

**March 19, 2020**

Dear Friends of Cristo Rey Philadelphia High School,

We are on our Spring break this week – a time to prepare for renewal. Next week we will go on a COVID-19 shutdown. It's impossible to know for how long.

On Monday, some students and staff came back to the school to collect books and other belongings. We issued chrome books to students who had no other means for communications and home study. Then we shut the building down for the duration.

For the past few weeks, we've started to plan and set up communications and support systems with students, families, staff and Work-Study Partners.



The academic team is preparing for a potentially extended period of at-home teaching and learning, which we will launch next week through virtual lesson plans and strong two-way communication.

The Work-Study team is in regular contact with our Work-Study Partners, and they are preparing an at-home business literacy program for the students on their regular work days.

Our food service team is exploring the possibility of providing curbside food pickups for families, and we've shared the locations set up by the City of Philadelphia to find free meals during this time.

The college counseling team will virtually assist the class of 2020 to finalize scholarships and to enroll in college.

Many of our graduates have been cut off from dorm rooms and meals at their colleges. Some are struggling to get home. Some can't access online classes because they lack the necessary technology. So, we have set up a help team of CRPHS staff and supporters who are already making a difference. If you want to contribute, click the button below, go to online donation and earmark your donation to "Community Emergency Fund."

[DONATE TO COMMUNITY EMERGENCY FUND](#)

We are also building new methods for 9th grade admissions, including virtual interviews and tours. Our Admissions team will continue their personal approach, but Ms. Evelin won't be able to hold a mother's hand when she promises her: "... Le damos la bienvenida a formar parte de nuestra familia."

By Tuesday morning I was restless at home, so I visited the school to see that the lockdown was secure. I walked through the building, turned off some lights and deposited sneakers into the lost and found. The building was quiet and dark. Instead of the usual positive energy, I felt an air of stillness, isolation and worry. I wondered how and when we would return to normal.

But I am confident that Cristo Rey Philadelphia will thrive again. We are a community of hopeful believers. We are passionately committed to the success of the students, and we don't give up when things get hard. Most importantly, we know that our students will inspire all of us, as they always do, with their resilience and perseverance.

Sincerely,

John McConnell  
Founder and President

