

April 8, 2020

Dear Friends of Cristo Rey Philadelphia High School,

The learning goal for the 9th grade Biology class on Monday was: SWBAT (Students Will Be Able To) virtually dissect a frog. On their chrome book. From home.

To prepare for the dissection, they used internet research resources and a PowerPoint developed by their teacher. Then, they completed an interactive virtual dissection, which was created for students preparing for college by McGraw Hill.

We are on a mission at Cristo Rey. We are helping to prepare tomorrow's leaders – the people who will rebuild our cities, lead our government and manage the crisis of tomorrow. So, we don't have time to waste just because we can't leave home.

That's why, even in the midst of a pandemic, life goes on at Cristo Rey with urgency.

Every morning at 8:20 am, students receive their Distance Learning Instructions from the Principal's Office. This email usually opens with some cheerful encouragement and then summarizes learning and homework requirements for the day. It also includes links to teacher instructions, information about faculty Zoom office hours, tips from the Counseling Department and contact info. Students even get a listing of "this week's birthdays". If it's their workday, students receive YPWBAT (Young Professionals Will Be Able To) instructions from the Work-Study Department.

We are trying to mimic the regular Cristo Rey experience, but with extra doses of individual responsibility and discipline that are required when working from home.

The students are still in regular contact with counseling and college counseling. Academic Support has created tutorials on using tools like Google Calendar. Fitness teachers are providing at-home workouts. Honors Convocation and Campus Ministry retreats are moving to social media.

Virtual fun happens too. Clever videos are circulating throughout the community keeping the Blue Pride culture alive. Facebook and Instagram are going strong. Check out the very popular CRPHS virtual dribbling competition:





Is virtual school working? It's probably too soon to tell. The majority of students are participating, but some are not.

Here is a sampling of student reactions: "I've learned a lot about taking initiative and being responsible for myself"; "It almost feels like we're in college"; "At first, I was excited to learn and work from home, but now ..."; "I miss my friends, I miss my teachers, and I desperately want to be in class learning like normal"; "All in all, it's been a wild ride."

The transition from learning in school to distance learning at home is not easy for the students nor the faculty. Are the students learning at the "in school" rate? Probably not. How will we "catch up"? We don't know yet.

But we know that we won't give up or simply "throw in the towel" for this school year. Our mission, the students, are too important for that.

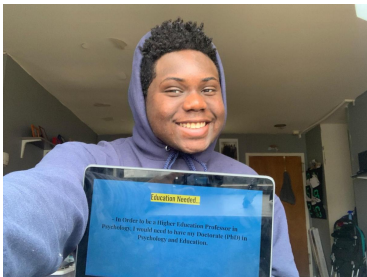
Sincerely,

John McConnell
Founder and President

CRPHS Distance Learning



The senior faculty team created a Zoom video for students, introducing the plans for the rest of the year and providing some tips for successful online learning.



Students are adjusting to their new "normal" for the foreseeable future, and staying connected with peers, teachers, family and community for support.

The Community Emergency Fund

To help contribute to the unanticipated expenses incurred by our graduates in college and our current students, please consider making a gift to Cristo Rey Philadelphia's Community Emergency Fund. 100% of donations will go directly to our alumni and families who are experiencing financial hardship as a result of COVID-19.

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