

- Alumna Educator Shares Her Story from Gesu to the Ivy League
- Health and Wellness Programs Educate the Whole Child
- Grade 6 Teacher Champions Ingenuity and Jesuit Values
- Thank You to Our Generous 2016-2017 Donors



THROUGH OUR EYES

2016-2017 Annual Report



From the President

Dear Friends of Gesu School,

Gesu School is a beacon of hope in our North Philadelphia community and a model of inner-city education. Codirected by the Jesuits and the Sisters, Servants of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, we offer 450 students of all abilities a top-notch academic education infused with character development to break the cycle of poverty and violence.

I invite you to take a closer look through our eyes—those of our students, faculty, and alumni—at why “Gesu Works.” I hope you enjoy the pages that follow, which capture our 2016-2017 school year and share the Gesu experience from multiple perspectives:

- The voice of an alumna who reflects upon Gesu’s meaning in her life as a mathematics teacher and professor, a mother, and an active member of her church community
- A glimpse of the unique health and wellness programs that educate the whole child at Gesu
- An award-winning teacher who aligns his practice with Jesuit values and creates a classroom brimming with innovation and high expectations

Thank you to our supporters, who impact lives and make a Gesu education possible through your time, prayer, talent, and generosity!

Peace and blessings,

Bryan H. Carter
President and CEO

P.S. I welcome you to visit Gesu School and experience it through your eyes. To schedule a tour, contact the Development Office at 215-763-9077 or development@gesuschool.org. Stay current on Gesu news. Visit gesuschool.org. Click “Join our email list.”

“Gesu is a warm and loving learning environment. Children from all backgrounds have the opportunity for a great education.”

—Ijaiana, Grade 8



Front Cover Photo: A Gesu School 3rd grader enjoys reading in our Youth Education for Tomorrow (YET) literacy program, which provides one-to-one attention from a teacher four days per week after school. Photo by Sabina Louise Pierce

Educator. Mathematician. Leader. Mother. A 2002 Alumna Shares Her Story.

Your support impacts students’ lives,
from Gesu to the Ivy League.

For Catera Scott '02, life has come full circle. After attending Gesu from Kindergarten–8th grade, she blossomed at an elite high school, college, and an Ivy League graduate school. She returned to the classroom—in Philadelphia.

Strong and accomplished, Catera balances her career with being a mother of a toddler and a member of Harold O. Davis Memorial Baptist Church, where her husband is Pastor. She sings in a citywide choir and is active in community events. The academic skills, confidence, and values Catera gleaned at Gesu seeped into her adult life.



Q. What special Gesu memories do you have? Is there a teacher who inspired you?

A. Akybra Theater and the plays with Shirley Bright, former 3rd Grade Teacher. She taught us about how proud we should be of ourselves and where we come from. I enjoyed rehearsing and felt proud of the productions. She referred to me as Big Sister Catera. I felt like I had to do what was right because younger students were looking up to me.

Q. How did attending Gesu propel you forward in your education?

A. We took religion and learned about treating other people how we would want to be treated. Those classes impacted my life skills and how I interact with people.

Gesu made sure students were ready to compete at top high schools. I was in Dr. Erwin’s advanced writing class. I zoomed through Spanish at Springside because I had a course at Gesu. I had advanced math in middle school. I took honors calculus at Springside and placed out in college.

Gesu really helped me with connections. They put me in touch with then Councilman Michael Nutter for my high school senior project. He took me to community events and city council meetings. I got an award at

Springside for this project. I interned at Morgan Lewis law firm, a high-level experience in college. **Your development matters to Gesu even beyond your time there.**

Q. At the Gesu Gala, you discussed degradation and self-image and that positive images at Gesu helped reshape this perception. How did Gesu change this for you?

A. At Gesu, we always celebrated our culture and Black History Month. You knew you came from greatness despite what society says, so you felt empowered. We saw images in every classroom of Mary and Jesus of color. Those images helped me accept and appreciate my natural beauty. It was important that I had that sense of pride going in to Springside, where the population was very different.

Q. What advice would you offer Gesu students?

A. Take advantage of every resource or opportunity. Cherish the time that you are there. The school I teach at, like Gesu, offers a great sense of community, belonging, nurturing. You don’t get that everywhere. I’ve seen some things that Gesu offers, like ballroom dancing, that nurture the whole student, not just academically, but that make students cultured as well. Taking advantage of those opportunities is so important.

