
CRISTO REY JESUIT HIGH SCHOOL

THE MAGIS

IMPACT REPORT





Pictured: "The Pilgrim" statue of St. Ignatius of Loyola

THE LATIN WORD MAGIS MEANS "THE MORE" OR "THE GREATER."

The term appears in two important aspects of the Jesuit charism (or "spirit"): The first is in the Jesuit motto *Ad Majorem Dei Gloriam* ("For the greater glory of God"). The second is found in the *Spiritual Exercises* of St. Ignatius Loyola in which the retreatant reflects upon three questions: What have I done for Christ? What am I doing for Christ? What more ought I do for Christ? The spirit of the magis encourages us to examine where in our life we can be more intentional in our Christian witness in loving and serving our God.

The Magis Impact Report celebrates the achievements and constant pursuit of the Magis displayed by members of the Cristo Rey Jesuit community.

Cover Picture: Denise G. '26 performs at the 2023 Milwaukee Stars Merengue event

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Page 3: **A Message From President Andrew Stith**
Page 4: **The Impact of the Class of 2024**
Page 5: **The Impact of Your Investment**
Page 6: **Academic Impact**
Page 7: **Corporate Work Study Impact**
Page 8: **Student Life**
Page 9: **Ignation Innovation**
Page 10 - 11: **Student Service**
Page 12: **Alumni**
Page 13: **Admissions**
Page 14: **The Impact of Milwaukee Stars Merengue**



A MESSAGE FROM PRESIDENT ANDREW STITH

Welcome to 'The Magis', our new Impact Report magazine. The following pages will give you a chance to see the impact a Cristo Rey Jesuit education can have on our students and, in turn, our community. To begin, I want to share a story of a Trailblazer alumna. **Angie Sandoval took a risk and attended Cristo Rey Jesuit as part of the founding class.** She quickly became a leader among her peers and exhibited a strong work ethic in her classes. As a CRJ alumna, she became the first in her family to go to college, attending and graduating from UW-Madison.

Angie was hired after college by Johnson Controls. She spent four years there through Cristo Rey's Corporate Work Study Program, and they saw her professional growth first hand. In fact, in January 2018 Angie's supervisor wrote: *"Angie continues to perform at a high level and always with a great attitude. She accepts and welcomes new challenges and is eager to learn. She is a great asset to Johnson Controls."* As an employee with eight years of experience at Johnson Controls on her resume and as a newly minted college graduate, Angie continues to contribute as an analyst in their community affairs, governmental relations, and sustainability unit.

When we opened Cristo Rey Jesuit in 2015, we told the community that we believed there were young people with great talent in our city who weren't getting the opportunities they needed in their education to contribute fully with their gifts to our community. We also said that **our vision was to become an excellent Catholic and Jesuit high school which would provide colleges and our city with a pipeline of diverse, educated talent.** We are beginning to see now that the vision we set in 2015 is coming to fruition through alumni like Angie.

I am thankful to all of our families, staff, partners, benefactors and volunteers for walking with our students as they strive to achieve the Magis as they determine the impact that they will make by their college decision or career path. To quote Fr. John Foley, Founder of the Cristo Rey Network: *"Our world is awash in grace. Grace makes us excited about the future. The Kingdom is coming, and we are an essential part of that dream!"* Viva Cristo Rey!



CLASS OF 2024

GRADUATES WILL BE ATTENDING THE FOLLOWING COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES



“This is the first class that has reached 100% college acceptance before January. We congratulate them for reaching this milestone so quickly!”

- Director of Postgraduate Success Zuleyka Rios



UW-Milwaukee



Marquette University



UW-Madison



Milwaukee School of Engineering

TOP 5 COLLEGE CHOICES

98% of the class of 2024 will be the first in their family to attend college.



Mount Mary University

Maribel Mora, Class of 2024 Valedictorian, Attending Stanford University

6 years

Cristo Rey Jesuit High School work with alumni for up to 6 years after their high school graduation so they can earn their college degree.



7.5 college acceptances per student

90% of the Class of 2024 enrolled in college.

