

ANNUAL REPORT

2024



CHRISTOPHER
LEARN DREAM ACHIEVE HOUSE



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A Letter from our CEO

Dear Friends and Supporters of Christopher House,

To all those who made this past year possible—thank you! Your continued support has been vital to our progress and impact.

Guided by our FY24–FY26 Strategic Plan, we remain deeply committed to our core priorities: achieving high student outcomes for for all Christopher House scholars, making Christopher House the best place to work, sustaining strong enrollment to ensure financial stability, and aligning our budget with compliance and resource needs.

We are so proud of our impact this year; delivering on 96% of our birth-five scholars meeting widely held cognitive and developmental outcomes, 100% of transitioning Kindergarten scholars achieving widely held expectations for kindergarten readiness, 100% of our 8th grade scholars graduated - with 21% being accepted to CPS Selective Enrollment High Schools, in addition to 97% enrollment in addition to maintaining 97% enrollment in our programs that deliver life changing impact for scholars and families.

We ground our work in the voices of our families, scholars, and staff, striving every day to deliver a high-quality education that reflects our shared values.

As we look ahead, we are inspired by the strength and resilience of the Christopher House community. Thank you for standing with us—we’re excited to move forward together.

It is our pleasure to share the following Annual Report, reflecting the progress and outcomes of FY24, which includes: Our Leaders, About Christopher House, Our Model and Impact, Early Head Start, Our Financials, and 2024 Donors.

With gratitude,



Julie Dakers
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

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About Christopher House

Our History, Mission, Vision

Since its founding in 1906, Christopher House has created opportunity and advanced equity by delivering high-quality, innovative programming that serves the needs of our community. From being one of the first Head Start providers in the 1960s to launching the Christopher House Elementary School in 2013, Christopher House has honed a continuum of education model with immersive family support that enables scholars and their caregivers to thrive.

Today, we deliver this model to thousands of scholars, starting at birth through the 8th grade, across our family of schools located in Belmont Cragin, Logan Square, and Uptown. We build strong, trusting relationships with families – scholars and their caregivers – to provide coordinated support and care to create pathways to success for the whole family.

Our Community

Christopher House Scholars and Families
Through our continuum of education, Christopher House promotes overall success for children and families in school, the workplace, and life. We serve BIPOC communities on the North and Northwest sides of Chicago – communities that have been disproportionately impacted by systemic, institutionalized racism and further affected by the pandemic.

Belmont Cragin was an epicenter of Covid-19 in 2020, with infection rates as high as 40%. With a targeted Public Health campaign, which Christopher House participated in, Belmont Cragin has since become one of the highest vaccinated BIPOC communities in Chicago. (<https://www.wbez.org/stories/chicago-targets-15-hard-hit-communities-for-a-vaccination-blitz-to-fight-disparities/>).



100%

of our community has been identified as low-income (proxy: FRL and/or average annual household income).

64%

of Scholars were from single-parent households.



16%

of Scholars from Infant to 8th grade were Diverse Learners

50%

of Scholars were English Language Learners.



Many of our families are first-generation, immigrant or migrant families.



FAMILIES:

- 71% Latinx
- 21% Black or African American
- 1% Multiracial



SCHOLARS:

- 72% Latinx
- 25% Black or African American
- 3% Multiracial

Our Impact & Program Highlights

In FY24 (July 1, 2023 – June 30, 2024) Christopher House served a total of 1,629 scholars and families across our family of schools – Infant and Preschool, Elementary and Middle School, After School, and Parent School.



Infant & Pre-School

enrolled over 300 children, ages 0 – 5 years old this year. All three preschools are accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) – a distinction awarded to only 10% of early learning schools across the country – and each school has received the highest Gold Circle of Quality ranking from ExceleRate Illinois. Across our Infant & Pre-School classrooms we implement a methodology that is centered on personalized education, with immersive family support. We meet every scholar and their caregiver where they are, embracing an educational pedagogy that is child-centered, social justice motivated, and Reggio Emilia inspired. We are pleased to share that last year:

100% of children transitioning to kindergarten were developmentally ready in Social Emotional Learning (SEL).

99% of three- to five-year-old scholars met the widely held expectations (WHE) in literacy development.

Our Stories

Christopher House incorporates an interactive STEAM-based (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, Mathematics) education across our family of schools – to foster creativity, support problem solving skills, and prepare scholars for their academic and professional futures – and our Infant and Preschool program is no exception.

Early Childhood classrooms explore STEAM in many different ways – guided lessons, interactive experiments, colorful projects. One example is Ms. Margo and her Room 13 Pre-School scholars, ages three to five. From studying silkworms and their habitats, to playing with light and colorful reflections, Ms. Margo’s scholars are STEAM explorers!

