

Inside:  
The President's  
State of the  
School Address



10 Years Later First  
Students Look Back at  
Their Unique Place  
in DPCR History

*"I wouldn't be where  
I am now if I hadn't  
gone to DPCR."*



DePaul Cristo Rey's first students say that their lives have been shaped by the time they spent in the new school. As DPCR marks its 10th anniversary, three of them reflect on the school's impact on them.

They're now young professionals making an impact on others. Their stories are inside on page four.

SAVE THE DATE  
to  
Celebrate 10 Years  
of Rey of Light  
at DePaul Cristo Rey

**April 23, 2022**

Call Lisa Muething at  
513.861.0600  
to sponsor,  
donate an auction  
item or volunteer.

*Rey of Light*  
DePaul Cristo Rey High School







## The State of the School

by **Siobhan A. Taylor**  
President & CEO

Dear Friends of DePaul Cristo Rey High School,

Life is full of moments. Celebrations and disappointments. Actualized goals. Dreams deferred. Moments. The little and big miracles of life. Moments. Those small periods of time where the extraordinary is so often overlooked because it seems just so ordinary.

DePaul Cristo Rey High School continues to find ways to make the ordinary extraordinary. From a focus on faith, education and vision, we have now exited one decade and moved into another focused on sustainability, growth and innovation. Our faith continues to steady us; fortifying our minds and souls as we continue to weather the seemingly unending uncertainties of a global pandemic.

In October, our Board of Directors and Executive Leadership Team began developing a strategic plan for the school's next three to five years, and we look forward to the addition of a visionary principal, beginning this summer, to lead the academic program.

### Shattering Limitations

Our students continue grace the halls of our building; as faculty and staff deliver an unwavering commitment to educating Cincinnati's changemakers. Extracurricular clubs and athletics are, again, in full swing, while mission trips to Nashville, Cincinnati and Washington, D.C. are planned. Partnerships with longtime supporters like Beech Acres Parenting Center and new supporters, like Forever Kings, have tended to the social and emotional health of our students. And God, with His matchless power and mercy, has allowed,

yet again, another year marked with His extraordinary favor and protection.

Indeed, we have been richly blessed. This past August, 81 percent of the Class of 2021 enrolled in college, while many alumni from the Classes of 2015 and 2016 returned to campus to celebrate their high school reunions. And from those whom we haven't seen in person, we hear the stories of their continued perseverance as they believe, achieve and become in both collegiate and professional work. Time and time again, we see that our unique model of education works; that the blend of a college preparatory academic program and a corporate work study experience shatters the limitations of impossibility. We see firsthand the value of an extraordinary education that prepares students both spiritually and comprehensively for life's ordinary moments.

### The Needs of This Calling & Mission

While the sowing of seeds in this comprehensive model yields a unique harvest from year to year, we still find ourselves noticeably unable to meet the needs all this calling and mission requires. This year, our freshmen did not deploy to work, as companies and community organizations responded to continued pandemic needs within their own spaces. Instead, our freshmen had opportunities to explore various careers through visits to partner locations and a professional speaker series. While such an experience was valuable for many, nothing replaces the mentoring, learning and practical real-world experience work provides. Today, job placements are still needed. Your help is still needed, always needed, in order to bring forth a new crop of possibility for our students at work.

We are so incredibly grateful to you for your continued gifts of time, talent and treasure. Each of your contributions maintains a special place in the story of DePaul Cristo Rey. Your kindness has not been overlooked; your steadfastness always igniting possibility so that our students' ordinary can become extraordinary.

Looking forward in hope,

**Siobhan Taylor**  
President & CEO  
DePaul Cristo Rey High School



## A Brilliant Streak of Success

Join us on April 23



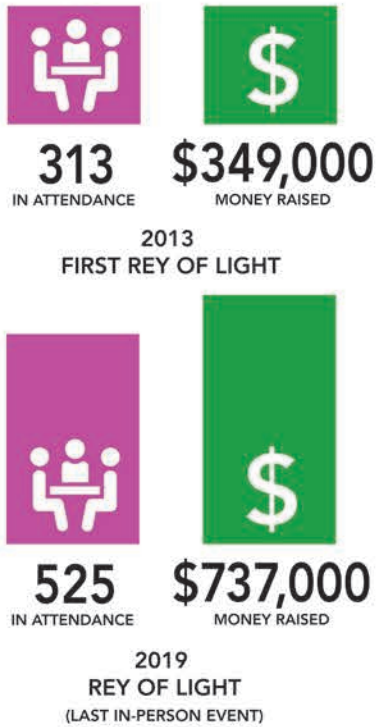
Rey of Light Chairs John and Christine Browner

From an initial spark of an idea through its impressive decade of growth, Rey of Light plans to continue its brilliant streak of success by hosting the 10th anniversary event on April 23. The 2022 rendition of this annual scholarship benefit will be an in-person event held, for the first time, in DPCR's new Student Center.

