

August 8, 2024

Dear Friends of Cristo Rey,

The last time we connected, as a community, we were heading into a summer that would be filled with Horizons, Summer Bridge for the Class of 2028, and Study Abroad programs across the globe. I am happy to report that all of these programs went very well and we are now poised to bring our team back for Faculty & Staff Bootcamp next week. Our students will join us in the building on August 20, so the 2024-2025 school year is right around the corner! I'm excited that the halls will soon be filled with our students, but I have thoroughly enjoyed the laughter and the joy of our youngest neighbors and the Class of 2028.



Our Horizons program kicked off summer in late June with 75 youngsters and a new cohort of rising Kindergarteners. Our educators spent time both in and out of the classroom making sure our Horizons program resulted in an impactful experience for our kids. With two certified counselors, our students received Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) classes weekly, which resulted in improvement of handling emotions. A slew of partnerships provided experiential learning opportunities throughout the summer. Our neighborhood partner, Tioga-United invited our students to Tioga Hope Garden where they explored a community space. ArtWell continued their programming in our Art Studio so that our young people could express their creativity. The Columbia-North YMCA provided a safe-haven, yet again, for our young people to learn the ins and outs of the pool. And finally, through a Horizons Greater Philadelphia partnership with GSK, our young people experienced Science in Summer with STEMSpark and a trip to the Franklin Institute for The Art of the Brick exhibit and so much more. We closed our six weeks with an End of Summer Celebration that was full of smiles! We are thrilled to have Caryn Rivers as Executive Director again in the coming year, so that this program can continue to flourish and thrive under her leadership.





In mid-July, when most 14-year-olds are sleeping in, our halls were filled with our entire 9th grade class. Unique to our model, the incoming Class of 2028 joined us for two weeks in the middle of the summer to become acquainted with Cristo Rey. They heard from Work-Study partners about their time in the workplace, they worked with our talented teachers in Math, English and Leadership classes, and spent time as a group learning about the different facets of our school each morning at assembly. We also provided programming for families so that they are better equipped to be an integral part of our Blue Pride community. Summer Bridge has become a crucial component for our culture-building and student retention strategy. More to come from the Class of 2028... the annual We Lead video is set for release later this month!

Finally, with the support of incredible benefactors, 78 students participated in summer programming and five of those students participated in Student Diplomacy Corps programming on four continents, citing adventures from Massachusetts to Taiwan to Tanzania to Italy.

Rising Senior, Kat, spent time in Italy. "This summer I was graciously offered the opportunity to spend a month abroad in Rome, where I was able to embrace the Italian language and culture," she said. "While studying there, I stayed with an amazing host family in a small town called Milano. With my time in Rome, I feel like I have grown as a person and made many new friends along the way. I owe my thanks to the Cristo Rey team for this opportunity."



The opportunities you help to create for our students are boundless. Whether they are in our home at 1717 W. Allegheny Avenue, in workplaces all over the Philadelphia region, or halfway around the world, our mission, coupled with your support, is making an incredible impact. I hope you will visit this year to see that impact in action.

Enjoy the remainder of your summer!

Tom Shoemaker
President & CEO
Cristo Rey Philadelphia High School





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