

Learners Today

Leaders TOMORROW

Annual Report
Fiscal Year 2020

*Nia Aspires to
Be a World Leader*



GESU
SCHOOL

ESTABLISHED IN FAITH. UNITED IN PURPOSE.

Gesu School



Dear Friends of Gesu School,

This year has challenged all of us with the unexpected. As our Gesu community reflects upon this time, we are filled with gratitude and resolve to remain rooted in our mission.

Together, we confronted the challenge of shifting to a virtual learning landscape, within days. Our teachers responded swiftly to the pandemic, adapting to new instructional methods to meet students' learning needs.

Together, we collaborated to ensure that families' material and emotional needs were met. Gesu addressed food insecurity, provided access to technology, and offered counseling support.

Together, we continue to advocate for racial justice. Gesu teaches our students to understand this nation's history of racism and to tackle current issues resulting from this enduring oppression, while embracing their heritage and culture with pride. We embed Black history into our curriculum—all year. Counselors hold class discussions as a space for students to express their feelings and experiences. Faculty, staff, and trustees participate in educational programs to better engage in open dialogue around antiracism.

I often use the phrase "Gesu Works" to describe our school community and our extended community of volunteers, donors, trustees, and friends. Now, more than ever, I can attest to its truth. "Gesu Works" because we care for each other. "Gesu Works" because we stand up for justice and equality for all. "Gesu Works" because we are united in faith and hope. "Gesu Works" because our holistic, innovative education empowers students to transcend poverty.

The pages that follow showcase what makes Gesu special and celebrate our 450 students' growth, from Pre-K–8th grade. In this year of transitions, we recognize their grit and heart.

Thank you for being part of our Gesu School community.

Peace and blessings,

Bryan H. Carter
President and CEO

P.S. I welcome you to experience our community in action and stay current on Gesu news. Visit gesuschool.org and click "Tour our school" or "Join our email list." To schedule a conversation, contact the Development Office at 215-763-9077 or development@gesuschool.org.

Table of Contents



Gesu 2nd Grade Teacher Mary Ryder mentors new educators, coordinates Gesu's peer support SpeakUp! program, and serves as official mascot, the Gesu jaguar. Here, she amps up the crowd at our Catholic Schools Week student-staff basketball game.

Front Cover Photo: Gesu prepares today's learners, like 7th grader Nia, to become tomorrow's leaders. We educate the whole child, including development of soft skills, such as grit and confidence.

Features

- 4 Gesu Responds to 2020 with Care and Adaptability**
Our Gesu community mobilizes to sustain one another through the transition to virtual learning, and beyond.
- 10 Fostering Empathy and Cultural Competency**
Gesu's eight-year partnership with the Anti-Defamation League fosters a school culture of respect and inclusion.
- 18 Memorable Moments**
Highlights from our academic year capture the story of how we prepare today's learners to become tomorrow's leaders.
- 34 2020 Commencement Address by Alumna Kimberly Baxter '12**
Now a Public Interest Scholar at Villanova University's Charles Widger School of Law, Kimberly Baxter '12 reflects on how her Gesu "home" prepared her to succeed.

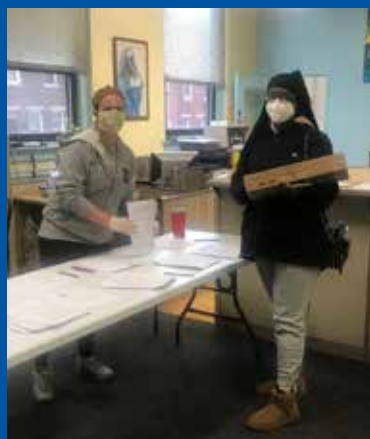
Departments

- 2 From the President**
- 12 Teacher Feature**
Mary Ryder, award-winning 2nd Grade Teacher, forges class unity and fuels her students' creativity and confidence.
- 14 Alumni Accolades**
Cierra '16 embraces her Gesu foundation as a leader and changemaker at Saint Joseph's University.
- 16 Student Gallery**
- 22 Our Fiscal Year 2020 Donors**
Thank you to our generous donors, who are "women and men for others" for Gesu.

Gesu Responds to 2020 with Care & Adaptability

March 2020 transformed learning. While Gesu temporarily closed for our community's safety, creative learning and social support persisted for the school year's duration and into summer. Gesu embraced our model of holistic education and continued to do what we do best—build community and care for each other. See highlights of our Gesu family's extraordinary efforts.

Distributing Emergency Resources



Gesu's full-time social worker and counselors conducted immediate outreach to families on availability of resources. Gesu quickly mobilized as a food distribution site, providing meals for the week via the Archdiocese of Philadelphia's Nutritional Development Services program. Administrators offered grocery gift cards to 100 families and organized computer allocation from Gesu's classroom supply of 300 laptops and Chromebooks. A grant provided an additional 64 computers for students in need. Teachers and staff volunteered to distribute laptops.

"In a year marked by incredible challenges and stress, we are humbled by the love and generosity of the extended Gesu School family. From grants for technology to financial assistance for struggling families during the holidays, we are grateful to the organizations and individuals who provide much-needed support for our students and their families. We are truly blessed!"

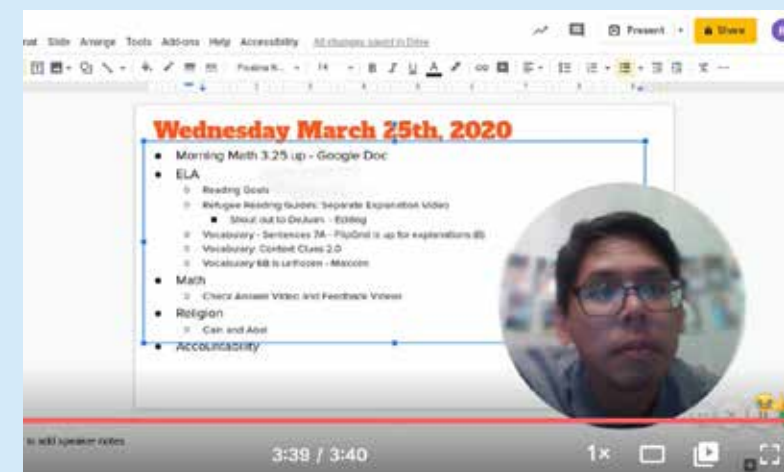
—Rob Weinstein
Vice President of Development

Learning Virtually

Within days of the state's order to close schools, Gesu's nimble, dedicated teachers shifted to new instructional modes. Teachers devoted hours to compiling learning packets and introducing virtual classes on platforms like FlipGrid and Google Classroom. Creative projects abounded. Meeting curricular guidelines continued.