"The first time we attended Rey of Light a few years ago we thought, 'Holy cow, what a party,'" recalls DPCR Board Member **John Browner**, who is chairing this year's event with his wife, **Christine**. "We were both so impressed with the enthusiasm and community support for DPCR. People are incredibly generous with their time and resources when it comes to the school." The Browners share that commitment. "We think DPCR's mission is so important. We are happy to lead this year's efforts because Rey of Light is critical to the school's success. The dollars raised fund education opportunities for its amazing students," says John.

Rey of Light's results are incredibly impressive with the 10 events since 2013 having raised nearly \$5 million, all designated for financial aid for students.

The idea to hold a dinner-auction started as a discussion among a few staff members and volunteers including former Board Chair **Pat Robertson**. "Other Catholic schools have annual auctions but their guests and supporters are typically alumni and parents. As a brand new school we couldn't expect that, so we knew our event needed generous sponsors and had to introduce new people to the school," she recalls. "That first year we were pleasantly surprised by how many people came and how much was raised."



In the first year, there were 313 guests and \$349,000 was raised, which included a generous matching gift from one donor. In 2019, the last year Rey of Light was an in-person event, 525 people attended and \$737,000 was raised. Rey of Light has been virtual the past two years due to pandemic restrictions, yet thanks to generous sponsors and online bidding, scholarship dollars still came in. Returning this year as an in-person event, organizers hope the amount raised will also return to pre-pandemic levels.

"DPCR's mission works. It needs continuous dedication from those who believe in it," says Pat. "These students make our community better and do so much good. Without DPCR many of them would not have the opportunity to go to college, find their career path and change their lives."

**To sponsor, donate an auction item or volunteer at Rey of Light, please contact Lisa Muething at 513.861.0600 or [lisa.muething@dpcr.net](mailto:lisa.muething@dpcr.net).**



(Continued from front cover)

## Rochelle Benton '15

*Persister Poised to Graduate*

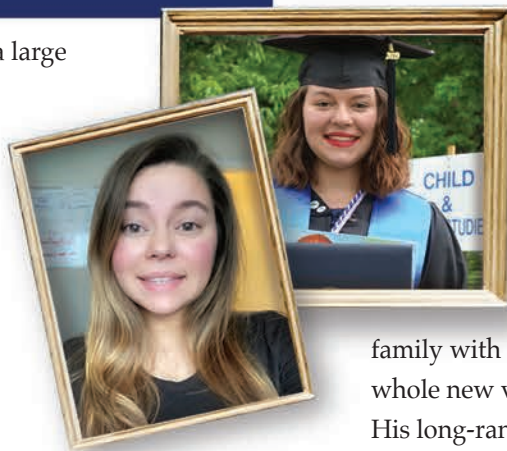


"It felt very special to belong to the first graduating class," recalls Rochelle. "We had a special bond with our teachers. They were tough but they taught me to take care of myself. I really struggled, and there were times when I thought I wouldn't graduate with my class, but the teachers really wanted all of us to succeed with nobody left behind. I decided I wasn't going to be stuck anymore," she says. "I wouldn't be where I am now if I hadn't gone to DPCR." After graduation Rochelle attended Clark State College for two years before taking time off and enrolling at Miami University Hamilton. She will graduate in May with a bachelor's degree in social work and has a job offer from one of her internships. "I will be the first in my family to graduate from college and they are so proud of me. DPCR's Graduate Success Program has given me a support team through college. I tell people that my school still really cares about us graduates and lets us know we're not alone on our journeys."

