



# A C H I E V E

## Offering Every Kid Success

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 school, the workplace, and life.

Our continuum of high-quality schools serves children from birth 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.

# A Letter from Our Board President

Recently, I was elected President of the Christopher House Board of Directors. It's an honor and I'm humbled by the responsibility. Over the years I've been engaged with Christopher House's work, I have met families whose lives have been changed dramatically, and children whose potential may have gone underdeveloped and wasted if not for the efforts of Christopher House staff and supporters. I don't take this opportunity lightly.

My priorities over the next few years in my term are to increase the stability we have in our leadership in the organization through professional development, increase the capacity of the Board by welcoming new members with different backgrounds and industries to influence our growth, and last, but certainly not least, to complete the school in Belmont Cragin through eighth grade. We are so excited to complete our continuum and give more children and families the chance to reach their potential.

As you know, Christopher House children and families can't do it alone, just as I won't be leading the Board alone. You'll find in this newsletter some examples of the support we have for our families and for our organization: from the "YOU: Your Child's First Teacher™" curriculum for our families to learn to be the best parents, to our partnership with great foundations like RBC Foundation USA, and the fantastic work of numerous individual donors, we have great support.

We all have our work cut out for us, but I know we can do it – together.

Sincerely,



Thomas O'Neill  
President, Christopher House Board of Directors

February 2017



## 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

## FAMILY OF SCHOOLS

### INFANT & PRESCHOOL



Christopher House's internationally renowned, full-day early childhood schools serve children from six weeks to five years old. Our schools advance literacy, motor skills, positive social behavior, cognitive development, math skills, and long-term success.

### ELEMENTARY SCHOOL



Christopher House Elementary School is an innovative school model offering a continuum of education for children as young as six weeks of age through eighth grade. The school's rigorous college prep curriculum develops critical thinkers who will succeed in high school, college, and beyond.

### AFTER SCHOOL



Christopher House After School promotes academic achievement, self-confidence, and positive decision-making skills for children and youth. We offer tutoring, enrichment activities, field trips, college and career prep, and more.

### PARENT SCHOOL



Christopher House Parent School fosters the skills parents need to raise happy, healthy children. The school prepares parents for birth, and educates parents to be a child's "first teacher." As well as creating a strong support system for new parents with social workers, food pantries, and emergency financial assistance.

# Capitalizing on Early Success

We know that the earliest investments in education can yield the greatest returns, so we begin with children as young as six weeks, and we focus on each child's academic and social/emotional development. In addition, we partner with parents to give them the skills to be advocates in their child's growth, and give their children the best chance at success.

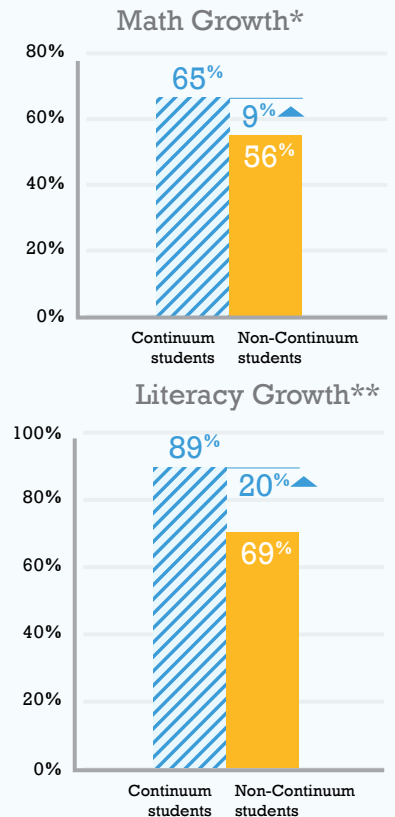
Too often though, we saw these successful preschoolers move on to elementary schools that did not meet their needs and through no fault of their own they would lose their hard-won early gains. That is why we opened our elementary school in Belmont Cragin in 2013 — to create a seamless path for up to 648 children at a time to have quality, individualized education.

