

You provide teachers to reach them— Every. Single. One.

Thanks to you, young men in North Philadelphia find a mentor and role model in Chris Osborne, “guide” and teacher to the 5th grade boys in Gesu’s single gender program.

At 7th grader Jordan’s Eagle Scout ceremony, friends and family gathered to honor the admirable young man, who at the age of 13 had become the youngest member in his troop’s history to earn the Boy Scouts’ highest achievement.

But when the scoutmaster announced that Jordan had chosen his 5th grade teacher Chris Osborne to say a few words, one member of the audience was caught by surprise—Osborne himself!

“It was easy to talk about Jordan because he’s *such* a good kid,” says Osborne, reflecting on his off-the-cuff Eagle Scout tribute that night. But honestly, Osborne could likely provide an off-the-cuff tribute for any one of his boys—whether a model student or a more challenging one. Osborne’s effort to get to know and treat each of his students as unique individuals is one of the qualities that led his peers to nominate him as this year’s Knetzger Teaching Prize winner.

Each September, Osborne scraps his lesson plans from the previous year and starts fresh, tailoring his approach to the unique personality of his newest class. He spends time eating lunch with the boys, exploring their interests and meeting with their parents to discover what makes them tick.

“I think it’s really important to get to know each student as an individual... and to get to know what each student has on his plate,” Osborne says.

Students respond to Osborne’s efforts. According to Jordan, our



Teacher Chris Osborne examines slides under the microscope in the science lab with his 5th grade boys. On a daily basis he looks just as closely at the individual motivations and aspirations of the students in his care.

new Eagle Scout, Osborne is one of his role models at Gesu. “He always gave you 100% respect from the beginning,” Jordan asserts. “I didn’t take that respect for granted.”

Osborne rises to the challenge of Gesu’s urban environment and the obstacles his students face. In his approach, Osborne accounts for the fact that some students have more outside issues to cope with than others. “When they succeed, that’s so much more magnified,” says Osborne. “These are the kids that are my favorite to work with.”

Oftentimes, the true work is convincing the students that their futures and their community are worth putting effort into.

“I don’t want them to be ashamed of where they come from,” Osborne explains. “But they are just as aware as we are of the negative things about where they are from. I try to help them have pride in their neighborhood and be part of

the community while finding ways to distance themselves from the negative influences.”

This year Osborne responded to the students’ request to launch a baseball team. With support from the administration, St. Joseph’s Prep’s JV team, and donors like you, Coach Osborne led the team through its debut season this spring.

Now in his 4th year teaching at Gesu, Osborne comes from a family of educators. He earned his B.A. in English from Saint Joseph’s University, where he will soon complete his M.Ed. as well. Thank you for bringing him and teachers like him into the lives of our children!

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.