“Young children are naturally curious. They are experiencing new things and ideas in the world every day. Their thinking is magical. They are not sure why things happen, and they are not sure what effect they have on the world. We talk about using our “scientist senses” – what do we directly see, hear, smell, touch, and taste that teaches us what is happening in the world? And when we interact or experiment with objects or living things, what impacts do we have?”

The warm and supportive environment that Ms. Margo facilitates in her classroom helps her scholars feel comfortable and find joy in experimenting and exploring new subjects. By creating a welcoming and creative learning environment and prioritizing a STEAM-focused education for her scholars, Ms. Margo helps prepare them to take the next steps in their educational journeys and excite them about the possibility of exploring STEAM careers in the future.

“In the short term, I hope our Pre-School scholars develop a habit of exploring bravely – touch that moth, pound that lever, plop that rock into water, see what happens. Try changing what you’re doing, predict what will happen, then see if it does! In the long term, I hope our scholars’ preschool experiences build a strong, visceral foundation of scientific concepts that they can think back on when they are expected to build abstract models of scientific ideas in high school or college. I hope these experiences will spur some of them to work in STEAM fields someday and use science to improve the world.”

Elementary & Middle School

provides more than 440 scholars – including the graduates of our Infant & Pre-School – with a personalized education, including a STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Math) curriculum, ongoing professional development of Christopher House’s qualified staff, and a college-going culture that ensures every scholar is prepared for the bright future ahead. We are pleased to share the following scholar successes, including math and reading scores. These are critical as we support students on their post-Covid continued learning journeys.

100% of Elementary and Middle School scholars achieved goals set with social workers.

62% of Elementary scholars are meeting or exceeding their NWEA projected growth targets in math, and **45%** in reading.

100% of our 8th grade scholars graduated... with **21%** being accepted to CPS Selective Enrollment High Schools, which is a **29%** increase in the number of scholars accepted from our first 8th grade graduating class in 2021.



Our Stories

Each May, Christopher House 8th grade scholars look back fondly on their years in our colorful halls, recounting the lessons they have learned, the projects they have completed, and the friends they have made that will last a lifetime. While reflecting on his time here at Christopher House, previous 8th grade graduate, Derek, shared his goals for the future and offered sincere thanks to those who have supported him along the way.

“I have big hopes and dreams for my future, and they revolve around both school and baseball. In school, my goal is to excel academically and pursue my passions. I dream of working hard to achieve good grades, getting involved in clubs and extracurricular activities, and eventually attending a college where I can continue my education. Both my school and my family play important roles in helping me reach my goals, especially when it comes to my passion for baseball. At school, my teachers provide support and encouragement as I strive to excel academically and athletically. They understand my goals and help me balance my studies with my commitment to baseball, offering flexibility with assignments. Outside of school, my family is my biggest cheerleader, attending my games, offering guidance, and instilling lifelong values like perseverance and hard work that are essential for success both on and off the field. Their unwavering support motivates me to push myself and never give up on my dreams, whether it’s earning good grades or making strides in my baseball career. Together, my school and my family created a strong support system that empowers me to chase my goals each and every day.”

From his accomplishments on the field, to being awarded the Daniel Murphy Scholarship, Derek is thankful for support that he has received at Christopher House over the years and will forever cherish the deep, genuine connections he has made both in and outside of the classroom.

“After graduating, one thing I’m going to miss a lot is the sense of community. School isn’t just about classes and homework; it’s also about the people you’re with every day. The friends I’ve made and the connections I’ve formed with teachers and classmates are really special to me. We’ve shared so many experiences together, from group projects to school events. It’s like we’re all in this together, supporting each other and cheering each other on.”

After School

worked with 229 students – including our Elementary School scholars and graduates – from age six to fourteen, to explore new opportunities, achieve academic excellence, and develop healthy behaviors and the soft skills needed for success in school, home, college, and the workplace. After School operates year-round, providing programming from 2:30 – 5:30PM during the school year and during non-school days operates full-day programming. Scholars participate in a variety of academic and social activities that focus on SEL, academic support, and community exploration.

100% of After School scholars – school age – achieved two of the three SMART goals they set for themselves by the end of the school year.

78% of all After School scholars improved their grades from first semester to second semester or maintained a B average.

70% of children and youth were engaged in learning as evidenced by the SAYO-Staff assessment.

64% of scholars exhibited genuine motivation, persistence and goal directed behavior as evidenced by the SAYO-Staff assessment.