At the 2017 Gesu Gala, Catera Scott '02 speaks of her Gesu experience. View it on Gesu’s YouTube Channel at youtube.com/gesuschoolworks. Photo by David DeBalko

Catera Scott '02

Springside School '06

Spelman College '10
B.A. in Psychology
Minor in Spanish
Phi Beta Kappa

University of Pennsylvania '12
M.Ed.

Teach for America Educator
and Mentor Teacher

Grade 7 Math Teacher,
Mastery Charter School

Adjunct Professor,
Mathematics, Community
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Health & Wellness Programs Educate the Whole Child

Thanks to your support, unique programs shape students' physical well-being and mental health.

Nestled in North Philadelphia, Gesu School is entrenched in a neighborhood that witnesses violence and poverty. Many Gesu students are exposed to these traumatic circumstances. As an integral component of educating the whole child, Gesu provides programs to help children manage the stresses that can accompany growing up in an urban environment, stay physically active, and focus on learning and building confidence.



Grade 6 Teacher Champions Ingenuity and Jesuit Values

MY DAUGHTER'S KITCHEN



Gesu 7th grade chefs cook a healthy meal and learn fundamentals of nutrition with My Daughter's Kitchen.

For eight weeks, Gesu 7th grade girls experienced hands-on cooking and nutrition with **The Philadelphia Inquirer/Vetri Community Partnership**. Students learned how to prepare healthy recipes, from peeling onions for turkey tacos to slicing vegetables for minestrone. Each meeting ended with sharing the meal and journaling. Students hosted an elegant meal for their families and cooked their favorite recipes from the course, baked chicken with root vegetables and strawberry-rhubarb bars. **Antoinette, a 7th grader, states, "In My Daughter's Kitchen, I learned that eating healthy isn't hard when the food tastes great! I also learned that making your own food is a lot of fun. On our last day, I was really proud. I saw all these people enjoy the food I made."** Our thanks to Ellen Churchill, Gesu Board Member. Read more about the class on the Philly.com My Daughter's Kitchen blog!

Your generosity enables teachers to infuse innovation in the classroom.

Can 6th grade boys enjoy diagramming sentences? When Rufino deSantos is teaching, the answer is "Yes!"

To former student Adrian, Mr. deSantos is a "cool guy" who surprised him by making learning fun. The 7th grader adds, **"He's understanding. If you have a problem or are confused, he always helps you to get right back on track."**

His colleagues agree, awarding him the 2016-17 Knetzger Outstanding Teacher Award. Art Teacher Linda Hartzell explains, **"His expertise in engaging with others captures the fascination of the entire class and sets a model for colleagues to emulate."**

letting students be kids. At the same time, he is focused on helping you mature and guide you to your path to excellence. He has high expectations."

Innovation and Intention

Mr. deSantos embraces current technologies to engage learners. Lessons weave in target skills and soft skills, like grit, for long-term growth. He reflects, **"I'm always looking for alternative apps that allow kids to be creative in ways they haven't been before. It's more than printing a worksheet and putting it in front of students. We're creating materials that advance learning."**

Students and teacher navigate new technology, such as Animaker. Each student researches an issue, like the Keystone XL Pipeline, writes an argument, and creates his own animated film.

Students learn cooperation, accountability, and resilience. "They have a problem they haven't done before and have to focus," shares Mr. deSantos. **"My hope is if they get enough experience of never having done something before, but can problem solve their way through things from past experience, they can take this with them."**

Commitment to Jesuit Tenets

In 2016, the Jesuit Schools Network named Mr. deSantos an exemplary Ignatian educator. After teaching with Jesuit Volunteers International,

he volunteered with Partners in Los Angeles Catholic Education, teaching 6th-8th grade and earning an M.A. in Education from Loyola Marymount University '12. Summers find him at St. Joseph's Prep Camp Magis. He serves with Gesu's community service club and soft skills committee.

Educated at St. Joseph's Prep '02 and The College of the Holy Cross '06, he attests, "I wanted to be in a Catholic School. There is a foundation of character development that cannot be replicated. Making connections and asking 'why' is important to students' education."

In his religion classes, students connect historical figures, such as Moses, to heroes like MLK, Romero, and Malala. Mr. deSantos poses tough questions: **"What would Jesus do? What would you do?" Students can look to their teacher for inspiration.**

The Knetzger Outstanding Teacher Award, endowed by a gift from Jay and Kathy Sherrerd in memory of Gesu Board Member Edwin Knetzger, is presented annually to that faculty member demonstrating the highest quality of teaching ability and commitment.



