

# GESU SCHOOL

Educational Excellence in North Philadelphia in the Jesuit and IHM Traditions

## Redefining Inner-City Education



(Left) Physical education teacher, athletic director and coach Sean Deal counsels his basketball players in the gym, where cultivating respect is the most important lesson. Your support brings teachers and programs that build character to Gesu's halls and classrooms in North Philadelphia. (Right) Sixth graders Nadia and Semaj, 5<sup>th</sup> grader Eva, and 6<sup>th</sup> grader Amira powered their way to a 2<sup>nd</sup> place finish at the Penn Relays, a success that was the culmination of weeks of serious focus and determination.

**HERO [HEER-OH]:** *noun.* 1. A person of distinguished courage or ability, admired for his or her brave deeds and noble qualities. 2. A teacher. 3. Sean Deal

In March the National Liberty Museum honored 20 teachers out of nearly 100 nominations from across the Mid-Atlantic as the heroes they truly are at the "Teacher as Heroes" Awards. The shining star among them was Gesu's ten-year-veteran phys ed teacher Sean Deal. Mr. Deal was recognized for the countless hours he dedicates to Gesu's and the region's athletic programs, his generosity in mentoring students both past and present, his perseverance, his creative teaching approach, and his contribution to defusing violence.

Born several months premature, Mr. Deal has had serious physical challenges as well as a learning disability to overcome throughout his life. Despite the tremendous difficulties he faced, practice, determination and hard work enabled him to play basketball in high school and to persevere academically through college to earn his bachelor's degree in education. For the last ten years, much of his persistence has gone into helping Gesu students overcome their own obstacles in order to realize the same success that he has achieved.

While healthy exercise and eating habits may be the core subject matter in Mr. Deal's phys ed class and on the court, RESPECT is equally emphasized in Mr. Deal's gym. Mr. Deal's lessons in respect begin with showing students and athletes respect himself. But for this "extremely competitive" crowd, Mr. Deal also stresses how to win with dignity and how to lose with dignity, to show humility and shake hands when they've won a competition, and that hurtful words can stay with people for a lifetime.

Before Gesu School had a gymnasium, Mr. Deal had to be quite inventive to come up with activities that would work in the school's basement multi-purpose room. He took a lot of that outside-of-the-box thinking with him to the school's new gym (which he thanks you for!). He's always looking for creative ways to teach proper eating and exercising habits, and finding ways to incorporate music into the activities he's developed to tap into our students' love of music. Because of Mr. Deal's rapport with the students, other teachers often turn to him for help with a student whose grades are slipping, who isn't doing homework, or who is having other challenges. Such trust and respect speaks for itself.

**THE MAGIS [MAH-JIS]:** *noun.* 1. To do something of greater worth, in the current moment, for the most pressing need. 2. Principal Sister Ellen Convey's life work at Gesu School.

Gesu's principal Sr. Ellen Convey, IHM, "is an educational *tour de force* in the world of Catholic education in the City of Philadelphia. This is not because she has been everywhere doing everything - but precisely due to the opposite—the long-standing, formidable, deep commitment to the children of Gesu School," explained Fr. Daniel Joyce, S.J., assistant to the vice president for mission and identity at Saint Joseph's University, where Sr. Ellen was honored with The Robert Molyneux, S.J. Award by the Center for Catholic and Urban Education in January.

The award, presented for the first time this year, will be given annually "to a Philadelphia or regional educator who has made exceptional advances in innovation and efficacy for Catholic schools—capturing the essence of 'the *magis*'—to do something of greater worth, in the current moment, for the most pressing need." Congratulations, Sr. Ellen, and thank you, from everyone whose life you've touched!

### DETERMINATION

**[DIH-TUR-MUH-NEY-SHUHN]:** *noun.* 1. a firm or fixed intention to achieve a desired end. 2. One of the qualities you're helping to develop in students at Gesu School. 3. The strength driving our Penn Relays team forward.

One hundredth of a second—that's all that separated Gesu's 4x100m junior girls' relay team from the first place team at the Penn Relays this year. Their second place finish out of 119 teams was the best in the school's recent memory, and treated spectators to an incredible, nail-biting come-from-behind charge in the last 100 meters. The race itself was the culmination of months of hard work for 6<sup>th</sup> graders Nadia, Amira, and Semaj, and 5<sup>th</sup> grader Eva. Their training regimen included two weeks of daily four-hour after-school sessions on Saint Joseph's University's track, where they also closely observed the Jamaican relay team's practice to pick up pointers. Kudos to coach Pat Leaf and 6<sup>th</sup> grade teacher Andrea Carter for cultivating an attitude for success.

