

August 18, 2025

Friends of Cristo Rey,

We hope that your summer has been as exciting and fulfilling as it has been for our Cristo Rey Philadelphia community! From our Horizons at Cristo Rey six-week summer program to our Class of 2029's Summer Bridge to our upperclassmen's vast experiences on college campuses and service programs all over the world to our alumni's internships with Work-Study partners, it has been a busy summer.

Horizons at Cristo Rey kicked off its fifth summer of programming on Monday, June 23 with a record 90 students. The six-week program enriches our youngest neighbors across North Philadelphia through academics, social-emotional learning (SEL), and various experiences!

Throughout the six weeks, students worked with STEMSpark to explore scientific concepts ranging from chemistry and physics to robotics and coding. Students experimented with hands-on fun along the way! Hosted by Girard College, we partnered Dive & Thrive to deliver high-quality swim instruction to every student. Our 4th, 5th and 6th graders competed with other sites in the Horizons Greater Philadelphia Swim Meet and secured a few gold medals in the process! Students engaged in SEL programming both in the classroom and through one-on-one support with two licensed school counselors. While lots of learning took place, there was no shortage of fun. Led by members of the Philadelphia Horticultural Society, students traveled to our local Tioga-Hope Garden at 20th and Tioga Streets to help tend the space and take home produce. One class even planted beans early in the summer and returned later to see them begin to sprout! It was an impactful lesson in growth and sustainability right in our neighborhood. As part of a visiting author workshop, provided by Horizons National, students had the opportunity to engage with Jamar Nicholas, creator and illustrator of *Leon the Extraordinary*. During his July visit, he shared Leon's story of embracing individuality and encouraged students to reflect on what makes them unique.

Our End of Summer Celebration took place on Friday, August 1, with a guest appearance from none other than the Phillie Phanatic! The joy in the room was palpable as the Phanatic danced with our students, their families, program partners, and supporters. We appreciate Caryn Rivers, Ari Manley, and the entire Horizons at Cristo Rey staff for their continued dedication to providing this amazing opportunity for summer learning to our youngest neighbors. Click on the images below to see a few media clips regarding our programming!




In July, our annual Summer Bridge programming took place as 143 incoming freshmen spent two weeks at Cristo Rey Philadelphia learning about what it means to be a Cristo Rey student. They engaged in Math, Reading and Leadership in Learning courses, visited college campuses, and even filmed their We Lead Video. Make sure to keep an eye out for that later this month!

Additionally, throughout the summer, we had over a quarter of students participating in summer immersion programs for their intended major in college, Study Abroad programs both domestically and internationally, and summer internships with Work-Study Partners. We are excited for our students to be back in the building this week so that we can not only hear about their summers, but also prepare them for the upcoming school year. Liz Blessing is thrilled to get the year underway as Cristo Rey Philadelphia

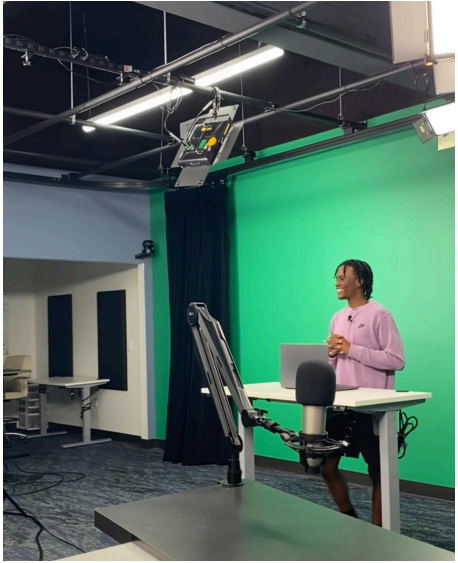
High School's third principal and I'm right there with her. Our school is alive when our students are in the halls and that constant hum is about to get a little louder!

I'm sure your summers have been busy yourselves, so if you've missed it, I wanted to provide a few more news clippings regarding Cristo Rey Philadelphia High School and our incredible students. They are all wonderful stories, and I hope you'll take the time to read and watch!



Working as a caddie helped this Cristo Rey graduate earn a full scholarship.
Darlie Valmyr's family immigrated to Philly after the devastating 2010 earthquake in Haiti, now she's earned a full ride to Howard University.


Inquirer Article



Achiever's Brunch Fox29 Clip

Our team was on-site last week participating in our annual Faculty & Staff Bootcamp, Supervisor Orientations took place throughout the region for our Work-Study Partners, and students are back in the building tomorrow. We hope you'll come visit us soon!

In Blue Pride,



Tom Shoemaker
President & CEO
Cristo Rey Philadelphia High School





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