

[Previous Story](#)

[Next Story](#)

Article rank 10 Jan 2013 The Washington Post JAY MATHEWS

When new ideas pay off for everyone

Twelve years ago, I stumbled across a story that seemed too good to be true. A Catholic high school in Chicago ensured its financial survival by having students help pay their tuition by working one day a week in clerical jobs at downtown offices.

This was a new idea in U.S. secondary education. New ideas are not necessarily a good thing, because they often fail. But the creator of Cristo Rey Jesuit High School was an educational missionary named John P. Foley who had spent much of his life helping poor people in Latin America. I was not going to dump on an idea from a man like that without seeing how it worked out.

Now I know. The Cristo Rey network has grown to 25 schools in 17 states, including a campus in Takoma Park, where more than half the students are from Prince George's County and more than a third are from the District. It is blossoming in a way no other school, public or private, has done in this region.

Foley started the original school in 1996 in the Pilsen/Little Village section of southwest Chicago, a heavily Hispanic area. To some, it seemed to be a foolish venture. Catholic schools were dying in the nation's urban neighborhoods. There was no way to pay for them.

But Richard Murray, a management consultant Foley knew, had an inspiration. What if Foley divided the student body into teams of four and assigned each team to an office job in the city? Each student would work one day a week. Their combined salaries could guarantee the school's future.

More than 90 percent of the students at the original Cristo Rey school were from low-income families. Few had been subjected to the pressures of big city offices. But they received proper training for their clerical assignments. As the experiment proceeded, they realized the writing, reading and math skills they were learning in school were relevant to their new jobs — and their work experience would help them find jobs to pay their way through college.

Foley urged other cities to adopt the unorthodox Cristo Rey approach. When he took some of his Chicago students to Los Angeles, a skeptical California teenager asked, "Don't you think it's nuts that you are doing all this work and don't see any money out of it?"

One of the Chicago students answered: "Maybe I don't see any money, but I get an education."

A network of new schools began to grow, including Takoma Park's Don Bosco Cristo Rey High School, which opened in 2007 as the first Archdiocese of Washington high school in more than 55 years. Today, it has 325 students who "work one full day per week at law firms, banks, hospitals, universities and other professional corporate partners and are in the classroom the other four days," spokeswoman Alicia Bondanella said.

More than 100 companies and organizations — including Ernst & Young, Georgetown University Hospital and Miller & Long Concrete Construction — employ Don Bosco students. Each student makes \$7,500 a year, which is applied to the school's \$13,500 tuition. The remainder of the cost is covered by fundraising and the student's family.

Bondanella said that 93 percent of students received outstanding or good ratings in their mid-year evaluations at their workplaces. Their attendance rate at work was 99 percent. Every one of the school's 2011 and 2012 graduates were accepted into two- or four-year colleges. Eighty-two percent of the 2011 graduates, the first at Don Bosco to complete the four-year program, enrolled for a second year of college, twice the rate for students of similar backgrounds.

Hopefully the network will grow and perhaps embrace a bigger challenge: How about a college designed just for low-income students in the Cristo Rey way, paying the bills while establishing an unbreakable connection between what they are learning in class and what they are doing at work?



mathewsj@washpost.com

FACTS AT A GLANCE

Located in Takoma Park, MD, Don Bosco Cristo Rey High School provides a rigorous, college preparatory curriculum to students in the greater Washington area who have very limited financial resources but dream of going to college. All students participate in the Corporate Work Study Program, where they gain professional work experience and earn money to pay for a portion of their education.

Our School and Students

- 315 high school students
- 100% of Class of 2011 and Class of 2012 accepted to college
- 78% of students qualify for the federal Free and Reduced Meals Program
- 22% reside in the District of Columbia, 62% in Prince Georges County, 16% in Montgomery County



Why is Don Bosco Cristo Rey High School Needed in Our Area?

- The 2011 Federal Poverty Level Income Guideline for a family of four (200% of poverty rate) is \$44,700. The median annual family income for DBCR families is approximately \$38,000.
- While the high school graduation rate in Montgomery County is 91.1%, more than 40% of youth in the District do NOT complete high school.

Corporate Work Study Program – “The School that Works”

A key part of the educational experience at Don Bosco Cristo Rey High School is the Corporate Work Study Program (CWSP). All students work one full day a week, plus a rotating Monday, at sponsoring companies in order to gain real-world workplace experience. Students learn valuable professional skills while extending classroom learning in an unusual way.



- Teams of four students share a single entry level office position on a rotating basis.
 - CWSP staff secures the jobs and trains the student workers
 - Students are transported to and from work with supervision from CWSP staff.
- Each student earns the majority of the cost of his or her education through the CWSP.

