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**game-changing Investment Helps Students Overcome**

**Obstacles TO LEARNING
*$133.5M Donation from Philanthropist MacKenzie Scott Will Deepen***

***School Impact Nationally***

(Gig Harbor & Key Peninsula, WA) Feb 3, 2022 – Communities In Schools (CIS) announced today **philanthropist MacKenzie Scott has made a transformative $133.5 million gift to the Communities In Schools national network, the largest, unrestricted gift in CIS history.**  This unprecedented gift includes a collective **$5.85 million given to Communities In Schools of Washington and three Washington state CIS affiliates: CIS of Peninsula, CIS of Benton-Franklin and CIS of Renton-Tukwila**.

“This donation will not only allow Communities In Schools of Peninsula (CISP) to increase the number of schools and students we serve, but it will also add organizational sustainability and the ability to increase resources and services within our existing schools,” said **CISP Executive Director Colleen Speer.** “It also speaks to our work of striving for educational and racial equity, which was clearly important to this donor.”

At a time when the global pandemic has particularly hurt students with fewer community resources or adequate supports, this investment will help CISP carry out its mission to break down the systemic barriers that stand in the way of opportunity and student success. CISP will build programs to scale to meet the needs in their community and will also continue to seek ongoing support to meet their five-year strategic goals.

For 22 years, CISP has demonstrated measurable success in student outcomes. During the last five years, CISP has served on average **320 case-managed students each year, and last year 79 percent were low income and 89 percent were exposed to some form of trauma. In addition, 98 percent of K-11 students were promoted to the next grade, and 89 percent of seniors graduated or received a GED. Last year CISP also served 3,588 students in 10 schools with whole-school supports, “But with over 8,600 in our district, the need is great, and we must do more,” added Speer.**

CISP believes that transformative relationships are key to unlocking a student's potential. Their school-based staff works inside schools partnering with teachers and parents to help address the needs of students. Working with schools and local service providers CISP coordinates critical resources for students and families including, food, housing, healthcare, counseling, access to remote technology, all while supporting students in their school attendance, behavior, and academics. By identifying the points of challenge for students in their personal lives, CISP staff help to empower them to move beyond the barriers they face in the school building and in the community.

**Speer continued**, "This gift allows us to combat the inequities in public education and reimagine the way schools operate and show up for all students.  We are working closely with our board to get these dollars working in our community as quickly as possible by increasing the number of schools and students we serve. This also means we will need more support to sustain these new sets of needs. We appreciate how far the community has taken us to get to this point and we will still rely on this generosity in the form of both volunteers and donors as we move forward.”

For more information about CISP go to [www.peninsula.ciswa.org](http://www.peninsula.ciswa.org).

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**About Communities In Schools Nationally and in Washington State**

*Communities In Schools® (CIS™) is a national organization that ensures every student, regardless of race, zip code, or socioeconomic background, has what they need to realize their potential in school and beyond. Working directly inside 3,000 schools across the country, they connect students to caring adults and community resources that help them see, confront, and overcome the barriers that stand between them and a brighter future****.*** *In Washington State 3,499 case-managed students showed outstanding progress with 98 percent staying in school, 82 percent improved attendance, 93 percent improved behavior and 89 percent improved coursework. Together, CIS has built and continues to grow a powerful change movement made up of peers, students, and alumni committed to building an equitable path to education for future generations.*