

\$430,000 RAISED FOR ATLANTA'S AT-RISK STUDENTS AT COMMUNITIES IN SCHOOLS OF ATLANTA'S 14TH ANNUAL CHOOSE SUCCESS CHARITY EVENT

Community Leaders Neil Shorthouse & Patty Pflum and Local Students Were Also Honored and Celebrated



Helen Smith Price and Frank Brown with student award winners.

ATLANTA – Over 400 attendees gathered at the beautiful Flourish in Buckhead on Thursday, March 15 for an evening of celebration – from congratulating students on their successes inside and outside of the classroom to honoring community leaders for their life-long contributions to helping students succeed. With \$20,000 raised for Atlanta's at-risk students in less than an hour and \$430,000 raised overall, Communities In Schools of Atlanta's 14th Annual Choose Success Awards Dinner was a rousing success!

Attendees were brought back to their school days with a school bell signifying the beginning of the program and "morning announcements" from event co-chair **Chris Womack** of the Southern Company. Recess (dinner) featured an incredible centerpiece of various breads and vegetables. The backdrops for the photo booth and stage (shown above) were specially created for this event by a local artist. They showed the words 'Choose Success' and were covered in the names of the school districts represented, motivational messages, and positive symbols.

"This event serves as a huge night for Communities In Schools; we rarely take time to celebrate our success or foundation on which we were built," expressed Frank Brown, CEO of Communities In Schools of Atlanta. "We want to continue to ensure that a child's zip code will not dictate their outcome. This is what I want for every child, by enacting our mission every day: to surround kids with a community of support, empowering them to stay in school and achieve in life. Our mission would only be a dream without Patty Pflum and Neil Shorthouse. They are visionaries who – back in the day when most folks were blind to the issues of kids like me – took action, and that's why we honor them."

Event co-chair, **Helen Smith Price** of The Coca-Cola Company, recognized the following five students from Clayton County, Fulton County, Dekalb County, and Atlanta Public Schools:

- Samya Riley – F.L. Stanton Elementary School
- Santino Harris – Brown Middle School
- Maia Parham – Jackson High School
- Victoria Rice – Charles R. Drew High School
- My'Yelle Warner – Creekside High School

Student Support Coach Sonja Mangham from Daniel McLaughlin Therrell High School was also awarded the first ever annual "Patty Pflum All In For Kids Staff Award" for her extraordinary dedication and determination to the mission of Communities In Schools.

The heartwarming evening came to an end with the presentation of the "Anne Cox Chambers Champion for Kids Award" to long-time contributors **Neil Shorthouse** and **Patty Pflum**. In 1972, Neil helped bring to life this organization that has now grown into the nation's largest dropout prevention network and remains active with its affiliates to this day. Patty was the first paid employee of the organization. She worked her way up through the organization and last held the position of Executive Director for 20 years. Their hard work laid the foundation for the successful outcomes of the organization today.

"We need you. We need rich people, people like you, in these schools. Rich in relationships, rich in love, rich in a value system that enables you to understand what really is important," said Neil Shorthouse, Co-Founder of Communities In Schools, on the continued importance of community support. "We have always said that there is no limit to what a person can do with a caring adult in his or her life."

Other highlights of the evening included powerful testimonies from Communities In Schools of Atlanta alumni, National CEO **Dale Erquiaga**'s touching speech to the evening's honorees, and a bonus premiere of Communities In Schools' newest [PSA video](#) in partnership with Funny or Die and Sterling K. Brown (known for his most recent role in the NBC drama *This Is Us*). The Choose Success Awards Dinner was a wonderful opportunity for attendees to see first-hand how Communities In Schools of Atlanta goes all in for kids in the community.

For more information on how to get involved with Communities In Schools of Atlanta, please visit www.cisatlanta.org/get-involved. For access to additional photos from the evening, please email info@360media.net.

ABOUT COMMUNITIES IN SCHOOLS OF ATLANTA: Communities In Schools (CIS) of Atlanta, established in 1972, is the nation's first, largest and most effective dropout prevention organization, dedicated to doing whatever it takes to help students succeed in school and achieve in life. Operating in more than 62 schools, mainly in Atlanta Public Schools, as well as Clayton County Public Schools, DeKalb County Schools and Fulton County Schools, CIS of Atlanta supports more than 36,000 students and their families in the 2016-2017 academic year. Based directly inside the schools, CIS of Atlanta connects students and their families to basic and critical educational and community-based resources, tailored to each student's specific needs. Click [here](#) to learn more about CIS of Atlanta. Follow along on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), and [Instagram](#).

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