



- **Alumnus Poised for College & Career**
- **Grade 5 Teacher Inspires Confidence & Creativity**
- **After-School Programs Enrich Students**
- **Thank You to Our Generous 2015-2016 Donors**



MOSAIC

OF MANY LEARNERS
2015-2016 ANNUAL REPORT

FROM THE PRESIDENT



Photo by Sabina Louise Pierce

Dear Friends of Gesu School,

The 2015-2016 school year launched with Pope Francis' visit to Philadelphia for the World Meeting of Families Congress and our 8th graders' participation as ballroom dancers in the Festival of Families. These historic events set a tone of joy, togetherness, and pride for the year. Our Gesu community collaborated to fund and build a new playground. Our students, many of whom come from families living in poverty, not only raised funds for global missions, but exceeded their goal. They are truly "young men and women for others."

As I reflect upon these moments, I am mindful of Gesu's identity as a Jesuit and IHM institution. I remain dutiful to our mission to provide a quality education to 450 Pre-K – 8th grade students, enabling them to break the cycle of poverty and violence. "Gesu Works!"

Each day, our committed faculty educates children of all ability levels—our mosaic of many learners. In the spirit of the Sisters, Servants of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, Gesu attests that "every child can learn." Committed to non-selective admissions, we offer the resources to help students reach their highest potential—whether through remedial support or advanced classes.

Aligned with the Jesuit belief in *cura personalis*, care of the whole person, Gesu unwaveringly nurtures students academically, socially, emotionally, and spiritually. Our single-gender education in grades 3-8 allows each child to focus and flourish.

I hope you enjoy the pages that follow, which highlight our mosaic of learners and why "Gesu Works":

- Meet a determined alumnus whose Gesu education catapulted him to early success in academics, athletics, and the professional world.
- Learn about a remarkable teacher whose expertise is matched by her strength and compassion.
- Read about our extended day programs, which provide critical enrichment and a safe haven for our students.

Thank you to our many supporters who make a Gesu education possible through their time, talent, and generosity—board members, sponsors, foundations, corporations, individual donors, volunteers, and families. Each of you is an essential piece in our mosaic.

Peace and blessings,

Bryan H. Carter
President and CEO

I invite you to visit Gesu School to experience our community in action. To schedule a tour, contact the Development Office at 215-763-9077 or development@gesuschool.org. Stay current on Gesu news. Visit www.gesuschool.org. Click "Join our email list."

(Front Cover): At the outset of the 2015-2016 school year, Gesu School's 450 students were greeted with a new playground on the roof to ensure they have a modern, safe space to play outdoors. A special thanks to the Cooney, Schreder, Sims, and Trumbour families from Holy Child School at Rosemont; PENTA Building Group Foundation; the Ethel Mae Hocker Foundation; and a generous anonymous donor. We are also deeply grateful to the Gesu parents/guardians and friends who volunteered to build the new playscape. Photo by Sabina Louise Pierce

2012 ALUMNUS BALANCES ACADEMICS, WORK-STUDY, AND ATHLETICS

Your support enables Gesu to educate well-rounded students poised for college and career.

Zachary Thomas '12 maximized his Gesu education to excel in high school as a well-rounded student. Gesu School educates the whole child—academically, socially, physically, and spiritually. Zachary's success stems from his Gesu roots and his family's support.

A member of Cristo Rey Philadelphia High School's Class of 2016, its first graduating class, Zachary was accepted to multiple colleges and universities—Albright, Delaware State, Ithaca, La Salle, Saint Joseph's, and Tuskegee. He will attend The University of Scranton, a Jesuit institution, with multiple scholarships.

A disciplined young man, Zachary balanced an intense high school schedule. A typical day included 5:30 a.m. swim practice, school or work, evening swimming until 7 p.m., and studying.

With this rigorous routine, Zachary still earned second honors and served his community—volunteering as a school retreat leader and a swim coach. About his work ethic, Zachary says, "I know that once I get to college, I'll know how to take on a big schedule. I've managed it."

Zachary thrived in Cristo Rey's Work-Study Program, working five days per month in professional settings and earning top ratings from supervisors. His pay helped fund his tuition.

During his freshman and sophomore years, Zachary worked at Comcast in Home Security and Supply Chain Management. He developed spreadsheets for national inventory and product distribution and tested home security equipment. As a junior, Zachary interned at the law firm Lavin, O'Neil, Cedrone, and DiSipio, where he attended depositions and organized case documents.

As an Editorial Intern for Bryn Mawr

Communications during his senior year, Zachary assisted with the medical publisher's website, wrote two articles for potential publication, and collated research on medical technologies. This experience spurred him to pursue journalism and electronic media in college.

