

# ACHIEVE

FALL 2023



  
**CHRISTOPHER HOUSE**  
LEARN DREAM ACHIEVE

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

To our Christopher House Community,

This end of summer-beginning of fall season is a time of reflection and gratitude. I am both proud of the work we've done this year and humbled by the work that lies ahead in advocating and realizing our social justice commitment to our scholars, families, teachers, staff, and our broader community.

One of our core values is equity, and this past year, this commitment has shown up in so many ways. We are working in and outside the classroom to support courageous conversations around Diversity, Belonging, Equity, and Inclusion (DBEI), and I am thrilled to share that we are continuing our partnership with Single Story, Inc., who provides professional development for our staff. I am also beyond humbled to share that Christopher House is now one of **only 120 National SEED (Seeking Educational Equity and Diversity) sites in the United States, with five of emerging leaders being trained as SEED facilitators this past summer.**

SEED is a professional community committed to having actionable conversations that center around identity. SEED participants explore and reflect on their own education in relation to various identities that one carries – and how individual lived experiences are different and similar; we call this looking for “mirrors” and “windows.” Together, SEED participants examine how we are all shaped by social systems and recognize how identities shape systemic impact and our responses to it. The goal is to first understand our own selves, so that we can better examine our school's policies and practices, rooting out bias and racism to create a just and supportive learning environment and workplace.

Creating spaces for belonging is a core tenet of DBEI, and I am proud of our staff and teachers, who live this value daily. From celebrating the diverse cultures of East & West Africa at our Uptown campus during our Cultural Fashion Show, to teachers labeling classroom items in native languages, we ensure all scholars and families feel their whole selves seen, celebrated, and valued in our family of schools.

Thank you for the opportunity to continue to serve our scholars, families, teachers, and staff—and doing this work in community, together.

In service,



Libby Shortenhaus



## 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 Report Card

We are thrilled to share with you the following highlights from FY23!



## Infant & Preschool

% of children, ages 0-5, who are meeting literacy development milestones*	<b>97%</b>
% of our infant to 3-year-old children showed an increase in their social emotional development*	<b>83%</b>
% of pre-school children transitioning to kindergarten who are kindergarten ready*	<b>52%</b>

\*as evidenced by the Teaching Strategies GOLD Assessment

## Elementary & Middle School

% of our 8th grade scholars who graduated	<b>100%</b>
% of our graduating scholars were accepted to their Top 3 best fit high schools	<b>85%</b>
% of our graduating 8th grade scholars who were accepted to CPS Selective Enrollment High Schools*	<b>25%</b>

\*This is a 71% increase from our first graduating class in 2021!

## After School

% of After School scholars – school age and youth – who achieved two of the three SMART Goals	<b>93%</b>
% of all After School scholars who improved their grades from first semester to second semester or maintained a B average	<b>82%</b>

## Parent School

% of families (Early Childhood and Elementary School) who scored safe or stable based on the Christopher House Family Assessment	<b>75%</b>
% of parents across our family of schools who achieved 2 out of 3 goals they create for themselves to enhance their child's healthy development	<b>91%</b>
# of children and parents who received food from our on-site food pantries	<b>1,676</b>
# of families who received food and gifts through the Family-to-Family Holiday giving program	<b>1,653</b>

“The DBEI professional development has been a great experience. It has created a space to learn about people's identities through storytelling and to hear diverse perspectives. The activities we did collaboratively were powerful – it allowed us to express love for and to be proud of all parts of our own identities while also learning about one another's. - Bernadette Loyola, Associate Director of Curriculum & Instruction”



# Our 2023 Calendar

Take a walk through Summer at Christopher House!



**Taste of Christopher House: March 17th, 2023**  
Family Support Services and our Parent Leaders hosted the return of the Stewart Campus's Taste of Christopher House. An afternoon dedicated to the celebration of our families' cultures through home-made food and lively music.

## MARCH



**National Volunteer Month: April, 2023**  
Christopher House honors, recognizes, and appreciates our amazing and dedicated volunteers who go out of their way to show their support for our scholars, families, and mission - to create opportunity and advance equity within our community.

## APRIL



**Annual Gala: May 4th, 2023**  
Christopher House raised nearly \$500,000 in support of our children and families at the Annual DREAM Gala. A night full of reconnection, food and drinks, and live and silent auctions. Thank you to our friends and sponsors who made the memorable evening possible!

## MAY

**Teachers Appreciation Week: May 8th -12th, 2023**

Christopher House would not be without the continued dedication and compassion of our staff and teachers, as well as their ongoing commitment to the children and families they serve. It was a joy to celebrate our teachers and staff through week-long activities, including a red carpet, build-your-own bouquets, delicious treats, and free massages!



## JUNE

**2024 Illinois State Budget Signing: June 7th, 2023**  
Christopher House hosted the signing of the 2023 Illinois State Budget by Governor JB Pritzker. The new State budget allows for over \$250 million in support of Early Childhood Education and \$1 billion in support of Health & Human Services and homelessness prevention for our families.



