

# VOICES OF CJA

**CHICAGO JESUIT ACADEMY  
ANNUAL REPORT 2017**



## CHICAGO JESUIT ACADEMY

“Thank you for helping to support our school so that students like me can get a great education. I would have never been here without you and I appreciate you helping me.”

*Kalimba, Class of 2019*

**THOMAS BECKLEY** *Love is the Light* **PAGE 2**  
Principal

**JULIAN WICKS** *The Best Family* **PAGE 8**  
CJA'11

**JON HICKS** *Make a Difference, Right Now* **PAGE 12**  
Benefactor

**TOYA SHAFFER** *Every Student Is Exceptional* **PAGE 14**  
Parent

**MIKE MASON** *Cura Personalis* **PAGE 16**  
Faculty

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Volunteer

*CJA's First College Graduates* **PAGE 25**





## **LOVE IS THE LIGHT** *Thomas Beckley, Principal*

Sometimes I lose the thread of my vocation. The violence in our city catches me up short, and I feel the sand slipping away from under my feet as wave after wave of bad news washes over the West Side of Chicago. That news recently hit home very painfully, as our College-Persistence Office received word that one of our alums was shot to death in a senseless and all too familiar act of violence. Death and darkness are so good at obscuring hope. It's times like these that I need the light of love to hold on to the thread of why I'm here.

The truth is that that young man who was murdered was a wonderful human being who, as a 14-year-old CJA student, had the strength and character to look his teachers in the eyes and tell them he loved them. It was the first time I had ever heard a student express himself that way, and the memory of it burns in me. It was clear, it was loud and it was true.

Love is the light that keeps my vocation clear. I tend to think of only the measurable, temporal and material objectives of our work, but I try to never lose sight of the fact that Love itself is the ultimate objective. Every time I see a teacher working with a student to fix a problem from class, or a social worker gathering resources to support a family in crisis, I see the bright light of Love. That Love is present in the remarkable sacrifices of our parents, in the generosity of hundreds of donors and in the

diligence of our talented faculty and staff, but it is never more clear than in those moments when Chicago Jesuit Academy helps a child to know that he is Loved beyond all measure by the God who created him in His image. A youngster who knows he's Loved also knows that he's worthy of Love. He knows that he is talented and that he's someone worthy of the investment being made in him. He knows that his life has the power to change his community and to give care to others.

If someone asks me why I work at CJA, the easy and simple answer is that I get to work with and for wonderful people. I have the opportunity, in some small way, to help a student move from one point in their lives to some other point beyond middle school, or high school or college. The more complete answer – the truth really – is that I do this work because, despite my human frailty and moments of despair, I can come here each day and know that there is more Love in the world because I took that long commute. I know that this work we do together helps parents, teachers and students see themselves as the loved children of God. I can think of no mission, no calling more worthy than that. I'm humbled by the power of the Love I see in this school, and it's a constant reminder to me that, even when death and darkness get the best of me, I too am Loved.

# CLASS OF 2017

“If you remember nothing else, be kind to each other. The world teaches us many things, not the least of which is the idea that for you to be cool, someone has to not be; that for you to succeed, someone else has to fail. So if you hear nothing else I have said, I ask you, my young brothers: reject that notion.”

*Rep. Christian Mitchell  
2017 Commencement Speaker  
Member of the Illinois House of  
Representatives, 26th District*



# IN GRATITUDE

## FOR OUR FACULTY

“We are grateful for all of the teachers and staff here because they have done so much for us. Thank you all for staying by our sides through this journey.”

*Jeremiah*



## FOR OUR PARENTS & FAMILIES

“I would like to thank all of the CJA parents and families for sacrificing for your sons. Whether it was coming for parent volunteer day or providing money and time for CJA Magis Day, we truly appreciate you.”

*Marvin*



## FOR OUR BENEFACTORS

“CJA students learn how to make sacrifices to help others in need as true Gentlemen for Others. We are able to learn all of these things because of the generosity and love of our benefactors.”

