

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**CISPAC Awarded Official Sanctuary Model® Certification**

PITTSBURGH (March 22, 2021) –

**Communities in Schools of Pittsburgh-Allegheny County (CISPAC) has been awarded Sanctuary Model® Certification by the ANDRUS Sanctuary Institute, formalizing our organization’s commitment to providing trauma informed care and support to students, families, and schools we serve.**

CISPAC began this comprehensive certification process more than five years ago, understanding how pervasive and impactful trauma can be for children and youth. This past year as given witness to many new traumas being faced by students and families. An increase in health fears, closed schools, economic insecurity, lost loved ones and other traumatic experiences have been all too common during the pandemic. **As students return to school, trauma awareness is more important than ever to help the children and youth of our region succeed.**

**The Sanctuary Model® is a clinical and organizational blueprint for change which promotes safety and recovery from adversity through the active creation of a trauma informed community.** It teaches how to recognize trauma, establish practices to better support those affected, and provides tools and exercises to identify trauma and work through it. Certification through the Sanctuary Institute requires a deep dive into both internal and external processes and interactions. The program has worked to integrate trauma theory and best practices in all aspects of our organization, from our work in the community with kids to the way we conduct internal meetings with our own staff.

**CISPAC is proud to be one of the first Sanctuary® Certified programs in Pittsburgh. Because the pandemic caused an escalation of trauma and stress for students nationwide - CISPAC is eager to share what we have learned with our schools to better serve our students.**

Those interested in learning more about the Sanctuary® program and how CISPAC is implementing their training, visit us [www.CISPAC.org](http://www.CISPAC.org) or contact executive director Bridget Clement at [bclement@cispac.org](mailto:bclement@cispac.org).

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**About Communities In Schools of Pittsburgh – Allegheny County**

CISPAC is part of the Communities In Schools® network that ensures all students have what they need to stay in school and on a path to a brighter future. Working directly inside more than 2,500 schools and community sites across the country, we connect 1.62 million students to caring adults and community resources designed to help them succeed in school and life. With a proven mix of evidence-based practice and human capital, we do whatever it takes to empower kids to realize their full potential. To learn more about CISPAC, visit [cispac.org](http://cispac.org).

Communities in Schools of Pittsburgh - Allegheny County (CISPAC) is a Sanctuary®-certified institution committed to deepening its understanding of trauma's impact on individuals, schools, and communities. CISPAC works actively to promote trauma sensitivity within our internal operation as well as in our work throughout the Greater Pittsburgh region.