**Cultural Fashion Show: June 1st, 2023**  
We celebrated the 2nd Annual Cultural Fashion Show at Uptown, highlighting fashions and traditions from 9 countries from around the world, including Cameroon, Ghana, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Ecuador, Mexico, Nigeria, Togo, and Puerto Rico.



**Pride Month: June, 2023**  
In June, we celebrated ALL members of our community who identify as LGBTQIA+ and reinforced our commitment to being a place of safety, love, and respect for our scholars, families, staff, and community.



**8th Grade Graduation: June 2, 2023**  
We graduated our third graduating class - the Class of 2023! 100% of our 8th grade scholars graduated, and 25% were accepted to CPS Selective Enrollment High Schools.



**Christopher House Community Garden: July 7, 2023**  
We excitedly announced the opening of our Christopher House parent-lead community garden, located at our Stewart campus in Belmont Cragin.



## JULY



**Preschool Graduations: August, 2023**  
We were thrilled to celebrate our Uptown, Logan Square, and Belmont Cragin Preschool scholars as they graduated and took their next steps in their educational journeys.

## AUGUST

**First Day of School: August 21, 2023**  
Scholars and families returned to our classrooms for another exciting year full of new experiences, supportive teachers, and amazing friendships.





# The Voices of Christopher House

## Vincent Rodriguez, Diverse Learners Coordinator

Vincent Rodriguez, a classically trained flautist with an eye for detail, and ear for harmony, and a passion for supporting children and families, is Christopher House's Diverse Learners Coordinator. In his role, Vincent supports Diverse Learning scholars and their parents as they navigate Early Intervention and access resources.

We spoke with Vincent about his Christopher House story, and he had these words to share:

### Why do you choose to work at Christopher House?

*I love working here because of how the organization supports its staff, students, and parents using a strength-based, equitable approach. As part of Christopher House, I help children and families access and utilize the best resources so they can succeed. Ultimately, I want to support parents in becoming the strongest advocates for their children by empowering parents to know what tools are available to them and how to use them.*

*Also, I've been around Christopher House forever... my mother used to be a site director!*

### Can you explain your role as a Diverse Learners Coordinator and why it's important?

*My role as the Diverse Learners Coordinator is really unique. I support families in navigating the early intervention process and ensure that all children with Individualized Family Service Plans (IFSP) and Individualized Education Plans (IEP) are receiving the services and support they need. This population has increased significantly after the pandemic. Currently, 30 percent of our Early Childhood scholars are Diverse Learners. I also support teachers in incorporating in-class strategies for their learners. In my position, I am*

*able to do more than just case management. I am very involved in the classroom, and I am connected to our families during the entire Early Intervention process – from the initial referral and evaluation, to navigating systems and resources outside of Christopher House. These first learning years are crucial for all children, and early access to necessary support resources - in and out of the classroom - makes all the difference in healthy and positive development.*

### How does your role fit into Christopher House's continuum of education model?

*My role does not end once a child receives an IFSP or IEP; it is only the beginning. Often times, I am working with the same children from infancy up until they transition to kindergarten, and this continuity of care is vital for their ongoing development. I also support families so that they are able to continue to navigate external resources and systems that their child may need even after they leave Christopher House. My work is not just about immediate services, but setting children and families up with the tools they need as they continue on through Elementary and Middle School and beyond.*



# Corporate Volunteer

## Spotlight Illinois Tool Works

On June 16, 2023, Christopher House was thrilled to welcome twenty-five ITW volunteers to our James & Jean Stewart Campus located in Belmont Cragin and to be a nonprofit partner in ITW's annual Day of Action – a company-wide day of civic engagement and volunteerism that allows employees to give back to community partners in areas where they live and work. In Chicagoland, Christopher House was among a few different partners that ITW partnered with that serve the Belmont Cragin and Austin communities.

ITW Volunteers helped Christopher House prepare our Stewart Campus for summer – from mulching over 30 yards of play and outdoor space to supporting our Early Childhood classrooms with some deep cleaning. We are so grateful for all the helping hands!

Reflecting on their volunteer experiences and their ongoing partnership with Christopher House, Mimi de Castro, Community Affairs Sr. Analyst, share,

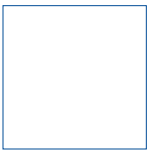
*"ITW has a long history of giving back to our communities. Day of Action is one of those events that allow our employees to collectively do this. We were honored to partner with Christopher House this year and hope to volunteer again in the future."*

ITW has been a longtime supporter – from helping us build out our James & Jean Stewart Campus to serve our full continuum of education, to now seeing many of our 8th graders become Freshman at ITW David Speer Academy, a Noble School. Together, ITW and Christopher House are proud to serve the northwest and west sides of Chicago in creating access to high quality education opportunities for children, youth, and adults.