4

CRISTO REY JESUIT STUDENTS GRADUATE FROM COLLEGE AT TWICE THE RATE OF THEIR SOCIOECONOMIC PEERS. YOUR INVESTMENT IN OUR MISSION HELPS STUDENTS BECOME GRADUATES LIKE CRISTAL, '24:

I was introduced to Cristo Rey Jesuit High School through my brother Marco's experience as a member of the founding class. He would talk about how much he liked the school, his teachers and being a part of the community. When it was my turn to pick a high school, my mom saw the positive results from my brother's experience and urged me to go to CRJ as well. The idea of working in a corporate environment on a weekly basis as part of my education, in addition to the new building that I had seen pictures of, were both really intriguing to me, and I agreed that Cristo Rey Jesuit would be a great fit for me.



“My two younger sisters often tell me they can't wait to go to Cristo Rey Jesuit when they are old enough. They have seen and heard what the experience has done for my brother and me in preparing us for college and beyond. I love being a role model for them, and I love being a Trailblazer.”
- Cristal Navarro, '24

I can't thank my teachers enough for all the support that they offer and for how flexible they are to be available to students through office hours or after school. They have shown me and my classmates over and over how much they care. We don't feel like we are just students to them - they are with us to help in any way they can.

I have worked for the past three years at Michael Best through the Corporate Work Study Program (CWSP) as well as during the summer. **CWSP gave me very valuable work experience as well as networking connections I never would've had access to.** During my college selection process, I was able to talk with one of my co-workers who graduated from Marquette University about their experience and get answers to some questions that I had from them. I had such a great relationship with my supervisors and co-workers. They made me feel welcome and like a part of their team and not just a student worker. In fact, they even took me out for a celebration lunch when I was accepted to Marquette University.

Coming to Cristo Rey Jesuit High School, I was new to what a 'Jesuit' education meant. I really connected with the idea of service to others. **During my time at CRJ, I felt inspired by the Jesuit mission to volunteer after school as a mentor for middle school girls.** We would do an hour of sports and an hour of academics with the girls, and seeing the growth these girls had made me thank God that I could be there to help others in my community. My Jesuit education helped me to be more grateful, more present in the moment and that my attitude can help others grow.

The clubs at Cristo Rey Jesuit have also helped me grow as a person. I spent two years in our Orgullo Latino club, including as vice president during my senior year. It has helped me grow in my culture as well as a person through the social justice aspects that the club explores. I want to be an advocate for those who don't have a voice and affect change in my community.

My personal experiences with mental health issues through members of my family have inspired me to be a clinical psychologist. I want to help others who face mental health challenges and be someone people can reach out to for help. **I am attending Marquette University to pursue this career path through a Jesuit education.**



BY THE NUMBERS

95%

average daily attendance

\$24M

in scholarships and grants awarded to the Class of 2024

830

Open House Attendees, a 14% increase

85%

of juniors and seniors took at least one Advanced Placement course

14,500

hours of service completed by the student body

2

National Questbridge full-ride scholarship recipients

100+

minutes of daily innovation lab access provided to students

2

Lake City Conference Championships

30

Presidential Scholarships awarded to incoming CRJ freshmen

89

of 113 graduates attending a Wisconsin college or university



Through collaboration, creativity, and preparation, **Cristo Rey Jesuit engaged 460 students in real-world work experience building professional skills in 2023-24.** Thanks to our corporate partners, Cristo Rey Jesuit was able to continue supporting and developing a diverse, qualified talent pipeline for greater Milwaukee. Through innovation and partnership with Cristo Rey Jesuit, area businesses transform our community one student at a time.

102

local businesses and organizations partner with Cristo Rey Jesuit

78%

retention rate of founding partners since 2015

97%

exceed supervisor expectations as rated on performance reviews

400

miles traveled each day by CRJ vans transporting students to and from work

CAREER TRAILS

In alignment with our strategic plan to be a pipeline for talent and build a more thoughtful and meaningful work-study experience, Career Trails was inaugurated in 2023. In addition to invaluable work experience, students receive five opportunities throughout the school year to learn more about various career paths and connect to choice employers. Thanks to the following foundations for their support of the inaugural Career Trails programming - Anon Foundation, Gebhardt Foundation and Ralph Evinrude Foundation.



OPTIMAL FIT PLACEMENTS

Considerations for CWSP placement now include: Myers Briggs Type Indicator evaluations, Career Interest Inventories, Student Annual Performance Reviews, and personal and professional fit.

UPSKILLED TALENT

For scholars interested in gaining certifications for skilled roles, Cristo Rey now offers various certification programs. Last year, 21 students served as Certified Nursing Assistants in high-quality institutions such as Froedtert Hospital and St. Camillus Residence. Additionally, several students worked towards their A+ certification in Information Technology.