## Theresa Bruns '15

*DPCR's First College Graduate*

Theresa transferred to DPCR from a large public high school as a sophomore. "I was struggling there and DPCR seemed like a better environment," she recalls. "Even though I knew I was a good student, I had no desire to go to college because nobody at that school talked about it." At DPCR she found a college-focused, supportive environment at school and her Corporate Work Study placements. Those proved crucial when



she gave birth to daughter, Vivian, the summer before her senior year. "Senior year was hard. I tried to drop out and enroll in an online high school, but DPCR leaders insisted I stay and finish my degree," she says. After graduation she went to Berea College, lived on campus with her daughter, and became the DPCR's first college graduate when she received her bachelor's degree in Child and Family Studies in May 2019. Since then she's worked as a social worker in Morehead, Kentucky. "At DPCR I saw what a big deal it was to actually graduate; everyone was so proud of us. Even today I believe the people there will do anything in their power to support students. If I didn't have that support, I wouldn't have succeeded."

## Aaron Carter '15

*Unlimited Vision of the Future*

Aaron is a student again, now pursuing a master's degree in counseling and human development while working full-time as a behavioral health specialist at Cincinnati Children's Hospital and as a resident manager at Lighthouse Youth & Family Services. "I continue to realize every day what I didn't realize in high school – the advantages we had at DPCR and what we gained in academics, experiences, communication and critical thinking skills," he says. He earned a full-tuition, academic scholarship to Mount St. Joseph University where he completed a bachelor's degree in sociology. "When I started at the Mount, I felt prepared for college-level work because I left DPCR well-prepared in every aspect of life," says Aaron. Looking back 10 years he says, "I came from a place and level of poverty where I didn't see myself graduating from high school; now I'm the only one in my family with a bachelor's degree. Graduation opened a whole new vision for me of what I am capable of doing." His long-range plan is to complete a doctorate and open his own counseling practice.



*Celebrating a decade of faith, education and vision.*

Members of the DPCR community celebrated the school's 10th anniversary at a party that included the official debut and blessing of the new campus. Guests were awed by the transformation, and heard reflections on the school's history from **S. Barbara Hagedorn, SC**, past president of the Sisters of Charity of Cincinnati; **S. Jeanne Bessette, OSF**, founding president of DPCR; and current DPCR President **Siobhan Taylor**.

Teacher and Hispanic Outreach Coordinator **Dr. Manuel Iris**, (pictured to the right) who is also Cincinnati's poet laureate emeritus, read the poem, "The seed and the tree," which he wrote in honor of the occasion. Artist **Holly Schapker** explained and unveiled a tapestry she created in honor of the school's first decade. The program ended with **S. Patricia Hayden, SC**, president of the Sisters of Charity of Cincinnati, leading the guests in a communal blessing of the new buildings, pictured below.



## The seed and the tree

*Take a good look at the seed: there,  
in its quiet heart  
shines the beginning of a forest,  
the taste of the fruits of a tree  
to whose shadow you will return.*

*The light and the shadow have passed  
and the tree has ten inexhaustible fruits,  
and from its trunk – made of Faith,  
Vision and Study –  
take flight birds  
that will always return  
to the place where they learned how to fly.*

*DePaul Cristo Rey:  
ten years are your present,  
the seed of your future.*

*The History of History  
starts every day.*

*So, today  
we celebrate what we are:*

*A tree-seed nurtured by love,  
because God has sown it.*

by  
**Manuel Iris, Ph.D.**  
*Teacher & Cincinnati Poet Laureate Emeritus*





# Health Carousel’s Purpose to Improve Lives Now Extends to DPCR

Cincinnati-based **Health Carousel**, one of the nation’s top healthcare staffing companies, stays singularly focused on improving lives and making healthcare better. Now, through the Corporate Work Study Program (CWSP), that focus encompasses DPCR students. “What drew us to partner with DePaul Cristo Rey is the school’s unique approach to supporting youth within our community,” explains **Johanna Krogh**, associate manager of Communication and Engagement.

Health Carousel became a CWSP Partner in 2020. “We were excited and ready to host student-workers and then the pandemic hit,” recalls Johanna. “However, it was really important to us to continue to support the school in some way, even though no students worked last school year. We kept our financial commitment to the program anyway,” she explains.

As they prepared to welcome students this school year, “We started to talk about how we could have a greater impact beyond the four students assigned to work here,” says Johanna. That led Health Carousel to host all sophomores, juniors and seniors for full days of professional development in September. The students rotated through sessions on resume building, careers and corporate communications, and participated in a Future Leaders Panel with Health Carousel’s top leaders.

