



## **Dedication of Christel House Academy West**

*Ballard and DeHaan Attend Ribbon Cutting*

**INDIANAPOLIS** – Inner-city kids on Indianapolis’ near Westside have a new educational option. Christel House Academy, a public charter school with a proven track record of success in serving at-risk urban students, launched the next phase of its mission today with the dedication of Christel House Academy West.

Christel House International Founder and CEO Christel DeHaan and Indianapolis Mayor Greg Ballard were among those on hand for the ribbon cutting and dedication ceremony.

The school, located on 8+ acres on the grounds of the new Central Greens redevelopment project, opened in August 2014 serving grades K-2, with a new grade level added each year. A replication of the highly successful Christel House Academy South, Christel House Academy West is authorized by the Mayor of Indianapolis as a public charter school.

“We firmly believe that all children should have the opportunity to learn and grow in a safe and stimulating environment, no matter what their economic circumstances,” said Carey Dahncke, Christel House Academy Chief Academic Officer. “The Christel House methodology is holistic; we want to help every child maximize his or her potential and become a successful, contributing citizen of our community.”

"Christel House schools do great work to help students excel, and I am thrilled that more students will have that opportunity," Mayor Ballard said. "The addition of a west side Christel House campus will be a driving force in many positive changes to make this neighborhood a better place for families to live and work."

Other dignitaries attending the dedication included Robert Smith, President, Lilly Foundation, and senior director, Corporate Responsibility; Ina Kamenz, Senior Vice President, IT, Chief Information Officer, Eli Lilly and Company; Joyce Irwin, Community Health Network Foundation president and CEO; and Patrick Herrel, The Mind Trust VP of Education Initiatives. Thanks to Lilly, the school campus now has a fitness trail, which will be open to students and the general public. As part of Indy Do Day, approximately 300 Lilly volunteers worked Thursday morning putting finishing touches on the trail during the Lilly Global Day of Service.

“Lilly is proud to partner with Christel House Academy in this initiative that perfectly aligns with Lilly’s goal of strengthening communities through education and also providing resources that encourage healthy, active lifestyles for both students and surrounding community members,” said Rob Smith, president of the Lilly Foundation.

Community Health Network is providing an on-site nurse at Christel House Academy West, via a grant from The Richard M. Fairbanks Foundation. “Quality health services are one part of creating and

maintaining a safe haven for kids, and we are happy to assist in that endeavor,” Joyce Irwin, Community Health Network Foundation president and CEO said.

The Walton Family Foundation provided a grant for start-up activities including office furniture and technology, classroom furniture and instructional equipment, software, and partial salary and benefit support for the school leader.

In addition, The Mind Trust provided start-up funding as part of the Charter School Incubator Grant for the development, creation and maintenance of a network of exceptional public charter schools in Marion County.

Christel House Academy West offers an extended school day and school year, a proven academic curriculum, life-skills building activities, field trips and enrichment experiences, after-school clubs, tutoring opportunities, and quality art, music, athletic and technology programs. It is housed in a new building (phase 1) that features a full gymnasium, cafeteria, vocal and instrumental music rooms, science lab, art rooms and more.

### **About Christel House International**

The mission of Christel House is to transform the lives of impoverished children around the world—breaking the cycle of poverty and building self-sufficient, contributing members of society. A focus on academic excellence through a robust K–12 curriculum is combined with a strong character development program and holistic human development to give students the skills and competencies necessary to compete successfully in complex 21st Century society. Much more than a school, Christel House was established in 1998 by Founder Christel DeHaan and currently serves over 4,100 impoverished children through seven learning centers—located in India, Mexico, South Africa and the U.S.A., as well as a career development program in Venezuela. Christel House maintains a 96% high school graduation rate, and the majority of its graduates go on to pursue higher education. They become productive citizens, and many secure employment with top multi-national corporations. Christel House graduates are confident, hardworking, responsible and ethical, with a passion for giving back to their communities and caring for their families. For more information, please visit [www.christelhouse.org](http://www.christelhouse.org).