



What It Takes

Doing the *Magis* at

Chicago Jesuit Academy

Annual Report 2015

FOR FAMILIES AND FRIENDS OF CHICAGO JESUIT ACADEMY



“CJA is like my second family. I trust the teachers and they taught me everything I needed to know before graduation. **Thank you for making this all possible.** Now I’m able to continue down the right path towards a bright future. Ultimately, I’m planning to give back to the school that has made me into a man. That school is Chicago Jesuit Academy.”

Shermar, *Class of 2015*

A Letter from the President

A.M.D.G.

August 2015

Dear Friends,

During a quiet moment before school recently, I had the opportunity to talk with one of our parents about her experiences at her son's prior school. He had previously attended his neighborhood elementary school, and as he moved from third to fourth grade his mom had grown increasingly concerned about the quality of his education.

At the start of fourth grade, she approached his new teacher to see if there were any enrichment opportunities for her son at the school. The teacher was kind, but struggling to manage her packed classroom of thirty-four students. She contended that with nineteen boys in her class, most days were a battle just to keep order. The teacher said she would try to find a few more challenging activities for our parent's son, but she never did.

Our parent wanted her son to go to college, and she realized he was falling away from that path. That's when she went looking for another school and found CJA through a trusted friend.

Her story mirrors the stories we have heard from several parents since the founding of CJA in 2005. It's the story of talented, strong and capable young men who haven't been given the chance to learn in a school with the structure, support and rigor they deserve. When these students start their studies with us at CJA, our teachers often get phone calls from their parents saying, "CJA is what my son always hoped school could be."

For many of our other families, their experiences with school before CJA were much more difficult. Some students were previously denied critical services. This was the case for a student with Tourette syndrome, whom his former principal had derisively called "bird boy" because of his involuntary verbal chirps. Other students enroll at CJA unable to read – putting them well below the third-grade grade equivalency where most of our fifth graders begin their studies at CJA. A heartbreaking number of our students and their families are also struggling to manage recent losses of loved ones to the violence in our neighborhood.

This is why we are so deliberate in everything we do at Chicago Jesuit Academy.

It's why Mr. Diehl or Mr. Beckley greets each student every morning with a firm handshake while asking, "Is there anything that you need from me?" It's not a throwaway line, but rather a heartfelt question. If a student responds with a silent shrug or presents with tear-stained cheeks, his next stop will likely be a special breakfast with Ms. Fleming – one of our amazingly dedicated social workers. If instead a student is wheezing or feverish, he'll go directly to our school nurse, Mrs. Gilmour. Our goal is to take stock of the unique context of each student.

I'm always amazed by how many students answer the question with only a warm smile and a polite, "No, thank you." They have reservoirs of determination and courage that I don't think I would have been able to tap when I was 10, 11 or 12 years old. Despite so many obstacles, our young men find their way to CJA ready for the challenges of a new day.

...

As a Jesuit school, we call this the *magis* – the pursuit of the qualitative "more" in the service of the universal good. The pages that follow are filled with stories about the great things that happen when our students, alumni, families, faculty, staff and friends ask themselves, "What more am I called to do in the service of others with the gifts entrusted to me by God?" I hope you join me in taking great inspiration from these stories and the beautiful ways in which so many talented people within our school community are choosing to answer that question.

Thank you once again for believing in the promise of our students.

In gratitude,



Matthew Lynch
President

Chicago Jesuit Academy

Class of 2015



“You have a purpose that reaches beyond anything you, me, your parents or anyone else may even be able to distill in this moment. Still, I know for certain that you have a purpose granted from above that gives you more value than any of us can ever realize.”

Mr. Blake Sercye, 2015 Commencement Speaker



Grad-At-Grad Award Winners

Religious

Awarded to Shermar by Mr. Beckley
“Shermar has chosen the greatest rule of all – to love God with all his heart, with all his mind and with all his soul, and to love his neighbor as himself.”



Intellectually Competent

Awarded to Calyle by Mr. Diehl
“Three things will always stick with me about Calyle: how he is humble enough to ask questions and follow-up questions, how much time and effort he puts into his learning and how little it seems he does his work simply because someone tells him to.”



Loving

Awarded to Shermar and Cecil by Mr. Kane
“Shermar and Cecil have given me extra life, they have given each of their peers extra life, they have given this school extra life, simply through love. Through acts of affection, kindness, and care you have made CJA a better place and saved me many times.”



Committed to Doing Justice

Awarded to Amari by Mr. Houlihan
“I can’t even begin to name all of the ways that he makes his classroom and his school better places to be. He influences his classmates daily, and I’ve never seen him ask for a reward. He just does it, because doing it is right, and that is the reward.”



