



Christel House Academy

Ann Ring

Christel House helped her to set her own goals and dream big for her kids

The Mind Trust's \$1 million Incubator award supports two types of Christel House schools: dropout recovery schools to help high-school dropouts prepare for college and successful careers, and K-12 schools focused on academic rigor and strong parent engagement. Christel House is launching four schools that together will serve 1,650 to 2,100 students annually.

When it came to attending high school, Ann Ring didn't have much of a choice. At 16 she and her family moved to the small town of Reelsville in Western Indiana. Ann's mom did not want her to attend the town's tiny high school, but that was the only school option in Reelsville.

So at 16, Ann dropped out. At 18, she got married and moved to Indianapolis. And since then, she's faced an uphill battle to find a stable, well-paying job.

She's cleaned hotels, managed convenience stores, worked as a grocery store clerk and waited tables. Many of those jobs have been physically demanding. None of them have fulfilled her in the way she hoped.

Life without a diploma has made Ann realize the importance of education, and she's determined that her children, Ashley, 14, and Aaron, 12, will have better opportunities. When Ashley



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was finishing sixth grade, Ann began to explore new school options for both kids and came across Christel House Academy, a public charter not far from their home on Indianapolis' Near South-side.

Ann was impressed by what she found through her research and meeting the school staff, so she filled out applications for their admittance. Aaron landed high on the waiting list and was admitted as a fifth grader. Ashley didn't fare as well in the initial lottery but entered the following year as an eighth grader.

Ann has been wowed by the academic progress she's seen her kids make at Christel House. Ashley, who always excelled academically, was challenged at a new level and did so well in eighth-grade math last year that she was invited to take the Algebra 1 end-of-course assessment a year early.

Aaron struggled a bit in sixth grade but with the school's academic support boosted his grade-point average above a 3.0. And through Christel House, Ann found her way back to achieving her own educational goals.

Last fall she enrolled in Christel House's new Dropout Recovery School (DORS), where she is working to obtain her Core 40 diploma. She earned 13 credits in her first year and is on track to finishing in the next few years.

When she began last year, she and Ashley were learning some of the same concepts, and Ashley at times would coach her in certain subjects. This year, Ann has made enough progress to be able to help Ashley with her homework.

After she earns her diploma, Ann hopes to advance her education even further – and she knows that finding a job will be much easier with high school and college education under her belt. Her dream is to find a job in which she can work with animals.

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