Weekly faculty meetings centered on professional development in remote learning strategies and ensuring student wellness. The counseling team supported teachers by immediately contacting families whose students were absent from virtual learning or did not turn in assignments.

Our 8th graders completed discussions on *To Kill a Mockingbird*. Our 1st graders formed online reading groups to reinforce essential skills and play memory games. Our Kindergarteners earned IXL math certification for building 100 skills. Our 6th grade boys started each morning by sharing individual "smiles and frowns"—happy moments and frustrations—in their supportive community. Administrators executed an online graduation ceremony celebrating each student.



"Gesu teachers have used this crisis as an opportunity to reevaluate our own teaching methods—adapting them not only for the current crisis, but for the modern world. Being forced into virtual education has given us the opportunity to target varied learning styles in the classroom. The virtual setting has allowed us to accommodate the needs of introverts and extroverts differently, and to target individual student interests more specifically.

The skills we have gained as teachers during this time will continue to serve our Gesu students long into the future."

—Kevin Price
8th Grade Boys Teacher



Emphasizing Wellness

“When Gesu transitioned to remote learning, the four-person counseling team responded by providing students and families with what they needed to succeed: resources on COVID-19, housing, technology access and affordable internet, and counseling. We made virtual counseling available and offered ‘lunch bunches’ to check in and share space for students to socialize with classmates.

We provided over 150 social-emotional learning lessons on topics like feelings, grit, transitions, diversity and inclusion, and gratitude. These lessons help equip students with coping mechanisms and navigate these difficult times.”

**—Amanda Rice
Gesu Counselor**

Gesu’s core value of educating the whole child became even more of an imperative during virtual learning. To engage students in critical social-emotional learning (SEL) and help process the sudden change in routine and learning environment, counselors visited every Gesu class weekly. They remained in regular contact with teachers and families to facilitate a smooth transition. Classes integrated mindfulness and movement breaks, like yoga and breathing techniques. The team built online resource rooms, accessible to families. They offered individual student counseling sessions and extended that care to families and staff, even in summer, ensuring our community remained supported.



Advocating for Racial Justice

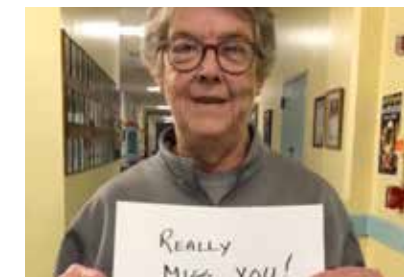
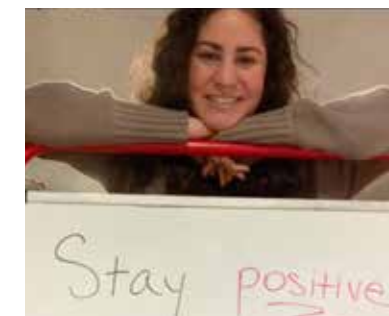
The Gesu counseling team has responded to the challenges of a public health pandemic and continues to address the pandemic of racial injustice and its effects on the Black community. To respond to the experience of racial injustice in students’ lives and its prevalence nationwide, the team provided sustained support with individualized “check-ins” and class discussions. Gesu’s Lead Counselor, Jonathan Jackson ’99, and Director of Graduate Support, Jose Gonzalez, also held an alumni discussion group to reach high school students.

“The counseling staff pulled together resources on mindfulness, self-care, social-emotional learning. We talked about how students are, how they feel about the pandemic, and how they feel about George Floyd. We’re doing preventative work—sharing tools and giving coping mechanisms. We spend a lot of time on, ‘How can you make your voice heard? Where is the power that you have?’ We’re going into classrooms virtually and having those difficult conversations on race, getting the pulse of where students are and how they feel, and dealing with the social-emotional part of what’s happening. Together, we can bring about change, even if we first start in Gesu School.”

**—Jonathan Jackson ’99
Lead Counselor**

Celebrating Virtual Spirit Day

On May 4, Gesu celebrated a virtual spirit day to stay connected and positive, even when we were apart. Gesu families submitted photos of their virtual learners. Vice Principal Alana Lee created a “We are Gesu strong!” slideshow to strengthen community.



Sharing Student Success

Pre-K and Kindergarten Graduation

Gesu's Pre-K and Kindergarten students celebrated online graduation with their teachers and classmates. Gesu recognizes how much they have grown and learned this year, from vowels and numbers to building friendships.



Girl Scouts

Staff came together to celebrate students with an online badge ceremony and slideshow for Gesu's Girl Scout Troop 9043. Students earned badges for community service, taking action, being their best selves, and cookie sales. Gesu is proud of these girls for exhibiting ingenuity and leadership, especially at Gesu's MLK Day of Service.



