



CIS Goes To Pinehurst

Cindy Kowal, CIS Executive Director and five CIS staff members attended the 2009 annual CISNC conference in Pinehurst, NC February 3 - 5. Not only did the staff "Get Fired Up About Fundraising", "Develop Partnerships in Rural Communities" and Use the "7 Habits for Effective School Mentoring", they also heard some of the most warming testimonials from students and business professionals. A fresh blanket of snow was ordered up just for the event too. The guest speakers included: Keynote Speaker and opening Performance by Chuck Davis and The African American Dance Ensemble; the former Miss NC, Jessica Jacobs; the current Miss NC, Amanda Lauren Watson; and the President of AT&T North Carolina, Cynthia Marshall.



Economic Woes Likely to Increase Dropout Rates

By Linda R Harrill, CIS President/CEO

In North Carolina alone, over 39,000 children will be displaced because of the mortgage crisis. This means children may have to leave their neighborhoods and schools, moving away from family and friends. Research suggests that moving during adolescent years has a negative impact on a child's academic and social well-being. Younger children tend to adapt to new schools and new environments more readily than older youth. When the world is changing around them, the loss of a sense of community can be devastating for adolescents. Children without a strong, positive peer group are more likely to fall into whatever peer group that is most accepting, often the group of students who are themselves feeling loss and are without sense of purpose. Normal adolescence is a challenging time for even the most stable families, but adding the stress of job loss or change of lifestyle and economic drugs and sex, and increases the chance of experiencing mental health issues.

We are already seeing evidence that younger children are being asked to take part-time jobs to help cover the basic costs of food, clothing and shelter, another sad by-product of the economic tsunami that has hit North Carolina. Older siblings are often asked to stay home and take care of younger siblings because parents cannot afford to miss a day of work or childcare. Some older youth will feel they must drop out of school to get a job. They believe they must financially help their families now. Most young adults do not make decision based on long-term outcomes but rather react to the immediate future. Many parents are not aware of the strict attendance policies of schools, assuming their children can make up missed work, but in most cases students are not allowed make up work missed as the



UNC Chancellor Speaks at CCEF Event

Chancellor Holden Thorp returned to his hometown in January to help the Cumberland County Education Foundation (CCEF) celebrate public education. The annual Excellence in Education event is a Foundation fundraiser that also honors Cumberland County teachers. Thorp spoke to a room of grant award recipients, community leaders and guests about the importance of desire in the classroom. He said, "Success is really about desire, effort and opportunity." Thorp also praised the Foundation's support of public education. CCEF awarded more than \$15,000 to local teachers this year.



("Woes...cont'd") result of an unexcused absence. Ten days out of school with unexcused absences is a ticket to failure. North Carolina had over 80,000 students retained in grade last year. It is an enormous challenge for schools to catch them up. Communities In Schools has recommended funding graduation coaches in the most distressed middle and high schools. If approved, these full-time staff members will help remove barriers that are keeping our children from graduating from high school. Their job will be to work with individual students and families to keep children coming to school and on track to graduate. While the economy and certainly the state budget is uncertain, we must continue to invest in our children, our future workforce, so that when the economy does rebound, our children have become the skilled and educated workers who can fill the jobs a revitalized economy will produce. We simply cannot afford to continue to see our graduation rates decline at a time when the demands of the 21st century workplace and our future economic viability depends on a state with a well educated, well prepared workforce. Improving the graduation rate from high school is not just an education issue; it is an economic stimulus issue. If we do nothing we will continue to see dropout rates increase. We cannot afford the future bailouts a nation of young people who are uneducated, unskilled and unprepared for the future will require.

Mark Your Calendars

- 3/24 African American Dance Ensemble at Fuller PLC
- 4/09 CIS Reality Store, "It's My Life" at Lewis Chapel Middle School
- 5/22 Fuller PLC Graduation at EE Smith HS
- 6/18 CCEF 6th Annual Golf Tournament



ABC 11- Gilbert Baez visits Fuller PLC



Miss North Carolina visits CIS at Lewis Chapel MS

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