



# ConnectioNews



Patti Aldaz-Carrasco, CIS Associate Director of Knowledge Management and Arleen Peterson, CIS Director of Education Initiatives, presenters at the Summer Training Institute



## Summer Training Institute Brings Statewide CIS Network to St. Augustine

Communities In Schools of Florida hosted its 2011 Summer Training Institute, "Celebrating Success: Building Our Future," August 24-25 at St. Augustine's World Golf Village. The two-day intensive workshop welcomed Executive Directors and Site Coordinators from CIS affiliates throughout the state as part of their ongoing professional development.

Communities In Schools of Florida invited several key staff from CIS National to facilitate the sessions. The first session, led by Gary Chapman, Executive Vice President of the National Network, Dan Fuller, Vice President of Legislative Relations, and Mike Bento, Executive Vice President of Marketing and Communications, provided an overview of Communities In School's strategic marketing, branding, and grassroots advocacy campaigns. The second session, facilitated by Arleen Peterson, CIS Director of Education Initiatives, delved into Communities In School's racial equity initiative, which helps affiliate staff and partners better understand the structural challenges facing many of the students they serve and how the CIS Model can help close the achievement gap for youth of color. The Institute concluded the following day with Patti Aldaz-Carrasco, CIS Associate Director of Knowledge Management, presenting best practice strategies and other information, tools, and resources critical to the successful implementation of the CIS model.

We were also pleased to welcome Joe Louis Barrow as our luncheon keynote speaker. Joe is the CEO of [The First Tee](#) and was introduced by Guy Garbarino, Senior Director of Outreach for The First Tee and a CIS of Florida board member.

To see photos from the Summer Training Institute, please view the [album](#) on the CISFL Facebook page.



CIS Site Coordinators share experiences during lunch at the Summer Training Institute.

## Partner Spotlight: State Farm®

Communities In Schools of Florida is continually grateful to our partners who support our vision for a drop-out free Florida. This month, we highlight the generosity of [State Farm®](#), an ongoing community partner.

Education is a corporate priority for State Farm®, who believe in giving all children access to a first-rate education. In Florida, State Farm recently granted \$50,000 to Communities In Schools of Florida to support CIS replication effort (aimed at developing new affiliates in communities not yet served by CIS.)

In addition to being a key partner of Communities In Schools of Florida and serving on its Board of Directors, State Farm® also partners with several local CIS affiliates throughout the Florida network. State Farm's® Michael Grimes, a Public Affairs Specialist based in Tallahassee, worked with local State Farm® agents on a Back-to-School Drive to benefit students in Leon County.



Michael Grimes, State Farm Public Affairs Specialist, presents a grant check to Lois Gracey, President of CIS of Florida.



CIS of Leon AmeriCorps VISTA members Erika Davis, Farah Denis, Millie Mathis, and Sarah Dittman distribute State Farm back-to-school supplies at the Lawrence-Gregory Community Center in Tallahassee.

Communities In Schools of Leon County received over 1,000 items critical to students' success in the classroom, including pencils, pens, paper, folders, rulers, markers, erasers, crayons, binders, and backpacks. Most of these items have already been distributed to over 150 families in need at the Lawrence-Gregory Community Center during a back-to-school rally held on August 26<sup>th</sup>.

The remaining items will be distributed to students in need at Oak Ridge Elementary and Hartsfield Elementary Schools.

## CIS Alumni Network

There's a new social network created just for students who have benefited from Communities In Schools. The Communities In Schools Alumni Network launched earlier this year and provides a way for friends to stay in touch and connect with other alumni, find out about scholarship and career opportunities, and get involved as mentors, volunteers and advocates.

The Alumni Network is for and about alumni, with content contributed by alumni. There's also a Communities In Schools Alumni Network [YouTube](#) channel, designed to inspire others with stories uploaded by former students.

Want to find out more about the Communities In Schools Alumni Network and join in the conversation? Get involved [here](#).

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