Summer 2013

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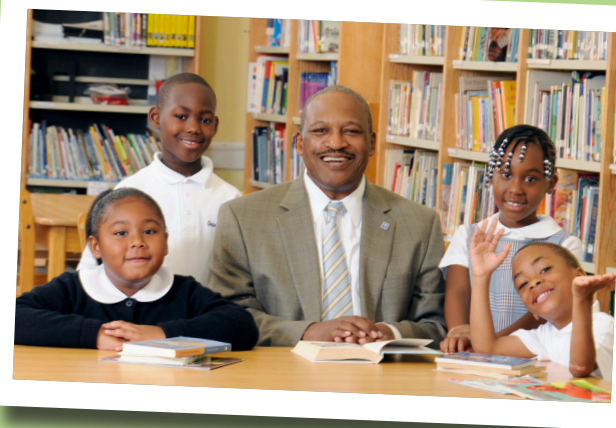
## FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear Friends of Gesu School,

As we come to the close of the 2012-13 school year, I think of the Gesu mantra and African proverb "It takes a village to raise a child." Each September, 450 children begin the school year and our objective is to "raise" the children in academics, in spirituality and in character—to educate the whole child.

I want to emphasize the character formation aspect of our school year. In line with the Jesuit tenet of being *Men and Women for Others*, the children, many of whom reside in the most impoverished areas of Philadelphia, collected canned goods for the needy, donated nearly \$2,000 in mission collections and conducted an anti-bullying service project with the Need In Deed organization. As a result of the work of our children, Gesu School will receive the designation of a *No Place for Hate* school from the Anti-Defamation League of Philadelphia. We are "raising" the children in character and spirituality!

Of course, we are proud of the academic accomplishments of the students and our eighth grade students, in particular, who will attend top high schools such as Shipley, The Baldwin School, Friends Select, Central, and St. Joseph's Prep in



September. We are "raising" the children academically!

So, I say to the volunteers, benefactors and friends of Gesu School, thank you for continuing to be part of the "village" that "raises" our students. Your support, financial and otherwise, is critical to the ongoing success of Gesu School and our children.

Peace and blessings,

Bryan H. Carter  
*President and CEO*

## THREE CHEERS!

Alumna and trustee **Nyree Lyons '95** made Level Four Clinical Nurse at the Hospital at the University of Pennsylvania... Alumnus and trustee **Daryl Shore '94** was promoted to Vice President at JP Morgan Chase... The Good Shepherd Mediation Center recognized trustee **Rev. George Bur, S.J.**, with the Shepherd of Peace Award... The American Catholic Historical Society recognized trustee **Rev. William J. Byron** with the Barry Award... The Support Center for Child Advocates honored trustee **Mark Solomon** with the Judge Lois G. Forer Child Advocacy Award... 8<sup>th</sup> grader **Jada** placed 4<sup>th</sup> in the nation in triple jump and 6<sup>th</sup> in the nation in the 800m run at the most recent Junior Olympics... Our **8<sup>th</sup> grade team** of Denzell, Derrick, Janiya, and Sahara placed 1<sup>st</sup> in English and 2<sup>nd</sup> in history at the West Catholic Academic Challenge... Kindergarten teacher **Cristina Byce** completed her M.Ed. in Early Childhood Education at Chestnut Hill College... and technology teacher **Sallie Michalsky** completed her M.S. in Education at Saint Joseph's University...

## TRUSTEE NOTES

We welcome to our Board of Trustees the following new members:

**Marie T. McCormick, Ph.D.**, *co-president, InSyte Partners*; **Sr. Stephen Anne Roderiguez, IHM**, *principal, Saint Aloysius Academy*; **Sr. Mary Ellen Tenny, IHM**, *congregational leadership, Sisters, Servants of the Immaculate Heart of Mary*; and **Sr. Janet Mary Walters, IHM**, *principal, Mary, Mother of Peace School*.

We gratefully thank the following former members for their service: **Sr. John Evelyn DiTrollo, IHM**, **Sr. R. Patricia Fadden, IHM, Ed.D.**, **Sr. Margaret Gradl, IHM, D.** **Daniele Hager**, **Peter Morse**, and **Babette Snyder**.

## IN MEMORIAM

The Gesu community is saddened by the loss of two important members of our circle. **G. Davis Greene** (died 8/2/2012) was one of Gesu's founding board members and served as board treasurer for a number of years. His support in Gesu's early years as an independent school were critical to our success today. **Bette Saul** (died 1/6/2013), Gesu supporter and wife of founding board member Ralph Saul, was much beloved by all at Gesu School and her cheerful presence at many of our events will be missed.

