

Troy Sams '93

Dean of Students, Cristo Rey Philadelphia High School



PHILADELPHIA, PA

When Troy Sams entered Holy Child

School at Rosemont in grade 5, it was with a bit of anxiety. He wasn't sure what he'd find at a school that was somewhat different from St. Ignatius, his former school in West Philadelphia. However, what he found then, and still treasures today, was a sense of family.

"The teachers at Holy Child took a lot of their personal time to help mold you and make you feel like family," said Troy. This was evident when Peggy McCloskey, Troy's grade 6 math teacher, invited him and some of his classmates to dinner and the St. Denis Fair in Havertown, PA or when teacher Steve Clarke '73 P'01'03 (who attended Holy Child with Troy's uncle Bobby Samuel '73) made it a point to connect with one of Troy's grandmothers, by sending her seeds because she too loved gardening. "Again creating that feeling of family," said Troy.

While joining a new community in middle school can be difficult, Troy immersed himself in the culture of Holy Child, playing football and basketball and "enjoying every minute of it." A self-described "reserved person," the family-like school community helped him to blossom. Said Troy, "Coming to Holy Child was a great opportunity for one, but secondly, I developed a lot of relationships with people who, even to this day, I'm still friends with. Creating those relationships allowed me to be more extroverted because all the friends I made were very welcoming to me."



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The family that Troy formed at Holy Child was no doubt a result of Troy's gifts of communication and forging relationships. "One thing I've always known about myself is that I have a very calm demeanor, so that's allowed me to work with a lot of different people

and students. I think I'm OK at a lot of different things, but communication was just one of those things that I was innately able to do well for whatever reason." It is this skill that Troy took to The Gesu School where he worked for nine years and now to Cristo Rey Philadelphia High School, where he has worked as the Dean of Students for the past four years. "I call it a gift from God. He has given me the ability to communicate with students or parents the right way."

In his current role as Dean of Students at Cristo Rey, Troy is putting his talent into action in the many hats he wears there. Cristo Rey is an independent, Catholic high school that combines strong academics and ensures five days of work experience a month for its students at corporations such as Comcast, FMC, and Independence Blue Cross. This model promotes the students' development and their wages support their tuition since the students could otherwise not attend private school. Whether Troy is leading student mediations, working with the school counselors, or assisting parents with their children, he strives to help the

students thrive. "I'm hoping I'm helping to form and shape young minds and encouraging them to be positive and productive young men and young women. Whether it was at Gesu or Cristo Rey, it's about preparing young people for the world that's ahead of them, but also wanting them to be caring and loving people that have empathy for others and are able to be successful in life."

What Troy found at Holy Child and in his upbringing impacts what he teaches his own three children and ultimately how he leads at Cristo Rey. "My biggest takeaway from Holy Child was to be open to everyone and to realize that lessons come in many different shapes, forms, and fashions, and you never know who or what is going to be a blessing to you in your life. I was treated like family, even though I came from a different background than the majority of students at Holy Child. I feel like everyone treated me well, not just at Holy Child, but also at home. That was something that I was taught, so in turn that is the same message I preach not only to my own kids, but also to the kids that I work with." ❖