

CRISTO REY'S BIG VISION FOR A BIGGER FUTURE

AS SCHOOL OFFICIALS WORK TO EXPAND THEIR CAMPUS, MOTIVATED STUDENTS CONTINUE TO EXPERIENCE A REWARDING HIGH SCHOOL EXPERIENCE

BY MIKE VULPO

WHEN SUMMER vacation came to an end, students enrolled in Cristo Rey Orange County High School knew an exciting adventure was about to begin.

As soon as they arrived on the Santa Ana campus for the first day of school on Aug. 14, motivated and mature high schoolers realized they could dream big with an even bigger support system surrounding them.

“Cristo Rey is innovative and unique,” founding principal Karelyn Roberts told Orange County Catholic during the first month of the fall semester. “The small school environment contributes to our ability to provide individualized instruction to meet the needs of each student. Failure is not an option at Cristo Rey. We are able to successfully support students so that all students experience success in the classroom and their workplace.”

While academics are a major aspect of student life at Cristo Rey, a corporate work-study program employs every student five full days a month in an entry-level, professional job for all four years of high school.

Students earn a portion of their education cost while gaining real-world work experience that strengthens their confidence and prepares them for success in college and careers.

“We provide the opportunity for students to receive a quality, college-preparatory education paired with real-world experience,” Roberts explained. “I have felt so blessed to see our students grow in confidence as they take on challenging



FRESHMAN STUDENT CHLOE AND A PARENT ARRIVE FOR CRISTO REY HIGH SCHOOL'S FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL ON AUG. 14. PHOTOS BY ANN CHATILLON



SOPHOMORE STUDENT AMALIA RECEIVES A SPECIAL BLESSING FROM HER DAD DURING THE FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL.

academic courses and head out to their professional jobs. Students are able to identify their strengths, believe in their God-given potential and accomplish more than they believed they were capable of.”

For Vince Prietto, who is a theology teacher and the founding director of campus ministry, he sees the growth in students in and out of the classroom firsthand.

He also follows the school's mission to make the kingdom of God concrete in the here and now.

“Concretely, this looks like providing access to a quality Catholic, secondary education: a rigorous academic program, integrated faith formation and a unique work-study program,” he shared. “It's wonderful to see how students have grown socially, intellectually and spiritually. Our students are joyful, caring and talented young men and women who are our partners in creating our school community.”

JUST THE BEGINNING

As Cristo Rey High School kicks off their second year in Santa Ana, school leaders have big visions for current and future students.

They are actively looking for a larger, permanent campus to accommodate the rapid growth in interest from the community.

“We are already bursting at the seams, and we don't want to turn people away,” Roberts said. “We want to have a building that can accommodate families who want this opportunity and students who want the opportunity that we provide. We need a larger facility, and we'd like to stay in Santa Ana.”

During a period when some traditional Catholic schools were struggling to stay open, the Cristo Rey Network has grown into the largest network of high schools in the country that exclusively

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serves low-income students.

In the last 20 years, the Cristo Rey Network has grown from a single school in south Chicago to a national network of 40 schools. The network even caught the attention of “60 Minutes,” which previously profiled the schools during its primetime show.

“I see Christ in the transformative love at the center of our community,” Prietto said when recalling God’s work at the Santa Ana campus. “Where does the absolute goodness of our students come from? What is the source of the great commitment and care of our families? What animates the generosity and compassion of our staff, partners and donors? We are all caught up and carried along in the very life of Christ, transforming all things.”

School leaders like Roberts invite students and families to visit the campus and experience the Cristo Rey difference.

The school also considers a variety of factors during the application process

such as whether or not students embrace Catholic values, have demonstrated strong discipline and attendance records and have limited economic resources.

“We don’t want to be the best-kept secret!” Roberts explained when promoting her school. “We have such amazing students and families alongside us for this adventure. See for yourself what makes Cristo Rey such an amazing opportunity for students in Orange County!”

With a new school year just beginning, Roberts and her staff are filled with excitement to have the opportunity to transform students’ lives daily. As a bonus, they can confidently say they are just getting started.

“I wake up each day grateful that I am able to work in such a special place with such amazing people,” Roberts shared. “Our students, families and staff are committed to making a positive impact on our community and world. ... It is such a blessing to be able to provide a school environment where students flourish.” ❖



FRESHMEN STUDENTS ISABELLA AND CAMILA RECEIVE A WARM WELCOME FROM TEACHERS AND STAFF AT CRISTO REY HIGH SCHOOL. PHOTOS BY ANN CHATILLON



FRESHMAN STUDENT YVONNE GETS TO WORK IN THE CLASSROOM DURING HER FIRST WEEK OF CLASSES.



THE SCHOOL
THAT WORKS!

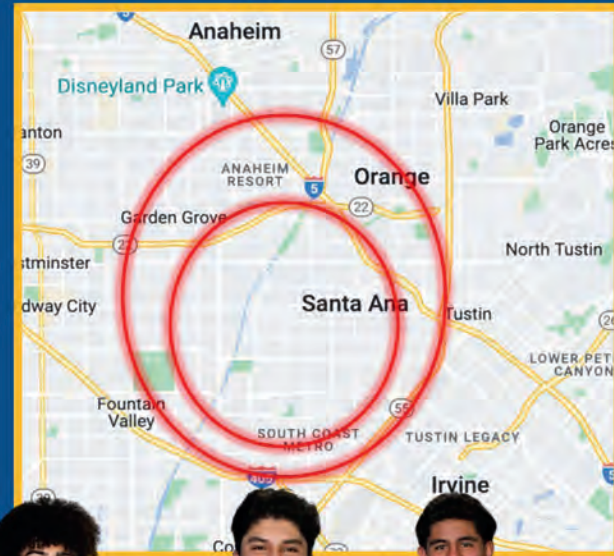
SEEKING CAMPUS TO EMPOWER DREAMS

We've outgrown our existing facility,
and are looking for a **Larger, Permanent Campus.**



SEARCH REQUIREMENTS:

- **50,000-70,000 square feet** of existing vacant office, industrial, or big-box retail on 5-7 acres for adaptive reuse as the future campus of Cristo Rey.
- **15-20 minute drive** from the heart of Santa Ana
- **200+ parking spaces**
- Long-term lease or purchase
- Timing: **Immediate**



PLEASE CONTACT:

Mike Del Santo: (626) 827-7823

Bill Milligan: (949) 422-3933

For further information please visit:

www.cristoreyoc.org

Cristo Rey's proven national model empowers students of limited economic resources to succeed on the journey to college, career, and heaven.



CRISTO REY
NETWORK