

ACHIEVE

FALL 2024


CHRISTOPHER
LEARN DREAM ACHIEVE
HOUSE

CHRISTOPHER HOUSE CREATES OPPORTUNITY AND ADVANCES EQUITY FOR SCHOLARS AND FAMILIES THROUGH A CONTINUUM OF PERSONALIZED, HIGH-QUALITY EDUCATION WITH IMMERSIVE FAMILY SUPPORTS, STARTING AT BIRTH.

A LETTER FROM OUR CEO

Dear Christopher House Friends, Families, and Supporters,

It is with immense gratitude and excitement that I introduce myself as the new Chief Executive Officer of Christopher House.

It has been nearly 20 years since I joined this incredibly special organization, and over that time, I've had the privilege of witnessing Christopher House's remarkable growth and transformation. From the expansion of our Early Head Start Program to the opening of our Logan Square campus, and groundbreaking of Belmont Cragin's Stewart Campus – ultimately completing our birth through 8th grade model – Christopher House has continually demonstrated its unwavering commitment to excellence, and the transformative ripple effect we have on the lives of our scholars and their families.

I've also witnessed the resilience and grace with which Christopher House adapts to adversity, including through the pandemic that disrupted every facet of education. Our capacity to navigate these challenges while remaining steadfast in our mission to close the opportunity gap through educational excellence showcases the strength of this organization and the unwavering dedication of our staff, families, and supporters.

In fact, while I've witnessed Christopher House evolve over the last two decades, one thing has remained constant: the unwavering commitment and support of this community. Together, we have built something truly special, and I am excited to guide the next chapter of our journey.

I am eager to collaborate with our Board of Directors, leadership team, dedicated staff, and our families to cultivate learning environments that truly embody CH's core values of excellence, respect, and equity. We have a remarkable foundation to build upon, and our mission is clear: to provide every scholar with access to high-quality education from birth through 8th grade. Equally important is our commitment to actively engage parents and caregivers in this journey, empowering them to support their children in reaching new heights.

I am excited to navigate this new chapter and look forward to connecting with each of you in the months to come.

Warmly,
Julie



Julie Dakers

Julie Dakers
Chief Executive Officer, Christopher House

OUR VALUES

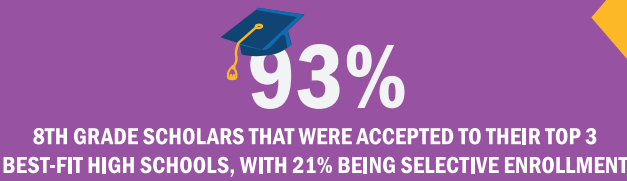
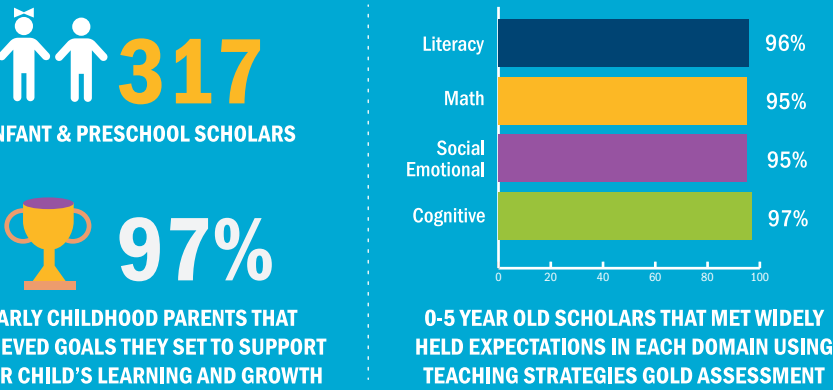
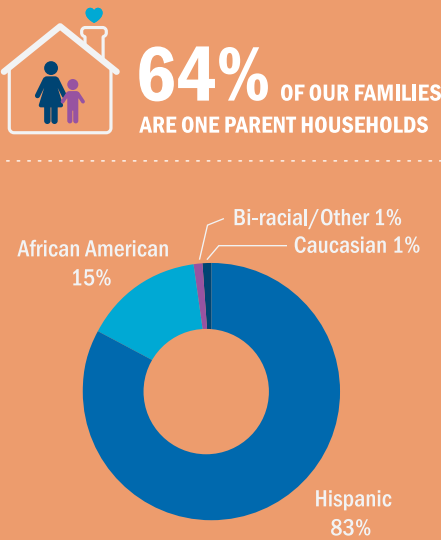
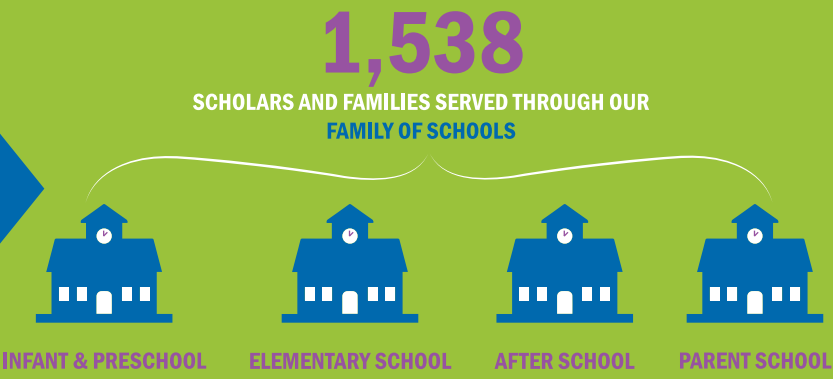
- Commitment to Excellence
- Achievement and Perseverance
- Respect and Compassion
- Equity

