

2011-2012

Annual Report



Transform -LIVESshape FUTURES



FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear Friends of Gesu School,

As I begin my second year as president of Gesu School, I do so with a year's worth of conversations, experiences, and encounters that compel me to share with you just how much your support has transformed lives.

This fall, I accompanied one of our recent graduates to his first day of boarding school. This incredibly talented young man, due to circumstances beyond his control, could easily have been lost to the streets. But throughout his years at Gesu, programs that you support, influential teachers whose salaries you pay, volunteer hours that you have logged, all came together to give this young man the boost he not only needed, but *deserved*.

This young man is destined for great things, as are all of our 450 students, whether they aspire to become veterinarians like Ashlei (p. 4), Navy pilots like Jamal (p. 3), or teachers like Ms. Egea-Hinton '02, Ms. Carter '98, and Ms. Bright '65. Thanks to you, Gesu's children, many of whom come from the three poorest zip codes in the City of Philadelphia, experience a safe, nurturing environment where they develop the academic skills and character traits that position them for success.

As we embark on our 20th year as an independent Catholic school in the IHM and Jesuit traditions, we have begun strategic planning to ensure that Gesu continues to pioneer fruitful approaches to the challenges of educating inner-city

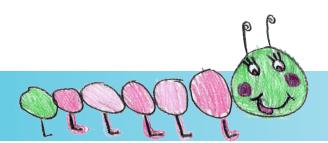


children in the 21st century. We welcome the leadership role Gesu has taken in Philadelphia and the nation, and hope that our success continues to inspire and guide others serving children who reside in inner cities across the country.

Thank you for all you have done to shape the lives and futures of the children at Gesu School. I sincerely hope you will continue to support our mission and our children who depend on you. It is undeniable—*Gesu isn't Gesu without you!*

Peace and blessings,

Bryan H. Carter President and CEO



We thank Alphonso, Amya, Diamond, India, Jade, Mikala, and Tahjaé for the artwork that appears throughout this report.

HAVE YOU MET JAMAL?

You should! He is one of the 450 unique children whose lives and futures you helped shape this year. Let us introduce you!

Favorite subject: MathFuture career: Navy pilotHobby: Playing board games

Activities and programs: Choir, Advanced Math, Advanced Writing, and G.E.M. after school wrestling, Spanish, and board games classes

Jamal, Grade 6

- **Q.** What are you learning at Gesu School that will help you with your goal of becoming a Navy pilot?
- **A.** Reading, self-discipline, responsibility and respect.
- **Q.** You transferred to Gesu in 5th grade What do you like about Gesu that's different from your previous school?
- **A.** Gesu teaches you religion and it's less violent.
- **Q.** What programs are you able to participate in at Gesu that you didn't have at your previous school?
- A. Choir, Advanced Math, Advanced Writing, and the G.E.M. after school wrestling, Spanish, and board games classes. (Essentially, everything.)

- **Q.** You are in the Advanced Math class. What do you like about that?
- **A.** I like that the class is small and it's fun.
- **Q.** If you could say anything to the donors who help keep Gesu School open, what would you tell them?
- A. This is a great place for a child to blossom. (Nicely said, Jamal. You make Advanced Writing teacher Dr. Erwin proud!)



Did you know?

While Honors Math programs at other schools often have standardized testing requirements to participate, Advanced Math at Gesu is open to the top math students in each 6th, 7th, and 8th grade class—both the students to whom math comes naturally and the ones who worked and sweated their way into the class. "If you are really interested in math, chances are I'll take you and give you a shot," explains Advanced Math teacher Augustine Asta, who strives to give every child the opportunity to excel at an advanced level.

The six Advanced Math classes for grades 6 through 8 can accommodate up to eight students each. Teacher Augustine Asta, who is currently completing his master's degree in math education at Saint Joseph's University, was never an advanced math student himself. He reminds students that their current circumstances shouldn't hamper their ambitions for the future.

SHAPING FUTURES WITH LOVE, HOPE, AND FIDELITY.

We thank the Sisters, Servants of the Immaculate Heart of Mary for 120 years of nurturing the children at Gesu School. We thank YOU for keeping their mission alive and vibrant.

One hundred and twenty years ago, an Immaculate Heart of Mary (IHM) sister stood at the front of every boys' classroom at Gesu School. (The Sisters of Notre Dame taught the girls at that time.) While the number of IHMs in the classrooms may be smaller today, their shared mission with the Jesuits and their impact at Gesu School has grown strikingly.