Open to Growth

Awarded to Kentrell by Mr. Young
“Of particular importance is his remarkable patience with classmates who were struggling to make the right choices. This didn’t come from any sense of being better than his classmates, but from a realization that they all need to learn and grow together.”



In Gratitude

For Our Faculty

Prince
“I recognize that I’ve received a significant gift from the faculty and staff of CJA, and I look forward to sharing this gift with others. I’ll share it with my family, my friends and my classmates in high school. My education at CJA mattered.”



For Our Benefactors

Kristian
“We’ve seen and done things that I never dreamt I would. The benefactors made that happen because they have hope and confidence in us. They invest in young men who can do anything they put their minds to, and I intend to honor their investment.”



For Our Parents & Families

Tyreick
“Our families are really important to our achievements. By feeding us, caring for us, and loving us at our most difficult moments, our families made it possible for us to concentrate on school and learning. By partnering with CJA, our families helped us trust that the work was worth it.”



High School

Acceptances

Private Catholic

De La Salle Institute
Loyola Academy
St. Ignatius College Prep

Boarding

Culver Academies
Episcopal High School
Lake Forest Academy
La Lumiere School

CPS Selective Enrollment

Brooks College Prep
Lane Tech College Prep
Walter Payton College Prep
Whitney Young

Noble Network Schools

Baker College Prep
Butler College Prep
Chicago Bulls College Prep
DRW College Prep
Golder College Prep
Hansberry College Prep
Johnson College Prep
Muchin College Prep
Noble Street College Prep
Rauner College Prep
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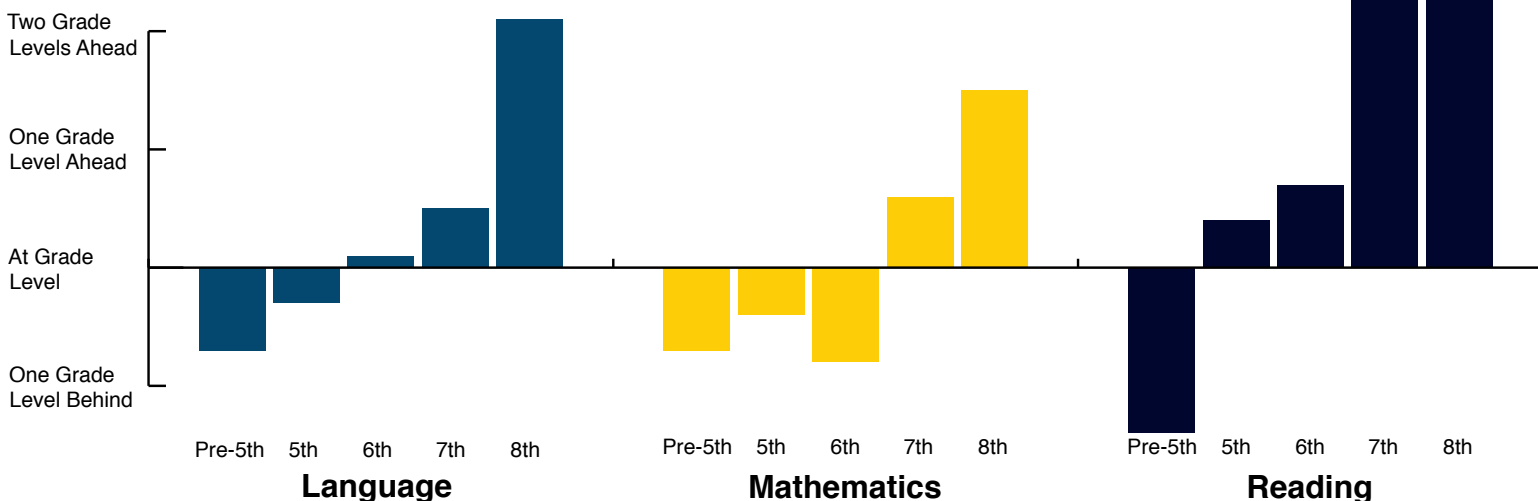
Academic

Growth

Though the Class of 2015 entered CJA testing higher than many other CJA classes, on average they still lagged behind their peers nationwide – over half a grade behind in Language and Math and a grade and a half behind in Reading.

However, they quickly made up for lost time. By the end of fifth grade, on average, they were testing above grade level in Reading. By the end of sixth grade they had caught up in Language and by the end of seventh grade they had caught up in Math. By graduation, the Class of 2015 was testing as high as many of their future classmates in college prep high schools across the country – on average, above the tenth-grade level in Language and Math and above the eleventh-grade level in Reading.