Our Stories

Christopher House After school supports children during out-of-school time so that they have the resources they need to succeed both academically and developmentally year round...scholars like Mohammad. Mohammad, a now 12-year-old scholar at Disney Magnet School and participant in Christopher House's After School program, first joined in the 3-5-year-old room. Through a continuum of education, Mohammad had the opportunity to remain in the Christopher House community after graduating from Preschool by participating in CH's year-round After School Program.

Throughout his 7 years at Christopher House, Mohammad has consistently maintained an impressively high GPA, taking advantage of all resources offered to him by teachers, staff, and peers. His After School Instructors have routinely collected report cards and monitored his grades to highlight target areas in need of support and observe general trends within the classroom and school community. Mohammad found additional support in academic hour, receiving guidance from teachers, working with peers, and even mentoring younger students. During enrichment hour, Mohammad has participated in a variety of activities that focus on academic or SEL areas in need of improvement (literacy, math, problem solving, etc.). From lively spelling bees to exciting “hot topic” student debates, Mohammad has never shied away from the opportunity to participate in the fun.

Now a 7th grade scholar with his sights set on high school, Mohammad was recently selected for the honor of participating in high jump, a summer program that helps prepare 7th and 8th grade scholars for high school through academic engagement. Whether it is Loyola or Lincoln Park High School, Mohammad is looking forward to taking the next steps in his educational journey and is deeply thankful for all of those – teachers, parents, staff, and friends – who have prepared him for this momentous milestone.

Parent School

partners with every parent of each scholar in the Infant & Pre-School, Elementary School, and After School in order to create a stable, healthy home environment that advances their child's academic and social-emotional development. From infancy through young adulthood, we recognize there is no greater driver in a child's success than an active, engaged caregiver and we respect and nurture the power of caregivers in every step of a scholar's educational journey. Parent School supports families year-round by providing holistic resources, including family advocates, parent education workshops, counseling services, and additional family support, like on-site food pantries and emergency financial assistance. By recognizing our scholars' parents as their first teachers, we are able to form deep, meaningful connections with them, understand their needs, concerns, strengths, and areas of need to ensure they have access to all of the culturally responsive support and resources they need to thrive.



100% of parents of Infant and Preschool scholars reached 2 out of 3 goals they create for themselves to enhance their child's healthy development.

1,307 individuals (unduplicated) received food from our on-site food pantries last year.

1,510 families received food and gifts through the Family-to-Family Holiday giving program.

148 adults and children received financial assistance, therefore preventing crisis such as eviction, and/or having their electricity or heat turned off.

Our Stories

Each year, the Christopher House Annual Gala presents our surrounding community – friends, partners, and supporters – with an incredible opportunity to hear directly from the scholars and families we serve and to learn more about the vital impact of our programs. Highlighted in the 2024 Annual Gala video, we had the pleasure to sit down with some of our families and learn more about ways in which Christopher House, and in particular, Parent School, has impacted them and their children... families like Sara Moreno.

Sara is a mother of two boys, Arlo, a toddler in a 3-5-year-old classroom, and Felix, who is now in third grade. Sara is incredibly active in her children's school and education, volunteering at parent-led events and participating in “Cafecito,” or mom's group, a safe space dedicated to mothers and caregivers so they may gather in community to connect through shared experiences. Throughout her time at Christopher House, Sara has developed strong relationships with both her Family Advocates and her children's teachers.

Erika, Sara's Family Advocate, shared, “If you ask me to describe my relationship with Sara and the Moreno family, we are really like family. Through the connection we've grown over the years, we now have a deeper relationship that allows me to help her with anything her family might need. She has even taken on a leadership role, volunteering with other parents and advocating for all children.”

While reflecting on the support her family has received from Christopher House – from our bi-monthly food pantry to our emergency rent assistance program – Sara shared, “The food pantry is a great support for our family. It allows us to use our resources for other necessities. When we did not have the financial resources, they even helped us with part of the rent. Honestly, this school is like a great family.”