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

2023-2024 Report Card



THANK YOU!

Your support is the driving force behind the success of our scholars and their families, enabling them to reach incredible milestones that uplift and inspire us every day. It is only through your generosity that our scholars and families are able to thrive, reaching their full potential in school, the workplace, and life.



AROUND THE HOUSE Summer at Christopher House

Increasing Kindergarten Readiness through Summer Bridge Program

Christopher House's unique continuum of education model provides support to scholars through key moments of transition, ensuring that they are prepared to take each and every step on their educational journeys.

To ensure our scholars have a positive and healthy transition from Preschool to Kindergarten, Christopher House offer a Summer Bridge Program - **a program that relies on the collaboration of our Early Childhood Program and Elementary School** - for graduating Preschool scholars. Through this five-week summer program, Preschool scholars preparing to matriculate to Kindergarten have daily opportunities to receive additional individualized and focused instruction to strengthen specific skills while being introduced to teachers, classroom environments, and resources that students will be interacting with in the coming school year.

By easing the transition with early and intentional exposure, scholars experience reduced stress and can more easily interact with their new learning environments in positive ways, leading to higher educational outcomes.

In partnership with Julian Lomax (Lead Preschool Teacher), Kimberly Lopez (English Language Learner Teacher and Summer Bridge Teacher) spent this past summer helping our young scholars prepare for Kindergarten.

"Throughout the summer, scholars became more fluent in their numbers, letter identification and print awareness. They also improved rhyming skills and by the end of the program, could recognize rhyming words based on sound, images, and letter recognition. If you were to see all of my students now in Kindergarten, they look like pros walking down the hallway and listening to their teachers! I am so proud of each and every one of them, and I'm excited for their next educational adventure."

After completing last year's Summer Bridge program, we are pleased to share that 100% of the 57 preschool scholars transitioning to Kindergarten met the widely held expectations in Social Emotional, Literacy, Cognitive, and Math domains.

Celebrating Culture and Community at Uptown's Cultural Fashion Show

This summer, Christopher House had the pleasure of celebrating our third annual Uptown Cultural Fashion Show, an exciting event that demonstrates the importance of identity through the celebration of cultural diversity.

With over nine countries and cultures from around the world represented at this year's event, 50+ Uptown families had the opportunity to strut their stuff wearing cultural fashions from their native regions. The joyous day included lively music, face painting, and tasty food representing many different countries and cultures – from Nigerian Jollof Rice and Chicken, to Colombian empanadas.

