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## **New Investment Expands and Strengthens the Cristo Rey National Network of High Schools, Responding to the Needs of Urban Youth**

*\$6 million grant to grow network to 23 schools to provide 10,000 underserved students with more opportunities to succeed in high school, college and career*

CHICAGO – Today, Cristo Rey announced a \$6 million investment from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation to expand their network to 23 schools serving about 10,000 students in some of the nation's poorest urban areas. This investment will support upcoming new school openings and fund a network-wide professional development program to assist staff in meeting their students' needs.

Cristo Rey schools serve low-income and minority youth using a proven formula of rigorous coursework, an innovative work-study program and individualized support for all students. This unique Catholic college-prep education prepares *all* students – particularly those who are economically disadvantaged – to succeed in college and career. Admission is open to students of all faiths.

The Cristo Rey Network currently operates in 12 cities around the country and will expand in 2007 to include Baltimore, MD; Birmingham, AL; Indianapolis, IN; Minneapolis, MN; Omaha, NE; and Washington, DC. Locations for the next five schools in the network have yet to be determined.

According to the 2006 *Diplomas Count* report, about 3,000 kids drop out of high school every day, and fewer than 20 percent of African American and Latino students graduate ready for college-level academics. Cristo Rey schools have a proven track record at reversing this troubling trend. The four-year dropout rate for the network's Class of 2006 was 2.6 percent. Network-wide, 99 percent of the graduating class of 2006 was admitted to a two- or four-year college and 95 percent enrolled this past fall.

"We continue to be humbled by the terrific growth and achievements of young people in our schools, and it remains our mission to see them achieve their fullest potential," said John P. Foley, S.J., president of the Cristo Rey Network. "We are gratified to know that this investment will allow us to serve even more young people, so that they, too, can reap the benefits of this tremendous educational model."

The signature component of the Cristo Rey model is a work-study program in which all students are placed in entry-level jobs with local companies, including some of the nation's largest corporations such as Best Buy, PricewaterhouseCoopers, Deloitte & Touche, Blue Cross Blue Shield, Texas Instruments, and Nike. Students gain real world experience, connect with professional role models,

develop a strong work ethic, and pay for a significant portion of their tuition. All income earned on the job is disbursed directly to the school.

Cristo Rey schools almost exclusively serve low-income youth in some of the country's most challenging districts, and about 90 percent of students currently enrolled are Latino and African American. School officials deliberately seek out the lower-performing students. In Chicago, for example, those who have "tested in" to other Catholic schools in the district are not admitted to Cristo Rey. It is part of the school's mission to reach students who otherwise might not have a high-quality educational option available.

"All students, regardless of income or background, should have access to a high school education that truly can prepare them for success in college and in life," said Tom Vander Ark, executive director of education for the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, which has previously invested \$9.9 million in the school's network. "We are proud to partner with the Cristo Rey Network, whose efforts to bring innovation into urban education will continue to influence communities and students' lives for years to come."

At its high schools, Cristo Rey students benefit from a longer school day and year, academic assistance, counseling, and smaller class sizes. To improve their academic performance and build staff capacity, this investment will set in place a series of regional teacher and school leader trainings, and a best practices "think tank" that will eventually include video stream classroom techniques and offer real-time conversations between teachers as they observe one another's lessons. This will be particularly useful for new teachers who have limited experience working with students who live in poverty and who are below grade level.

The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation is focused on improving the nation's low high school graduation rates. To date, the foundation has invested more than \$1 billion to expand educational options for high school students by supporting the creation of more than 1,600 high-quality high schools in 42 states and the District of Columbia. Please visit [www.thenewsmarket.com/gatesfoundation](http://www.thenewsmarket.com/gatesfoundation) to download broadcast-quality video, b-roll footage, and other multimedia assets from the foundation's BroadcastRoom. The service is open to all credentialed journalists.

