

September 17, 2020

Dear Friends of Cristo Rey Philadelphia High School,

These are turbulent times for all of us. And now, when we need more than ever to be together, most of us are confined to sterile Zoom sessions and newsletters like this one.

The last ten years, the beginning years for Cristo Rey Philadelphia High School, have been an exhilarating experience for me. Many of you have suggested: "You should write a book!", and maybe someday I will. But for now, the quick summary of my last ten years is: challenge, change, friendships and joy.



I am very proud of what our school has become. I am especially proud of the large and diverse community that makes us who we are. But most of all, I am grateful for the dearest friendships that I have developed with many of you, and I am proud of the friendships you have developed with each other because of your shared love for this mission.

From the beginning, our goal has always been to build an excellent school that was focused on the students first, and I believe we have. We also wanted to build a school that would last forever. Forever wasn't just about a building, but a culture that would endure and persist through changing times and changing people.

On June 28, 2019 several of us walked from our original campus at 5218 North Broad Street to open the doors at our new and permanent home at 1717 West Allegheny Avenue. It was a beautiful day, and I was pleased with our new campus, our new leadership team and with the diverse community that Cristo Rey Philadelphia had become. But I knew, on that day, that there was one more step required for our startup to launch successfully on its path to forever.

I can't imagine my life without Cristo Rey. But I am certain that the leadership of the school is very strong now, and our mission is ready for a next chapter, which should start with a successful transition to a new President.

Our Board of Trustees, always attentive to succession planning, has formed a committee to select a new President. I am certain that they will find many highly qualified candidates who will be eager for the privilege to serve this committed community. We hope to have a new President in place by July 1, 2021, and I will remain President until the Committee is satisfied that we have found the right leader.

We won't skip a beat between now and July. We have much to do at Cristo Rey in order to survive these challenging times and to ensure that we will thrive again whenever we arrive at our new normal.

I have loved every day at Cristo Rey, even the many days when we were confronted with challenges or failures or sadness. I have been "on the job" 24/7 for the last ten years, not because of duty, but because I have relished every minute.

For me, the greatest joy in life is being with other people, and there is no better environment for that than Cristo Rey. I am confident now, that the good people of Cristo Rey (students, alumni, families, faculty, staff, Board Members, Work-Study Partners, donors, volunteers, etc.) will ensure a great forever for our school and a great experience for our students. I will never lose interest in that or in each of you.

I look forward to the day when we can meet together, the old-fashioned way, to remember our Cristo Rey adventures together and to dream about what's next for this wonderful school.

Sincerely,

John McConnell
Founder and President