THE RESULT



We have been mutually enriched by working with our Cristo Rey students, and I highly recommend it for any business in Milwaukee.

*Terry Tuttle
President, HellermannTyton
North America*



The Cristo Rey Corporate Work Study Program gave me the knowledge, skills, and network to be successful at college and life. At Marquette, I continued my work with Northwestern Mutual until I landed my role with Baird Advisors.

*Adrian Mora, '19
Portfolio Analyst, Baird*



STUDENT LIFE



“BE TRANSFORMED: MEN AND WOMEN FOR OTHERS”

By: Aydee Cruz, Class of 2024

“Be Transformed: Men and Women for Others” was the theme for the 2023-24 school year. Throughout the academic year, our school provided rich cultural engagement opportunities designed to foster a sense of community and social responsibility among students. From spirited pep rallies to cheer on our student athletes, bake sales to raise money for important causes, and elegant school dances to transformative retreats, community service opportunities and theater productions, our calendar is replete with activities that not only celebrate our collective heritage but also challenge us to confront issues of social justice. Through these experiences, students are encouraged to embrace their roles as agents of positive change; to be transformed as men and women for others.



ENABLING IGNATIAN INNOVATION

CRJ students brought their design and entrepreneurial ideas to life throughout the year in the Northwestern Mutual Ignatian Innovation Center. CRJ's new Innovation Lab Specialist Andrea Spykstra was instrumental in creating dozens of new opportunities for students to use the equipment.

A major focus for the year was to spark creativity by integrating innovation skills-based projects into other academic courses. **Thanks to the grant support from the Northwestern Mutual Hispanic Employee Resource Group**, the Center was able to add design-capable laptops for up to 20 students to use at one time. This enabled Spykstra and Director of Innovation Andrew BoddySpargo to begin collaborations with other teachers that helped students apply problem solving and design thinking in different contexts. For example:

- Seniors in physics made their own Rube Goldberg machines after a unit on energy, momentum, and force
- Finance students created t-shirts and stickers using design software and the vinyl printer, then used the sales of those products to learn about market research and bookkeeping
- Students in US Government teamed up to produce podcast episodes and infographics to share what they learned about the 1st Amendment

In the 2024-25 school year, students will have the opportunity to join CRJ's inaugural FIRST Robotics team! The Robotics team will build a fully-functioning mobile robot that will be entered into competition with robots from other teams across the country.



CRJ FRESHMAN LEADS DISCOVERY WORLD EXHIBIT REDESIGN

Eager to make an impact in his job placement at Discovery World, Nery, '27 quickly noticed that the Invertebrate Touch Tank was an underutilized exhibit compared to other high traffic experiences in the aquarium. *"I saw that the Touch Tank was being overlooked by guests which made me try to think of a redesign for the tank so it would also get the same amount of attention that other touch tanks have."*

After conducting some research, **Nery created a four page proposal on how the exhibit could become much more engaging to Discovery World guests.** Through his proposal work, Nery collaborated with teams at Discovery World ranging from Education, Marketing, Graphics & Design, Aquarists, Exhibits Maintenance, and more. Nery's proposal resulted in changes made to the overhead lighting, seating and staff placement throughout the entire Reiman Aquarium to increase guest access to the Touch Tank.

Nery shared that his Summer Bridge training made him feel prepared for his work placement. *"When I found out I would be working at Discovery World, I was excited to show that I'm responsible enough to work at such a beautiful place."*

"The Corporate Work Study Program was pretty important for me in choosing to attend Cristo Rey Jesuit. Being able to have work experience is something that's really cool and rewarding."
- Nery, Class of 2027



INTERNATIONAL SERVICE TRIP BRINGS WATER TO DOMINICAN REPUBLIC COMMUNITY

When you think of a trip to the Dominican Republic, your imagination may fill with pictures of sandy beaches, palm trees, and relaxing by the ocean with a cold drink in your hand. The CRJ team of 12 students and 3 members of the faith formation team spent nine days in the Dominican Republic this August, but it had nothing to do with vacation. Instead, they helped to build an aqueduct for a rural community of 135 homes that did not have access to clean running water. **This trip was made possible thanks to Alter Metal Recycling's Go Green for the Green program in April that raised over \$28,000 to support the trip.**

Campus Ministry Director Isabel Guerrero said, "This was the first international service trip for our school, and it came to mean many things. It meant being okay with being uncomfortable and allowing ourselves to be open to growth. It meant looking at the work that lay before us each day and checking in with ourselves and one another as a group to see how we could be supportive."

