



Chicago West Side Christian School  
1240 South Pulaski Road  
Chicago, IL 60623  
773.542.0663  
info@cwscs.org

April 2017

## Called to Thrive Scholarship Benefit

On March 16, over two hundred friends and families of Chicago West Side Christian School gathered for our annual scholarship benefit. This year's theme was "Called to Thrive!", and guests enjoyed learning how CWSCS students and alumni are thriving in a fun-filled, inspiring evening.

To date, donations received through the event have reached \$60,000, and gifts continue to arrive daily! If you would like to contribute to the scholarship fund, go to [www.cwscs.org](http://www.cwscs.org) to donate.

## Wednesday Academy

How do teachers inspire life-long learning in their students? By modeling that they want to keep learning as well! Every Wednesday, our teachers meet from 2:30-4:00 to learn how to be the best teachers they can be. While they learn, their students are also learning in their classrooms with volunteers, support staff and after school program team members who have introduced them to a range of topics including origami, etiquette, performance arts, writing poetry, creating art, leadership development and community service.

Our teaching staff is working on strengthening collaboration, building school-wide best teaching practices, nurturing teacher reflection and successfully implementing our new reading and math curricula.

What topics have teachers explored to become better teachers? Here are a few: formative assessment, providing feedback, number talks, open ended questions, talk moves, using mistakes to help students grow (error analysis), wait time, using hand signals, student explanations versus, 'answer getting', new vocabulary strategies and sorts. Teachers have welcomed the time to have things modeled for them and to have opportunities to both try out research-based methods and to create different learning tasks during this professional development time.

The Wednesday Academy is led by Jeralyn Harris and Melissa Sears. When asked how the weekly teacher academy classes are helping, they note seeing evidence of specific language/practices being used school-wide which will help our students and teachers long term as students move from class to class. They are particularly delighted to see evidence of growth in student mental math fluency as they observe number talks. As they observe teachers grow in their craft by implementing best practices, they recognize the long-term value of a commitment to strengthening instruction to increase students' success!

## Inspired by Lincoln

Two CWSCS eighth graders who participated in the Chicago History Museum's Inspired by Lincoln: Student Speech Writing Competition were honored to have their essays chosen for recognition. The museum sponsored the contest "to give the young people in our city the opportunity to think critically about the problems we face and a platform in which to make their own voices heard and be civically engaged. Abraham Lincoln demonstrated his ability to move others with his words through many of his speeches, and this competition asked students to identify a contemporary issue, local, national or global, and write a short, persuasive speech about it with the hope that their speeches can also move others."

Congratulations to Alisia Harris for winning the Best Local Topic award and to Leah Brecheisen who was honored for her participation!



ABOVE: Wednesday Academy with student Angela Merrick and 5th grade teacher Tiffany Daniels. BELOW: Alicia Harris and Leah Brecheisen, Lincoln Contest Honorees.

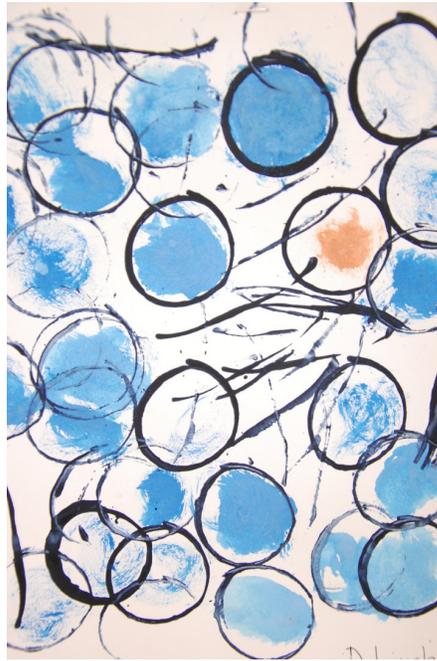


# Called to Thrive.

“It really is a joy and a privilege to help guide students in their creativity. I’ve been so high standards and aren’t afraid to try out their ideas when it comes to creating. See below.”