Today, with your collaboration, the IHMs bring their philosophy that "every child can learn" to Gesu's classrooms through their superb leadership and support of a strong corps of lay faculty, staff and volunteers. They battle the increasingly challenging problems of poverty, drugs, and violence now pervasive in North Philadelphia to ensure that our children's dreams to become teachers, doctors, lawyers, and police officers might become reality.

"Each IHM sister, from the first ones in the 1890's to Sister Ellen Convey and



Sister Patricia McGrenra in the present day, has spent untiring efforts for the cause of Catholic education in North Philadelphia. The sisters are proud to be able to share their IHM charism of 'Love, Creative Hope and Fidelity' each and every day at Gesu by their lives as well as by their teaching!" explains Sister John Evelyn DiTrolio, first assistant to the IHMs' General Superior.

Trustee Bob McAlaine sums up principal Sister Ellen Convey's role at Gesu in two words: "the GLUE." "She serves as she leads," a teacher explains as she recounts how her first-day-on-the-job jitters were relieved when Sister Ellen suddenly appeared to help unpack her car.

Vice principal and counselor Sister Patricia McGrenra is equally vital to the school community's well being. "There is so much to say about Sister Pat's intelligence, insight, hilarious sense of humor...and unselfishness, that I don't know where to begin or end. I always tell her she's the



Sr. Pat McGrenra, Sr. Ellen Convey, Sr. John Evelyn DiTrolio, Sr. Elaine de Chantal Brookes, Sr. Rita James Murphy, Sr. Helen Thomas McCann, and Sr. Joanne Ralph enjoy the gala in May. Over the years, many IHMs have transformed students' lives here at Gesu.

Energizer Bunny in a habit," says fellow school counselor M.M. O'Neill.

Gesu has also been blessed to have the expertise of Sister John Evelyn DiTrolio, Sister Patricia Fadden, and Sister Margaret Gradl on our Board of Trustees for a number of years.

We thank the IHMs for 120 years of faithfully focusing on each and every child. We also thank you, our supporters, without whom the IHM mission at Gesu would be impossible.

From the poet to the struggling reader, the artist to the athlete, every child can succeed at Gesu, thanks to the programs you make possible.

Art. Advanced Writing. Learning Support. Music. The IHMs' commitment to their maxim "Every child can learn" manifests itself in Gesu's myriad of offerings.

"The programs that Gesu offers students, such as the Advanced Writing and Math programs, helped build my confidence in subjects that are among the toughest to grasp for many students. It wasn't until I entered high school that I realized how much these programs benefited me. The class work came easily to me and by my sophomore year I was placed in honors classes at Springside School."

—Ashlei '06 is a junior at Syracuse University majoring in biology and cultural anthropology. She plans to attend veterinary school after completing her bachelor's degree.



WHEN YOU CHAMPION TEACHERS, YOU TRANSFORM LIVES.

With your help, Angela Keeler strives for the Magis as she cultivates the curious minds in her care.

Seventh grade teacher. Cheerleader on the sidelines. Forensics team chaperone. Service-learning co-leader. Student Council moderator (who accepted the invitation to take on the role with a resounding "Yes! Yes! Thank you!"). "There is no limit to her generosity," principal Sister Ellen marvels of Angela Keeler, the 2011-2012 winner of Gesu's Knetzger Teaching Prize. "She is creative and innovative, and she always goes the extra mile." The Jesuits would call it reaching for the "Magis"- striving to do and be "greater" in service to God. It seems to be the unspoken motto of Keeler's life.

At Gesu, Keeler has found an environment that resonates with her generous approach to life and work. "Gesu's leadership

is always asking the teachers to do more, and giving us the tools to do it," she explains. She particularly values the opportunities for growth and professional development afforded Gesu's faculty. It fits well with one of her maxims of teaching: "If I stop learning, then I don't belong in the classroom."

This year, Keeler and fellow 7th grade teacher JoAnn Young will stretch



their minds and abilities—as well as their students'—as they integrate a new service-learning program into the curriculum with the help of the organization Need In Deed. Keeler and Young will guide students as they choose and research an issue, examine the root causes of the problem, consider solutions, and implement their service project.

In Keeler's student-centered classroom, where hot-button topics like morals and faith are covered as part of the curriculum, students are encouraged

> to voice their opinions respectfully. "It's about their journey. I want my class to be a safe place for dialogue," she explains.

