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**Election Coverage**

### 'Step up with Kids' seeks support, awareness for agency

\* The 5K and 1-mile walk-runs will raise funds for Communities in Schools, a group that works to keep students from dropping out.

By **KHALILA PERRIN**  
Published: Tuesday, September 15, 2009 9:34 AM EDT

Communities In Schools leaders want residents to lace up for education's sake Saturday, Sept. 19.

That's when the drop-out prevention organization will be hosting Step Up With Kids, the first ever 5K and 1-mile walk-run for the 16-year-old organization.

Registration for the event begins at 8:30 a.m. Sept. 19 at Genoa Park, adjacent to COSI in downtown Columbus. The start time for the 5K is 10 a.m.; 1-mile start time is 10:15 a.m.

The course ends at the Riverfront Art Festival, which begins at noon and ends at 10 p.m. Sept. 19.

Kitty Kerrigan King, the group's community relationships director, said the event is all about residents showing their support for Central Ohio youth and Communities In Schools' efforts.

The event's name shows children are vital to the outing too, Kerrigan King said.

Organizers named the event Step Up With Kids "because we wanted to say to the kids that we work with that this includes you, too," she said.

"We want you to be a part of it."

But the day isn't limited to those students and families who receive the organization's services, and they don't have to be on site to contribute.

"If someone can't participate, they can sponsor a family or a student," whom organizers will select from among those CIS works with, she said.

The event is a first-time venture for the organization.

"We had never really done any really big fundraising ... so we decided that we wanted something that would get our name out there," she said.

While the walk-run has been in the works for about six months, the Central Ohio branch of CIS has been working in schools for much longer.

"A lot of people don't know who we are and what we do," even though the Central Ohio arm of the national organization has been operating since 1993, she said.

Nationally, CIS has been in existence for more than 30 years and operates in close to 3,000 schools in 28 states.

CIS provides staff to some Columbus and Westerville city schools, and all Whitehall City Schools. They help counsel and tutor students as well as provide afterschool enrichment and connect families with valuable community resources.

CIS recently received a grant to provide afterschool programming in schools in the Catholic diocese.

For students and families CIS has helped throughout the years, organizers hope to garner good turnout Sept. 19.

"I would love to get a couple hundred people (to participate)," Kerrigan King said.

With the added bonus of great weather, exercise and the arts festival afterward, Kerrigan King said she hopes those who participate enjoy themselves.

"All and all it should be a fun day for them," she said.

Tickets for adults participating in the 5K or 1-mile event are \$25; Youth tickets are \$15. Free T-shirts will be given to the first 400 registrants and same-day registration will be available.

Those interested also can register online at [premieraces.com](http://premieraces.com).

For more information call Kerrigan King at 614-268-2472, ext. 11 or send her an e-mail at [kkking@ciskids.org](mailto:kkking@ciskids.org).

OCTOBER 2009

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