Class of 2015 Testing Growth



Scholarships



Magis Scholarship

\$5,000 per year for four years

provides a CJA student with critical resources including access to social workers, a school nurse, a reading specialist, remedial tutoring and group counseling to help overcome one-time traumas, chronic struggles and other special needs.

Core Scholarship

\$12,500 per year for four years

funds an excellent college prep education for 9.5 hours per day and 11 months per year to prepare students for the rigors of college prep high schools.

Comprehensive Scholarship

\$17,500 per year for four years

provides all of the resources of both the Magis and Core Scholarships for a CJA student.

Chicago Jesuit Academy relies entirely on the generosity of others to offer a full-scholarship, college prep education to young men who otherwise would not be able to afford it. That generosity ensures that our students will receive an excellent middle school education, as well as the advocacy and support they will need throughout high school and college through CJA's College-Persistence Programs.

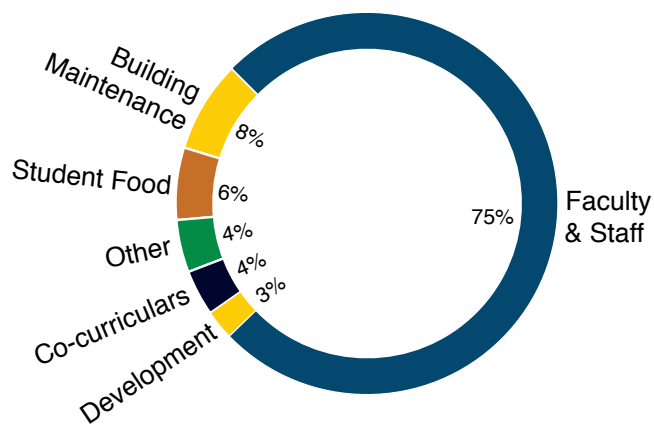
Benefactors who choose to support CJA are investing in the long-term future of our young men. That investment signals a belief in their promise – not only as students, but as gentlemen who are committed to doing justice in the service of others.

If you are interested in learning more about becoming a scholarship benefactor, please contact Mrs. Maria Lefkow Sorensen, Director of Development, at (773) 696-4907 or by email at sorensen@cjademy.org.

A Glance at

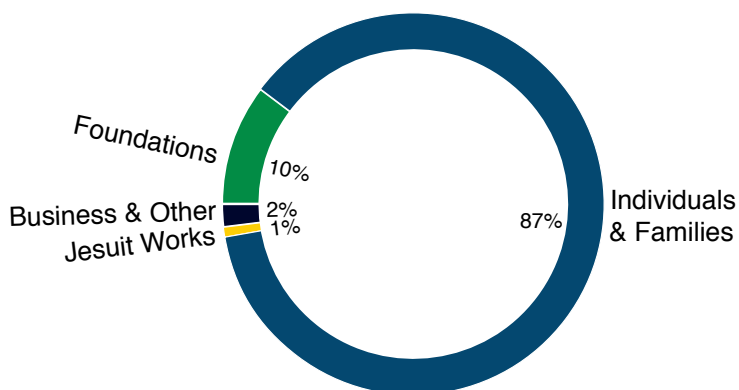
Our Financials

Expenses by Category



Total FY14-15 Expenses:
\$3,004,036

Funding Summary by Constituents



Audited financials are available upon request.
Please contact Mrs. Maria Lefkow Sorensen.

Alex, CJA Class of 2018

and Mr. Gardner, Volunteer

When students begin at CJA in the summer Higher Achievement Program (HAP) prior to their fifth-grade year, CJA faculty and staff use the small class sizes of 12 to 14 students to determine what each student will need to find success. For some, the rigor and structure of CJA classrooms are what they need to grow. For others, checking in with a social worker on a daily basis helps keep them on track. For students like Alex, access to volunteers like Mr. Gardner can supplement their work in the classroom with individualized reading and writing support. Over 50 volunteers gave their time, care and love to CJA students in the 2014-15 school year by tutoring, building strong relationships and offering administrative support to faculty and staff. **If you would like to volunteer your time or expertise, please contact CJA's Volunteer Coordinator, Ms. Terese Hagerty at hagerty@cjademy.org.**

Marvin, CJA Class of 2017

and Mr. Mason, Faculty Member

When students enter seventh grade at CJA, the change in their uniform signals their growth as leaders in the school and our rising level of expectations for their work. Whether students like Marvin are learning pre-algebra in Mr. Mason's Math class or reading and analyzing poetry in Language Arts, they are preparing for rigorous college prep high schools. With the support of teachers and CJA's College-Persistence Team, seventh- and eighth-grade students begin to learn about the scope and complexity of the high school landscape and consider what schools will best fit their talents and needs. The College-Persistence Team then works with the students and their families to successfully navigate the high school admissions process.