Mauriasha - 5th Grade



Dalaiyah - Pre-school



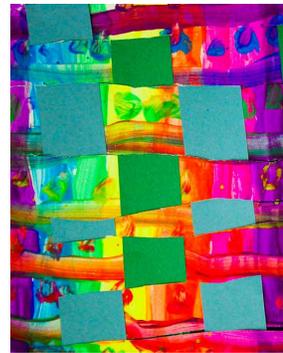
Alayah - Pre-school



Emmitt - 4th Grade



Isaiah - 2nd Grade



Makhi - 2nd Grade



Micah - 3rd Grade



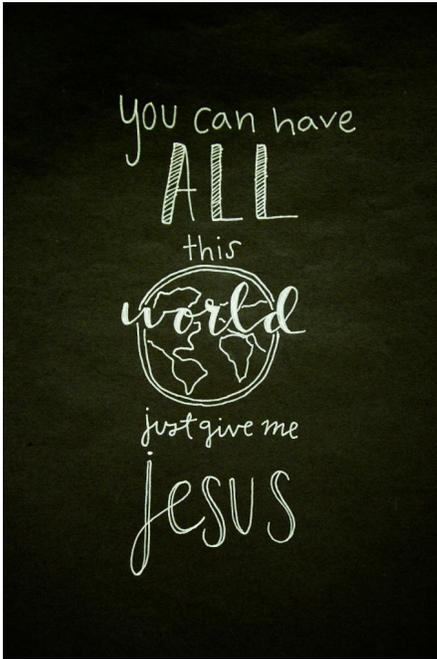
George - 1st Grade



Maddie - 1st Grade

# . . in Creativity!

o proud of the work that has come from them this year! Students hold themselves to  
now our students are thriving in their artwork this year!” -Lydia Guanga, Art Teacher



Leah - 8th Grade



Tyrah - 8th Grade



Robyn - Kindergarten



nd Grade



Khalis - 4th Grade



Xavier - 6th Grade



7th Grade



Luke - 4th Grade



Myah - 5th Grade

## Poetry Slam Inspires Community and Communication

On Thursday, March 23, CWSCS' eighth grade students hosted our second annual Poetry Slam. Present and former students from CWSCS and adults from around the Chicago community were invited to share spoken word and music and to fellowship together with some delicious food! We were happy to have several returning performers and visitors, but were glad to have some new participants and visitors as well!

The eighth grade class did a wonderful job preparing the list of presenters and the space for the evening. Tables with centerpieces were brought into the sanctuary and the lights were dimmed to create the perfect atmosphere. Students and staff sold bowls of soup and baked goods as concessions to support the East Coast Trip, and the night went smoothly.

Many participants stated how privileged and honored they felt to be a part of the evening. One performer said to the other participants before she began, "You need to know, that what you carry is important and you need to keep going. You do not know what you can do for a person". The mood of the evening was supportive, intimate, meaningful, challenging, and uplifting. Presenters weren't afraid to share their stories through their poetry or their music and the two hours we all spent together were beautiful. We are blessed to have such talented students, alumni, friends, and community here in Lawndale and beyond!



## Learning From an Expert

When CWSCS science teacher Karen Trout learned that Dr. Lou Sytsma, a retired chemistry professor from Trinity Christian College, was offering his services as a Science Coach to schools of the Bright Promise Fund network through an American Chemical Society program, she jumped at the opportunity! The ACS Science Coaches One-on-One program is a partnership where a volunteer chemist helps a science teacher to provide more and better science education opportunities for students.

After meeting with Mrs. Trout, Dr. Sytsma joined the 6th, 7th, & 8th grade students in class where he led them through demonstrations and a series of experiments. When asked about impact of the Science Coach program, Mrs. Trout said, "Lou has been a wonderful addition to our classroom as he provides a wealth of scientific knowledge and perspective. Lou has not only offered constructive feedback to sharpen my curriculum, but he has also made himself available to introduce and model meaningful activities where I lacked confidence. I am so grateful for his insight, and I can't begin to recount the number of, 'A-ha!' moments in which he has enlightened me."

We are grateful that the Bright Promise Fund made us aware of this opportunity! Check their website at [www.brightpromisefund.org](http://www.brightpromisefund.org) for a longer article on the ACS Science Coaches One-on-One program at CWSCS.

A purple poster for the Poetry Slam event. The text on the poster reads: "Poetry Slam", "March 23, 2017 @6:15pm", "GO HOSTS SUMMER PEREZ AND LAURIE WILTJER", "Chicago Westside Christian School 1240 S Pulaski Rd.", "SPECIAL GUESTS SHARONA DRAKE JASMINE EVANS ITOHAN OMOLERE AND MANY MORE", and "Adults: \$6 Students K-12th grade: \$4". A vintage-style microphone is featured on the right side of the poster.

ABOVE: A poster beckons the community to the Poetry Slam. LEFT: Eighth grade students and the staff event sponsors. BELOW: Dr. Lou Sytsma helps CWSCS students learn science.