In the summer, Zachary maintains his busy schedule as a lifeguard at a Philadelphia country club and a playground. Since grade 7, Zachary has participated in competitive swimming with the Salvation Army Kroc Aquatics team. He credits the "strict schedule" with honing his organizational skills.

He attributes his creativity and maturity to Gesu. Ms. Hartzell's art classes ignited a creative spark, which later translated into writing. Since grade 8, what little spare time he has, Zachary dedicates to drafting short stories. His portfolio includes material for two books.

Surrounded by books at Gesu, Zachary cultivated a thirst for knowledge that he carried to Cristo Rey, where he took AP English, AP history, and honors pre-calculus. An avid reader, Shakespeare's *Hamlet* is his favorite literary work.

His family values Gesu's model and teachers. "They kept me on track and communicated with my parents," indicates Zachary, who attended from grades 1-8. "Teachers teach the material thoroughly. They don't just throw it at you, but teach you how to comprehend and learn better. I came into high school very prepared and very confident in myself," Zachary reflects.

Gesu helped Zachary form his strong character, which he describes as "authentic and loyal," and develop resiliency. "I learned about never giving up," he states.

Zachary's father, Mr. Thomas, praises Gesu's approach: "The structured environment prepares



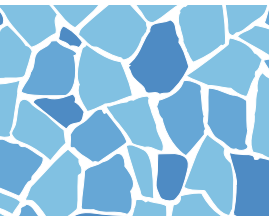
At the outset of college, Zachary Thomas '12 already exudes professionalism and intellectual curiosity and boasts an impressive résumé. His Gesu foundation fueled his confidence and drive.

"I came into high school **VERY PREPARED & VERY CONFIDENT** in myself."

—Zachary Thomas '12

students for how to move in society. As they get older and start dealing with high school and adults, Gesu prepares them for the real world."

Father and son agree: "Stick through the process. And trust it, because this school really works."



EXTENDED DAY PROGRAMS PROVIDE ENRICHMENT AND A SAFE HAVEN

Your generosity delivers crucial academic, social, and physical education activities to Gesu’s students.

To meet the needs of working parents and provide a safe environment, Gesu School offers extensive, varied after-school programming five days per week until 6 p.m., even through the summer. Students engage in remedial support, academic and cultural enrichment, and physical activity. Extended day plays a vital role in the overall well-being of students from Gesu’s surrounding communities.

After-School Program

Staff create daily activity plans by grade level for 80-100 students, including homework and structured play, such as computers or cooking. In addition to seasonal and cultural activities, such as a Christmas play and African American history, unique opportunities abound. Students in grades 2-4 are developing civic engagement through membership in Gesu’s Boy Scout Troop 1700. **Tyree, grade 4, has learned “to be a leader, not a follower, and to stand up for yourself.”** Students in grades 2-5 can participate in year-round tennis clinics with Down the Line and Beyond Foundation. Field trips include the zoo and aquarium.

“It’s a safe haven,” says **Director, Denise Jackson**, who holds an M.A. in Education from Saint Joseph’s University and a PA Director Credential. **“I aim to create out-of-school time that is safe, fun, and nurtures students—academically, socially, emotionally, and artistically. I want them to have exposure to what’s in the world, like the arts, and to see that they can rise from poverty and escape violence.”**



Denise Jackson, Director, has further professionalized Gesu’s After-School Program and earned its PA State Certificate of Compliance. Photo by Sabina Louise Pierce

(Right) Youngest Scholars’ five-week summer intensive targets a topic, such as the ocean, for in-depth study.

Catholic Youth Organization (CYO) Team Sports

Students learn teamwork, discipline, and athletic skills via JV and varsity basketball for boys and girls in grades 5-8, co-ed soccer for grades 5-6, baseball for grades 6-8 boys, and co-ed track for grades 4-8.

Gesu Extra Mile Program (GEM)

Each trimester, GEM enables students in grades 5-8 to explore new interests, including international affairs, improv, or chess. **Says 7th grader, Dhmyni, “My favorite activity is newspaper because I had a page where I could write my opinion. I learned that a project could get done with teamwork.”**



Literacy Programs

Gesu’s **Youth Education for Tomorrow (YET)** program provides individualized instruction four days per week for students in grades 1-3 who are reading at least two years below grade level. YET builds essential literacy skills. **Youngest Scholars** challenges students in grades 3-5 who excel academically with in-school and after-school experiences, such as an advanced reading group.

(Left) Boy Scout Troop 1700 is learning good citizenship.

GRADE 5 TEACHER INSTILLS CONFIDENCE AND INSPIRES CREATIVITY

Thanks to your support, quality teachers impact students’ lives.

Faithful. Caring. Smart. Energetic. These are the mosaic of words that Gesu’s 5th grade girls use to describe their teacher, Ms. Tammi Crummy.