Making the *Magis* Possible

Every Step from Fifth Grade through College

Amari, CJA Class of 2015

and Mrs. Curtis, Parent and Staff Member

As students graduate from CJA and enter high school, the College-Persistence Team continues their partnership with students and families by serving as supplementary guidance counselors, offering summer employment opportunities and caring for the academic and socio-emotional needs of alumni. Fortunately for Amari (CJA Class of 2015, Culver Academies Class of 2019), seeing his mother and visiting the College-Persistence Team can happen all at once – Mrs. Curtis serves on staff as CJA’s Administrative Assistant to the Principal and co-leads the Parent Involvement Initiative. Mrs. Curtis engages CJA parents and families through community events like BINGO nights, field days and parent volunteer days in addition to her work helping to recruit future CJA students.

DaMarcus, CJA Class of 2009

and Mrs. Lenti, Board Member

CJA’s oldest alumni from the Classes of 2009, 2010 and 2011 are now attending colleges such as Denison, DePaul, Fordham, Occidental, Northwestern and Loyola University Chicago’s newly-formed Arrupe College. When DaMarcus (CJA Class of 2009, DeLaSalle Class of 2013, Knox College Class of 2017) was searching for a summer internship, the College-Persistence Team connected him with Mrs. Lenti – a CJA Board Member and Executive Vice President at Wintrust Commercial Banking. Mrs. Lenti joined several other board members in advocating for CJA alumni to serve as summer interns at businesses like Wintrust, Heico, Navman Wireless and Walsh Construction. As an Economics major, the internship at Wintrust will give DaMarcus crucial experience as he enters his junior year at Knox and prepares for his next step into the professional world.



What It Takes



Doing the *Magis* at CJA

What do students need to truly succeed?

At CJA, the answer lies first and foremost with people: parents, teachers, volunteers, benefactors, social workers, healthcare professionals, counselors, speech pathologists and coaches.

They meet each student where they are and collaboratively help them find success, no matter the obstacles in that child's way. In the Jesuit tradition, this care for the whole person is called *cura personalis*, and this idea is at the center of CJA's work.

For the students CJA serves, the road to a college degree and meaningful employment is full of obstacles. Research shows that only **6 in 100** African-American males in Chicago Public Schools – and nationwide, only **9 in 100** students from the lowest income quartile – attain a 4-year college degree by their mid-twenties. As a result, CJA students must have access to more, or the *magis*.

Academics

On average, students begin their studies at CJA in fifth grade testing between the third-grade and fourth-grade level in reading and mathematics. As a non-selective school, CJA's structure is built to deliberately assess and overcome these academic hurdles with teachers leading class sizes of 12 to 14 students in fifth and sixth grade and 20 to 24 students in seventh and eighth grade. This

structure is built into a 9.5-hour school day and 11-month school year so as to add more instructional time and turn summer melt into summer growth.

“We serve a huge range of students. Some join us reading at emerging levels and struggle to sound out words and decode. Others are reading advanced texts and need to be challenged more,” explains Emma Driscoll, CJA's seventh-grade Language Arts teacher who also directs reading interventions. “In order to serve these students, we have a reading specialist, learning specialist, volunteers and social work interns who perform reading interventions for small groups of 1 to 3 students to really work on phonics, fluency and comprehension needs at each level.”