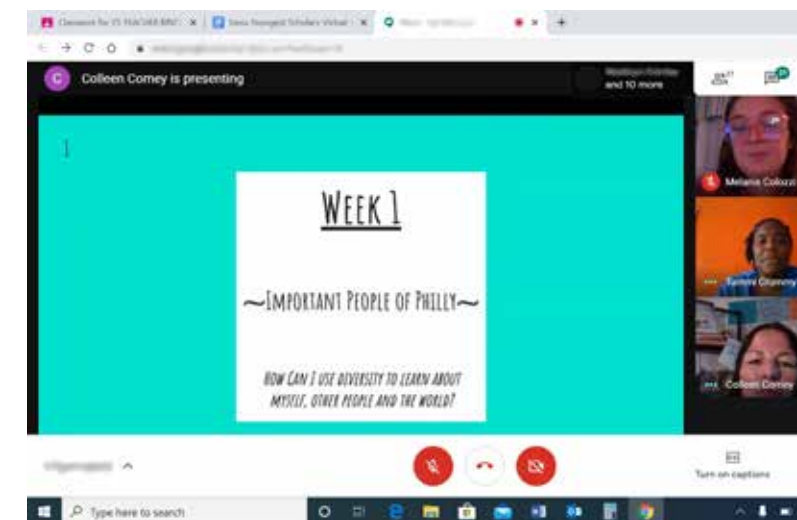
Sustaining Spirituality

Our Mission and Ministry team and faculty support committee initiated virtual daily Mass and a weekly "Magis moment" email with reflections and discussion starters on topics ranging from praying for racial justice, to commemorating Earth Day, to staying hopeful. The goal remains to keep our faith-based Catholic foundation in focus during virtual education.

Thriving as Summer Scholars

Gesu's Youngest Scholars program sharpened students' skills for five weeks. Rising 3rd, 4th, and 5th graders completed advanced study of Philadelphia: Then and Now, with focus on liberty and diversity. Virtual trips included landmarks such as the African American Museum. Students engaged in project- and performance-based learning and researched topics from the Constitutional Convention to role models like Patti LaBelle.

Youngest Scholars embodies Gesu's mantra to educate the whole person, pairing academics with wellness, prayer, even dance breaks for self-care and socialization.



"Youngest Scholars were changemakers in the midst of a global pandemic and civil unrest. Each committed to learning not only about Philadelphia but also mindfulness, cultural diversity, and social-emotional learning. The students built confidence in a virtual learning environment and shared their knowledge. All demonstrated a growth mindset."

**—Colleen Comey
Youngest Scholars
Program Director**

Philadelphia: Then and Now Essays by Rising 3rd Graders



My name is Demi. The year is 2020. Today I went to a Black Lives Matter protest. The Civil Rights Act was passed in 1964, but not everything changed. Many people, like Martin Luther King, worked to make sure everyone was treated equally. We must continue to make our voices heard, like he did.



Hi,
My name is Camryn. The year is 1965. I am so excited. Today my family is going to the Divine Lorraine Hotel. It is the first racially integrated hotel. Many leaders are working on Civil Rights, and I think a change will come soon!

Fostering Empathy & Cultural Competency

Highlights from Gesu's Partnership with the Anti-Defamation League



Volunteers with the ADL and Gesu School celebrate Read for Respect Day with Gesu students in March 2020. They read *Sulwe* by Lupita Nyong'o, *The Day You Begin* by Jacqueline Woodson, and *Lillian's Right to Vote* by Jonah Winter and discussed themes of understanding social justice and what it means for everyone to have equal rights.

Gesu is proud to be designated a No Place for Hate® school by the Anti-Defamation League for eight consecutive years. To earn this designation, Gesu students, faculty, and staff engage annually in school-wide initiatives that create an environment where all are respected and where diversity is celebrated.

Over the years, these efforts have included the annual Martin Luther King, Jr. Day of Service project, Stomp Out Bullying Day, and school mural projects that encourage respect and acceptance. Gesu also participates in programs

directed by the ADL Philadelphia, such as the yearly Read for Respect Day and the Walk Against Hate®.

The partnership between Gesu and the ADL Philadelphia blossomed under the leadership of Vice Principal Alana Lee, featured in the ADL's 2019 No Place for Hate® Coordinator Handbook and Resource Guide. Our thanks to the ADL, especially Lisa Friedlander, Education Director of No Place for Hate®, and Lindsay Shafer, Associate Education Director, for their collaboration and their role in ensuring that inclusivity permeates Gesu's school culture.

"Gesu values the knowledge and resources that the Anti-Defamation League provides. As a school community, we try to live out the No Place for Hate® mission: learning to respect and celebrate each other's differences and challenge each other's bias. Rather than just saying that we are an anti-bullying school community and hanging a few posters, our students, faculty, and staff model ways to show empathy and kindness to build a more respectful community."

We enjoy participating in Read for Respect Day with our ADL friends. One of our favorite programs is representing Gesu in the ADL's Walk Against Hate®. It is truly a day filled with love."

**—Alana Lee
Vice Principal**



Along with over 30 Gesu students, families, and staff, Gesu Pre-K Teacher Aides Desiree Porter (left) and Andrea Warner (right) participate in the 2015 ADL Walk Against Hate®.



For National Bullying Prevention Month in October 2017, Gesu students signed a pledge to advocate for bullying prevention. Students and faculty wore blue to commemorate World Bullying Prevention Day.

Photo Right: With Dean of Students Tammi Crummy (left) and Vice Principal Alana Lee (right), Gesu 7th graders showcase their creative designs as finalists for the 2020 No Place for Hate® Gesu t-shirt contest. Students and staff receive t-shirts to foster school unity.



For Read for Respect Day 2019, ADL volunteers read *Each Kindness* by Jacqueline Woodson and *Chrysanthemum* by Kevin Henkes and discussed themes of tolerance and empathy in grades 1-4.



"In recent years, there has been an escalation of everyday acts of bias and hate incidents in communities and schools. Many schools say that they have anti-bullying and anti-bias policies to handle these incidents, but Gesu lives those messages each and every day. When it comes to a commitment to creating a respectful and welcoming school, Gesu not only talks the talk, but they truly walk the walk. The ADL has enjoyed a strong relationship with Gesu for many years, and we value this partnership and their commitment to equity and inclusion."

**—Lisa Friedlander
ADL Education Director of No Place for Hate®**



With the support of Teacher Mary Ryder, a 2nd grader presents on her hero, Sojourner Truth.

Award-Winning 2nd Grade Teacher Sparks Creativity

Your generosity enables teachers to instill confidence and a growth mindset.

"As a near weekly volunteer in Mary Ryder's classroom for six years, I saw firsthand the special place she holds in her students' hearts. Her current kids adore her. It's a testament to her teaching and her capacity for nurturing that former students, some gone many years, visit regularly. Older Gesu students, and even graduates, routinely pop in for a quick hug."