Our educational model leads to significant gains; our continuum approach preserves those gains.

We can give children a boost that will propel them through high school, college, and beyond. Our current "continuum" cohort — students who entered as infants or very young children and are now in the elementary school — are outperforming the non-continuum students in math by 9% and in reading by 20%. As more students enter the continuum each year — 70% of our kindergarten class this year — we have every reason to think these results will only improve.

In fall 2017, the fifth grade class we enroll, will bring us to the final phase of the building plan — adding grades six through eight. To do that, we must expand our school. That expansion — the last mile of the pathway that will connect at-risk children to Chicago's best high schools and the world beyond them — will cost an estimated \$6.5 million.

## Higher Outcomes for Continuum Students



This remarkable journey will lead to greater successes for more children and their families.



\*Percentage of elementary students reaching expected levels on the research-based NWEA assessment from Fall 2015 to Spring 2016.  
\*\* Percentage of elementary students on track to meet or exceed state reading standards per University of Chicago's STEP assessment in 2016.



## Your Child's First Teacher — YOU

**W**hen Director of Family Support Services, Gloria Kuechenberg heard about “YOU: Your Child’s First Teacher™” she knew it was a great match for Christopher House. “We have always believed that the parent is the child’s first teacher and that the more a parent is involved, the more a child will succeed.

“It is always about partnering with our parents to consistently give children the best education in school and at home,” says Gloria. “Our families are committed to continuing to grow and learn. We want to empower them to do so in every way we can.”

The ten-week workshop series empowers parents by providing the tools they need to understand their importance in their child’s education and teaching them to actively engage with their children’s schools.

This series is open to all Christopher House families, and includes three books in Spanish or English to cover tools and strategies for parents to guide their children toward college success, beginning at birth through high school graduation. The workshops and books not only provide a resource for our families, they encourage families to engage with staff and other parents to build a community.

“YOU provides us with a great way to track our parents’ progress’, as they go through the books, they can see for themselves just how far they’ve gone. I’ve seen great gains from the curriculum being added to our work and parents feel more confident — which is a big step to being a better parent.” says Gloria.



### What is YOU™?

YOU is a parent engagement program to unite teachers and parents to support a child’s success at school and at home. When parents partner with schools, students succeed. The YOU program builds upon decades of research to teach administrators, teachers, school staff, and parents how to build a lasting partnership to maximize student achievement.

Sunny Chico. (2014) Available at <http://youyourchildsfirstteacher.com>

# Our Families

**68%**

Parents working  
and/or  
in school

**5,700**

Children and families  
served annually

**84%**

Parents have high  
school diploma or  
less

**\$18,932**

Average household  
income



“Skills beget skills. The early years are crucial in creating the abilities, motivation, and other personality traits that provide success downstream: in school, in the workforce, and in other aspects of life.”

- Nobel Laureate and Professor of Economics  
at the University of Chicago, James Heckman



## 27<sup>th</sup> Annual Benefit

Please join us on  
April 27, 2017 for our  
27th Annual Benefit  
at the Four Seasons,  
Chicago.

The event brings together  
400 corporate and  
philanthropic leaders to  
celebrate Christopher  
House's sponsors,  
partners, donors, and  
successes.

This year, we are  
thrilled to be honoring  
our partnership with  
Cubs Charities. We will  
also be honoring the  
a Christopher House  
family, as our 2017  
Family of the Year, for  
their commitment to  
Christopher House  
values.

For more information or  
to purchase tickets, visit  
[christopherhouse.org](http://christopherhouse.org) or  
call 773.922.7544.



# Support for our Readers!

## RBC Foundation USA Sponsors 2017 Read-A-Thon

The Read-A-Thon is a celebration of literacy and the love of reading. It creates a spotlight on the importance of literacy and how parents can get involved in fostering a love of reading and learning at home. The Read-A-Thon promotes independent reading, reading as a family, and provides hands-on activities designed to increase parental involvement in reading and learning.

