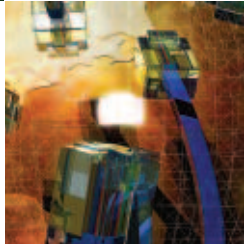


FROM THE EDITOR

A gripping series concludes



“**O**n a malnourished 5-year-old, the facial fat is the last to go.”

Nine months ago, *ASBJ* started its “Children at Risk” series with those words, a stark introduction to a world of poverty, neglect, and, ultimately, academic failure for the nation’s 13 million kids who come from low-income homes. This month, Senior Editor Lawrence Hardy concludes this gripping five-part series with a look at an Indianapolis school that is succeeding despite the odds.

Throughout the series, Hardy’s reporting has examined the many problems low-income children face outside school, from poor nutrition and housing to dangerous neighborhoods and family stress.

“While we have profiled some promising school-based programs, the inescapable fact is that schools alone cannot solve the problems of at-risk children,” says Hardy, who has been on the *ASBJ* staff for a decade.

As Hardy notes, schools cannot take a child like Antonio—the 14-year-old from our February story whose mother was shot on the streets of Southeast Washington, D.C.—and make him whole. They cannot take a troubled girl like Carla—a teen jailed for robbery in Broward County, Fla., who was profiled in our April story—and save her from herself.

What schools can do is what the 850-student George Washington Community

School has done in Indianapolis. From an onsite health center and mental health clinic, to a full-time coordinator who oversees 50 partnerships with outside groups, George Washington has embraced its name and become a “Community School.”

That said, challenges remain, with 30 percent of ninth-graders leaving school before they graduate. Still, the district’s investment in helping children at risk has paid off in too many ways to ignore.

We hope you have benefited from our investment over these past months in bringing light to the myriad challenges schools face. We plan to continue the series from time to time in future issues, and hope you will join us for the journey.

The bulk of this month’s issue, and the result of a great team effort by our staff, is a look at the skills students must have to succeed in the 21st century. Our 22-page special report, “What is Ready?,” examines the issues schools face in preparing students for the world of life and work.

It’s thought-provoking stuff, and we hope it will arm school leaders like you with the tools and information you need to make decisions about educating the children of today, tomorrow, and beyond.

Until next month...

Glenn Cook, Editor-in-Chief