



First Lady Michelle Obama paid a special visit to students from CIS partner school Ferebee Hope Elementary during a visit that included a forum on strategies for improving academic achievement and the importance of community involvement. Photo courtesy of Jason Miccolo Johnson, 2009.

## First Lady Michelle Obama Visits Communities In Schools

Yesterday First Lady Michelle Obama visited a Communities In Schools after-school reading program in Washington, D.C. The visit was a delightful surprise for 30 wide-eyed third-graders who read stories and asked questions of the first lady who told them they can help the president by working hard and never quitting. "When something gets hard, because it will be - there will be plenty of things that will be hard for you all; there are things that are hard for me," said the first lady, "Will you promise me that you will not quit?"

Alison Hertz, the CIS on-site coordinator for the school, gave Mrs. Obama a tour of the program and discussed how early intervention can have a profound impact on a child's willingness to engage, and can set an attitude that carries well into middle and high school.

Before visiting the students, the first lady met with the national Communities In Schools Board of Directors who discussed the need for more coordination and integration of support services into our schools - that schools alone are not equipped to teach students who are not prepared to learn.

"We were delighted to have First Lady Michelle Obama visit one of our partner schools," said Bill Milliken, Founder and Vice Chairman of Communities In Schools. "The long-term sustainability of this city - and our nation - is tied to the success of the public school system, There is no greater priority than ensuring all our children have access to a quality education, and the community resources they need to build their futures. We all have a stake in this", added Milliken.

President and Mrs. Obama have voiced strong support for community engagement and improvements in both the quality of public education and the nation's dropout rate.

Communities In Schools is the nation's largest dropout prevention organization, working in more than 3,200 K-12 public schools. Founded in 1977, Communities In Schools is headquartered in Alexandria, VA. Today, 1.2 million young people annually receive direct services through more than 200 CIS local affiliates in 27 states and the District of Columbia. In Florida, more than 31,500 students and their families are currently receiving services.



CIS National Board Chairman Elaine Wynn greets First Lady Michelle Obama during a visit to CIS partner school Ferebee Hope Elementary.

Photo courtesy of Jason Miccolo Johnson 2009.