**EVERYTHING YOU NEED IS JUST A CLICK AWAY!** Gesu is thrilled to debut our **NEW** website, thanks to the generosity of trustee John Backe and the tireless work of his talented team at Backe Digital Brand Marketing.

Student artwork, the latest news stories, profiles of our teachers, upcoming events, the school handbook, registration information, ways to get involved—you'll find it all right here at [www.gesuschool.org](http://www.gesuschool.org) in a beautiful new user-friendly format. You might just find *yourself* calling Backe to say "thank you" for their great work, too!



Here's a peek at the new website, designed and created by the talented team at Backe Digital Brand Marketing. Check it out at [www.gesuschool.org](http://www.gesuschool.org)!

## SAINT JOSEPH'S UNIVERSITY FIELD EXPERIENCE AT GESU FOCUSES ON SOCIAL JUSTICE.

Through a new partnership, Gesu students benefit from individualized assessment and instruction while college education majors gain field experience in urban education.

Eleven college students and eleven Gesu students are spread throughout the multipurpose room, focusing on various lessons. This scene has repeated itself weekly since the beginning of the school year, when the Saint Joseph's University education majors taking Dr. Bill Murphy's assessment course and subsequent instruction course came to Gesu School to put theory into practice. They began by assessing Gesu's students for high incidence disability, then followed up with individualized instruction for the academic challenges they identified.

The SJU course has a social justice focus; the class discusses their field work in the context of poverty and need. "It's such a rich experience for my students," explains Dr. Murphy, who says his goal is to open up his students to the idea of teaching in urban education. It must

**"THERE'S SOMETHING SPECIAL HERE. I COULD FEEL IT THE FIRST DAY I ARRIVED."  
— Dr. Bill Murphy**

*A Gesu student benefits from individualized instruction, while an education major from Saint Joseph's University gets first-hand experience in the field of urban education. The partnership not only helps Gesu's current students, but hooks and develops up-and-coming talent to teach in the inner city.*



be working— at this point he believes a third of his class would come to teach at Gesu in a heartbeat, and he already anticipates an enrollment of 20 for next year's course.

Murphy has been teaching this class for six years, but worked with a public school for the field component. This year he decided to start bringing his class here to Gesu. It was a logical choice given the two schools' shared Catholic, Jesuit missions. "There's something special here. I could feel it the first day I arrived," he explains.

In the end, the arrangement is a win-win-win for Gesu's students, Saint Joseph's University's education majors, and the future of inner-city education.

## STOCK MARKET SAVVY EMPOWERS STUDENTS.

Eighth graders enjoy investment simulation project with Gesu trustee Paul Welch of PENN Capital Management.

"Residents in the inner-city are not as involved in the stock market," Gesu trustee Paul Welch explains to the library full of 8<sup>th</sup> graders. "As you grow, you can help others learn about it. It's about giving back—helping the community and your neighbors."

This year, Welch, a senior research analyst and partner at PENN Capital Management, brought a variation of a Chicago-based school investment education program to Gesu. In November, Gesu's students began with a \$2,000 investment. Each "investor" selected a stock of interest to them with the goal of making money as a class gift to Gesu School. Over the course of the project, Welch tracked the simulated performance of the students' portfolio, and taught the students ins and outs of investing.

At the end of May the students learned that their portfolio earned a 14.2% rate of return for a grand total of \$2,285 to be donated by Welch. In honor of the students' work, PENN Capital Management is donating an additional \$3,000 to the school.

The class and the topic captivated the students. "It's preparing me for when I get into the real world," asserts 8<sup>th</sup> grader Sahara. Her classmate Monique was proud to learn that H&R Block, the stock she had chosen for the portfolio, finished with a 57% rate of return despite low expectations for its performance among her fellow students. "Everyone can do this. Listen to yourself," Welch told the class.