Meet our New Instructional Leader – Principals



Jennifer Alexander
Instructional Leader
Principal (Kindergarten – 4th Grade)

Greetings Christopher House community!
This school year and beyond I look forward to continuing to build relationships with our scholars and watching them grow. I am also excited to collaborate with community members and stakeholders as we work to achieve continuous improvement. I hope to be able to create a school climate that empowers teachers and staff to have a lasting impact on the life of each Christopher House scholar.



Pablo Vega
Instructional Leader
Principal (5th – 8th Grade)

I am overjoyed, honored, and humbled that I have the opportunity to serve the Christopher House community, co-leading an environment that will make Christopher House a second home for everyone. It is the honor of my life to join the Christopher House family as an instructional leader. I hope to meet and work tirelessly with each of you to provide the best integral education to each of our scholars so they can use the skills and education they receive here to create a better and kinder world.

Janet Hernandez, Early Childhood Youth Development Family Engagement Manager, helps organize the annual event. Reflecting on the impact of the fashion show, she shared,

"We have a very diverse community in Uptown, and we want to ensure that all families feel respected and welcome to express themselves. Acknowledging that we are in a diverse neighborhood, we want to celebrate every part of it!"

Eight-year member of the Christopher House community, Angela Igbinewka-Obaseki, Parent Representative to the Christopher House Board of Directors, has participated in the Cultural Fashion Show for the past two years. She shared,

"My motivation to participate stems from a desire to promote our family's heritage and culture. The cultural festival highlights the diversity present within Christopher House, fostering an appreciation for different cultures and reinforcing the idea that we are all part of a larger community."



Strut through Summer at Christopher House

April
Taste of Christopher House

May
33rd Annual Benefit

Cisco Volunteer Day at Uptown

Teachers Appreciation Week

Christopher House Uptown 30th Anniversary

8th Grade Graduation

June
PRIDE at Christopher House

Uptown Cultural Fashion Show

ITW Volunteer Day at CH Elementary School

July
Preschool Graduation

August
First Day of School

Community Corner

Senator Dick Durbin Visits Christoper House, Applauding Innovative Model

We were thrilled to welcome Senator Dick Durbin to the halls of our Christo- pher House campus located within the Uptown community. While touring the school, Senator Dubrin had the opportunity to learn about our innovative two-generation model – which bridges high quality, personalized education with immersive family supports, meet teachers and staff, and even read to some of our youngest learners.

In preparation for the Senator’s visit, scholars learned about the importance of voting and the power of civic engagement. While visiting one of our pre- school classroom’s, scholars presented Senator Durbin with a handmade book filled with personal letters and requests for the local government, in- cluding, “Please buy more legos for students; help families fix their houses – maybe the government can use tape; and please make laws to tell people to be nice and help one another.”

“At Christopher House, we recognize the profound impact of Senator Durbin’s commitment to the children and families of Illinois,” CEO Julie Dakers shared. “Our morning with him was a reminder that the voices of our young people are not just heard but valued. Together, we envision a future where their hopes and dreams shape the policies that nurture their growth and wellbeing.”



The Legacy of JoAnne Ciccheli

In early August the world and Christopher House lost an incredible person and long-time supporter, JoAnne Ciccheli. From early in her professional career teaching fifth grade and high school history, to her support of education Prime-Time School Television, a nonprofit organization that connected teachers, families and public television, JoAnne’s career reflected her life-long commitment to education as a vehicle for social change.

JoAnne served on the Christopher House Board of Directors for over 20 years. When Christopher House expanded its impact to found our innovative birth - 8th grade model, JoAnne played a key role in launching the middle school, later named “The JoAnne Cicchelli Middle School” in her honor. JoAnne will be greatly missed, but her leadership and generosity, will live on through her legacy at Christopher House in the lives of our scholars.