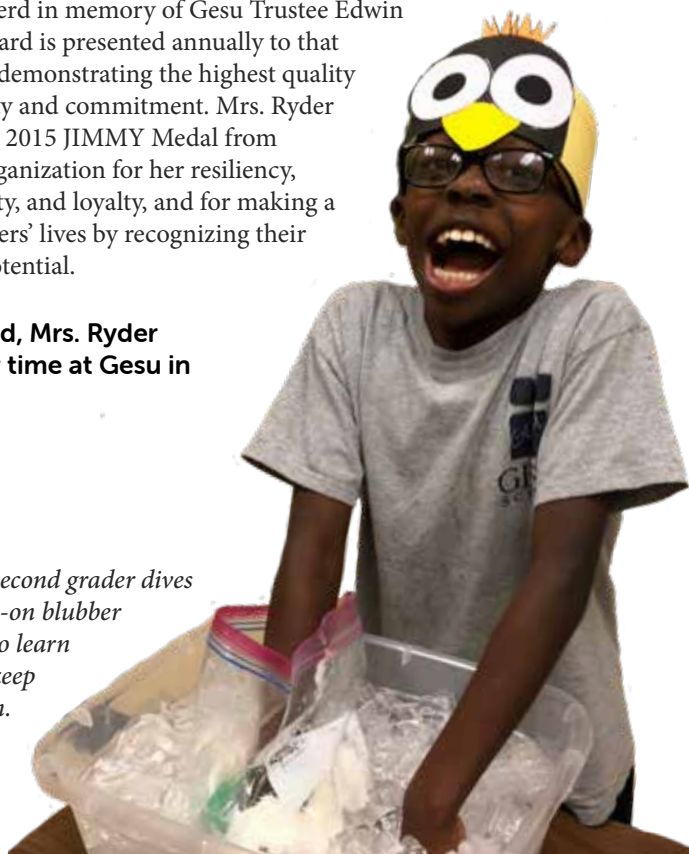
**—Keith Pension
Gesu Trustee
and Volunteer**

The annual blubber experiment. Class chants. "Think Outside the Box" Thursdays. For nine years, 2nd Grade Teacher Mary Ryder has infused her classroom with interactive, hands-on learning.

In 2020, Mrs. Ryder's colleagues awarded her the Knetzger Outstanding Teacher Award. Endowed by a gift from Jay and Kathy Sherrerd in memory of Gesu Trustee Edwin Knetzger, the award is presented annually to that faculty member demonstrating the highest quality of teaching ability and commitment. Mrs. Ryder also received the 2015 JIMMY Medal from the SpeakUp! organization for her resiliency, empathy, humility, and loyalty, and for making a difference in others' lives by recognizing their goodness and potential.

Recently retired, Mrs. Ryder reflects on her time at Gesu in this interview.

(Right) A second grader dives into the hands-on blubber experiment to learn how penguins keep warm.



What is your teaching style and philosophy of teaching?

Interdisciplinary and student centered. I love linking science, English Language Arts (ELA), social studies. For example, we'd read our book on penguins for ELA and always did a separate social studies component on the Arctic and Antarctic, a blubber science experiment, and penguin "handprint" art. Kids would see that none of their subjects existed in a bubble. What I love about Gesu is that as long as I'm meeting the standards, I could teach as I saw fit.

What inspires you about teaching 2nd grade? What is challenging?

Second graders are the ultimate human beings. They are very inquisitive and are developing a wonderful sense of humor. One tough part, which we work on a lot, is that 2nd graders are perfectionists. If they can't do something perfectly, they become frustrated or even refuse to do it. I teach them to say "I don't know how to do double digit addition, yet. I don't know how to draw that, yet." It's that combination of "yet" and grit. If you keep trying, you will eventually get it.

Your class is known for its team spirit. How and why do you create class unity?

It leads to a sense of community and empowers students. They have increased trust to take risks. I can also see decreased behavior issues. I did team-building activities at the beginning of each year and would continue. On "Fun Fridays" we did STEAM (science, tech, engineering, art, math) team-building activities to solve a problem. That is life: work together to figure out how to get things done.

Second graders present reports on Black heroes. Why is this assembly so important?

We learn about Black heroes during Black History Month. However, I would incorporate Black history into our class throughout the year. Many students know MLK and Rosa Parks, who are so important. I want them to see there are Black people like them who have accomplished important things and to know their history. After all, Black history is American history. To add to this discussion, I invited guest speakers, such as parents, to talk about Black heroes and share their personal history. We discussed race and racism multiple times a week, prompted by books, current events, and personal experiences. It's important to have this continued conversation.

Describe your Thursday "Think Outside the Box" activity.

It's a wonderful way to get kids outside of their comfort zone. I would post a partial image on an easel, like a half of a plus sign. After moving it to different angles, students would have 15 minutes to think and draw something that was, in fact, *not* a plus sign. The goal was having fun while taking their brains to a different place. The answer isn't right or wrong. It's about perspective.

Why is working at Gesu meaningful?

The camaraderie. Once you're in the door, you don't ever want to leave. What I love most is the sense of support from administration, teachers, staff, as well as the parents, and students' extended families. I teach a student one year, a cousin the next, and a sibling three years later. I really feel like Gesu is a family.

What do you hope students hold with them after 2nd grade?

I want them to know that they are enough. They have proven they can overcome challenges by learning to say "yet" and by developing grit. I also want them to have authentic memories of me and their classmates and to know that they will always hold a place in my heart.

Second Graders Think Outside the Box





"I'm grateful to Gesu School for putting me on this path and making me the confident woman I am today!"

—Cierra '16



At an early age, Cierra emerges as a leader. As a member of the SpeakUp! peer team, she planned events for parents, teens, and teachers to increase dialogue.

Cierra '16 embraced her Gesu foundation to become a changemaker.

She grew up in North Philadelphia, near Gesu School. A vibrant, close-knit community, the neighborhood nonetheless experiences systemic issues common to inner-city areas, including high rates of violence and poverty.

