



Communities In Schools Dallas Region, Inc.
Helping Kids Succeed in School and in Life

Miss Texas Adopts Communities In Schools as National Platform Issue

Shilah Phillips to Tout Success of Dallas-area Dropout Prevention Program During 2007 Miss America Pageant

For Immediate Release...January 18, 2007...Dallas, Texas...Shilah Phillips, the reigning Miss Texas, will shine a spotlight on Communities In Schools and its innovative dropout prevention program when she competes at the 2007 Miss America pageant on Jan. 29. Specifically, Phillips will highlight as her national issue platform the successes of Communities In Schools Dallas Region, Inc. (CISDR), which places professional staff on campus to work one-on-one with at-risk students in more than 50 Dallas-area public schools. Communities In Schools is the nation's largest dropout prevention program based in Alexandria, VA; CIS of Texas includes 26 local affiliates across the state.

Since winning the title of Miss Texas in 2006, Phillips has embarked on a 12-month speaking tour titled "Never Give Up" that focuses on staying in school, living a healthy lifestyle and keeping dreams alive. Her message is born of personal experience—from her own academic struggles in high school to her decision to forgo a college education to pursue a recording career in Los Angeles.

"I chose to leave school to pursue my dream," says Phillips. "After hitting several roadblocks with nothing to fall back on, I came to realize the value of an education. Part of my message to young people is to understand the vital role that education has in helping to achieve ones dreams. I am proud to support Communities In Schools efforts to offer children hope for a brighter future by giving them the tools and resources they need to succeed now."

Since 1985, CISDR has provided one-on-one guidance and individual case-management to at-risk students in the school setting. By intergrating services into the school infrasturcture, CISDR professional staff serve as a vital connection for students to obtain academic tutors and mentors, early intervention and prevention services, medical and dental care, school supplies and clothing, as well as supplemental basic needs assistance from other public service agencies. CISDR has made a tremendous difference in the lives of more than 325,000 students in its 22 year history and boasts a more than 90 percent success rate in improving academics, attendance, behavior and graduation rates amongst students served.

"CISDR is extremely pleased to have Shilah Phillips' assistance in drawing attention to the successful model CISDR provides in Dallas and across the nation to combat the growing dropout problem," says CISDR president & CEO Sandra G. Chavarria. "Her decision to use her role as Miss Texas, not only to promote the value of education, but as a catalyst to complete her own education, makes her a wonderful role model to the students CISDR serves."

Phillips' desire to compete for the title of Miss Texas was born of necessity—she needed the scholarship money to fund her decision to return to school and earn a bachelors degree in music. She is now the first African American to hold the title of Miss Texas and is only the second individual in the program's history to win the title in her first foray onto the pageant circuit. She completed her associate's degree at Collin County Community College prior to entering the pageant, and will use her scholarship to attend the prestigious vocal jazz performance program at the University of North Texas in Denton, Texas.

Phillips will compete for the title of Miss America 2007 on Jan. 29 at the Aladdin Resort & Casino in Las Vegas.

About Communities In Schools Dallas Region, Inc.

Communities In Schools Dallas Region, Inc. (CISDR) is an innovative public/private partnership committed to helping at-risk students to stay in school and to achieve success academically and in life.

CISDR has been serving students in the Dallas region for the past 22 years, providing daily on-campus academic support, training, prevention, early-intervention and other direct services thousands of at-risk students and their families across the region. During the 2005-2006 academic year, CISDR provided one-on-one case management to 6,484 at-risk students. Of these, 98 percent stayed in school, 90 percent improvement in academics, behavior, and/or attendance and a 90 percent of eligible seniors graduated. To learn more, visit www.cisdallas.org.

To schedule an interview with Shilah Phillips or representatives of Communities In Schools Dallas Region, please contact Funmi Okunbolade, CISDR Marketing and Public Relations Coordinator at 214-827-0955 ext. 222 or funmio@cisdallas.org.

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