

CIS more than proves its worth day in, day out

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The work of Communities in Schools (CIS) of South Central Texas positively affects more than 17,000 children in area school districts. Locally, 26 schools in four districts — New Braunfels, Comal, Schertz-Cibolo-Universal City and Marion — benefit from the services of CIS.

The program provides counseling and a wide range of social services, including mediation, transportation, clothing and shelter for children who qualify as high-risk. About one-third of Communities in Schools' funding comes through the Texas Education Agency, while another third comes through local donations and fundraisers. The remainder comes from the host school districts.

The people who really benefit from the program are not the staff, but the children. Having access to CIS can make the difference between failure and success for many kids.

In addition to securing tutoring or help with homework or maintaining good grades, CIS intervenes in a student's life in many ways. Sometimes it helps students pick better or more positive friends. Sometimes, with the help of volunteers, it provides positive relationships with a stable, secure adult through mentoring.

On Friday, some Oak Run Middle School students took time to talk about how much CIS has done for them.

“With my mom going to jail and everything, Miss Beltran has been there for me,” one girl said. “I go to her for everything. I can talk to her. I know she'll be there for me.”

That says a lot about this valuable program. We can't imagine how the program's participants would succeed in school — or out of school — without CIS. The harsh reality is that many of them wouldn't. That's why CIS is here.

As our population grows, so will the need for CIS and its services.

Those services aren't cheap and they can't be accomplished without an army of quality volunteers. If you can afford to volunteer a little time, please do so. If you don't have time but you have money, a donation of the latter certainly would be welcomed.

Whatever you have to offer, consider offering it to CIS. The program really is worth it.

To learn more about CIS and how you can help, visit www.cis-sct.org.