Cierra reflects: **"Growing up in urban North Philadelphia, many kids like me sometimes feel there is little or no hope. Gesu changed that course for me. It gave me the foundation to innovate, to imagine, and to act!"**

Gesu School provides a transformative education for our 450 Pre-K–8th graders, helping them to transcend all forms of poverty. We empower our students to develop their strengths, overcome challenges, and become positive, engaged members of the community and the world. Cierra personifies this mission.

At Gesu, Cierra built leadership skills in Model UN and as a SpeakUp! peer leader. She sharpened academic skills in advanced writing classes and as a Lenfest Scholar. She engaged in community service and explored her talents in the Gesu Gospel Choir.

Cierra earned a full scholarship to Merion Mercy Academy, a top girls Catholic school. She arrived poised to be a changemaker: "I knew my potential and had the confidence to get involved."

At Merion, she was elected president of the Black Student Union and served as one of the first students on the inaugural Diversity and Inclusion Committee. Eager to grow, she expanded her skill set and

articulated her voice on a global scale at the National Association of Independent Schools Student Diversity Leadership Conference.

Because of her Gesu foundation, Cierra continues thriving. **As a freshman at Saint Joseph's University, she has already taken on a leadership role with Be Civil, a diversity leadership training team.** After earning her degree in marketing, she aims to specialize in diversity, equity, and inclusion work for corporations.

Gesu School brims with hope-filled leaders like Cierra. We offer a specialized soft skills curriculum to shape their confidence, grit, and social competence. And we provide scholarships and financial aid to every student who qualifies. Each year, Gesu raises roughly \$4 million to ensure that students have access to the highest quality education and the agency, like Cierra, to make an impact in our communities.

"Gesu School has made me a better me!"

—Cierra '16



Cierra receives the St. Josephine Bakita full scholarship to Merion Mercy Academy, with her family and Gesu Principal Sr. Ellen Convey, IHM and Gesu President and CEO Bryan Carter in attendance.

Alumni Accolades

News from Gesu's Graduate Support Program

Launched in 2016, the Graduate Support Program aims to ensure that Gesu students and alumni continue their educational advancement, fulfill their potential, and maintain productive roles in society. The GSP supports all alumni after they have moved on to high school, college, or the workforce.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM FY 2020

Weekly Lunch-and-Learn Sessions

20 high schools visit Gesu (including 4 boarding schools)
286 touch points with the high school admissions process for Gesu 7th and 8th graders

Outreach to Alumni Classes 2016–2019

19 high schools visited before March 2020
97 alumni visited at high schools

Annual High School Fair at Gesu

32 high schools participated (including 8 boarding schools, the School District of Philadelphia, and Breakthrough Philadelphia)

Parent Academy Courses Prepare 6th and 7th Grade Guardians

HS 101: Navigating the High School Admissions Timeline
HS 201: High School Admissions Requirements
HS 301: Understanding the Cost of High School

Are you a Gesu graduate?

For more information on the Graduate Support Program, including Gesu reunions, college admissions resources, and career networking, contact Director Jose Gonzalez at 215-763-3660 or jose.gonzalez@gesuschool.org.

[f /groups/THESchoolAlumni](https://www.facebook.com/groups/THESchoolAlumni)

[@GesuGradSupport](https://www.instagram.com/GesuGradSupport)

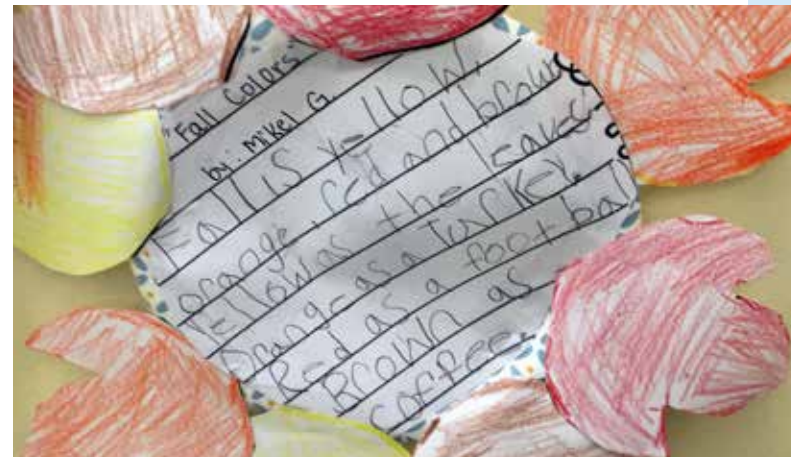
[@GesuGradSupport](https://www.tiktok.com/@GesuGradSupport)

[gesuschool.org/alumni-graduate-support](https://www.gesuschool.org/alumni-graduate-support)

Student Gallery

Visit Gesu School's YouTube Channel to enjoy musical selections and other student presentations. youtube.com/gesuschoolworks

"Fall Colors"
By Mikel, Grade 1



"Kente Quilt"
By Ms. Mack's Pre-K Class



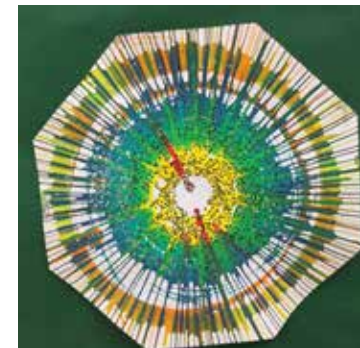
"I Am"
By Heilyn, Grade 2

I am smart and sassy
I wonder what it is like
to be in high school
I hear my mom say
I love you
I see birds
I want a phone
I am smart and sassy

I pretend to be famous
I feel happy when
it's nice outside
I touch my hair
I worry about my mom
I cry when I get hurt
I am smart and sassy

I understand English
I say empowerment
I dream about my mom
having a big house
I try to be kinder
I hope the virus goes away
I am smart and sassy

