

Support CIS and have a great time, too

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It hasn't been the easiest of years for Communities in Schools of South Central Texas.

The program, which serves at-risk youths in elementary and secondary schools in local districts, took severe funding hits —first from the state, then area districts — last spring and summer.

Still, the agency carries on. CIS executive director Chris Douglas has managed to plug the funding gaps, despite having to lay off employees, and the agency continues in its core mission to help students stay in school.

Last week, CIS kicked off its biggest yearly fundraiser — Rock 'n Roll for Kids — by announcing competitors for the "Great Legs Contest." More than a dozen men from the community will be bearing their legs in hopes of filling up money buckets for local schools.

This is how it works. Competitors solicit votes from everyone, and each vote equals \$1. There's no limit to the amount of times a person can vote.

The contestants will be visiting various venues, especially on Feb. 23, when they'll participate in a pub crawl of downtown watering holes. Scheduled stops include the Faust Hotel, On The Half Shell Oyster Bar, Piano Bar, Kork Wine Bar and The Phoenix Saloon.

Donations also are being accepted at the CIS website, cissctx.ejoinme.org/rocknrollforkids.

Last year's seven Great Legs participants raised more than \$6,200, led by New Braunfels Police Chief Tom Wibert, whose legs brought in more than \$1,700. Douglas hopes CIS can raise a combined \$10,000 combined this year, and perhaps even approach the all-time high of \$11,500.

The Great Legs campaign is a lead-in to Rock 'n Roll for Kids, which begins at 6 p.m. March 3 at New Braunfels Civic Convention Center.

The event will feature music by Rotel and the Hot Tomatoes and a live and silent auction. Last year, CIS raised nearly \$80,000.

Like area school districts, CIS isn't out of the woods when it comes to funding. There's no telling what cuts lie ahead, though at least there won't be any until the Legislature convenes in January.

Last year's Rock 'n Roll event included a 10-minute video presentation of the kids CIS serves in our area. At each place setting at each table, their photos reminded of the agency's plight. "We want people to take the photos with them and ask that they be a voice for these kids," Douglas said. "Tell them that they can't cut education funding for schools, the kids and for CIS."

Don't let it come to that. Help CIS keep helping students in the way they helped more than 3,000 last year. Despite the hard times, the agency is on pace to do so again this year.

It's not about great legs. It's about realizing the great expectations in children.