*Trustee Paul Welch of PENN Capital Management (left) presents a check to 8<sup>th</sup> grader Monique and president Bryan Carter. In an effort to expose inner-city students to the concept of investing, Welch taught a course on the stock market to Gesu's 8<sup>th</sup> graders, giving them the opportunity to choose stocks and track their performance. Eighth grader Monique (center) chose H&R block, which earned a 57% rate of return. "They really get everything so quickly... They're always two steps ahead. I'm so impressed," Welch said.*

## ATHLETIC CORNER

**Track:** At the Area A Championships, Gesu's track team qualified to compete in 13 events at the Archdiocesan Championship later this spring, including the minor and novice girls 4x100m, the minor and novice girls 4x200m, and the minor boys 4x100m and 4x200m. Also advancing are 5<sup>th</sup> grader Isaiah in novice boys shot put, 5<sup>th</sup> grader Eva and 6<sup>th</sup> grader Semaj in the novice and minor girls 100m, 8<sup>th</sup> grader Audley in the cadet boys 100m, 200m and long jump, 5<sup>th</sup> grader Caelyn in the novice girls 200m, and 7<sup>th</sup> grader Javier in the minor boys 200m.

**Basketball: Girls Varsity and Boys Varsity** both advanced to the City Championships after losses in the CYO Region 8 Championships, putting them in the top 32 teams in the city. The **Boys JV** team won the Region 8 Championship. Congratulations to the students and coaches for a wonderful season!

**Soccer:** New this year, 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> grade students had the opportunity to learn about and play soccer on our rooftop playground twice a week with Coach Sylvester Corbie from West Philly

## NEW SERVICE-LEARNING PROGRAM LAUNCHES.

Students sink teeth into research project to serve the community.

Bullying. It's one of the social problems on the forefront of our students' minds. Mrs. Keeler's 7<sup>th</sup> grade class quickly landed on it as their topic for the school's inaugural service-learning project, facilitated with the help of the organization Need In Deed. The project, which aligns neatly with the core curriculum already in place, gives students a voice in the community and the opportunity for in-depth research and involvement in a topic that's important to them. Throughout the course of the year, Gesu students partnered with a class at Mercy Vocational High School to explore the nature of bullying and to develop projects addressing their findings.

One highlight of the year's project was Community Building Day, which included guest presenters from Saint Joseph's Prep and the Richard Johnson Center for Anti-Violence, as well as sessions conducted by the Mercy Vocational - Gesu 7<sup>th</sup> grade team, and phys ed teacher Sean Deal. The project culminated with the filming and production of five public service announcements addressing different aspects of bullying. At their year-end "Shout Out" celebration, Need In Deed recognized our 7<sup>th</sup> graders with the Transformation Award, recognizing the personal transformation our students exhibited as a result of the program.

## CURIOUS as to where our 8<sup>th</sup> graders are going next year? Check out this year's list of high schools at [www.gesuschool.org](http://www.gesuschool.org)!



*Third graders Taj-mir and Kiya enjoy a new sport on the rooftop playground. Thank you to Friend of Gesu co-chair Mike Wham for getting the ball rolling with his introductions, and to West Philly Soccer for giving our students a new source of focus and an outlet for their energy.*

**Soccer.** Roughly thirty-five students enjoyed the program late into the fall, and were back on the field in the early spring. Several students even opted to play indoors throughout the winter with West Philly Soccer at the Shepard Rec Center. "Many of our students don't always understand that you need to work as a team to achieve a greater goal," observes 4<sup>th</sup> grade girls teacher Ms. Hinton. "It's good for them to learn a sport that requires discipline and teamwork."

**Thank you** for keeping athletics as an important piece in our mission to develop the whole child!



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*And much more!*



Prudential Fox & Roach, REALTORS Chairman and CEO Larry Flick reads with 2<sup>nd</sup> grader Marcus in the library. Fox & Roach Charities is in its seventh year sponsoring a student at Gesu School. Thanks to Fox & Roach Charities and people like you, Gesu can focus on the growth of all 450 of our children—ensuring that they develop not only academically, but socially and spiritually as well.



Skyy and Sanii are one of four sets of twins at Gesu this year—double the promise, double the joy, and double the fun! Did you know that many companies will DOUBLE your gift through their matching gift programs? Visit [www.doublethedonation.com/gesu.php](http://www.doublethedonation.com/gesu.php) to find out if your company participates.



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Address correction requested

**PULITZER PRIZE WINNER PRAISES STUDENTS.**

Acclaimed journalist Kristen Graham encourages aspiring writers in Gesu's Backe Advanced Writing Program.

Gesu's 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, and 8<sup>th</sup> grade Backe Advanced Writing students had the chance to reverse the roles on Pulitzer-prize winning journalist Kristen Graham, who visited with the students in February. The students peppered Graham with questions about her life and career, impressing her with their preparedness and attention. Incidentally, Graham loves baseball and "curve-ball" questions. Her favorite curve ball of the day was whether she is right- or left-handed. (She's right-handed.)

