



CRISTO REY
PHILADELPHIA
HIGH SCHOOL

President's Newsletter

April 27, 2018

Dear Friends of Cristo Rey Philadelphia,

On Monday, April 23, Cristo Rey Philadelphia held its sixth annual CEO Breakfast, hosted by Pierre Brondeau, at FMC Tower. Philadelphia Mayor Jim Kenney joined us to honor the CEO's and executives in the Work-Study Program for their commitment to Philadelphia and its future workforce.

Our Founder and President, John McConnell spoke to more than 100 business leaders of Philadelphia and we would like to share his speech with you.

Welcome to the sixth annual Cristo Rey Philadelphia CEO breakfast. This year, we are thrilled to partner with two Cristo Rey employers, Philadelphia Mayor Jim Kenney and FMC, in honoring all 90 Cristo Rey Work-Study Partners for building a workforce development program that really works!

You are changing the future of Philadelphia by your work with our students.

From this spectacular vantage point, on the 24th floor of the brand new FMC tower, Philadelphia looks terrific. In fact, there are plenty of reasons to be optimistic about Philadelphia's future.



But out there, in the neighborhoods of North, West and Southwest Philadelphia, too many families live in poverty – forty percent of our children live in poverty! And they have no reliable way to escape the trap of poverty.

All of you here today know some of these children, and you and I know that they are smart and talented and ambitious. Our community can't afford to waixt all of that potential.

Philadelphia will never realize its potential to be great if we don't solve the problem of poverty.

The World Bank says that "education is a powerful driver of development and one of the strongest instruments for reducing poverty ... education is a growth and development strategy."

Well, the World Bank is probably right, but education for low-income children in Philadelphia isn't working!

In Philadelphia, the most accurate predictor of how a child will do in school is family income. High-income students do best; low-income students do worst. The kids who need quality education to escape poverty are precisely the ones who can't get it!

In Philadelphia, education is not a solution to poverty; it is not an economic development strategy. In Philadelphia, education is an enabler of economic apartheid.

Education reform strategies are failing low-income students because they don't provide what low-income students need most ... the skills to navigate in the world of prosperity.

Low-income children need to learn things like how to: stay healthy and safe, seek help from others, manage money, think critically and be skeptical, communicate and collaborate with people of all kinds, and build relationships.

This is way more than improving test scores! We must have bigger goals than academic achievement!

Traditional schools can't do this on their own. They are overwhelmed and lack the capacity. Cristo Rey can't do it either – unless we collaborate with others.

When our students work with you, a miracle happens. You become role models. You coach them and challenge them. You help them build confidence and self esteem. You show them their place in the world of prosperity.

Because of your work, our students learn to believe that they can navigate successfully on their own. And when they genuinely believe that, it becomes true!

We have a lot more to learn at Cristo Rey, but we know this model is working. One-hundred percent of our graduates have been accepted to a four-year college and ninety percent of our graduates are still in college today.

A cynic might say, "it doesn't matter. Cristo Rey, at 500 students, is a drop in an ocean of poverty" ... and, of course, I don't agree!

Your work certainly matters to those 500 students and also, to the generations that will follow them – because college graduates send their children to college.

And it matters for our city because it proves that the problem of poverty can be solved. By us! When we work together!

That is why we are so proud and grateful to have you as our partners.

Thank you!

John speaks about the miracle that happens when our corporate partners work with our students – by coaching and challenging them, these young men and women realize their full potential and believe that they can be successful in the world.

And you can see this miracle come to life in our video below, which we debuted at the CEO Breakfast.

Please click on the image or link below to watch the video.



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GovaM9BNU3U>

Sincerely,

Cristo Rey Philadelphia High School

Click [here](#) to watch the CBS Philly News Story on the CEO Breakfast!

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