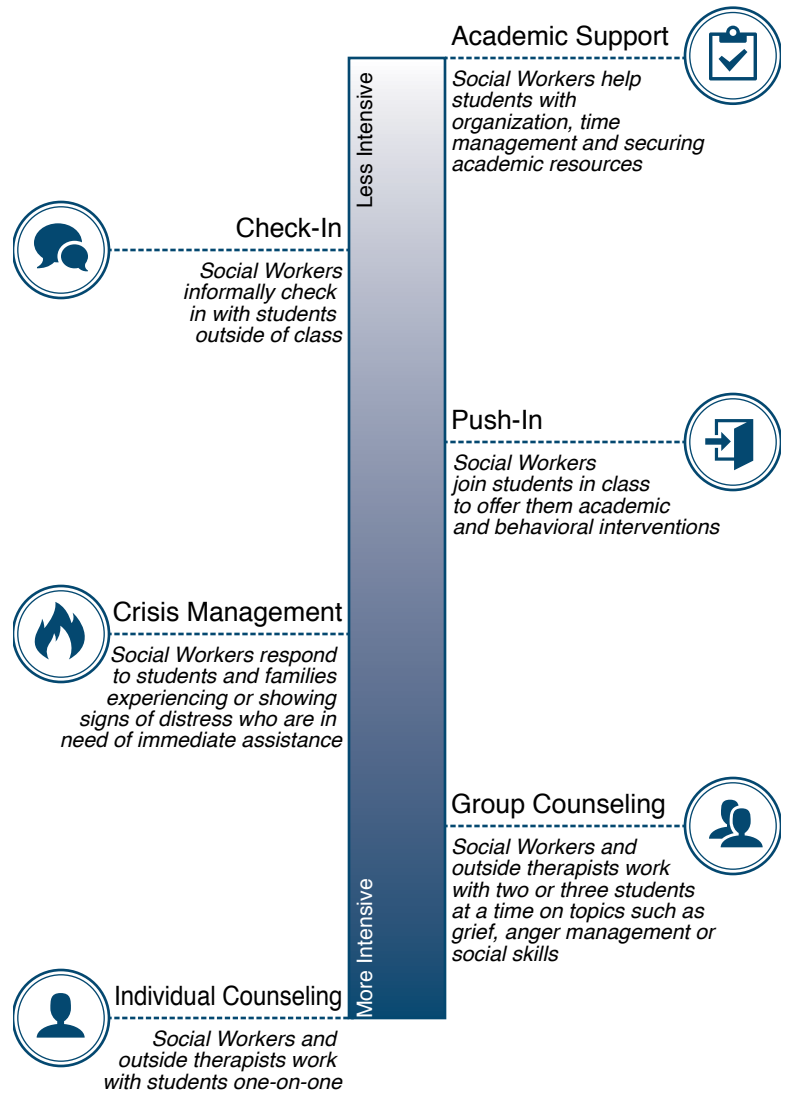
Tutors and volunteers play a critically important role in ensuring students have the one-on-one and small group support they need throughout the extended school day and school year.

“We pair students with volunteers based on the student's needs,” says Terese Hagerty, CJA's Volunteer Coordinator and fifth-grade Science teacher. “Some teachers will choose to have volunteers pull out students for mini-lessons in a small group. Others will push into the classroom and help a specific student or students stay focused and organized. Our volunteers also play a vital role in supporting students' social and emotional growth. They consistently show great care for our students.”



Mrs. Jenna Boyle, Dean of Academics, works with Calyle

Social Work Interventions at CJA



Social and Emotional Growth

Every student attending CJA is offered the love and support that they need in order to find success. The majority of incoming fifth-grade students arrive having been in classes of over 30 students at their previous schools.

“Our students who struggle academically often experience low confidence levels which results in them engaging in problematic behaviors,” explains Raynesia Fleming, CJA’s Lead Social Worker.

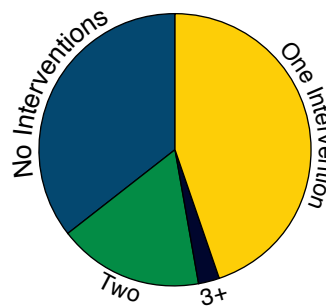
As with all middle school students, the social pressure to be considered “cool” or “tough” is beginning to take shape around the age when students enter CJA. This pressure can begin to influence their understanding of what it means to be a young man and what it will take to be a “gentleman for others.” To begin addressing these obstacles in a deliberate way, CJA faculty and staff lead students in daily Formation classes that begin with the Examen – a reflective prayer adapted from St. Ignatius’ Spiritual Exercises – and end with a discussion around topics like bullying, manhood and family.

“We pair students with volunteers based on the student’s needs. Our volunteers play a vital role in supporting students’ social and emotional growth.”

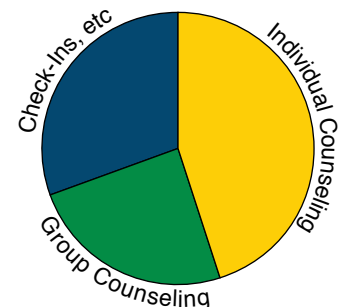
Ms. Terese Hagerty, Volunteer Coordinator

For CJA students, the difficulties of this coming of age are often exacerbated by the complex issues that accompany

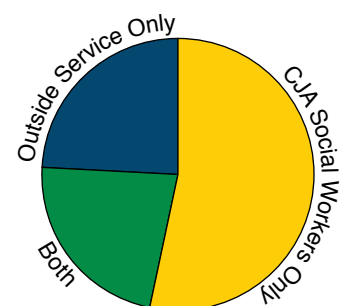
of Interventions per Student



Intervention Types



Source of Intervention



living in material poverty. For too many students, violence in their neighborhoods is a daily occurrence. Many have witnessed traumatic events that have left deep and enduring scars.