*Kody*



# CLASS OF 2017

“I would like to thank you for all you have done to help me at Chicago Jesuit Academy. It has been a pleasure having you by my side.”

*Micah, Class of 2017*



# GRAD-AT-GRAD AWARD WINNERS

## CAMERON

*Open to Growth*



“Cameron knows that saying ‘yes’ to the right things opens doors for him, and allows him to grow in different ways. And he has the maturity to say ‘no’ to the things that will hurt the opportunities afforded to him.”

*Ms. Kennedy*

## MAKHI

*Committed to Doing Justice*



“Jesus doesn’t ask us to just do a good enough job that we stay out of trouble. Our intentions matter. Committed to Not Getting in Trouble and Committed to Doing Justice in the Service of Others are not the same.”

*Ms. Boyle*

## BRIAN

*Loving*



“To love, and to love in middle school, is not the easy path. It’s an act of courage that requires a tremendous sense of self. The young man we recognize today has that kind of character.”

*Mr. Kemper*

## ESUSENI

*Intellectually Competent*



“With values like these, Esuseni was able to manage himself more and more, knowing that he was being guided by family, love, hard work and kindness.”

*Mr. Diehl*

## KAMERON

*Phoenix Award*



“Slowly, but surely, Kameron rose radiantly into an astute scholar, a helping hand, a trusted friend and a magnificent leader of our school community. Quietly and humbly he took the advice of those around him and made himself stronger.”

*Mr. Mason*

*This award is given to a member of the CJA community who has embodied the themes of hope and renewal.*

## JAHQUEZ

*Religious*



“Religious people are called to action, driven by a force so much bigger than them that they cannot help but live out God’s love in their lives. The most religious among us are sometimes those who can give a fiery speech, but more often they are those who just understand God’s compassion and let it guide their actions.”

*Mr. Houlihan*

## NEXT STEPS

Next year, the Class of 2017 will attend the following high schools:

**NOBLE NETWORK OF CHARTER SCHOOLS**  
Chicago Bulls College Prep  
ITW Speer Academy  
Muchin College Prep  
Noble Street College Prep  
Pritzker College Prep  
The Noble Academy  
UIC College Prep

**PRIVATE CATHOLIC**  
Christ the King Jesuit College Prep  
DeLaSalle Institute  
Loyola Academy  
Saint Ignatius College Prep

**PUBLIC WITH ADMISSIONS CRITERIA**  
Phoenix Military Academy  
Westinghouse College Prep

**OTHER PUBLIC**  
Hinsdale South High School  
Nicholas Senn High School

### CLASS OF 2017 HIGH SCHOOLS

#### NOBLE NETWORK OF CHARTER SCHOOLS (53%)

Each year, approximately one half to two-thirds of graduating CJA 8th graders attend one of the 17 Noble Street Charter high schools, which are designed to support students who will be first-generation college students.

#### PUBLIC W/ ADMISSIONS CRITERIA (9%)

CJA students have also chosen to attend selective-enrollment and other public schools with admissions criteria.



#### PRIVATE CATHOLIC (32%)

Some CJA students have earned both admission to private, Catholic high schools and the financial aid packages that make attendance affordable.

#### OTHER PUBLIC (6%)

A subset of CJA students move from the West Side of Chicago during their years with us and some now live in areas with strong neighborhood schools.

# GENTLEMEN TODAY

“You have made it possible for me to go to Chicago Jesuit Academy and you are a big reason I will be successful in getting into the high school and the college of my dreams.”

*Gabriel, Class of 2019*





# LEADERS TOMORROW



## THE BEST FAMILY

*Julian Wicks, CJA '11,  
Fountain Valley School (CO) '15,  
Knox College '19*

If you Google search the word “academy” the second definition is “a society or institution of distinguished scholars, artists, or scientists that aims to promote and maintain standards in its particular field.” In my opinion, the “particular field” that Chicago Jesuit Academy promotes is excellence.