Each morning, the group would wake to the sound of roosters in the road, head down to the "comedor" (dining room) of the main house, and eat together. After breakfast, they would load into the back of the truck or walk down the steep hill to the day's work site, where everyone would work until 5 PM, including a break for lunch. The work consisted of moving PVC tubes across a small river, digging trenches on the mountain with shovels and pickaxes, laying the tubes, and preparing them to be connected to the water source. At the end of every night, the group would come together and reflect on the joy and hope that was felt throughout the day while enjoying a home cooked meal that was prepared by members of the local community.

Sebastian '26 was moved by the amount of happiness and positivity he personally felt and surrounded the group during their trip.

"Knowing that the work you are doing will have a major impact on people's lives is a unique feeling, and it felt amazing! For me it felt like a super power because even when I got blisters, I knew the impact this work would have, and that kept me going. The best part of the trip was the joy I felt, working with these villagers and my friends. The amount of positivity the people projected, even though they don't have the best things in the world, they always had something to smile for and to laugh at. It was amazing to see how God connected through all these people."



BEING MEN AND WOMEN FOR AND WITH OTHERS

"We will nurture our students to be men and women in service to, and with, others through academic achievement, business experience, faith formation and civic leadership." This is the CRJ promise. **CRJ students went above and beyond this year to put their faith into action thanks to the grant support from the Archdiocese of Milwaukee GIFTS program.**

Before the 2023 school year even began, CRJ staff and 5 students trekked to **Jerusalem Farm in Kansas City, MO** to help with a variety of projects while living simply for an entire week. They experienced first hand some of the social justice issues facing our own country as well as ways they can help drive change. They worked side by side with residents to build and fix homes, tend the garden which sustains staff and volunteers throughout the year, and build a shed for a local school all while praying together and developing deeper relationships in the absence of cell phones and other distractions.

In the fall, students kicked off a new immersive service experience right here in Milwaukee called **Labre Ministry to the Homeless** where 5 times per semester, 15 CRJ students prepare bagged lunches and then go out directly to individuals experiencing homelessness to offer the meal as well as some friendly company. These excursions follow a model set by the Labre program originally founded by a fellow Jesuit high school in Cleveland.

Just before Christmas, the school community came together for the second year in a row - in partnership with Feeding America and Phoenix Investors - **to pack and distribute 800 boxes of pantry staples to families in the community.** Recipients also received a gift card in each box donated by El Rey

Foods for them to purchase fresh meat or produce. In early spring, dozens of students and staff gathered weekly after school to pick up trash from the street and sidewalks around the Clarke Square neighborhood.

Together, CRJ students have logged a total of 14,500 hours of service to their community. That's an average of more than 31 hours per student! *"There's literally no words to explain how good it feels to show some kindness and some empathy and have people smile at you and thank you and tell you, 'God bless you,'"* said Brianna, '25.



ALUMNI



“This was a huge moment, and it taught me to think BIG! I will take this experience and immediately implement it towards tailoring my career to what I want it to become.”
- Imanol, Class of 2020

ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT: IMANOL RUIZ, '20

In August 2023, CRJ alum Imanol Ruiz, '20 was in the middle of production on his senior thesis at UWM. Ruiz was a film student, meaning he needed to produce a 15-minute short film on a subject of his choice. Ruiz chose to do a documentary titled “The Time You Were Given” about three retired Catholic priests who look back on the choices they’ve made in their lives and ask ‘was it all worth it?’

“This film came as a result of reflecting on major changes in my life. I was about to graduate college and in many ways a version of me was ending and a new version of me was coming to life.” Ruiz estimated that he spent a year on the project from the time he came up with the idea until he finished the final cut, which was screened at UWM. **His film was then nominated for the Mometu College Shorts Film Festival in Los Angeles, and Ruiz ended up winning the best documentary category.** Ruiz attended the screening of his film at the film festival in July at The Harmony Gold Theater.

ALUMNI HELP CLASS OF 2024 BECOME COLLEGE READY WITH Q&A PANEL

The definition of a Trailblazer is *“the first person to do something or go somewhere, who shows that it is also possible for other people.”* Thirteen Cristo Rey Jesuit alumni returned to their alma mater to do just that by sharing their college advice with the Class of 2024 through discussion panels as part of the seniors’ College Readiness class.