“The people at Health Carousel love their jobs; I saw that during the field trip,” says **Mykasia ’22**, “and I still see it when I work there every week.” She works in Marketing; three other students work in Accounting, Compensation and Benefits, and Sales Enablement and Operations. Mykasia has taken on increasing responsibilities including creating and scheduling social media content, and conducting marketing research on competitors. “This job is teaching me a lot,” she says. “I’ve



Diamond '22 and Awa '22 sat on the Health Carousel Future Leaders Panel.

learned about Google Analytics, how to better manage my time, and overcoming my shyness to talk to people. It’s helped me decide to major in business in college.” “Even though our goal is to make sure we expose these students to aspects of our culture, we didn’t anticipate what they would teach our employees and leaders,” says Johanna. “This program gives some of our employees exposure to individuals who are different than them. Learning from teenagers has been an unexpected benefit for some of our managers.” She adds, “We hope to improve lives beyond our employees and immediate communities. We’re so glad that we get to be just a small part of what DePaul Cristo Rey is doing in this community.”

## New Partners and Sponsors Invest in the Future with DPCR Student-Workers

After a year on pause due to the pandemic, the Corporate Work Study Program has returned and this year welcomed the following new partners and sponsors:

- Anchor Fluid Power
- Christine and John Browner
- C.M. Paula
- Community Action Agency
- Corryville Catholic Elementary School
- First Tee
- Molly and Mike Hartmann
- Ken Anderson Alliance
- People at Your Service
- St. Joseph School
- The Crossroads Center
- Tier1 Performance Solutions
- TQL
- Women Helping Women
- UCAN Nonprofit Spay & Neuter Clinic

We’re very grateful for the support of these and all of our long-standing partners and sponsors!

# Experiencing Education and Hope in Tanzania

By Julie Rentz

*Math and Physics Teacher Julie Rentz (pictured in mask below) was an electrical engineer, then a stay-at-home mom before achieving her master’s degree in education and becoming a teacher in Portland, Oregon. In 2013 she and her family began a friendship with a Tanzanian priest studying in Portland. She traveled to Africa that summer to learn how to support the education of priests and became involved with the Kilimanjaro Mission of Hope and Outreach (KMHO). She’s now a KMHO program director and has returned to Tanzania three times.*

This past summer I spent a month in Tanzania visiting 38 secondary schools and vocational colleges in the Catholic diocese of Moshi at the base of Mount Kilimanjaro. I met with students, teachers and administrators, sat in on classes, and toured dormitories, kitchens, school farms, libraries, and laboratories. I met wonderful educators and students, and saw firsthand many needs of this developing nation. I also experienced gratitude, respect, a strong sense of community, and hope. The desire to bring hope and education to more students fuels my work with KMHO.



Tanzanian secondary schools have Ordinary Levels which most resemble our four years of high school. Less than 50 percent of Tanzanian young people graduate from Ordinary Levels; fewer still go on to vocational schools and college. The schools I visited are primarily boarding schools. Students play a big part in running and maintaining their schools; many of them are self-sustaining. Other than teachers, administrators and cooks, little outside help is needed. The student government has control over chore schedules, event planning and minor discipline. Students wash their own clothes and bedding; clean and mop their classrooms; plant, maintain, and harvest crops; and care for livestock. Although the common language throughout Tanzania is Swahili, all secondary schools are taught in English.

Having the joy of experiencing this culture, I now hope to share it with my DPCR students. We have started a new Tanzania Club where we plan to learn a little Swahili, taste some food, wear a

kanga, learn the traditional chagga dance, play a game of netball, and develop friendships across the world through video chats and letter exchanges. My long-term goal is to teach DPCR students about international travel and prepare for a field trip to Tanzania in a few years.

*If you want to learn more about Julie’s work with KMHO, reach out to her at [julie.rentz@dpcr.net](mailto:julie.rentz@dpcr.net).*





## Theater Major Ready for her Next Act

Devonna Wilson '18 describes herself as "very theatrical as a child. I was into the arts – dancing, singing and acting," she says. "I really loved theater but I took a break after my grandmother died; I didn't want to pursue the arts anymore."

Fast forward a few years and she's enrolled at DePaul Cristo Rey balancing honors classes with her Corporate Work Study placements. Her senior year she took the Performing Arts class and they read, "A Raisin in the Sun." For an exam, she had to memorize and recite lines from the play, an experience she recalls very vividly. "It was a great, familiar feeling to perform. I was happy doing it because it is something I love. I knew then that when I went to college, I wanted to study theater," she says.