Nothing less than the best is expected from everyone associated with CJA from Mr. Lynch all the way down to the 3rd graders. When I came to CJA in the 7th grade, I was not ready. In our community on the West Side of Chicago nothing is expected from us – us, as in young, strong, gifted African-American males. No one gives us a chance. CJA gave me, and so many other young men, the chance we so desperately need. It’s an anomaly.

I’ve been blessed with a great support system at home, but I never expected that support to trickle into the classroom. Mr. Beckley, in one of the CJA videos says, “We try to turn potentiality into actuality.” It’s true, at least for me. I needed a little bit of extra love and support to help me succeed. The amount of love and support I got at school was nearly suffocating, in a good way.

To hear “I love you” in school is something that I doubt can be found easily in other schools. I’ve had both my brother and father pass away, and members of the CJA staff came to both funerals. When I was kicked out of my high school, CJA was there. They stay for the good times, and the bad times. CJA is there whenever you need someone to talk to, someone to hug, and when you need to be put in your place. For that, I am thankful.

CJA has continued to be in my life long after I

graduated in 2011. I would go as far as to say that I attribute a great deal of my own success to Chicago Jesuit Academy. They pushed me academically, which led me to spend most of my high school career at a boarding school in Colorado Springs. They pushed me to make me become a better person. They’ve even helped me find jobs.

However, the sensational features of CJA would mean nothing if I did not put in the work. The faculty and staff will guide you and pave the path for you to walk, but they won’t hold your hand and they definitely won’t let you turn around. However, they will tell you everything you need to know to come out the other side. They will be there if you get lost. They will pick you up if you fall down. The students just have to walk the path, ask for help when needed, and most importantly, they need to believe that they can do it. I believe that greatness comes from within. If I did not think I was capable of success, then I would not succeed. **I knew I was capable. I just did not know what I needed to do to succeed.** They showed me the way and I never looked back.

Chicago Jesuit Academy changes lives. It is not just a “college preparatory middle school.” It’s more than that. It’s more than a support system, and as cliché as it sounds, Chicago Jesuit Academy is the best family any person can have. They will support and love unconditionally. They will always go the extra mile for someone. I can say, without a shadow of a doubt, I would not be a junior at Knox College double majoring in Education and English if CJA was not in my life. Chicago Jesuit Academy is an anomaly that I hope one day becomes the norm.

# OPEN TO GROWTH

“I really thank you for supporting my scholarship. You are giving me the chance to go to a good school that will help me have a great future.”

*Darrell, Class of 2018*



# CJA SCHOLARSHIPS

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 Ms. Maria Lefkow Sorensen, Director of Development, at (773) 696-4907 or [sorensen@cjademy.org](mailto:sorensen@cjademy.org).

## MIND THE GAP

Since CJA opened in 2005, we have grown in our understanding of the needs of our students. As a result, the true cost per student per year has increased as we have worked to meet these additional needs. The true cost per student is now approximately \$25,000, a figure comparable to the \$18,000 – \$22,000 spent by many North

### MAGIS

*\$5,000 per year  
for four years*

A Magis Scholarship provides a CJA student with access to social workers, a school nurse, a reading specialist and other supports to help overcome trauma, chronic struggles and other special needs.

### CORE

*\$12,500 per year  
for four years*

A Core Scholarship gives a student an excellent college prep education for 9.5 hours per day and 11 months per year in small class sizes with high-quality teachers.

