Research shows that early language development, particularly speech, has a lasting impact on the educational achievement of a child. The ability to speak 'clearly and confidently' is often cited as the most important skill for success in school and in an individual's career. Speech is an important but often ignored element of early language development. Our public schools do not have the resources to make speech training a part of the school curriculum.

The CrisAlex program is designed to address our children's speaking skills by involving the parents in the process. We believe that actively involving the parent in the learning process will help the parent become effective 'coaches' for all the children in the family and that ongoing awareness of speaking clarity and confidence will become an integral part of the family experience. The CrisAlex Program that SJPII Lower Mills is offering is designed to create a fun learning experience for both the parent and the child who participate, a learning experience that we hope will build lasting awareness of the importance of clear and confident speech.

The Program is structured in ten sessions to help each child-parent team to formulate and deliver the child's 'personal story' that we refer to as the "I Believe" speech. During the first half of the program we will work with parents to help them better understand verbal communication skills; for example, enunciation, speaking pace, eye contact, body language, elimination of bad speaking habits, and so forth.

During the second half of the program the parents and children will work together to build the child's "I Believe" speech. The speech will be developed in three sections with timed rehearsals after each section. Parents will act as evaluators of their child's speech as it is built.

At the end of the program the children will deliver their "I Believe" speech to an audience of their family and individuals from the school.

Here is a photo of the five children who 'graduated' from the 2017 program: