



**October 3, 2019**

Dear Friends of Cristo Rey Philadelphia,

On Saturday, September 28<sup>th</sup>, the entire Cristo Rey community – students, families, faculty and staff, job partners, supporters, neighbors and more – gathered together for Cristo Rey Philadelphia High School's Grand Opening at the Maguire Campus.

In addition to a celebration and tour of the new campus, we unveiled for the first time our Rise with Pride video series that highlights five different aspects of our school – Academics, Athletics, Student Life, Catholic School for Students of all Faiths and Pathways Through College.

You can view the videos on our website by clicking on the image below.



President John McConnell, introduced by Student Government President Rose Barreto, commenced the program with an opening speech...

*Welcome, all of you, to Cristo Rey Philadelphia High School at the Maguire Campus. I'm really pleased to see all of you here today.*

*This day marks a new beginning for Cristo Rey, but also the end of a long journey. The journey began in 2014 when our Board of Trustees decided to build a permanent home for Cristo Rey. Many of you here today were with us along the journey.*

*I see some of our graduates who are now college students and whose Cristo Rey experience never included this building. Some of them will be graduating from college this year! I also see some freshmen who began their Cristo Rey experience six weeks ago right here, and they will never know our beginnings at 5218 North Broad Street.*

*I see friends from Tioga who welcomed us into our new neighborhood more than four years ago. There is Carrie Kemp who lives on Westmoreland Street. Ms. Kemp, and many others in the neighborhood, endured two years of loud and dirty construction while we built the new school. We will*

*always be grateful for their patience and grace.*

*There's Captain Anthony Ginaldi from the 39<sup>th</sup> Police District. The 39<sup>th</sup> has partnered with us to keep our kids safe, and all of us at Cristo Rey are very grateful for that.*

*I see some elected officials who helped us along the way: Councilwoman Cindy Bass and State Senator Sharif Street.*

*I see the brilliant architects who designed this spectacular building: Jennifer Crawford, Darrin Jellison and Carmen Bushong from Blackney Hayes, and my good friend Lee Casaccio from Bernarden. I see some of our terrific builders: Clemens Construction, Devine Brothers, and others. And our bankers: TD Bank and Reinvestment Fund.*

*I see many of our Work Study Partners and Feeder School Partners and University Partners.*

*And, of course, I see donors ... many, many donors.*

*Today, we are gathered on the site of 20<sup>th</sup> century manufacturing and shipping buildings. Most were built in the early 1900s, but, by about 1980, the businesses shut down and the buildings were abandoned. The only building that still remained was a tricycle factory.*

*I know you will enjoy exploring the tricycle factory and our new building too, but it's not really the buildings that make us "the school that works." We were "the school that works" at 5218 North Broad Street, even without a shiny, new building.*

*When you look around today, see if you can discover the **real** reasons why we are "the school that works" ... the real reasons for the miracle of Cristo Rey.*

*Go visit the Deloitte Foundation Innovation Lab on the fourth floor of the factory and learn from the students about robotics and data analytics.*

*Check out the Fitness Center and ask the students about our nutrition and fitness programs. Ask them how much they love the healthy food in the cafeteria!*

*Go visit the Art Studio. We have terrific young artists but they never had an Art Studio. Ask the students to introduce you to their teachers, Mr. & Mrs. Fabulous.*

*Go to the Sanctuary and learn what it means to be "... a Catholic school for students of all faiths."*

*Talk with our students and our faculty and staff. Make sure you ask about how we teach and learn at Cristo Rey. Our methods are unique and powerful. They are a big part of the miracle.*

*Get the feel for our culture. Our culture enables the miracle. Our culture is based on a genuine love of the students and each other ... We are hopeful and optimistic ... We have very high expectations of our students and ourselves ... And we are not afraid of hard work.*

*When you understand our culture, you will understand the miracle, and you will see the bigger picture of what's happening here at Cristo Rey ... and what could happen everywhere else in Philadelphia.*

*You will become confident, like I am, that the problem of education in Philadelphia **can be solved!** ... That poverty in Philadelphia **can be eliminated!** ... That religion can **bind us together** and not tear us apart! ... That diversity and inclusion **make us better!** ... That, when people in this city work together, **we can do almost anything!***

*That's the miracle of Cristo Rey! That's why we are the school that works!*

*Now, let's talk about the cost of miracles.*

*Maybe in other times, miracles were cheap; But today, miracles are expensive!*

*It takes a lot of believers to make the miracle of Cristo Rey work. All of you are the believers that have made this miracle happen.*

*I can't thank all of you now, but I want to acknowledge one of our first and biggest miracle makers: The Maguire Foundation.*

*The first time I met Jim Maguire was in 2010, two years before we began. I brought a lot of facts and figures and a fancy PowerPoint, but Jim just wanted to talk. He asked me, "Where is the school going to be?" and I said that we didn't have a building yet. He asked me, "Who was going to be the Principal?" and I said we didn't have a Principal yet. He asked me, "Do you have any money?" and, of course, I had to say no.*

*Then he said, "Oh, I get it John. What you have is a PowerPoint!"*

*But Jim believed in the mission, and he understood the dream ... and The Maguire Foundation became one of the first angel investors in Cristo Rey Philadelphia. Their confidence in our dream inspired many others.*

*Later, The Maguire Foundation funded Work-Study internships, tuition scholarships, college scholarships, art programs and many other Cristo Rey ideas.*

*In 2014, when we began to dream about a permanent home for Cristo Rey, the Maguires led the way again with a foundational gift of \$5 million that supercharged the fundraising for this beautiful new school. That's why you are standing today in the permanent home of Cristo Rey Philadelphia at the Maguire Campus.*

*So, in closing, I would like you to stand, Jim, and I ask all of you here today to join me in thanking Jim and The Maguire Foundation for their faith in miracles.*

John McConnell  
Founder and President  
Cristo Rey Philadelphia High School

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## Grand Opening Photos



Click [here](#) to see more.