"Spin Art"
By Kindergarten

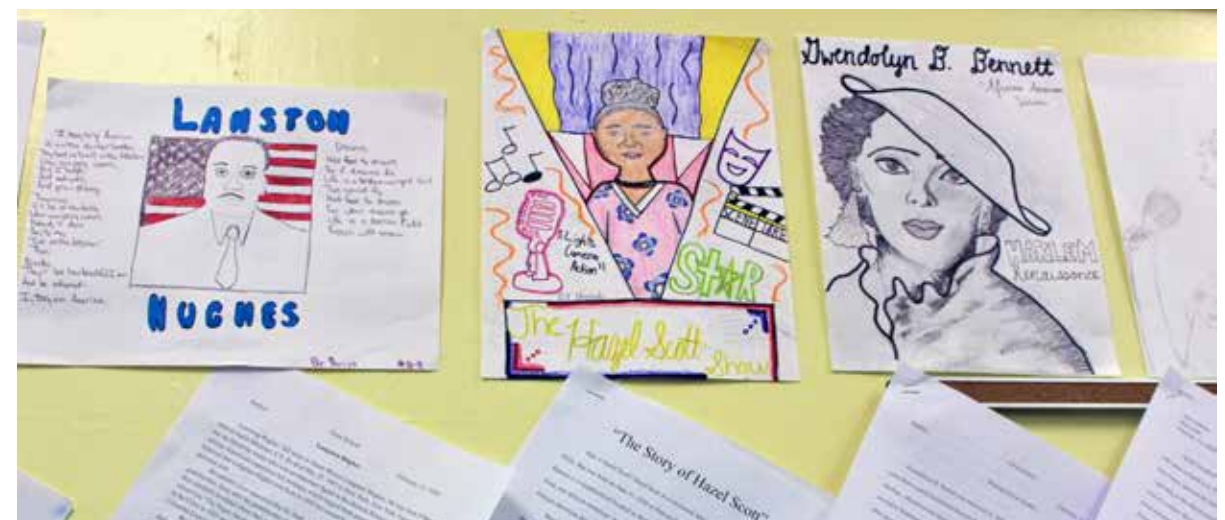


"Cut-Outs of Geologic Time Scale in Topographic Layers"
By Grade 6

Partnership with Wagner Free Institute of Science SNAP Program:
Science, Nature, and Art in Philadelphia



"Black Pioneers"
By Grade 7 Girls



Memorable Moments

from 2019–2020

August

To create an optimal, multi-dimensional learning environment, Gesu installed **15 new SMART TVs** and purchased **115 new Chromebooks**. Each Gesu student from Pre-K–8th grade now has access to a personal device—iPad or laptop.



Visit gesuschool.org and our social media channels for videos and more photos. Read our blog on the homepage. Or, click "News & Events."

September

Our community celebrated the **Mass of the Holy Spirit**, a Jesuit tradition, in the Church of the Gesu. Students reflected on the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit, offered prayers for the year ahead, and blessed their teachers and staff.

Over 100 friends raised more than **\$1,500** at the Gesu Junior Board's rooftop beer garden.

Attendees enjoyed outdoor games, good company, and food and drinks from Farmer's Keep, RR. King Catering, Yards Brewing, and Insomnia Cookies. The **PHL 17 Morning Show** and reporter Khiree Stewart previewed the event from Gesu's rooftop playground.



Alumnus Rasheed Stewart '04 (center), an attorney at a top New York City law firm, shared a **motivational talk** with 7th and 8th graders.

Stewart is a graduate of **Germantown Friends School, Temple University, and University of Michigan Law School**. He imparted wisdom about the value of education, with special thanks to Ms. Jo-Anne Young (right), his 7th grade teacher. "Anything is possible through education," he reminded students.



November

On November 7, Gesu celebrated our **15th year of partnership with Jumpstart Philadelphia at Temple University** and the organization's **Read for the Record Day**. This national day for childhood literacy promotes joy for reading among Pre-K children. Students across the country read Oge Mora's book *Thank You, Omu!* **Journalist Cherri Gregg** visited as our celebrity reader and shared the story on **KYW Newsradio**. Temple students work with Gesu Pre-K five days per week to build early literacy skills.

Gesu **student council** spearheaded the annual **Thanksgiving food drive, collecting 960 canned goods for the food pantry at St. Martin de Porres Catholic Church in North Philadelphia**. Each classroom had full participation. We are truly grateful to our 450 Gesu students for being young "women and men for others."



2019 Symposium: Social Justice & Education

Gesu hosted our **22nd Symposium on Transforming Inner-City Education** on November 1 with nearly 200 attendees. The symposium featured **keynote Pedro Noguera, Distinguished Professor of Education** at the Graduate School of Education and Information Studies and **Faculty Director for the Center for the Transformation of Schools at UCLA**.

He is the author of 11 books and over 200 articles and monographs. He appears as a regular commentator on educational issues on CNN, MSNBC, National Public Radio, and other national news outlets. Noguera's keynote centered on equity and the role educators play in building a school's capacity to meet student needs.

Gesu hopes that the symposium will prompt a wider conversation on how to improve education in all of America's urban schools. **We thank Presenting Sponsor, The Maguire Foundation, and symposium supporters Glenmede, Commonwealth Foundation, Craig & Sandy White, and James J. Clearkin, Inc.**



December



Gesu earned **renewal of our Jesuit sponsorship** after completing a year-long self-study that addressed required benchmarks and hosting a four-day visit by a team of educators from Jesuit schools. Every six years, Gesu engages in this sponsorship review process to assess and improve these areas: Jesuit and Catholic mission and identity, governance and leadership, educational excellence, spiritual formation, and faith that does justice.



Gesu **Sponsor a Child** supporters and students spent an afternoon together enjoying board games and sharing lunch. Sponsorship covers the majority of the annual cost to educate one Gesu student. **We thank our 118 sponsors for their life-changing generosity and supporting 221 students in fiscal year 2020.**

Santa stopped by Gesu School with a special delivery of new books for Pre-K and Kindergarten. Gesu extends our **sincere gratitude to our Jesuit neighbors at Old Saint Joseph's Church for sharing Christmas joy, year after year.**

January



Students and families from **Gesu and St. Joseph's Preparatory School** gathered for the **MLK Day of Service** to honor the legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and his commitment to justice, equality, and peace. Nearly 125 volunteers served our community through a block clean-up, packing hygiene kits, and creating decorative placemats for Meals on Wheels. Participants also watched the film *Selma* and engaged in a universal prayer service and Examen.

