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Ready. Set. Grow!

Our school theme this year is “Ready. Set. Grow!” Every new school year is a new opportunity to learn and grow in many ways. Whether it’s growing in our academics, growing in our creativity, growing in our social abilities, or growing in our spirituality, we continuously have the coaching and encouragement from God. He works through our students and staff to make Chicago West Side Christian School a place of constant growth! Here are a few ways we’ve been growing already!

In Kindergarten: Kindergarten is beginning to sprout good readers. We have been working on our sight words and have started to read books independently. - Mrs. Fleetwood

In 5th Grade: We are growing in every aspect! 5th graders are becoming great mathematicians and scientists as we learn and discover many new things. I am extremely excited to see them grow in many more areas! - Ms. Brown

In Spanish: I have been so encouraged and excited to hear students expressing themselves in Spanish! Just walking down our hallways or peeking in the gym room, the students greet me in Spanish or tell me how they are feeling in Spanish. Muy bien CWSCS estudiantes! - Mrs. Rivera



Eighth Graders Witness the Solar Eclipse in Carbondale!

Lots of hard work paid off this summer as five eighth graders took advantage of the extracurricular opportunity of a lifetime! First, they read Wendy Mass’ book titled Every Soul a Star, an adventure story of three teens whose lives converge at a campground for a long awaited total solar eclipse. Maddie’s summary of reading about the solar eclipse was that it “gave the feeling that something is so beautiful you can’t even imagine it.” After reading the book, they traveled with Mrs. Trout, CWSCS’ middle school science teacher, and her family to Carbondale to experience the solar eclipse together! To recreate the book, they camped at Giant State Park Campground. Jake marveled at how dark the night sky was: “When we were camping at night I could see stars, and I haven’t seen stars in a long time because of light pollution.” DeAnna thought camping was “kind of creepy because it was really dark, but it was kind of fun, too, eating s’mores.” The morning of the eclipse, after an inspirational breakfast of sun-kissed oranges, Sun Chips and CapriSun (did you catch the theme?), they headed over to join 15,000 eclipse fans at Southern Illinois University’s stadium.



ABOVE: CWSCS students at Southern Illinois University in Carbondale, Illinois, don their glasses to monitor the recent eclipse, hoping for a glimpse of the elusive totality.

Here is Karen Trout’s first-person account of the dramatic day:

There was not a cloud in the sky. We saw the moon make first contact with the sun and slowly begin ‘eating away at it’ as it traveled in front of it. Then just minutes before the moment we had all been waiting for (totality: when the moon completely covers the sun allowing us to take off our special eclipse glasses and view the sun’s atmosphere, when a wave of darkness sweeps over the land as the moon’s shadow is cast upon a stadium of gaping awestruck onlookers, when the sky turns so dark you can see the stars, and you begin to wonder if the world is coming to an end...) a huge cloud appeared out of nowhere right where the moon was ‘taking out the sun.’ You could feel the dismay sweep through the stadium as we realized we were missing this ONCE IN A LIFETIME opportunity because of one STUPID cloud!!! We held our breath waiting as we noticed a small gap in the clouds approaching. Joshua recalls: ‘When the cloud moved out of the way we saw a little piece of totality.’ Then very quickly, the cloud swallowed up our view again for the next 2 minutes of totality. No matter how hard we blew the air around us or how fervently we prayed, that cloud lingered the entire rest of totality and only parted again as the first rays of sun popped back out the other side of the moon allowing us to see what is known as the diamond ring.

We joined thousands of dejected spectators who left SIU to find their cars and begin the eternal trek home. For some, a 5 hour drive took 12 hours, for others it took 20. Yet despite our disappointment, we knew we had joined with thousands of others from around the world in awe of God’s creation and His power. We had done all we could to be a witness!

One result from the solar eclipse adventure is that all the CWSCS viewers are now committed to serious solar eclipse chasing! Jake spoke for all when he stated: “Whenever I think about the eclipse and how we didn’t really get to see it, I think about 2024! I WANT TO SEE TOTALITY!”

Welcome to the New CWSCS Staff!

Melanie Casey (Title I Teacher) I have always loved working with children. Being a teacher for over 20 years has not only been my calling, but a joy as well. K-2 classroom teaching has been the majority of my career, although I was a Media Specialist for one of those years. I have taught in Dallas, TX; Kansas City, MO; Lee's Summit, MO; and Chicago, IL. I graduated from the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, in 1977. I received my Master's of Education Degree from Baker University in 2010. I have been married for 40 years, and I have four children and nine grandchildren.

Abigail Rivera (Pre-school Assistant and K-5 Spanish Teacher) I graduated from Ashford University with my Bachelor's in Early Childhood Education and a minor in Early Childhood Development. I taught for nine years at Humboldt Community Christian School in early childhood classrooms. I have been married for almost 22 years and have three wonderful sons. I have a passion to see little minds grow and learn beyond our expectations. My desire for working with children in Chicago's inner city has brought me to Chicago West Side Christian School, and I am excited to see what God has in store for us all. I took on the challenge to also teach Spanish this year from Pre-K through fifth grade. I can already see and hear the impact it is having on the students as I hear them greet each other—and me—in Spanish every morning!

Marty Johnson (3rd Grade Teacher) I went to school at Trinity Christian College and taught 1st and 2nd grade before coming to CWSCS. I chose to become a teacher because I feel that is what God is calling me to do. My hope for my students is that they will be confident in who God made them, and that they will learn a lot of interesting things this year! I really like soccer, Star Wars, and Marvel and DC comics.



ABOVE (from left to right): Melanie Casey, Abigail Rivera, Marty Johnson, Koshimer Chambers, Jasmine Brown.

Koshimer Chambers (Recruitment/Admissions Director and School Counselor) I am truly excited to be a part of CWSCS as both the parent of a third grade student and now as a staff member. Professionally, I have a Bachelor's Degree in Social Work, and a Masters of Arts Degree in School Counseling. For the past 16 years, my work as a Criminal Justice Professional provided me with many learning opportunities. I helped youth make positive changes as they learned how to work through conflict, set specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, and timed based goals, and to change behavior by examining their belief and thinking patterns that precede their behavior. In this work, I solidified my passion to empower and help all youth reach their full potential, and I am glad to now have the opportunity to work in a school setting. On a personal note, I am a happily married mother of two wonderful boys.

Jasmine Brown (5th Grade Teacher) I attended Trinity Christian College and have a B.A. in Elementary Education along with an endorsement in Special Education. I chose the education field because of my own teachers, my love for learning, and my love for children. My hopes for this school year are to develop great relationships, create life-long learners, and help all my fifth grade students meet their goals! Some of my hobbies include reading, knitting, and baking. My life verse is 1 Peter 5:7.

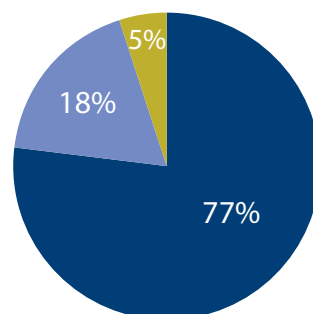


ABOVE: Did you view the recent eclipse? Our students came close, but a cloud obscured the totality. Still, the event had an impact.

Where do CWSCS Students Live?

While the majority live on the west side, our school serves many students from Chicago's various neighborhoods and reaches into the suburbs as well!

CWSCS Students Come from 20 Different Zip Codes



- West Side Neighborhoods:
North Lawndale
East and West Garfield
Austin
- Other Chicago Neighborhoods
- Suburbs