While alumni have stopped by in the past to speak to classes, this was the first instance of a formal discussion panel with alumni. **The goal was to give CRJ seniors a chance to envision what their next calendar year will look like and learn more about being a college student from actual college students.**

Emmanuel, '24 added that the panel was really informative in what the college experience entailed. *“I enjoyed getting actual current advice from college students who are trying to help us navigate through college in their first year. It was comforting to know their experiences, and that we’re not alone.”*



“It’s an honor to be able to come back to CRJ. The first semester of college can be a really challenging time for students so I hope my experience and advice, as well as those of my fellow alumni, can help these current students achieve success right away.”

**- Jonathan Andrade Plascencia,
Class of 2022**

ADMISSIONS

“I’m really enjoying Summer Bridge so far. Also, if I wasn’t here, I would be at home, and my mom would be making me do chores so this is much more fun.”
- Journey, Class of 2028



WELCOMING THE INCOMING CLASS OF 2028

For most students, June is a month that means summer vacation. For incoming Cristo Rey Jesuit students, June means the start of Summer Bridge. The four week program welcomes incoming freshmen as well as prepares them for everything that a CRJ education entails while building community with their classmates. **The Class of 2028 is the one of the largest in the history of CRJ Milwaukee with 125 students.**

During the first week of Summer Bridge, students worked on their professional introductions through the Speed Networking Lunch hosted by the Corporate Work Study Program. In addition to learning work place skills, students are exploring everything from AI literacy skills to entrepreneurship to analyzing text.

We appreciate the commitment and dedication of our faculty, staff, and community volunteers, who spend these four weeks preparing the Class of 2028. We look forward to welcoming all the students back at the beginning of the 2024-25 school year, which will be Cristo Rey Jesuit’s 10th year of operation!



“Something I tell other people and parents is that if you have a student that would like to work and like to learn, they should go to CRJ. If they don’t, they should go somewhere else.”
- Cesar Cerda

THROUGH A PARENT’S EYES

By: Cesar Cerda, parent of Reyli ‘25

When my family was looking for a place for Reyli to attend high school, we would always get great feedback from other families about Cristo Rey Jesuit High School. During her time here, I have seen her succeed and grow as a person and a student. She has learned the importance of responsibility and time management. Her teachers have worked with her to prepare her for college, and she has received experiences through Corporate Work Study that she wouldn’t be able to get anywhere else. **I don’t know of any other place that provides access to these types of opportunities.**

My favorite part about Cristo Rey Jesuit is that I am able to work with Corporate Work Study as a van driver. I love to be able to work at the school where my daughter is studying. It allows me to be close to her. Being a van driver also allows me to hear how the students’ work went, their experiences and what they learned. Some had a very good day at work and others share about the work they did that day. Through this experience, I get to know more of this city, places I never thought I would know, and the important companies in this city that give students a great opportunity to help them with their future.



MILWAUKEE STARS MERENGUE EVENT CREATES VITAL FUNDS FOR CRJ STUDENTS

Thanks to the generosity of more than 40 sponsors and countless individuals, **more than \$700,000 was raised to affect generational change through transformational education.** Congratulations to our 2023 Grand Ballroom Champion Nelson Lang and Judges Choice Winner Melinda Randa! Thank you to the Cristo Rey Jesuit community for making this such an incredible night. Most importantly, thank you to our eight Milwaukee stars who helped make it such an incredible evening:

- Kathryn Campbell** - Clarios
- Sandra Dempsey** - Catholic Financial Life, Source10
- Jorjio Hopkins** - MLG Capital
- Nelson Lang** - El Rey Foods
- Meg Loduha** - St. Jude the Apostle Parish Wauwatosa
- Vincent Lyles** - Milwaukee Succeeds
- Andy Nunemaker** - Groupware Technologies
- Melinda Randa** - Adoption Services Inc.



Don't miss the opportunity to attend the seventh annual Milwaukee Stars Merengue on Saturday, November 9th at the Baird Center Rooftop Ballroom in Downtown Milwaukee. Scan the QR code to get your tickets and vote for this year's Merengue Stars!

RESERVE YOUR SEAT: MILWAUKEE STARS MERENGUE

NOVEMBER 9

2024





THE MAGIS



CRISTO REY

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