“The students in need of long-term services have been exposed to traumatic events or are being exposed to those events now and it’s impacting their ability to function in their daily lives,” says Ms. Fleming. “The issues haven’t been dealt with and will take more time to address.”

For students to begin bravely addressing these issues and finding ways to overcome these obstacles, they need access to the services within CJA – such as teachers and social workers – as well as outside services that partner with CJA – like counselors, psychologists and healthcare professionals.

CJA’s four social workers and two social work interns offer students daily check-ins and weekly individual and group counseling sessions in addition to supporting students and families in times of crisis. Approximately half of CJA students received recurring care from social workers in the 2014-15 school year and all students had access to their support when needed.

“We have social workers and interns do push-in services for behavior and organization,” explains Ms. Fleming. “Depending on the need, we also have weekly or daily check-ins with students. We have a small group that deals with basic social skills to help students interact positively with their classmates and learn to be assertive.

“There are a number of students dealing with issues that are a lot deeper than what we see on the surface.”

Ms. Raynesia Fleming, Lead Social Worker

Other students participate in a 14-week grief therapy group called Rainbows.”

Outside services that work with CJA students on campus offer students therapeutic services, group and individual counseling and speech therapy. Roughly one-third of CJA students in the 2014-15 school year received care through these services, oftentimes in concert with care that CJA social workers and social work interns provided.

“There are a number of students dealing with issues that are a lot deeper than what we see on the surface,” says Ms. Fleming. “Some of those students have one-on-one therapists from outside therapy agencies and others receive psychoanalytic therapy from independent therapists partnering with CJA.”

The consistent, quality and loving care that CJA students receive through these professionals helps them begin to grapple with the complexity of the obstacles in front of them and chart paths to success despite them.

Health and Wellness

As CJA students grow academically and emotionally, they are also growing into young men whose success depends on access to quality food and healthcare. Too often, this access is severely limited.

Chronic, but manageable, issues such as asthma afflict CJA students



Ms. Fleming works with rising fifth graders

at significantly higher rates than the national average. Without consistent and quality care or medication, an asthma attack or other medical issue can result in a trip to the emergency room for a student and his family. In response, CJA's School Nurse, Pam Gilmour, coordinates medical care for students by administering medication and offering immunizations at school. She has also built partnerships with a mobile dental clinic and facilitates access to family physicians, dentists and ophthalmologists who can provide ongoing care for students and their families.

In addition to a lack of quality healthcare, the options for families to purchase healthful food are sparse in the neighborhoods CJA serves. CJA's campus itself is bounded on three sides by food deserts, which lack access to fresh and affordable fruits and vegetables.

"Nutritionally, we have issues at both ends of the spectrum," explains Mrs. Gilmour. "Some students present with high or obese Body Mass Index (BMI) and others are underweight with low BMI. Both issues relate to dietary choices and the availability of nutritional food."

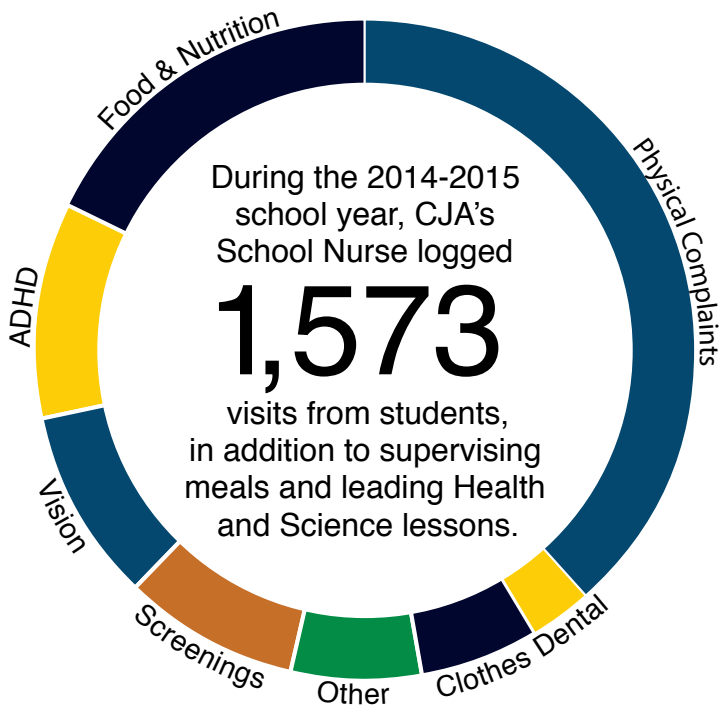
To counteract the lack of fresh and healthful food available, Mrs. Gilmour manages the relationship with CJA's food provider ensuring that the breakfast, lunch and afternoon snack provided at school include a variety of fruits, vegetables, whole grains and lean proteins.