To hear directly from Sara and her family, and to learn more about our family of schools, please enjoy our 2024 Annual Christopher House video, “The Sky's the Limit,” linked here: <https://vimeo.com/manage/videos/944867633>

*names have been changed to protect the privacy of our children and families

Statement of Activities and Changes in Net Assets

Years Ended June 30, 2024 and 2023

	2024			2023		
	Without Donor Restrictions	With Donor Restrictions	Total	Without Donor Restrictions	With Donor Restrictions	Total
Revenue and Support						
Government grants (Note 11)	\$ 17,901,171	\$ -	\$ 17,901,171	\$ 17,317,165	\$ -	\$ 17,317,165
Contributions of cash and other financial assets	971,805	274,600	1,246,405	924,495	397,654	1,322,149
Contributions of nonfinancial assets (Note 13)	214,198	-	214,198	240,509	-	240,509
Program service fees and incidental revenue	141,801	-	141,801	138,820	-	138,820
Special event revenue	481,750	-	481,750	415,425	-	415,425
Investment income - Net	97,800	-	97,800	52,840	-	52,840
Miscellaneous income	90,768	-	90,768	49,540	-	49,540
Total revenue and support	19,899,293	274,600	20,173,893	19,138,794	397,654	19,536,448
Net Assets Released from Restrictions	363,603	(363,603)	-	343,719	(343,719)	-
Total revenue, support, and net assets released from restrictions	20,262,896	(89,003)	20,173,893	19,482,513	53,935	19,536,448
Expenses						
Program services:						
Early childhood development	8,005,248	-	8,005,248	8,387,729	-	8,387,729
Youth development	1,229,864	-	1,229,864	1,487,065	-	1,487,065
Family support services	1,417,319	-	1,417,319	1,380,105	-	1,380,105
Elementary school	7,926,123	-	7,926,123	7,516,622	-	7,516,622
Total program services	18,578,554	-	18,578,554	18,771,521	-	18,771,521
Support services:						
Management and general	1,384,292	-	1,384,292	1,562,592	-	1,562,592
Fundraising	608,305	-	608,305	527,511	-	527,511
Total expenses	20,571,151	-	20,571,151	20,861,624	-	20,861,624
(Decrease) Increase in Net Assets - Before nonoperating income	(308,255)	(89,003)	(397,258)	(1,379,111)	53,935	(1,325,176)
Nonoperating Income (Loss)						
Net realized and unrealized loss on investments	216,396	-	216,396	(9,700)	-	(9,700)
Net unrealized gain on interest rate swap	(13,646)	-	(13,646)	163,545	-	163,545
Total nonoperating income	202,750	-	202,750	153,845	-	153,845
	(105,505)	(89,003)	(194,508)	(1,225,266)	53,935	(1,171,331)
(Decrease) Increase in Net Assets						
Net Assets - Beginning of year	19,754,226	1,436,328	21,190,554	20,979,492	1,382,393	22,361,885
Net Assets - End of year	\$19,648,721	\$1,347,325	\$20,996,046	\$19,754,226	\$1,436,328	\$21,190,554

Statement of Financial Position

June 30, 2024 and 2023

	2024	2023
ASSETS		
Current Assets		
Cash and cash equivalents	\$ 2,155,055	\$ 1,317,276
Investments (Note 5)	1,803,905	2,490,070
Receivables:		
Grants	2,322,328	2,290,202
Pledges - Net of allowance (Note 13)	285,200	416,130
Fair value of swap agreement (Note 8)	415,186	428,832
Prepaid expenses and other current assets	191,133	182,530
Total current assets	7,172,807	7,125,040
Pledges Receivable - Net of current portion and discount (Note 13)	100,000	-
Property and Equipment - Net (Note 6)	20,254,547	21,118,466
Right-of-use Operating Lease Assets (Note 10)	21,550	106,219
Finance Lease Assets (Note 10)	18,280	62,149
Total assets	\$ 27,567,184	\$ 28,411,874
LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS		
Current Liabilities		
Accounts payable	\$ 225,521	\$ 276,554
Accrued liabilities:		
Accrued payroll and vacation	923,869	897,483
Advances from government and funding agencies	-	114,862
Other accrued liabilities	43,940	45,997
Current portion of long-term debt (Note 8)	387,836	5,715,932
Current portion of lease liabilities - Operating (Note 10)	21,907	85,557
Current portion of lease liabilities - Finance (Note 10)	18,801	44,227
Total current liabilities	1,621,874	7,180,612
Notes Payable - Net of current portion and deferred financing costs (Note 8)	4,949,264	-
Lease Liabilities - Operating - Net of current portion (Note 10)	-	21,907
Lease Liabilities - Finance - Net of current portion (Note 10)	-	18,801
Total liabilities	6,571,138	7,221,320
Net Assets		
Without donor restrictions	19,648,721	19,754,226
With donor restrictions (Note 11)	1,347,325	1,436,328
Total net assets	20,996,046	21,190,554
Total liabilities and net assets	\$ 27,567,184	\$ 28,411,874

2024 Donors

Individual, Corporate, and Foundation Donors

\$100,000+

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\$50,000 - \$99,999
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