For ten years, her vibrant spirit has touched the lives of her Pre-K, Kindergarten, and 5th grade students. With her unwavering dedication to Gesu’s mission, Ms. Crummy’s colleagues nominated her for the 2016 Knetzger Outstanding Teacher Award.

As a Gesu parent, Ms. Crummy volunteered in her sons’ classrooms, prompting a career shift from social work and academic advising. This professional background, combined with her B.A. in Sociology from Virginia State University and her own childhood in Gesu’s neighborhood, strengthens her ties with students and families. Ms. Crummy states, “Growing up here and now teaching here—it means so much to me.” She elaborates, “I definitely use my social work skills in my classroom. It’s important at Gesu because of where the school is. With some of the students we have, it helps me have more empathy and understand their background. If a student is cranky, you might think he or she is misbehaving. But that student might be hungry.”

Ms. Crummy educates the whole child, teaching academics, life skills, and character formation. As a member of Gesu’s “soft skills” committee, she promotes a school-wide culture that instills qualities such as grit and positive thinking. She infuses this approach into her classes, particularly math: “My first challenge is to change their way of thinking about math for those who don’t like it or get discouraged. I show students in a fun way to see how numbers are helpful and why we need them.” For lessons on measurement and geometry, students design a floor model of a home.

She adapts experiential learning techniques from her M.S. in Education Pre-K – 4 program at Saint Joseph’s University for the Gesu classroom. Her creativity resonates with students. Fifth grader, Faith absorbed American history through theater and rap: “I learned about the constitutional convention and how our country came to be. I liked learning it through a play.” For Women’s History Month, students created a “live museum” of female thinkers, artists, and athletes. Students dressed as important figures—Misty Copeland, Marian Anderson—and shared their research via an exhibit.

Ms. Crummy empowers her 5th grade girls: “I want students to build that confidence in themselves to not be afraid to



Ms. Crummy empowers each student to be self-assured and reach her potential. Photo by Andrea Kellner

face challenges. And set goals. And aim for them. And reach them.” Her students notice. “She always believes in us,” says Faith. Fifth grader, Nateerah shares that her lasting memory of Ms. Crummy “is how loving she was.”

Ms. Crummy’s dedication extends beyond the school day. She teaches bible study at her church and devotes time after school and in the summers to Gesu’s literacy programs—Youth Education for Tomorrow (YET) and Youngest Scholars. As a single-mother who is earning her graduate degree, she is a role model for the Gesu community. She is raising three high-achieving sons—Stephon, a Lenfest Scholar at Saint Joseph’s University; Marquis, a starting varsity basketball player and mentor at Cristo Rey; and Xavier, a Gesu 8th grader, who participates in basketball and baseball and plays piano at his church.

“She gives of herself,” notes Gesu Art Teacher, Ms. Linda Hartzell. That is Ms. Crummy’s true essence.

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.

MEMORABLE MOMENTS

in 2015-2016

SEPTEMBER Gesu School welcomes Pope Francis to Philadelphia!



The Gesu Gospel Choir sings in the Revival at The Church of the Gesu. Thank you to the Black Catholic Parishes of the Archdiocese of Philadelphia and the Martin de Porres Foundation for inviting us.



Dancing with the Students – Gesu School performs at the Festival of Families, appearing live on CNN and 40 Jumbotrons on the Benjamin Franklin Parkway. We thank Susan Martinelli Shea, Gesu Board Member and President and Founder of Dancing with the Students!

OCTOBER Gesu hosts The Maryland Province Presidents, Principals, and Rectors Secondary and Pre-Secondary Schools Meeting to discuss mission, governance, and excellence for Jesuit schools in the 21st century.

NOVEMBER Gesu holds our 18th Annual Symposium on Transforming Inner-City Education to tackle Tragedies and Current Events: Helping Students Understand What They See, Read, and Hear in the News. [Read media coverage and a summary on Gesu's website.](#)

DECEMBER For the third consecutive year, the Anti-Defamation League designates Gesu School a “No Place for Hate” school for promoting respect and appreciation for diversity.

JANUARY Gesu's Junior Board launches a single-gender group mentoring program for 7th graders. Young professionals meet students monthly to discuss goal setting and career pursuits.



VISIT

www.gesuschool.org for photos, videos, and more on these highlights. Click “Gesu Updates.”

Bryan Carter, Gesu School President and CEO, serves as a press representative through Catholic Voices USA.