February



Gesu alumnus Rev. Msgr. Federico Britto '69 celebrated Mass for Black History Month with our **Gesu community**. The Monsignor inspired students with his Gesu story and his homily on praying to God to understand our vocations, do good for others, and become compassionate listeners and strong leaders.

The **Gesu Gospel Choir** and members of our **Catholic student union** presented a **prayer service for Black History Month**. Students shared the gift of song and reflection with the retired **Sisters, Servants of the Immaculate Heart of Mary at Camilla Hall Convent Home and Healthcare Center**.



Congratulations to the **Gesu girls varsity basketball and JV boys basketball teams, champions of their CYO leagues!** We are proud of their determination and hard work. Thank you to the coaching staff for their leadership and encouragement: **Coach Joe Caraway** (varsity girls) and **Coach Corby and Coach Isiah Wilson** (JV boys).



The **Gesu Junior Board** hosted its first "quizzo for classrooms" fundraiser with nearly 75 attending at Urban Saloon. Mike Talvacchia, 5th Grade Boys Teacher, hosted as emcee. The **event raised \$2,450** to support Gesu students' education.

March



An incredible **720 donors nationwide** supported **Gesu's One Day Challenge**, raising **\$68,188.41!** Our sincerest gratitude to **The Z Foundation** for sponsoring their **6th consecutive One Day Challenge** and donating **\$15,000!** We thank each donor for supporting 450 students' education, especially **Tim & Ellen Foster, Mary Kate Leonard, and a generous anonymous sponsor**. We acknowledge our **students, who contributed \$1,377 in "Change for Change."** Over the past six years, the One Day Challenge has raised \$360,792.41.

May

2020 Gala

Thank you to all who supported the 2020 Gesu Gala! Your generosity enables Gesu to deliver critical educational programs and resources that ensure our 450 learners become tomorrow's leaders. **The 2020 Gala raised more than \$200,000, including \$33,000 from our online auction!**

Congratulations to our **2020 Spirit Medalists Saint Joseph's University and Trustee Rosemary Español** for their dedication to Gesu School. We also honor **Imani Briscoe '09**, inaugural recipient of the **James F. Higgins '45 Distinguished Alumni Award**, as highlighted in



Catholic Philly. Gesu also pays tribute to the **St. Joseph's Prep Mother's Club** for their **65-year commitment to philanthropy and service**, especially their annual Christmas gift project, which supports hundreds of families.

View the interactive Gesu Gala tribute book here: gesuschool.org/2020gala.

Listen to the Gesu Gospel Choir, learn about our alumni award recipient, and watch video tributes to Spirit Medal honorees. Step inside our Gesu classrooms and community!

Thank you to all 2020 Gesu Gala sponsors for their investment in our students' education, especially **Legacy Sponsors Craig & Jean Burns, Mike & Joyce Hagan, and Susan Martinelli Shea**.

We appreciate our Gala Co-Chairs—Craig & Jean Burns, Jenn & Phil Flynn, and Mike & Joyce Hagan—and the 2020 Gala Committee for their efforts to promote and support the event.

June



Gesu celebrated a **virtual graduation ceremony**, including awards, speeches, and a slide show tribute to each graduate. The Church of the Gesu served as a backdrop. Staff and trustees planned **socially distant deliveries** of diplomas and alumni association welcome gear to **congratulate the Class of 2020 on their resilience and achievements**.

Thank you to our Fiscal Year 2020 Donors!*

Your support brings quality education to North Philadelphia.

Every effort has been made to accurately list all gifts. If your name is not listed, or if you notice an error, contact the Development Office at 215-763-9077.

Pierre Toussaint Society \$50,000 and 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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Members of the Magis Society impact children's lives by including Gesu School in their estate plans. For more information about how you can help secure Gesu's future through your estate plans, or to notify us of inclusion in your will, please contact Rob Weinstein, Vice President of Development, at 215-763-9077 or rob.weinstein@gesuschool.org.

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Chase wants to be a leader in learning and participation.

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In Memoriam

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

Mary Louise Caraway
Nadir Nafis Holloman, Jr. '16
Salvatore Nuzzo
Rodney L. Pickett, Sr.



Jonathan Detwiler

We will sorely miss Jonathan's infectious smile, enthusiasm, and love for Gesu School. His generosity and kindness helped touch the lives of so many Gesu students for more than two decades.

Vivienne Lambert Ehret Gesu Librarian, Sponsor a Child Supporter, and Friend



Vivienne served Gesu School in multiple capacities for 14 years. Elected to the Gesu School Board of Trustees in 2002, Vivienne championed Gesu's mission and educational model. Committed to Gesu's students, Vivienne sponsored a student from grades 1-8 through our Sponsor a Child Program.

In 2006, Vivienne began volunteering full time as Gesu's Librarian. In addition to

leading classes and encouraging students to read, Vivienne computerized Gesu's entire library, cataloging over 4,000 books by hand. To expand the library's reach and ensure that 450 students enjoyed weekly library classes, she recruited and managed a volunteer team. Gesu was blessed to recognize her in 2013 with our highest honor, the Gesu Spirit Medal. In 2016, Gesu officially dedicated our library to Vivienne in honor of her extraordinary service as a leader, mentor, and friend.

The Ehret family has generously made an endowed gift to sponsor a child in perpetuity in Vivienne's memory.

Frances M. "Frannie" Maguire

Frannie and the Maguire Foundation, of which she is a founder, have been friends of Gesu School and our students since 2012. Frannie and the Maguire Foundation support students as Maguire Scholars during middle school, high school, and college.