Donors to Christopher House - \$1,000+ July 1, 2024 – June 30, 2024

INDIVIDUALS	
Maria and Kevin Adam	Roger and Anina McCarron
Anonymous x 3	Kevin and Nicole McCormack
Gwendolyn and Zeb Barnes	Joyce McGlade
Harrison and Anastasia Bernbaum	Patrick McGovern
Jim and Mimi Brault	Peter and Christine Neely
Alan Brody	Jill Nolte
Bill Carr	Naomi O'Dell
Lisa Centone and Joe Curci	Liam O'Kane
Elizabeth and Tarun Chandran	Michael & Maria O'Toole
Rick and Dee Dee Chesley	Dani Petrie
Martha John Diener	Gretchen Rakowicz
Nikki Drevich	John Ratnaswamy
Bill and December Gladden	John and Ellen Riggs
Martin Goodlett	Sheila Ruder
Lois Hartung	David Sacks
Jillian Harvey	Amanda Schackart
Dr. Laurie and Andrew Hochberg	Susan Schwartz
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David and Maureen Lai	Kartika Sujdak
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Robin and Jeff Lyall	Jessica and Bryan Wain
Gene and Barbara Mackevich	Mary and Robert Womsley
Steve and Ellen Mardiks	Michael and Mary Woolever
	Carolyn Young
ORGANIZATIONS	
A.G. Cox Charity Trust	Harley-Davidson Financial Services
AbbVie	Illinois Tool Works Foundation
Anonymous x2	Max Goldenberg Foundation
Arnold Simonsen Family Charitable Foundation, Inc.	NAEIR
Assurance Agency Ltd.	Opus Foundation
AXA XL	Park Ridge Presbyterian Church
Chicago Creative Group	Peoples Gas
Christopher Family Foundation	Presbyterian Church of Barrington
CIBC Bank USA	RBC Capital Markets
Cisco Meraki	Southminster Presbyterian Church
CME Group Foundation	The Kraemer Family Charitable Fund
ComEd	Thoma Bravo
Constellation Energy	United Auto Insurance
D & R Fund	VNA Foundation
Egarter Family Foundation	
Ellis Goodman Family Foundation	
First Presbyterian Church of Arlington Heights	
	<i>*includes in-kind donations</i>

Community Partner Spotlight — Heartfelt Thank You to RBC Capital Markets for Making a Lasting Impact at Christopher House

The vital work Chrisotpher House does within the North and Northwest sides of Chicago would not be possible without the dedication and support of our community members, volunteers, and partners... partners like RBC Capital Markets.

For over 10 years, RBC has been a committed supporter of our family of schools and the unique, comprehensive supports we provide to the families and caregivers. From annual gifts in support of our programs to hosting RBC’s Day of Service, their generosity never wavers. On RBC’s valued partnership with Christopher House, Jacqueline Moore, Director of Asset Risk Management and RBC volunteer, shared:

“We are committed to making a positive and measurable impact on the communities in which we live and work. Our employees are passionate about volunteering their time and energy to organizations – like Christopher House – to provide support and opportunities to help young people reach their full potential. RBC Capital Markets is here to support young people in creating a more positive future.”

In addition to annual grant support of \$35,000, RBC recently made an additional gift of \$5,000 to Christopher House, supporting both scholars and families as they prepared for the new 2024-2025 school year.



Are YOU curious about what impact a single gift can make?



or



Back to School – School Supply Kits

To help prepare scholars for the new 2024-2025 school year, Christopher House used funds awarded by RBC to purchase necessary school supplies – notebooks, binders, backpacks, etc. – for 60 Early Childhood and Youth Development Scholars. All School Supply Kits were packaged by RBC volunteers.

Restorative Justice at Christopher House Elementary School (CHES)

Funds awarded by RBC supported the purchasing of materials and supplies to transform a classroom at CHES into a designated, safe, and welcoming Restorative Justic Center or “Peace Room”, which will support Elementary and Middle School Social Emotional Learning (SEL).



JOIN OUR SHINING STAR Monthly Giving Circle!

By becoming a monthly donor, you provide consistent, reliable support that helps us deliver high-quality education, essential family services, and holistic care to over 1,500 children and families across Chicago.

YOUR MONTHLY GIFT WILL:

Empower young scholars to reach their full potential

Provide critical resources to families in need

Ensure every child has a bright future, no matter their circumstances

Join the Shining Stars today at www.christopherhouse.org/donate and make a lasting impact! Together, we can create a brighter future for the next generation.