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### **Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation**

Guided by the belief that every life has equal value, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation works to reduce inequities and improve lives around the world. In developing countries, it focuses on improving health, reducing extreme poverty, and increasing access to technology in public libraries. In the United States, the foundation seeks to ensure that all people have access to a great education and to technology in public libraries. In its local region, it focuses on improving the lives of low-income families. Based in Seattle, the foundation is led by CEO Patty Stonesifer and Co-chairs William H. Gates Sr., Bill Gates, and Melinda French Gates.

## **Cristo Rey Network Schools**

### **Cambridge, MA – North Cambridge Catholic High School (2004)**

North Cambridge Catholic has an 85-year legacy of educating the children of immigrant and working class families throughout Greater Boston, and is the only coed conversion school in the Cristo Rey Network. One hundred percent of the class of 2005 and 2006 were accepted into college; for the past two academic years, 93 percent of the students were ranked by their Corporate Sponsors as “good” or “outstanding”; for the last two academic years there have been no dropouts, and admissions applications have increased 370 percent since the beginning of the Corporate Work-Study Program.

Contact: Margot Regan, 617-876-3939

Web site: [www.northcambridgecatholic.org](http://www.northcambridgecatholic.org)

### **Chicago, IL – Cristo Rey Jesuit High School (1996)**

The Chicago Province of Jesuits opened the school in 1996 to serve young people in Pilsen/Little Village, a Latino community on Chicago’s southwest side where dropout rates top 50 percent. Eighty-two percent of Cristo Rey’s alumni have graduated from or are currently enrolled in college [Note: 3.5 percent of 18-24 year olds in Pilsen have a college degree according to the 2000 U.S. Census.]

Contact: Peter Beale-Delvecchio, 773-890-6818

Web site: [www.cristorey.net](http://www.cristorey.net)

### **Cleveland, OH – St. Martin de Porres High School (2004)**

St. Martin de Porres is situated on the east side of Cleveland, Ohio. The school is dedicated to transforming urban Cleveland one student at a time through an innovative college preparatory curriculum rooted in the development of habits of mind and spirit, a unique partnership with the business community reflected in its Corporate Work-Study Program and a caring, Catholic community.

Contact: Carey Kuznar, 216-881-1689

Web site: [www.stmartindeporreshs.org](http://www.stmartindeporreshs.org)

### **Denver, CO – Arrupe Jesuit High School (2003)**

Arrupe Jesuit High School is the 47th college preparatory Jesuit High School in the United States and was designed primarily to serve the economically disadvantaged in the city of Denver. The Corporate Work-Study Program is an integral part of an Arrupe education, providing many opportunities for the students throughout the city of Denver. Entry-level office positions in banking, law, medicine, finance and many other exciting career opportunities are offered to each student.

Contact: Helen Martin, 303-455-7449

Web site: [www.arrupejesuit.com](http://www.arrupejesuit.com)

### **Kansas City, MO – Cristo Rey Kansas City High School (2006)**

Cristo Rey Kansas City, a Sisters of Charity of Leavenworth High School, opened August of 2006 and provides a Catholic, college prep education enhanced by an innovative Corporate Work-Study Program to culturally diverse students with economic need in the Kansas City metro area. Now in its first year, the school has enrolled 100 freshmen in its college prep curriculum and placed students in jobs at organizations and businesses throughout the Kansas City community.

Contact: Andy Stith, 816-457-6044

Web site: [www.cristoreykc.org](http://www.cristoreykc.org)

### **Lawrence, MA – Notre Dame High School (2004)**

Notre Dame High School is a family-centered, college preparatory, coeducational secondary school founded by the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur whose charism is “to make known the goodness of God.” The school provides quality education to youth whose access to culturally sensitive, innovative Catholic education might otherwise be beyond their means.