YOUNGEST SCHOLARS



Gesu's Youngest Scholars program offers five weeks of in-depth study in the summer for 3rd, 4th, and 5th graders who excel academically. **This year's theme, Transforming You at Gesu, focused on health and fitness.** Students researched the body, made nutritious recipes, and got moving for 60 minutes a day with yoga and training for a one mile run.

Gesu School 5th graders come to their yoga mats an hour per week with Mindfulness Through Movement.

Students learn simple breath and movement practices, important self-empowerment tools, to help manage the stress of living in an urban setting, so they can relax more and open their minds to learn. Co-founders Cara Bradley and Cheryl Nichols note, "MTM's mindfulness curriculum aims to cultivate emotional regulation, attention, and performance. Breathing exercises help to still the mind."

MINDFULNESS THROUGH MOVEMENT

Creating Community and Trust

For Mr. deSantos, building trust on day one is paramount. It fosters community and a positive learning environment. He observes, "It really has to be about students being comfortable and being themselves. I put them in situations later where they have to be uncomfortable thinking, writing, saying things and be willing to take risks."

One way Mr. deSantos relates to students? Basketball. He frequents the court, facilitating life lessons on motivation.

With this safety net in place, he sets lofty standards. The goal? To prepare self-aware young men of strong character. Students notice. Says 8th grader, Kyle, **"Mr. deSantos enjoys**

Above: Rufino deSantos builds community through a trust circle in his 6th grade class. Right: Bryan Carter, Gesu President and CEO (left), and Sr. Ellen Convey, Gesu Principal (right), congratulate Rufino deSantos on receiving the Knetzger Outstanding Teacher Award.

Gesu students begin to study with the RockReach program in 3rd grade. **For 36 weeks, they learn multi-disciplinary dance forms, such as ballet and hip hop, from The Rock School for Dance Education instructors.** Lessons and a yearly performance continue through 5th grade. Students build discipline and creativity through exposure to the performing arts and this partnership forged by Gesu Board Member, Randi Zemsky.



Third grade RockReach participants perform at the 2017 Gesu Gala. Photo by David DeBalko

ROCKREACH PROGRAM

Memorable Moments

from 2016-2017

AUGUST The rooftop and playscape transformation is completed! Resurfacing creates a safe space for students to enjoy playing outdoors. Our thanks to the many donors who supported the final phase, including our lead funders, **Gray Charitable Trust** and **The Le Vine Family Foundation**.

SEPTEMBER Gesu's MAGIS pilot program gets underway from Pre-K-8th grade! Teachers integrate "soft skills" into curriculum and assessment to equip students for lifelong success: Motivation, Awareness, Grit, Independence, and Social Competence.



SEPTEMBER For the 4th consecutive year, Gesu receives a "No Place for Hate" designation by the Anti-Defamation League. Gesu earned this recognition through school-wide events and initiatives that foster community and respect for all.

OCTOBER Gesu School launches our Graduate Support Program! Director Jose Gonzalez establishes high school and college access programming, including a Parent Academy workshop series, and alumni support services. Our thanks to **Board Member Peter G. Gould, Ph.D.,** and **Robin Potter** for supporting this program.

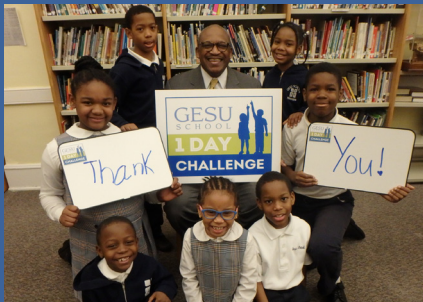
NOVEMBER Gesu's 19th Annual Symposium on Transforming Inner-City Education explores Cultural Responsiveness in the Urban Classroom with keynote Christopher Emdin, Ph.D., of Teachers College Columbia University. Nearly 300 attended. [Read a summary and see video and photos on Gesu's website.](#)



DECEMBER As our gift to the community, the **Gesu Gospel Choir Christmas Concert** spreads joy and holiday spirit in the Church of the Gesu. [Watch inspiring videos on our YouTube Channel: youtube.com/gesuschoolworks.](#)



JANUARY To commemorate **Martin Luther King, Jr. Day**, class "buddies" in Kindergarten and 8th grade assemble **care packages for local outreach programs**. Students made sandwiches and included artwork.



MARCH Gesu's 2017 One Day Challenge surpasses our goal! More than 850 donors supported our mission, raising \$63,632.13 in a single day! Our heartfelt thanks to **The Z Foundation** for sponsoring their 3rd consecutive One Day Challenge and donating \$15,000. We are grateful to each donor for contributing to students' education, especially **The Paul E. Kelly Foundation** and **Michael and Joyce Hagan** for their generous challenge gifts. We recognize Gesu students, who made every gift count, contributing with "Change for Change!"