Now enrolled at **The Ohio State University** as a theater major, Devonna will graduate in May. While her love of theater has never waned, she says, "Through college I wanted to explore many different things so I took a variety of classes including a women's studies class. I really enjoyed it and ended up making



Devonna (center) in her first OSU theater performance.

## Alumni Christmas Party



Basketball open gym, food, games, and connecting with former classmates brought dozens of DPCR grads to the annual Alumni Christmas Party held in December. Pictured here are (left to right): Heather Cook Trennepohl '17, Katie Makin '17, and Heidi Cook '19.

that my minor. My mom told me that you don't want to grow up and get a degree in something that won't make you happy. If it's something you love to do, something fun and joyful, you'll be better off."

During her four years, Devonna has been involved behind the scenes with several OSU Theater Department productions. This past fall she debuted in front of the audience, landing a lead role in the play, "In the Next Room." She says, "It was lot of work but it was fun and worth all of the sacrifices." Her dad, who she says is not a "theater person," saw her perform for the first time. "He told me I really have talent and he really enjoyed the show."

Devonna will take a semester break after her May graduation but she plans to be in graduate school in 2023, majoring in theater. "I want to expand my theater knowledge and focus more on acting skills and techniques. I also want to explore the business side," she says. "I love to write so I want to do that more, possibly writing a play or a screenplay."



## Be a Virtual CHAMPION OF CHANGE!

Join us  
February 24, 12 noon

Want to feel like a Champion?  
Grab your lunch, your laptop or tablet, and spend 20 inspiring minutes with the DePaul Cristo Rey community.

We promise a brief, uplifting, informative virtual program where you'll learn about our innovative school, amazing students, and one-of-a-kind Graduate Success Program.

To register for this virtual event, please contact Lisa Muething at [lisa.muething@dpcr.net](mailto:lisa.muething@dpcr.net).



## New Members Named to Board of Directors



**Battinto Batts, Jr., Ph.D.**  
Dean of the Walter Cronkite School of Journalism & Mass Communication at Arizona State University



**S. Joan Elizabeth Cook, SC**  
Past president of the Sisters of Charity of Cincinnati



**Jim Price**  
CEO and owner of Empower, an independent advertising agency in Cincinnati



# Graduate Success Campaign Honor Roll

The success of the **Building. Futures. Together. For A Greater Cincinnati Campaign** has meant even more to the DePaul Cristo Rey community than the physical changes on campus. It has greatly impacted the futures of DPCR graduates. When the campaign’s capital improvement goal was reached, fundraising continued to endow the Graduate Success Fund which provides microgrants to DPCR alumni to help them overcome the financial barriers to college completion.

With over \$3 million raised toward the goal of a \$6 million Graduate Success Fund, we recognize and thank the following who have contributed to this endowment fund.

|                                    |                                     |                                    |
|------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Anonymous                          | Arleene Keller                      | S. Timothy Ann Schroeder, SC       |
| Christy and Brian Banke            | Rebecca Khan                        | Mary Schuster                      |
| Gerry Benzinger                    | Yasmeen Khan                        | Deborah Shipp †                    |
| Lisa Benzinger                     | Pat Kowalkowski                     | Mary and Ken Sichz                 |
| S. Jeanne Bessette, OSF, Ed.D.     | L&L Nippert Charitable Foundation   | Jackie and Bill Siders             |
| Suzanne Bessette-Smith             | Kathy and Tom Liguzinski            | Sisters of Charity of Cincinnati   |
| and David Smith                    | Alicia and Doug Logeman             | Helen Smith †                      |
| Susan and Dr. Doug Bierer          | Kathryn and John May                | The Louise Taft Semple Foundation  |
| Carolyn and Steve Bloomfield       | Ann and Doug Miller                 | Amy and Bill Thaman                |
| H. Thomas Blum                     | Teresa and Michael Miller           | Thaman Family Foundation           |
| The BOH Foundation                 | Jo Anne Moser Gibbons and John Getz | Joan and Dan Valerio               |
| MC and Tom Brennan                 | Dr. Kimya Moyo                      | Anne Marie and Richard Wagner      |
| Donna and Joe Broderick            | Justin R. Niklas Family Foundation  | Edward Wells †                     |
| Kathy and David Cassady            | Carol and Mike O'Brien              | Western & Southern Financial Group |
| Betsy and Miguel Chavez            | Stacia Perry                        | Michael Wilger †                   |
| Cynthia and Manuel Chavez          | Katie and Nick Reilly               | S. Caroljean Willie, SC            |
| Kimberly and Martin Chavez         | Richard Curry Insurance Agency Inc. | Virginia Willoughby †              |
| MacKenzie and Manuel Chavez        | Mary Huesman Ries and Scott Ries    | Wohlgemuth Herschede Foundation    |
| Melanie Chavez and Jeremy Campbell | S. Kathleen Rossman, OSF            | Sparkle and Tom Worley             |
| Stefanie Chavez                    | Ann Saluke and Don Yelton           | S. Mary Jo Young, OSF              |
| Toncia and Estevan Chavez          | Joanie Schaffer                     | Paul and Marianne Zook             |