This year, all three Christopher House locations will participate in the Read-A-Thon from March 1 through March 17 and we are happy to welcome RBC Foundation USA as the lead sponsor of this event, joined by SMG as book sponsor. Stephen Raquet, Institutional Equity Sales at RBC Capital Markets and Christopher House Board Member said, "RBC is proud to be the lead sponsor of Christopher House's 2017 Read-A-Thon. We look forward to an amazing two and a half weeks of reading and building on the foundation that Christopher House has started."

One of the goals of our educational model is to inspire a love of learning and reading, and to support students in achieving high levels of literacy proficiency. Working with students from low-income households, we are addressing research that highlights gaps in the literacy achievement between

the rich and the poor. This gap starts early and has only gotten larger in recent years. On average, by the age of three, children in high-income households have heard 32 million more words than the children in poverty.<sup>1</sup> This gap continues to grow and impact students throughout their educational outcomes in elementary school and high school, as well as their access to college.<sup>2</sup>

The good news is there are proven solutions including high quality early childhood education, parent involvement, and early interventions that can close this gap in opportunity. The Read-A-Thon is part of Christopher House's year-round efforts to promote academic achievement, literacy development, and educate parents on the role they play in their children's success.

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- Stephen Raquet, Institutional Equity Sales at RBC Capital Markets and Christopher House Board Member



**2017**  
**read-a-thon**

Lead Sponsor  
 RBC Capital Markets

Book Sponsor  
 SMG

1. Shenk, D. (March, 2010) "The 32 Million Word Gap." *The Atlantic*. Available at: <http://www.theatlantic.com/technology/archive/2010/03/the-32-million-word-gap/36856/>  
2. Reardon, F.S. (2011). "The widening academic achievement gap between the rich and the poor: New evidence and possible explanations." Sage Foundation Press. New York: NY.

# Odaly & Juan's Story



Odaly with son Juan, and daughter Izanami, at the James & Jean Stewart Campus in Belmont Cragin.

Odaly, a mom of two in Belmont Cragin, struggled to find a school that could provide Juan, her son, who is a diverse learner, the resources and opportunities he needed to thrive. Odaly was excited when Christopher House announced they were opening a school in Belmont Cragin and signed up before it was even built.

Once Juan started, she immediately noticed an improvement not only in Juan's schooling, but his social skills, too. "I saw a big difference in how he was treated academically, and emotionally," recalls Odaly. "I realized he didn't know what he needed to know — he didn't know English, but he learned quickly once he started at Christopher House."

When "YOU: Your Child's First Teacher™" was offered to parents at our Stewart Campus, Odaly jumped at the chance to become even more engaged. "I'm interested in joining any workshop to make me a better mom, and learning better ways to educate my kids," replied Odaly when asked why she signed up.

"It helps me set expectations: on me, my kids, and my husband," Odaly said of the YOU curriculum's impact on her life. "I learned I have to be consistent with consequences, and teach my kids that they need to learn about what they did — not just react."

"I used to yell a lot. I learned I don't need to yell for them to understand. Juan learned, too." Odaly remembers, "he'd say, 'you don't need to yell, you only need to say it one time mom.' We both learned to be better and work together."

Odaly still uses the curriculum weekly as a resource in her parenting, in addition to the other resources Christopher House offers. Odaly knows she isn't alone and has a network to help her and her family reach their goals. "Any problem here, I feel helped and safe."

Read more stories from  
our families at  
[christopherhouse.org!](https://christopherhouse.org)





## Please Join Us!

### 2017 Read-A-Thon

March 1-17<sup>th</sup>

Celebrate reading with book drives and *Rockstar Readers!*

### 27<sup>th</sup> Annual Benefit

April 27<sup>th</sup>

A night to ignite dreams and create opportunities. Honoring Cubs Charities!



Details at [christopherhouse.org](http://christopherhouse.org)!



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