> "I love my job," Keeler beams, "though I wonder

if there is more that I could be doing. Hopefully, with prayer, I will just keep giving 100%." What better definition is there of the *Magis* in action?

Thank you for bringing teachers like Angela Keeler to Gesu School's classrooms, and giving them the tools they need to transform lives.

The Knetzger Teaching Prize, endowed by a gift from Jay and Kathy Sherrerd in memory of Gesu trustee Edwin Knetzger, is presented annually to that faculty member demonstrating the highest quality of teaching ability and commitment.

The 2012 Knetzger Teaching Prize winner Angela Keeler (center) celebrates the last day of school with rising 8th graders Shania and Leroy.



Skillful guidance of Student Council shapes servant-leaders.

Moderating a student leadership activity like Student Council requires tremendous talent—too much adult guidance defeats the purpose, but not enough can leave the group floundering. Since resurrecting Gesu's Student Council when she joined the faculty three years ago, Angela Keeler has displayed that rare gift for empowering students to take the reins, making Gesu's Student Council a positive presence felt throughout the school. From planning presentations on bullying to organizing school dances, the Student Council has added tremendous energy to Gesu's atmosphere.

"To me student council is about leadership and service," explains Kimberly '12, Gesu's 2011-2012 Student Council president and a freshman at Merion Mercy Academy this year. "We always try to lend a hand to those who ask and even those who don't. We also try to make the school year fun and exciting by listening to everyone's ideas."

"I'm always impressed by how incredible and gifted the students are, and what they can put together in three weeks," says Keeler. We can't wait to see what our Student Council alumni put together in their lifetimes!

"Gesu's leadership is always asking the teachers to do more, **and giving us the tools to do it.**"

KEY MOMENTS 2011-2012

- September A year of "firsts" begins with the first day of school. New President and CEO Bryan Carter greets students for the first time; teachers begin their first year teaching from the newly adopted Common Core Standards; our first Assistant Dean of Students, Troy Sams, begins his first year helping students build positive social skills.
- November At the 14th Annual Symposium on Transforming Inner-City Education we explore the topic of educating inner-city children in the 21st century. Visit www.gesuschool. org/2011symposiumrecap.html to listen to a recording or review the transcript.
- FebruaryA \$100,000 challenge grant from The 25th Century Foundation
helps Gesu establish a technology endowment. The fund will
help keep Gesu's technology resources on the cutting edge.
- March Board Chairman Gordon Cooney, a managing partner at Morgan Lewis, and his client John Thompson, a death row exoneree, speak to Gesu's 7th and 8th graders as part of the Gesu Speaker Series. Other speakers this year included State Treasurer Rob McCord, introduced to Gesu by Board Chairman Emeritus Win Churchill, and Alexis Moore, daughter of local civil rights activist Cecil B. Moore.
- May This year's gala, Yearbook: A Gesu Year in Review, honors Gesu Spirit Medal recipient Bob McAlaine. Under the leadership of co-chairs Jennifer & Kevin Kolmer, Pat & Allan Murphy, Keith Pension, and Eilise & Bill Rouse, the celebration raised \$312,000 for Gesu's children and brought new friends to Gesu. Mrs. J. Maxwell Moran was the presenting sponsor.

Andrea Carter's 6th grade class hosts Mayor Nutter for a game of trashcan basketball. Check out the video that aired on Action News at www.gesuschool.org/NewslettersPublications.htm.

June Robert Bogle, President and CEO of *The Philadelphia Tribune*, addresses Gesu's Class of 2012 at graduation. High school destinations included Merion Mercy Academy, Saint Joseph's Prep, and the new Cristo Rey Philadelphia High School, thanks to our school counselors who work hard to match students with high schools appropriate for their unique situations.



Eighth grader Jala presents symposium panelist Robert Birdsell, President and CEO of the Cristo Rey Newtork, with a piece of student artwork. We hope you can join us for this year's symposium, which is scheduled to take place on November 1st. Visit www. gesuschool.org/2012symposium.html for more information.



This year's Gesu Spirit Medal recipient, Bob McAlaine, catches up with Thomas '06, the second of many Gesu students Bob and his family have sponsored over the years. Thomas is pursuing his bachelor's degree at West Chester University.



Daja, Lauren and Kendall anticipate walking down the aisle to Pomp and Circumstance. This fall, they began high school at Little Flower, The Woodlynde School, and G.W. Carver High School for Engineering and Science respectively.