## Donors to Christopher House - \$1,000+ (July 1, 2022 – June 30, 2023)

A.G. Cox Charity Trust	Brian and Ronit Barrett	Campos EPC	CME Group Foundation	Robert Fedoris	Amy and Bob Greenebaum	Holland & Knight	Ingredion Incorporated	Meghan Kiesel	Lauren and Ryan Long	Jill Nolte	Patrick and Anna M. Cudahy Fund	Presbyterian Church	RJB Properties/Blackstone Group	Peter and Barbara Sereda	Automobile Insurance Company	The Wax and Skin Lounge	VNA Foundation
Accordion	Allan Berliant	Bill Carr	ComEd	Yoseph Feit and Edith Gross	Hermia Guerrero	Jennifer Holmgren	Roberto Interiano and David Barber	David and Maureen Lai	Lynn and Mike Lullo	Nordic Energy Services, LLC	M. Cudahy Fund	Elizabeth Press	David W. Rodin	Diane and Raj Shah	Jacqueline and Glenn Tilton	Aubrey Wagner	
All Chicago	Stacey and Joe Blasko	Lisa Centone and Joe Curci	Concord Group	Anthony and Elizabeth Fiore	Jordan and Debra Hadelman	Thomas and Vicki Horwich	Katherine Jahnke Dale and Eric Dale	Kenny and Jennifer Langston	Steve and Ellen Mardiks	Jeffrey O'Dell	Paul M. Angell Family Foundation	Leo and Yekaterina Radvinsky	Ron Rohde	Elizabeth Shortenhaus	Marion Walsh	Eric Weisseg	
AMD Family Fund	Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Illinois	Julie Chamberlin	Constellation Energy	First Presbyterian Church of Arlington Heights	Johanna Haggstrom	Hurley Family Foundation	Katherine Jahnke Dale and Eric Dale	LanzaTech, Inc.	Alex Maturi and Sarah Chuzi	Old National Bank	Paul Hastings LLP	Gretchen Rakowicz	David Rosenblatt	Kim White	Lizzy Whitehorn and Matthew Reilein		
Anonymous x 6	Arnold Simonsen Family Charitable Foundation, Inc.	Tarun and Elizabeth Chandran	D & R Fund	Joseph & Helen Komarek Foundation	Omar Hammami	Illinois Tool Works Foundation	Joseph & Helen Komarek Foundation	Open Kitchens	Max Goldenberg Foundation	Thomas O'Neill and Ann David	Earl Perlow and Grant Kaufman	Stephen and Shiloh Raquet	Loretta Rosenmayer	Bill Singer and JoAnne Cicchelli	Floyd and Jennifer Strimling	United Scrap Metal, Inc.	
Assurance Agency Ltd.	Tim and Meg Boarini	Helen Chen	Diana L. Amrein Grandchildren's Trust	Gerri and David Kahnweiler	Joe Hammon	IMC Chicago Charitable Foundation	Adam and Jessica LeFebvre	Opus Foundation	Roger and Anina McCarron	Dani Petrie	Dani Petrie	Katie and Michael Ruhland	Suzanne Smart	United Auto Insurance	Kartika Sudjak	William Blair	
AXA XL	Gregory Braun	Rick and Dee Dee Chesley	Carley Diedrich	Tiffany Fraley	Harley-Davidson Financial Services	Impact Networking, LLC	Leo S. Guthman Fund	Origami Works Foundation	Kevin and Nicole McCormack	Plante Moran	Plante Moran	Sheila Ruder	Rick and Holly Smirl	William Blair	Joe Zitomer and Traci Stanley		
Peter and Emily Baillos	Michael Buck and Deborah Lee	Nathan Chesley	DLA Piper US LLP	Franczek, P.C.	Lois Hartung	Incommmercial Property Group	Gary and Liz Levin	Osilich Family Trust	Joyce McGlade	Polk Bros. Foundation	John Ratnaswamy	Tina Ruttenberg	Southminster Presbyterian Church	Mark and Terri Sullivan	Respicio Vazquez and Anastasia Gomez		
Bank of America Charitable Foundation	Robert Buono and Elizabeth Cicchelli	Christopher House Auxiliary	Nikki Drevich	Garvey's Office Products	Diane Heller	Ingenuity	Tom and Cindy Lillard	Presbyterian Church of Barrington	McGraw Foundation	Diana and Bruce Rauner	John Salvino	Ed Ryder	Gregory and Margaret Spitzer	The Ruttenberg Foundation	Stephanie and John Vlahakis		
	Michael Caldwell	CIBC Bank USA	Egarter Family Foundation	Bill and December Gladden	Nicola Hill		Angela Lockhart	Presbyterian Women of the Park Ridge		RBC Capital Markets	Susan Schwartz	John Salvino	State Farm Mutual	The Donley Foundation			



## Family-to-Family Holiday Gift Program

**SIGN UP IS OPEN**

[christophershhouse.org/family2family](http://christophershhouse.org/family2family)

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Giving Tuesday

**NOV. 28, 2023**

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Annual Benefit

**CHECK THE WORD SEARCH FOR A SAVE THE DATE!**

### Save the Date Word Search

G	F	Y	O	U	S	D	Q	G	J
R	S	C	K	Y	E	Q	P	C	K
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- HINT 1:** Month that begins with "M"  
**HINT 2:** Date that begins with "S"  
**HINT 3:** Location that begins with "V"

Join us in creating opportunity and advancing equity for our scholars and families.

Learn more at [christopherhouse.org/family-to-family-2023](http://christopherhouse.org/family-to-family-2023)