† Denotes deceased

Every effort has been made to provide a complete and error-free list. If your name was overlooked or listed improperly, please accept our apologies and contact us to correct the error at 513.861.0600.

## Named Scholarships Support Grads

The following scholarships have been endowed by generous friends as gifts to the Graduate Success Campaign.

- The Kimberly and Martin Chavez Graduate Success Scholarship
- The Pat and Larry Gastreich Scholarship for Graduate Success
- The ChangeMaker Scholarship
- The Michael Wilger Memorial Scholarship
- The Carol and Michael O'Brien Graduate Success Scholarship
- The Sister Jeanne Bessette, OSF, Ed.D., Graduate Success Scholarship
- The Paula and Arthur Huesman Family Memorial Scholarship
- The Ann and Doug Miller Graduate Success Scholarship
- The Robert and Maelyn Siegmann Support Fund

Foundation  
Sheila Conway  
S. Joan Cook, SC  
CPPS Heritage Mission Fund  
S. Barbara Davis, SC  
Cyndi DeRobertis  
Jessica and Paul Ebert  
S. Karen Elliott, C.P.P.S  
Jimmie Ford  
Barbara Friedhoff-DeSanti  
Nancy and Dr. Glenn Gollobin  
Katelynn and Zack Guest  
James Hagerty  
Kathy and Dick Haglage  
Abby and Matt Held  
Katie Hoekzema  
Jacob G. Schmidlapp Trust  
Kerrie and Nick Katsetos

# Graduate Success Program is Critical to Keeping Alumni in College

“Without the help I’ve received from DPCR, I wouldn’t be in college right now,” says **Cherie Applebury ‘20**, who’s resilience is remarkable despite serious setbacks. Her senior year at DPCR ended with virtual classes and a drive-through graduation ceremony due to the pandemic. She enrolled at **Mount St. Joseph University** but halfway through freshman year a financial aid issue almost kept her from starting her second semester. “I reached out to Ms. Larisa (Wright) at DPCR who told me to apply for a microgrant and she also got me a computer because mine was dying,” says Cherie.

Ready to start her sophomore year this past August, Cherie and her mother were diagnosed with COVID-19. Cherie recovered and started school; her mom, who already had a rare lung condition, was hospitalized and passed away. “It was really hard to focus on school after that. I thought if I could live on campus, a change of environment would be helpful, but I

couldn’t afford it. Ms. Larisa connected with people at the Mount for some funding and a microgrant from DPCR covered the rest,” says Cherie. She’s now almost at the halfway point toward a bachelor’s degree in secondary education. “Even as bad as things were after my mom died, so many people were so supportive. The love and support I had while I was at DPCR is still there for me, even as a graduate.”

Cherie is one of many DPCR grads who have been able to stay enrolled in college thanks to the Graduate Success Program. Director **Larisa Wright** works with DPCR graduates in college as well as those who started college but left and now want to re-enroll. She offers financial aid advice, academic support, and the encouragement and guidance these mostly first-generation college students sometimes need. She also administers the microgrant program that helps pay for books, meals, transportation, and tuition gaps not covered by financial aid.

DPCR remains the only local high school offering this level of support – both human and financial – to its graduates. Since 2017 the Graduate Success Fund has disbursed \$223,500 in microgrants. This past year alone, 64 alumni received grants.

If you would like to support this fund and help our graduates complete college, please contact **Sparkle Worley** at sparkle.worley@dpcr.net or 513.861.0600.



**Graduate Success Fund**  
**\$224,287 in Microgrants**  
**Since 2017**



Cherie at the 2020 drive-through graduation.



Cherie (right) at the 2021 Alumni Christmas Party with Victoria Evans ‘20.