"My goal is to help our students learn how the decisions they make today affect their health tomorrow, next week and as adults. By the



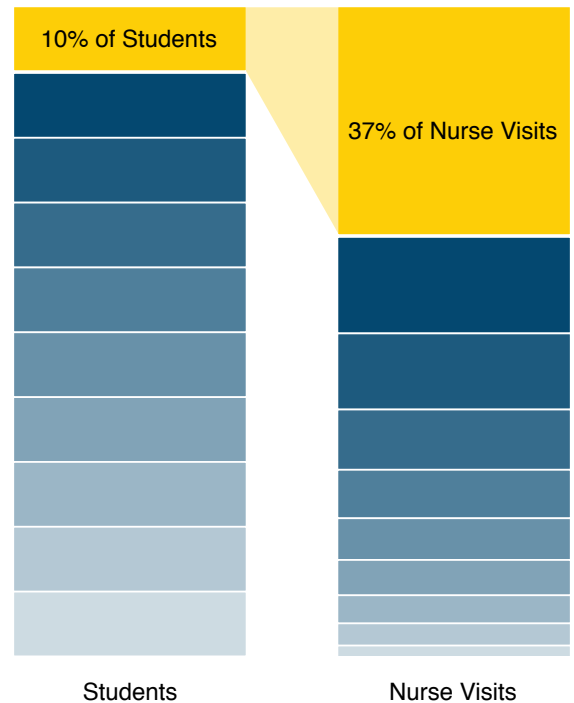
Mrs. Pam Gilmour, School Nurse, passes out apples at lunch

Nurse Visits by Student Issue



The responsibilities of CJA's School Nurse range from dispensing medication and distributing clothing to caring for typical adolescent scrapes and bruises and serving as a first responder.

Nurse Utilization by Student



Ten percent of CJA students are responsible for 37% of all nurse visits. Twenty percent of students are responsible for over half of all nurse visits.

time our young men are in eighth grade, their improved BMI are just one indication that they are beginning to make better lifestyle choices on their way to enjoying healthy adult lives.”

What It Takes

The obstacles that CJA students face on their road to a college degree and meaningful employment are varied and complex. To remain on that road – however nonlinear the path – they simply need more.

Some students need the safe, loving and rigorous environment that had not been afforded to them before CJA. Others might need a daily check-in from a social worker, regular access to a rescue inhaler and tutoring from a volunteer. Still others might visit the nurse twice a week for medication, meet with a grief therapy group and work closely with an independent therapist.

This scope and depth of services define the *magis* at CJA.

It means that a young man who tests at the twelfth-grade level in fifth grade will finally be challenged through the help of a volunteer.

It means that a student who has never had the eyeglasses he needs to

see the board will have access to an ophthalmologist.

It means that a student struggling to sound out words as he reads will work with a reading specialist on a daily basis.

It means that a student who has witnessed violence or abuse can begin to receive the therapy he needs.

It means that a student whose asthma used to force a trip to the emergency room now just needs a trip to the nurse’s clinic.

It means that the obstacles in front of CJA students are not insurmountable or prophetic, despite how significant they might be.

As a Jesuit school, CJA is called to take into account each student’s context, from his successes to his struggles. At the heart of this idea of *cura personalis* is a loving, caring partnership between students and the people supporting them along the way.

As the courageous young men of CJA continue to chart their path, they join the people around them in simply asking, **“What will it take? What more can I do?”**



Ms. Anne Roney, Dean of the Fifth Grade, works with Kaleb

Chicago Jesuit Academy

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Bolded names are scholarship benefactors.

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Joe Kalista and Mary Robinson
Kalista

Christopher P. Alonzi

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Robert C. Atkinson

Maureen and Michael Furey

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Kathleen Cahill

Amelita Salcepuedes Calayo

Maureen and Michael Furey

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Marge Riley

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The Mark Cavanaugh Memorial
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John J. and Virginia B. Gearen

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Solidarity

Dear Students,

I know its hard to be in Baltimore right now. I am not going to act like I know how it feels to be living there, and in that type of situation, because I don't. But just know you have somebody right here on your side, and supporting you through the whole situation. We are very similar schools in many ways. We wear the same uniform, and our school buildings are set up about the same. Going through these things are tough, and can be difficult, definitely for a grade school boy, but in your heart, believe everything is going to be alright.