VISIT

gesuschool.org for photos, videos, and more on these highlights. Click "Gesu Updates" and "Gesu in the News."

MAY Gesu students, alumni, and friends share **Gesu Through Our Eyes** with 350 attendees at the 2017 Gesu Gala. The gala raised more than \$396,000 in total, including \$80,000 through our auctions and \$62,000 for "Raise Your Hand for Technology at Gesu," which supports replacement of interactive whiteboards and projectors in 13 classrooms. Thank you! Your support ensures that Gesu School delivers the highest quality education for each student. Special thanks to the 2017 Gala committee and co-chairs and to all sponsors, in particular 2017 Presenting Sponsors: Marguerite & Gerry Lenfest, The H. Chase Lenfest Foundation, and M & S Foundation and Susan Martinelli Shea.

[View photos and videos from the gala, including student performances and Gesu Spirit Medalists, at \[gesuschool.org/2017galarecap\]\(http://gesuschool.org/2017galarecap\).](#)



The Gesu Spirit Medal honors individuals who have shown extraordinary commitment to Gesu School through their loyal advocacy and actions, and who have made a significant contribution to Gesu School's success as a model inner-city elementary school. Gesu School President and CEO Bryan Carter (left) and Gesu School Principal Sr. Ellen Convey, IHM (right) congratulate 2017 Spirit Medalists James F. Higgins '45, Gesu School Board Member (left center), and H. Chase Lenfest (right center). Photo by David DeBalko



2017 Gala Co-Chairs Greg Rigdon & Molly Murphy, Ted & Eileen Raven, Andrew & Michele Clayton, and Gesu Board Member John Curry & Jennifer Curry. Photo by David DeBalko

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At Gesu School, we strive to steward your gifts wisely so as to have the greatest impact for our 450 students. We invite you to review our audited financial statements and Form 990 on our website at gesuschool.org/financials.

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- Archbishop John Carroll High School
- Archbishop Ryan High School
- Bodine High School for International Affairs
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- Science Leadership Academy
- Springside Chestnut Hill Academy
- SS John Neumann-Maria Goretti High School
- St. Joseph's Preparatory School
- Valley Forge Military Academy
- Vaux High School
- West Catholic Preparatory High School

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to our 2016-2017 Fiscal Year Donors!

Your support brings quality education to North Philadelphia.

Pierre Toussaint Society

\$50,000 & Above

Gesu School recognizes our leadership-level donors who have made gifts of \$50,000 and above with membership in the Pierre Toussaint Society. Venerable Pierre Toussaint, the society's namesake, is a hero from our Catholic heritage. Born into slavery in Haiti in the early 19th century, Pierre Toussaint was brought to New York City, where he became a successful hairdresser. He used his earnings to free many slaves and finally himself. Once a free man, he performed many acts of charity, including the establishment of an orphanage and a school for black children. When most fled the city during a yellow fever epidemic, he stayed to nurse the sick. His dedication to the well-being and education of the poor makes Pierre Toussaint a fitting patron for Gesu and our donors.



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“All children are brothers
and sisters at Gesu.”
—Madisyn, Grade 1



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GESU SCHOOL HAS BEEN A PART OF MY LIFE FOR MORE THAN 75

years. Joining the Magis Society has given me peace-of-mind, knowing that I will have a lasting legacy at an institution that has already given me so much personally. With an estate gift, I am helping to ensure that Gesu continues to serve the children of our community for generations to come."

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— **John E. Backe**
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— **Joseph G. Keefer**
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—Dasani, Grade 6



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In the last year, Gesu mourned the loss of these members of our community.

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Polly Bancroft Hebble
Mary F.X. McFadden, Class of 1946
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Gesu mourns the passing of Ralph S. Saul, former Gesu Board Member and 2008 Spirit Medalist. We remember his generosity and loyal dedication to Gesu School, and we hold his family in our prayers.



MR. SAUL POSSESSED AN unwavering passion for Gesu School and our children. He would always say to me, 'Philadelphia needs more Gesu Schools.'"

— **Bryan Carter**
President and CEO
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"I like Gesu School because the teachers make learning fun and they care."
— Alayah, Grade 5

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Gesú School's Class of 2017 offers a praise dance to celebrate graduation. Students will attend top high schools, such as Cristo Rey, Germantown Friends School, and St. Joseph's Prep. Photo by Sabina Louise Pierce

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