



BEING PRESENT MATTERS

205 Grove Street
Mancelona, MI 49659

P: (231)-587-4367
cisinwmi.org



November 20, 2025

Dear Friends & Supporters,

Like many students, Naomi struggled during high school. The stress of her class schedule, prepping for her driver's permit test, making plans for prom – all of it took a toll, so much so that during her Junior year Naomi was thinking about dropping out.

Thankfully, unlike most students, Naomi had Mrs. Rau by her side. As the Communities In Schools (CIS) Site Coordinator at East Jordan Middle/High School, Mrs. Rau helped Naomi navigate every major high school milestone, from getting her license to having her senior pictures taken. No matter the challenge or deadline, Mrs. Rau was there to offer guidance, encouragement, and a listening ear – **she even met Naomi on a Saturday to help her get ready for prom, doing her hair and makeup so she could feel confident and celebrated.**

"She's the only friend that I know is true," Naomi shared.

At Communities In Schools (CIS) of Northwest Michigan, helping all students succeed is our guiding ambition and it looks different for every student we support. For Naomi, it meant showing up every day, offering practice tests to help her earn her driver's permit, and even stepping in to help find the resources to repair her family's well and furnace – making sure their basic needs were met so Naomi could focus on her future.

Our generous donors have helped us empower nearly 2,400 students in our region each day, but there are many more students in need.

We have 14 Site Coordinators in 13 schools across Northwest Michigan, reaching students in Central Lake, East Jordan, Ellsworth, Elk Rapids, Kalkaska, Gaylord, Mancelona and Vanderbilt. Your support will ensure that we can keep caring CIS Site Coordinators like Mrs. Rau in each of these schools so that – just like Naomi – all of our students have the support they need to succeed.

Of the students we supported during the 2024-25 school year, 99% were promoted to the next grade level, 96% improved their attendance, and 91% graduated from high school. These improvements have tangible impacts on our students and the leaders in our partner schools are seeing the difference every day.

"CIS has been a game-changer for Vanderbilt Area School. Their support has led to improved attendance, increased engagement, and brighter futures for our students."

"CIS has a wide-reaching and long-lasting positive impact on Kalkaska

Middle School students.”

“CIS has truly been an incredible partnership with East Jordan Elementary School! The staff are truly part of our family.”

As the only national organization proven to decrease dropout rates and increase graduation rates, our Site Coordinators are directly helping students succeed. But each year, it costs \$90,000 per school to maintain and supervise a CIS Site Coordinator. With your support, we can keep our Site Coordinators in their schools and continue to transform the futures of our local students.

Will you make a year-end gift to help us continue to motivate students to stay in school and achieve in life?

When she looks back, Naomi feels fortunate to have had Mrs. Rau by her side to help her stay on track and graduate. It is our sincere hope that you will join our mission and stand by our side to give every student in Northwest Michigan a chance to succeed, just like Naomi.

With hope, heartfelt gratitude,



Amy Burk
Executive Director



Charlie Polzin
Board of Directors Chair

P.S. Every gift, no matter the amount, helps local students overcome barriers to success. You can donate quickly and easily by scanning the QR code below.