Wishing you all the best,

Christian



During the protests following the tragic death of Freddy Gray in Baltimore, CJA's brother school – Saint Ignatius Loyola Academy (SILA) – was forced to close until the unrest ended. To show our solidarity with the students and families at SILA, CJA students chose to write letters in their Formation classes expressing their prayers and support.

Save the Date



SATURDAY
November 7th, 2015

9th ANNUAL

GIVE - A - LITTLE

Gala

Salvage One

SIX THIRTY IN THE EVENING
1840 WEST HUBBARD STREET - CHICAGO, IL 60602



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“I would like to thank you because being here at CJA allows me to show the talent that I have in a way that I feel comfortable. You have helped me become more grateful for the opportunity to go to school.”

Dushawn, *Class of 2016*

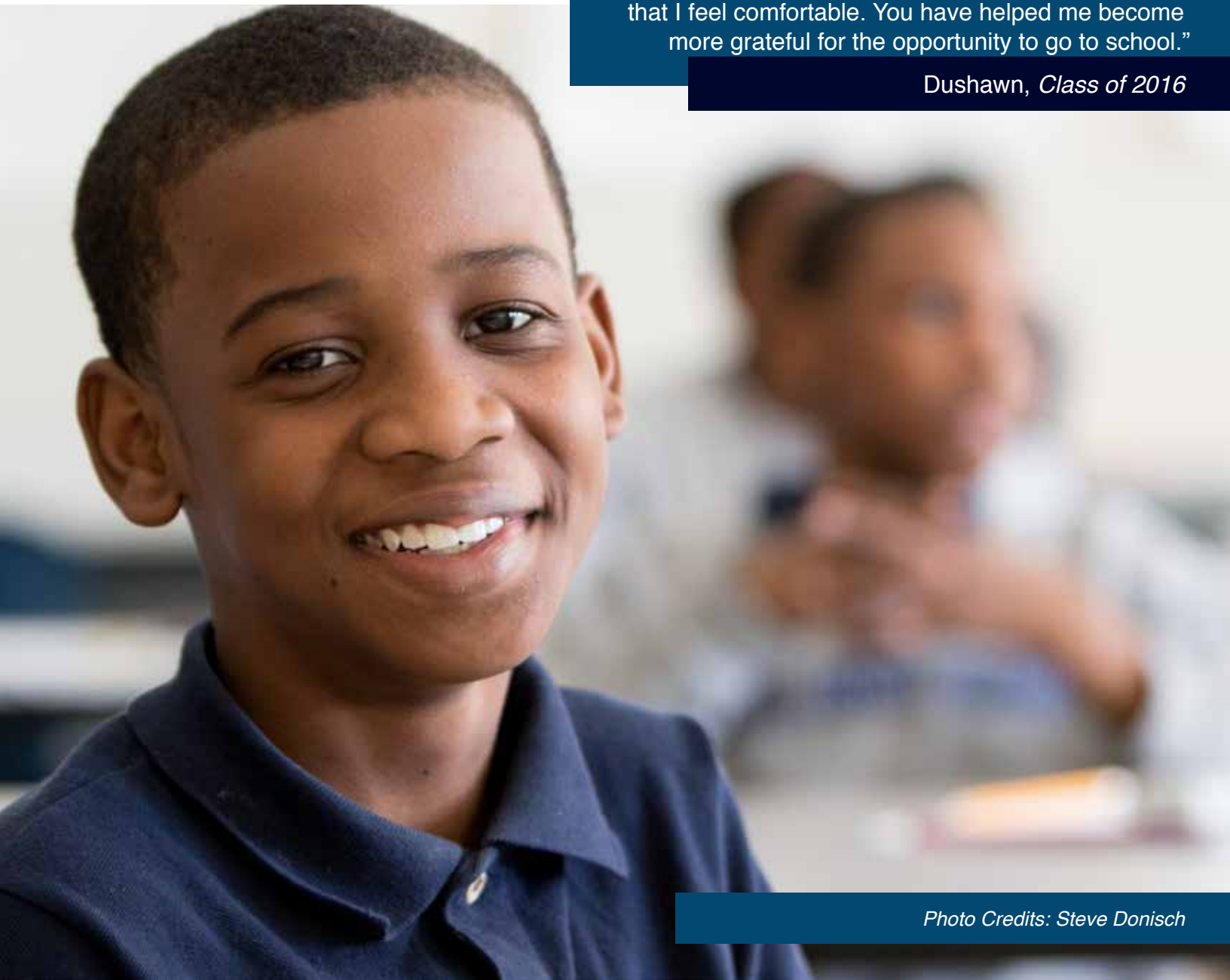


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