

Tashema, a sophomore high school student from Corporate Academy North (CAN), had a 1.0 grade point average and was full of attitude and anger. Sonise Carri, Communities In Schools of Miami's Site Coordinator at CAN, noticed Tashema's attitude and need for help. When offered CIS of Miami's Bridges to Graduation tutoring services, Tashema refused, claiming that she didn't need anyone to help her. Ms. Carri approached the principal at CAN and suggested that Tashema be mandated to receive tutoring. Tashema reluctantly agreed, and the CIS of Miami tutor patiently worked with her and gave her time to embrace the service. That same year, Communities In Schools of Miami started a Book Club, and Ms. Carri asked Tashema if she would like to join. Again, Tashema refused. But several weeks later, Tashema finally sat in on a Book Club session and discovered she enjoyed it. She later shared that she was a poor reader and very self-conscious about it. Her involvement in the Book Club gave her the encouragement she needed to ask for help with reading and to take risks in reading out loud. Once Tashema realized that Communities In Schools of Miami's staff truly cared for her, she began to build trust and self-confidence, request more services to help her do better in school, and even enrolled in the Bridges' mentor program.

By the time Tashema was a senior, she had participated in the tutoring and mentor program for three years, and received numerous other CIS of Miami services. Her attitude changed; she became more respectful, caring and understanding. Her grade point average increased to a 2.1, meeting the requirement to successfully graduate. Proud of Tashema's achievements, Ms. Carri asked if she would share her story at the Communities In Schools of Miami annual fundraising gala, where more than 150 guests would hear her speak. Her testimony touched many at the gala, even inspiring one guest to give her a scholarship to continue her education. Tashema is now attending Miami Dade College. Her story says it all: Communities In Schools of Miami provides the support that empowers our students to graduate and achieve in life.