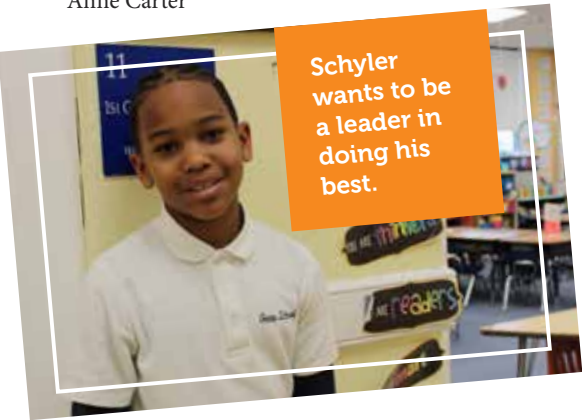
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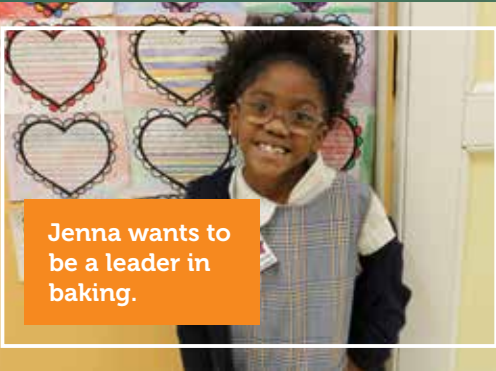


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Jenna wants to be a leader in baking.



Isaiah wants to be a leader in art and honesty.



Anaya wants to be a leader by becoming a lawyer.

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2020 Commencement Speech

Inspirational Excerpts
by Kimberly Baxter '12

"Gesu had a strong community of teachers and mentors that took the time to invest in me, support me, and guide me into becoming a strong individual. They saw the potential in me even during times when I did not see it in myself. Even though it's been eight years since I graduated, Gesu continues to support me and my endeavors and still serves as a place I call home."

— Kimberly Baxter '12

I am a graduate of Gesu '12, an alumna of Merion Mercy Academy '16, and a graduate of the University of Scranton '20. In addition to celebrating your achievements, I hope to inspire each of you to continue on your own paths of success that Gesu has helped you to create.

On Ambition

While at Gesu, I was the student who got good grades, participated in many school activities, including the Gesu Gospel Choir, forensics, and the Akybra theater program, and was class president for student council. I remember all the times I went home at night to study and work hard to prepare for tests, projects, and papers. I remember participating in class and staying active in school because I knew I wanted to do great things in the future.

It was in 5th grade that I decided I wanted to be a United States Supreme Court Justice. Declaring such an ambitious role as a goal at such an early age, not everyone took me seriously. But I always felt strongly supported by my family, close friends, and the Gesu community to continue pursuing

this dream. My early ambition was my response to my calling to serve others and lead in ways that make a profoundly positive difference. **Gesu helped me set my foundation for the person I wanted to be. I wanted to be a woman who is smart, talented, dedicated to serving others, and committed to making a better future for myself. I was able to acquire the necessary strength and courage to be a great leader who represented and served her school well.**

On Service

Gesu prepared me well academically, mentally, and socially for high school. It was then at Merion that I continued to develop my talents and leadership skills through clubs. I got involved in different community service opportunities around Philadelphia, which deepened my desire to be a "woman for others." The past four years at Scranton, I took the time to learn as much as I could about different social justice issues both internationally and domestically. I participated in two eye-opening service trips, one to Homeboy Industries in Los Angeles, California and the other to the Kino Border in Nogales, Mexico.

On Action & Advocacy

Experiences like these have only furthered my resolve to contribute to our society and shape it as a better, more welcoming place. My undergraduate experience taught me about service, but this fall when I begin law school at Villanova, I will gain the fundamental tools and skills necessary to take action, because advocacy allows you to change the world. There need to be advocates for social justice, who look to change and improve our systems of law, regulations, and society itself. **Service opened my eyes to the problems. My ambition that was instilled in me at Gesu, to study, learn, and apply the law, pushes me to find the solutions.**

On Gesu as Home

Gesu had a strong community of teachers and mentors that took the time to invest in me, support me, and guide me into becoming a strong individual. They saw the potential in me even during times when I did not see it in myself.

Even though it's been eight years since I graduated, Gesu continues to support me and my endeavors and still serves as a place I call home.

Just like Gesu invested in me and my goals, they are invested in helping you each succeed in life and are committed to helping you on your journey to success. Each of you will have a different idea and vision of what that may look like, but it's important that you know you are capable of achieving it. As you take your next steps into high school, remember that there will be difficult times when you feel like you're at your lowest or that you've failed. But remember, one setback does not determine who you are or your future. **Keep your head held high and continue working towards your own path of success. Remember, Gesu is always a place you can call home and that will be there for you.**

I congratulate you, the Class of 2020 on your achievements and wish you well in all your endeavors.

Kimberly Baxter '12

Villanova University's
Charles Widger School of
Law, Public Interest Scholar,
Class of '23

University of Scranton '20,
BA Political Science and
Criminal Justice, Honors
Research Program

Secretary, Student
Government

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Region 5 Residence Life

Orientation Assistant and
Tour Guide



Fiscal Year 2020: Financials & Numbers

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 on our website.

\$3,412,000
total financial aid
to 450 students in FY 2020

1/3
Gesu families with an
annual household income
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07408
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The Mission

Inspired by the Jesuit and IHM traditions of social justice, faith, creative hope, and love, Gesu School helps students to transcend all forms of poverty by providing a comprehensive, innovative education. We empower our students to develop their strengths, overcome challenges, and become positive, engaged members of the community and the world.

The Results

In a city where approximately 69 percent of public high school students graduate from high school in four years, 90 percent of Gesu alumni graduate high school on time, and of those graduates, 86 percent go on to college or post-secondary education.

Thank You

During this challenging year, your prayers, time, and financial generosity enabled Gesu to continue preparing 450 learners to become tomorrow's leaders.

Gesu looks ahead to a bright, hopeful future! Your support helps us achieve this vision for our 450 students.

A 2nd grader shows off special sunglasses and a homemade t-shirt to commemorate the 100th day of school.