Contact: Mark Reimer, 978-689-8222 ext. 14

Web site: [www.ndhslaw.org](http://www.ndhslaw.org)

### **Los Angeles, CA – Verbum Dei High School (2002)**

Verbum Dei has been called an oasis in the midst of one of the most notoriously violent neighborhoods. Located in the middle of Los Angeles' Watts neighborhood, the school has been in "lock down" for several weeks during the past two school years because of gang wars in the nearby Nickerson Gardens housing complex. Verbum Dei is committed to holistically educating and developing students of southern Los Angeles to become leaders who are intellectually competent, spiritually rooted, and socially conscious.

Contact: Don Morgan, 323-564-6651 ext. 49

Web site: [www.verbumdei.us](http://www.verbumdei.us)

### **New York, NY – Cristo Rey New York High School (2004)**

Cristo Rey New York High School is a coeducational, college preparatory Catholic school whose mission is to provide an affordable alternative to low-income urban families for a small, quality, value-laden high school. The school is designed to reach students who would normally be unable to afford a Catholic or private secondary education. Cristo Rey New York High School has enrolled 120 students in their new freshman class, increasing the school's population to 188 students in grades 9 and 10 this year, and will add a new freshman class each year until the school reaches its capacity with 400 students in grades 9-12 in 2007.

Contact: Jessica Dawson O'Brien, 212-996-7000 ext. 202

Web site: [www.cristoreyny.org](http://www.cristoreyny.org)

### **Portland, OR – De La Salle North Catholic High School (2001)**

De La Salle North Catholic High School opened with 71 ninth graders during 2001, and has since grown to 193 students. The school's goal is to develop tomorrow's community leaders by making quality education accessible to aspiring and motivated young people. The program provides ethnically diverse, at-risk youth, opportunities to succeed with small classes, high expectations, personal attention, parent involvement, active participation in the Corporate Work-Study Program, a prolonged school day, and a 10 ½ month school year.

Contact: Tim Hennessy, 503-285-9385 ext. 115

Web site: [www.delasallenorth.org](http://www.delasallenorth.org)

### **Sacramento, CA – Cristo Rey High School, Sacramento (2006)**

Cristo Rey High School Sacramento opened its doors in August 2006 offering opportunity and hope to the first class of committed students: the class of 2010. Over the next three years, the student body of this innovative Catholic high school addressing underserved youth will grow to about 400 students and will provide a high quality college-preparatory education along with a unique work-study experience.

Contact: Joan Evans, 916-733-2660

Web site: [www.cristoreysacramento.org](http://www.cristoreysacramento.org)

### **Tucson, AZ – San Miguel Catholic High School (2004)**

San Miguel High School serves low-income families, especially those of Southside Tucson. Although the student body is mostly made up of Hispanic and Native American students, San Miguel aims to serve a diverse student body. San Miguel students possess a wide range of academic skills and abilities, but what they share in common is a desire to work and the dream of attending college.

Contact: Kay McLoughlin, 520-294-6403

Web site: [www.sanmiguelhigh.com](http://www.sanmiguelhigh.com)

**Waukegan, IL – St. Martin de Porres High School (2004)**

St. Martin de Porres High School, a Catholic, coeducational college preparatory school located in Waukegan, Illinois is committed to academic excellence made affordable through each student's participation in the Corporate Internship Program. The school strives to develop the full potential of each student in an atmosphere of mutual respect for the religious and cultural heritage of every individual. The student enrollment reached over 100 students by its opening in 2004, and has since grown to 142.

Contact: Bob Juozitis, 847-244-6895 ext. 233

Web site: [www.smdpwaukegan.org](http://www.smdpwaukegan.org)

**To open in 2007**

**Baltimore, MD**

Contact: Christie Coe, 410-727-3256

**Birmingham, AL**

Contact: Scott Denton, 205-781-3860

**Indianapolis, IN**

Contact: Anne O'Dea, 317-860-1000

**Minneapolis, MN**

Contact: David Haschka, 612-276-0140

**Omaha, NE**

Contact: Neal Wortmann, 402-734-1802

**Washington, DC**

Contact: Fr. Steve Shafran, 443-285-2520