[View media coverage and videos on \[www.gesuschool.org\]\(http://www.gesuschool.org\).](#)

APRIL Gesu's 2016 One Day Challenge exceeds our goal! The Z Foundation at Gulf Coast Community Foundation generously granted \$15,000 to Gesu School. Their sponsorship of Gesu's second One Day Challenge fueled an incredible outpouring of support. In total, and including their \$15,000 challenge gift and \$13,000 from three generous donors, Gesu raised more than \$57,000 in only one day! **Our deepest thanks to The Z Foundation at Gulf Coast Community Foundation and all donors, including Gesu students, families, staff, and alumni.**



MAY The 2016 Gesu Gala, Inspiring the Light Within, draws 360 attendees and raises more than \$371,000, including \$72,000 from the “raise the roof” effort during the live auction to help resurface Gesu's rooftop! **Thank you!** Your support enables us to ensure that each child's future will shine brightly. We extend a special thanks to the 2016 Gala committee and co-chairs, as well as all Gala sponsors, in particular, Presenting Sponsors: the Bogle & Renninger Families, and M & S Foundation and Susan Martinelli Shea.

[View photos and videos from the evening, including Gesu Spirit Medalists and student performances at \[www.gesuschool.org/2016galablog\]\(http://www.gesuschool.org/2016galablog\).](#)



2016 Gala Co-Chairs, David Hilton and Anne Hilton (left) with Gesu School President and CEO, Bryan Carter; Gesu School Principal, Sr. Ellen Convey, IHM; and Gala Co-Chairs, Gretchen Cooney and J. Gordon Cooney, Jr., Esq., Chairman of the Gesu School Board of Directors. Photo by David DeBalko

JUNE

Gesu commemorates the retirement of Sr. Pat McGrenra, IHM, and her service since 1994 as Teacher, Counselor, and Assistant Principal. [Read a tribute to Sr. Pat on the Gesu website.](#)

Rev. Neil Ver'Schneider, S.J., Gesu Chaplain and Assistant Principal, celebrates his 50th Jubilee of ordination with mass in The Church of the Gesu and a student and faculty performance of prayer, dance, and poetry.

Gesu's baseball team captures 2nd place in CYO Region 6! Thank you to Jim Buck of the Philadelphia Phillies for securing a field for our players and to Bob McAlaine, Vice Chairman of the Gesu School Board of Directors, who assisted in coaching.

(Left above) 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 2016 Spirit Medalists and Board Members, Peter G. Gould, Ph.D. (left center), Consulting Scholar at the Penn Cultural Heritage Center of the University of Pennsylvania and Adjunct Professor at the American University of Rome, and Rev. Stephen D. Thorne (right center), Pastor of St. Martin de Porres Catholic Church. Photo by David DeBalko

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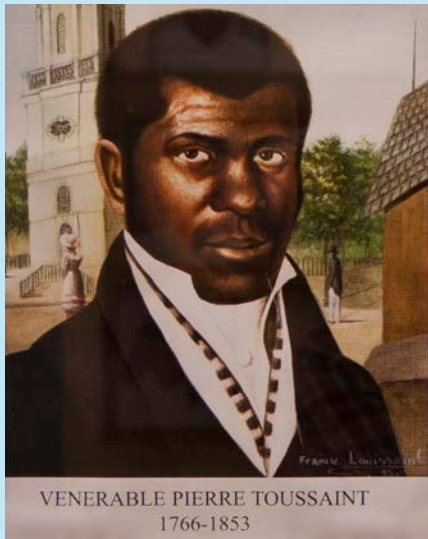
At Gesu School, we strive to steward your gifts wisely so as to have the greatest impact for our 450 students. We invite you to review our audited financial statements and Form 990 on our website at www.gesuschool.org/financials.

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Your support brings quality education to North Philadelphia.

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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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“My years as a businessman have provided me with many life lessons, responsibility and humility to name a few. My wife and I feel compelled to find ways to ‘give back’ to the community. The focus for our charitable endeavors has been inner-city schools and financially disadvantaged students. Through the OSTC program, we have been able to realize our goal of assisting those schools and students.

We have seen Gesu firsthand and have been impressed by the faculty and students. The students are provided a safe, distinctive educational opportunity—a chance to excel and make a mark for themselves, a moral compass, and a gateway to opportunity. **Gesu fits neatly into our concept of helping to educate children who just need a chance. We knew right away that our OSTC contribution would indelibly impact many.**

We feel privileged to help fund educational opportunities at Gesu and hope that others will think about the social good that schools like Gesu provide for all of us.”

—**Bob Cohen**
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In the last year, Gesu mourned the loss of these members of our community.

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Marjorie "Marcy" Wolfington

Gesu mourns the passing of Ms. Katie Robinson, a founding Board Member of the Gesu School Board of Directors. Known as the matriarch of the block surrounding Gesu, Ms. Katie coordinated community outreach for families and neighbors for over 25 years. We remember her kindness and hold her family in our prayers.



“**Katie Robinson**, a faithful parent, grandparent, advocate, and active volunteer at Gesu School, though now with God, is still working for every parent and child in the Gesu family. Let us thank our God for the gift she is to all of us.”

—**Fr. Neil Ver'Schneider, S.J.**
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and Assistant Principal

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