspiring perseverance and commitment to reaching not just the goals for her children’s success, but her success too.

Adriana Chavez, Family Advocate at Christopher House, nominated the Hales because of Shavon’s involvement and dedication. “She is ready and willing to do everything she can to see her children succeed and grow — she is so motivated to see her family do well, and continue to reach their goals,” says Adriana.

Shavon is now on track to complete her associates degree, and her two young children are enrolled in our early childhood education classes showing consistent achievements in literacy and development of soft skills.

“Shavon makes her family’s growth a priority and is using resources to change the trajectory of her children’s future.”

Looking for ways to give?

For many of our supporters, it is important to find a way to ensure Christopher House can continue to provide high quality education for low income, working poor families for years to come. Your support is the perfect way for these children and families to Learn. Dream. Achieve.

There are various ways in which you can make a commitment and leave a lasting legacy; you can leave a bequest in your will, add Christopher House as a beneficiary on your life insurance policy, or give a gift of retirement assets.

If you are interested in learning more about making an impact, please to contact Kathy Greenberg at kgreenberg@christopherhouse.org or 773-922-7584.

Join us on April 28th at the Ritz-Carlton, Chicago to honor the Hale family!

For tickets, sponsorships, or more information on Christopher House’s 26th Annual Benefit, visit christopherhouse.org/2016dream.
Visit christopherhouse.org for more information on how to join the celebration of reading this March!