FINANCIALS

At Gesu School, we strive to steward your gifts wisely so as to have the greatest impact for our students. We are proud that our fiscal responsibility has earned us Charity Navigator's highest rating for six consecutive years, putting us in the top 3% of all charities reviewed.

We invite you to view our audited financial statements and Form 990 on our website at www.gesuschool.org/financials.html





Donor Andy Anderson examines a piece of student artwork before bidding on it at the gala. The pieces up for auction represented some of the most stunning work students created in teacher Linda Hartzell's art classes.



07408 United Way Donor Choice Number



8th grader Alaya shows off the cookies she and her team baked on the roof using the solar-powered oven they invented and built. Experiences in Gesu's staffed science lab build students' skills and confidence for high school science.



Kindergartners and 6th graders enjoyed a trip to Blue Elephant Farm thanks to Christa and Calvin Schmidt. Real-world experiences like this one bring learning to life for our students. Earlier in the year, the Schmidts also generously hosted the gala kick-off party.



Second graders Niyere, Niarah and Naseam pose for a photo with Joseph Conyers of The Philadelphia Orchestra. The 2nd through 4th graders grow in appreciation of music through The Philadelphia Orchestra's Partnership Program. Students also enjoy the benefits of weekly music class with Mr. Ratliff.

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THANK YOU TO OUR 2011-2012 FISCAL YEAR DONORS.

You helped shape 450 futures!

Pierre Toussaint Society

\$50,000 & Above

Gesu School recognizes our leadership level donors who have made gifts of \$50,000 and above with membership in the Pierre Toussaint Society. Venerable Pierre Toussiant, the society's namesake, is a hero from our Catholic heritage. Born into slavery in Haiti in the early 19th century, Pierre Toussaint was brought to New York City, where he became a successful hairdresser. He used his earnings to free many slaves and finally himself. Once a free man, he performed many acts of charity, including the establishment of an orphanage and a school for black children. When most fled the city during a yellow fever epidemic, he stayed to nurse the sick. His dedication to the well-being and education of the poor makes Pierre Toussaint a fitting patron for Gesu and our donors.

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"For many young people in our affluent society, the biggest challenge they face is getting into the Ivy League. But for many children living in the inner-city, the stakes are much higher. Will they get shot, go to prison, or succumb to drugs or poverty before their potential is realized? Or will they grow into proud, competent, productive, responsible adults? If they are not on the right course by graduation from 8th grade, the odds are highly stacked against them. We support Gesu School to give children in North Philadelphia the chance they deserve."

-Anne & Bob McAlaine

Pierre Toussaint Society

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Of the many causes I support in life and hope to support after my death, Gesu is most important of all. For this reason, I have designated Gesu a 50% beneficiary. Because I come from a long line of nonagenarians and am more of a spender than a saver, the sum may turn out to be rather paltry, but I love knowing that Gesu will receive half of my estate, whatever it may be. Who knows? That very knowledge might turn me into more of a saver in my remaining years!"

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If you are interested in getting involved, there are three ways you can help: 1) In addition to your annual contribution, make a gift of any size to *Gesu Isn't Gesu Without You Community Sponsorships.* We will put your gift to work in combination with other donors' gifts. 2) Make a new commitment to support one or more children for one or more years (\$6,000 per child, per year). 3) Endow a scholarship to be awarded in perpetuity (\$125,000). For more information about the campaign, or to make a gift, contact Seán Lavelle at 215-763-9077 or sean.lavelle@gesuschool.org.

To all those who have already answered the call for help, thank you!

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The Mission:

Inspired by the Jesuit and IHM traditions of social justice, faith, hope, and love, Gesu School strives, without selective admissions, to provide a quality, innovative education for its neighbor children to empower them to break the cycle of poverty and violence.

The Results:

In a neighborhood where only 34% of adults over 25 hold a high school diploma, over 90% of Gesu alumni graduate from high school in four years, going on to become nurses, accountants, teachers and more.



Gesu's basketball team scrimmages in the gym. Coach and gym teacher Sean Deal puts his heart and soul into teaching his studentathletes just as much about doing the right thing as he does about sports. Thank you for making Gesu a safe place for students to shape their whole selves.



Third grade girls share their dreams for the future with a captive audience at the gala. Programs like the Akybra Theatre Project, the Forensics Team, and oral speaking components of the curriculum hone students' diction for the professional world thanks to your support.



TRANSFORM LIVES. SHAPE FUTURES.

To all who make Gesu School possible, whether through your prayers, time, talent or treasure—thank you! You are transforming children's lives one at a time, and shaping the future of our community.