15 years
CRISTO REY PHILADELPHIA HIGH SCHOOL

President's Newsletter

July 24, 2026

Dear Friends of Cristo Rey,

I hope you are having a great summer and enjoying time with family and friends. Although school is out for the summer, we have had no shortage of activity here in North Philadelphia! Construction to improve our campus began the day after school finished, our incoming Class of 2030 spent two weeks with us for Summer Bridge, our AP Pre-Calc students are currently taking class to prepare for the school year, and Horizons at Cristo Rey Philadelphia wraps up next week after six weeks at Mercy Career & Technical High School!

Our building at 1717 W. Allegheny Avenue opened in August of 2019. After six school years in the building and the creation of our Strategic Plan in 2024, we determined what facilities improvements were needed to best support our students. This year, we embarked on these enhancements. We are building out additional classrooms and new offices for Academic Support and Wellness. The biggest changes you will see are The Howley Foundation Work-Study Center on our 5th floor and the Connelly Foundation Science Lab on the 3rd floor. The Science Lab will welcome an anatomage table — an advanced, life-sized 3D anatomy and virtual dissection system. We are thrilled to have the support of these two foundations and others to make this project possible. Our campus will be back to normal in just over a month and we are looking forward to providing our students with a more comfortable and accessible learning environment.



Although construction is taking place, that did not stop the Class of 2030 from joining us for our annual Summer Bridge programming. Starting at 7:45am on July 6, Summer Bridge allows our incoming freshmen to understand what it means to be a Cristo Rey Philadelphia student. While our values are the first thing we discuss, Summer Bridge provides students with introductory course curriculum in both English and Math. It also fosters a space for students to hear from Work-Study Partners about leadership, success in the workplace, and business etiquette. Each morning, students gather for Assembly to learn about what makes Cristo Rey Philadelphia so special. There are even classes where various departments, like Campus Ministry and College & Career Counseling, prepare students for their faith formation and college application process, respectively. We are grateful that our students and their families are willing to invest two weeks of their summer to this foundational piece of the Cristo Rey Philadelphia experience!

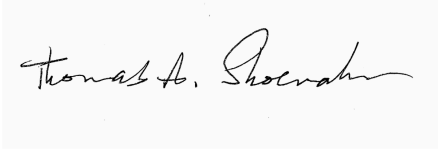
Finally, summer is the busiest time of the year for our Horizons at Cristo Rey programming! Due to the construction on campus this year, our friends at Mercy Career & Technical High School are hosting us and we are grateful to call their campus home. Our sixth summer of Horizons began in late June, with 90 students in grades K-6, and will wrap up next Friday with the End of Summer Celebration. Over the last five weeks, Horizons students have received crucial Math and Language Arts support to combat summer learning loss. With individual support from our Instructional Coach and catered curriculum taught by our outstanding teachers, our Horizons students are better prepared to head back to school in a few weeks. Students are also experiencing Social-Emotional Learning that helps them learn how best to cope with their emotions, interact with others, and build positive relationships! This curriculum carries over to extracurricular activities like visits to the Tioga-Hope Garden & Park where lessons are linked to the classroom. A recent lesson showcased how insects work together to best support the garden's ecosystem. Students are leaving the summer as proficient swimmers and, yesterday, 10 of our children competed in the Horizons Greater Philadelphia Swim Meet at University of Pennsylvania's Sheerr Pool! We are so proud of the numerous accomplishments of our Horizons at Cristo Rey students and are in awe of their growth week after week and summer after summer.



If you're able to join us, and the Philly Phanatic, next week, we'd love to have you join our End of Summer Celebration on Friday, July 31 from 11am-1pm at Mercy Career & Technical High School. Please reach out to Lily Jensen at ljensen@crphs.org, if you're interested. Additionally, we'd love to have you visit campus to see the improvements in action! Construction is moving quickly and will be finished by the beginning of the school year. Our students return on August 24 and we cannot wait!

I hope you enjoy the rest of your summer and we will see you soon.

In Blue Pride,



Tom Shoemaker
President & CEO
Cristo Rey Philadelphia High School

15 Alumni for 15 Years

Sincere Rodriguez ‘22

Immaculata University, 2026

Sincere Rodriguez found his way to Cristo Rey Philadelphia High School by chance and a counselor recommendation. He found the Work-Study Program interesting and knew it could provide a different high school experience for him. “Once I was at Cristo Rey, I threw myself into it,” Sincere says. He immediately became involved with Cross Country, The Dialogue Project, SLAM Poetry, and Student Ambassadors, knowing that they would enhance his experience. He says doing so led him to his first real adult decision: figuring out how best to allocate his time. He decided to invest his time in The Dialogue Project and SLAM Poetry. During his freshman and sophomore years at Cristo Rey Philadelphia, Sincere worked with University of Pennsylvania’s Graduate School of Education and The Philadelphia Writing Project. He credits this Work-Study Placement with improving his public speaking skills and confidence. While at school, he appreciated his teachers for teaching him about Growth Mindset and the idea that there are more ways than one to get to the correct answer. With the onset of the pandemic, Sincere found his growth mindset challenged toward the end of his Sophomore year, but was right back at it his Junior Year. He knew he needed to finish his time at Cristo Rey Philadelphia just as he started, sights set on doing “everything in my power to do the best that I could.” As a Howley Foundation Scholar and a Student-Board Liaison, he knew it was possible.

At the end of his Junior Year, Sincere was approached to join the Horizons at Cristo Rey Philadelphia programming team for the initial summer. There were just two classes and a few staff members! Since then, he has grown from Program Assistant to Student Supervisor to Teaching Assistant to Social-Emotional Learning Assistant. Sincere says, “Horizons has seen me through a lot of growth. I have learned many lessons in leadership, especially when working with my peers.”

The thought for Sincere’s college plans began early. He always knew he wanted to study Psychology so he took Statistics and Data Analytics in high school to best prepare him for college. He was the first in his grade to commit to college at Immaculata University, a Cristo Rey Philadelphia University Partner. During Sincere’s summers throughout college, he returned to Horizons each summer to put his degree to use. As a member of the SEL Team, he ensures our students are learning ways to best cope with their emotions and relationships. Sincere graduated from Immaculata University in May and will begin his first job as an Autistic Emotional Support Facilitator with Nyman Associates next month. He will be providing one-on-one assistance to students with Autism at KIPP Philadelphia Octavius Catto Elementary. He believes he got the job, because of his networking, a skill learned at Cristo Rey!

Sincere’s story is one of over 1000 alumni from Cristo Rey Philadelphia. We will be featuring 15 Alumni for 15 Years this year and hope you enjoy hearing about our alumni, just as much as we love sharing their stories.





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