Afterward Graham worked

with two particularly talented 8<sup>th</sup> graders, Ashley and Jelani, on essays they had written



Pulitzer-prize winning journalist Kristen Graham critiques work by 8<sup>th</sup> grade Backe Advanced Writing students Ashley and Jelani, who are destined for The Baldwin School and Constitution High School respectively.

and advanced writing teacher Dr. Erwin had submitted for review. "I thought you were definitely high school

students," confessed Graham, who had forgotten Gesu was only an elementary school when reviewing the pieces. "It was really good writing." As she gave the writers tips to improve their essays, Graham praised their abilities. "You are a very gifted writer. This is just a very vivid essay," she told Ashley. She also praised Jelani saying, "I'm really impressed with your writing." Would you like a taste of the incredible work coming out of the Backe Advanced Writing class?

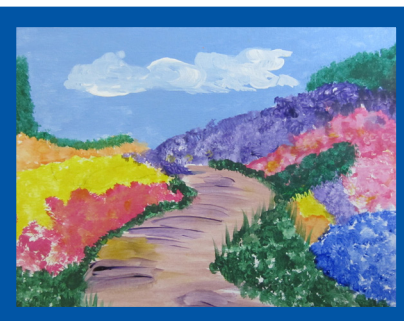
Read Ashley's original essay in the online student work gallery on our new website at [www.gesuschool.org/student\\_work](http://www.gesuschool.org/student_work).



(Front row) 8<sup>th</sup> graders Natalia, who is destined for Carver H.S. for Engineering and Science; Dama, who is headed to West Catholic H.S.; and Zavon, who is Saint Joseph's Prep bound, reverse the roles and come out to cheer for the Gesu staff and supporters team rowing in the Novice Corporate Challenge at the Aberdeen Dad Vail Regatta. The team of (back row) Fran Gray and Gretchen Cooney, and (not pictured) Kevin McGowan, Paul Welch, Bob Gagliardi, Kelly Grattan, Seán Lavelle, and Brianna Taylor learned how to row and trained for the race to raise awareness for Gesu School.



Enjoying the evening at the Bellevue are: (front row) gala co-chair Jenn Sims, Gesu Spirit Medal recipients Rev. William J. Byron, S.J., and Vivienne Ehret, principal Sr. Ellen Convey, I.H.M., gala co-chair Margaret Anne Nolen, (back row) gala co-chair Carter Sims, board chairman J. Gordon Cooney, Jr., president Bryan Carter, and gala co-chair Jim Nolen.



"Through the Garden," an acrylic by 8<sup>th</sup> grader Sierra, was one of 30 pieces of student artwork that raised \$2,880 through a silent auction at the gala this year.

**OVER 350 GATHER AT THE BELLEVUE TO CELEBRATE THE GREATNESS THAT'S GROWING IN NORTH PHILADELPHIA.** Students enjoy the opportunity to showcase their talents.

Thanks to the gala committee led by co-chairs Jenn & Carter Sims and Margaret Anne & Jim Nolen, the 2013 gala *Growing Greatness* raised over \$340,000 in support of Gesu's children. James J. and Frances M. Maguire and an anonymous donor were the presenting sponsors for this year's gala, attended by more than 350 people.

During the evening, trustees Rev. William J. Byron, S.J., and Ms. Vivienne Lambert Ehret were honored with the Gesu Spirit Medal. Gesu's achievements, its students' scholarship opportunities,

its growing Sponsor A Child program, and its thriving library are living tributes to the volunteer service and leadership of these two individuals.

The program featured performances from Gesu students including ballroom dancing, spoken word and selections from the choir.

Thank you to everyone who made the evening a success. If you missed the event, check out highlights on our YouTube channel at [www.youtube.com/gesuschoolworks](http://www.youtube.com/gesuschoolworks) or on our Facebook page at [www.facebook.com/gesuschool](http://www.facebook.com/gesuschool).

**UPCOMING EVENTS**

- 6/24 First day of summer programs
- 9/4 First day of school
- 11/1 Annual Symposium on Transforming Inner-City Education

**7408 - United Way Donor Choice Number**  
Please consider designating Gesu School (Gesu Community Service Project) when making your United Way gift.

**CORPORATIONS** can make a huge difference in the lives of Gesu children while receiving tax credits for their contributions to Gesu School through the EITC and OSTC programs. For more information on corporate giving, EITC and OSTC, contact Kelly Grattan at (215) 763-9077 or [kgrattan@gesuschool.org](mailto:kgrattan@gesuschool.org).