“The dividends are huge; not only in productivity, but in the good we are doing in the community.” –Kevin Virostek, Ernst & Young

CORPORATE WORK STUDY PROGRAM

2012-2013 CLIENTS

Abacus Technology Corporation
 Akin Gump Strauss Hauer & Feld LLP
 Akridge
 American Health Lawyers Association
 Archdiocese of Washington Catholic Schools
 Office ~ Baker Botts ~ Baker Hostetler
 Baker Tilly Virchow Krause
 B.F. Saul Company
 Boland ~ Bond Beebe
 Brickman Group ~ Brookfield Properties
 Capital Research Center ~ Carlyle Group ~
 Catholic Charities Archdiocese of Wash.
 Catholic University of America
 Charles Gormly, PC
 Children’s National Medical Center
 Choice Hotels International
 Clark Construction Group, LLC
 Coakley Construction
 Counselors Title ~ Ernst & Young
 Fannie Mae
 Fitzgerald Auto Malls
 Francis J. Collins Funeral Home
 Gannett ~ Georgetown University
 Georgetown University Hospital
 Gleason, Flynn, Emig & Fogleman
 Gray Plant Mooty ~ Hilton McLean
 Holy Cross Hospital ~ Honest Tea
 Hyman Phelps McNamara PC
 Impact Office ~ Jesuit Conference
 Jones Day
 Katten Muchin, Rosenman LLP
 Kirkland & Ellis LLP ~ KPMG
 Latham Watkins ~ Manatt Phelps
 Meltzer Group
 Miller & Long Concrete Construction
 Montgomery Co. State’s Attorney Office
 NASA Goddard
 NIH/NOAA Recreation & Welfare Assn.
 Object Video ~ OFFICEPRO, Inc.
 Patton Boggs ~ PCM Services
 PNC Bank ~ Presidio Networked Solutions
 Providence Hospital
 Reed Smith ~ Reznick Group ~ Ridgewells
 RLJ Lodging Trust
 Russell Reynolds & Associates
 SAIC ~ Savantage Solutions
 Sheehy Automotive
 Shrine of the Most Blessed Sacrament
 Sidley Austin
 Thomas B. Fordham Institute
 TDF Foundation ~ United Educators
 US Dept. of Education
 US Dept of Energy ~ Van Scoyoc
 Venable LLP
 Wealth Engine ~ White & Case
 Wilson Elser Moskowitz Edelman & Dicker
 Winston & Strawn LLP

THE CRISTO REY NETWORK



BALTIMORE, MD – Cristo Rey Jesuit ('07)
BIRMINGHAM, AL – Holy Family Cristo Rey ('07)
BOSTON, MA – Cristo Rey Boston ('04)
BROOKLYN, NY – Lourdes Academy ('08)
CHICAGO, IL – Cristo Rey Jesuit ('96)
CINCINNATI, OH – DePaul Cristo Rey ('11)
CLEVELAND, OH – St. Martin de Porres ('04)
DENVER, CO – Arrupe Jesuit ('03)
DETROIT, MI – Detroit Cristo Rey ('08)
HOUSTON – Cristo Rey Jesuit ('09)
INDIANAPOLIS, IN – Providence Cristo Rey ('07)
KANSAS CITY, MO – Cristo Rey Kansas City ('06)
LAWRENCE, MA – Notre Dame ('04)
LOS ANGELES, CA – Verbum Dei ('02)
MINNEAPOLIS, MN – Cristo Rey Jesuit ('07)
NEWARK, NJ – Christ the King Prep ('07)
NEW YORK, NY – Cristo Rey New York ('04)
PHILADELPHIA, PA – Cristo Rey ('12)
PORTLAND, OR – De La Salle North Catholic ('01)
SACRAMENTO, CA – Cristo Rey Sacramento ('06)
SAN FRANCISCO, CA – Immaculate Conception Academy ('09)
TUCSON, AZ – San Miguel ('04)
WAUKEGAN, IL – Saint Martin de Porres ('04)
WASHINGTON, DC – Don Bosco Cristo Rey ('07)
WEST SIDE CHICAGO, IL – Christ the King Jesuit College Prep ('08)

The Cristo Rey Network®

- Cristo Rey is a national association of Catholic high schools that features a college preparatory curriculum tailored to the students' needs.
- The first Cristo Rey high school opened in Chicago in 1996.
- There are 25 Cristo Rey schools throughout the country serving over 5,000 bright, highly-motivated high school students.
- 100% of 2012 graduates of Cristo Rey Network® schools were accepted into two or four year colleges.
- B.J. and Bebe Cassin were the first philanthropists to promote the scaling up of the Cristo Rey Model with a \$12 million commitment in 2001. Today, dozens of foundations, including the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, and individual donors throughout the country have contributed to the efforts of the Cristo Rey Network® and to individual schools.



For more information contact:

Fr. Steve Shafran, S.D.B.
 President
 Don Bosco Cristo Rey High School
 1010 Larch Avenue, Takoma Park, MD 20912
 P.O. Box 56481 Washington, D.C. 20040-6481
 Phone: 301.891.4750 Fax: 301.270.1459

Meet our students –
 View the latest DBCR video!
 Go to
www.youtube.com
 Search: Don Bosco Cristo Rey



CFC No. - 35956



United Way
 of the National Capital Area

Number - 9392