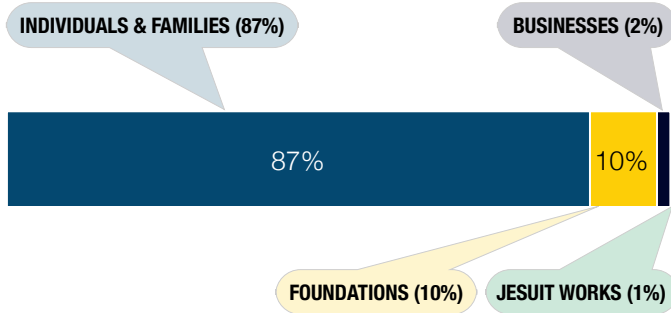
### COMPREHENSIVE

*\$17,500 per year  
for four years*

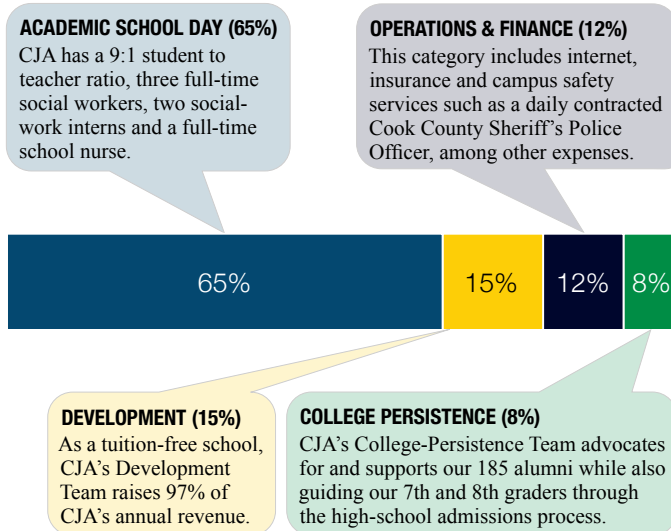
A Comprehensive Scholarship provides all of the resources of both the Magis and Core Scholarships for a CJA student.

Suburban public school districts whose average school day is three hours shorter than CJA's 9.5-hour school day and whose school year is two months shorter than CJA's 11-month school year. In order to fill the gap between a student's scholarship and our full cost per student, CJA relies on gifts to our Annual Fund.

#### FUNDING BY CONSTITUENTS



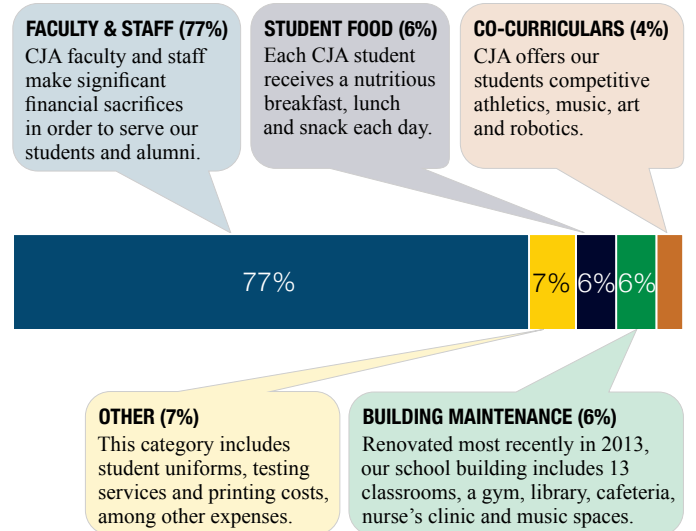
#### SPENDING BY PROGRAM & SERVICE



## OUR FINANCIALS

CJA's largest expense, by far, is salaries and benefits for our faculty and staff. These expenses are also allocated across different programs and services, such as the academic school day or the College-Persistence Program. The two charts below offer two different ways of looking at how CJA utilizes the gifts entrusted to our community through the generosity of our benefactors. Fiscal year 2016-2017 expenses totalled \$3,936,122. **For a copy of CJA's audited financials, please contact Ms. Maria Lefkow Sorensen.**

#### EXPENSES BY TYPE



# RELIGIOUS

“When I leave CJA I want to make sure I leave an awesome legacy. I want to be the example that teachers use when they want to explain something or compliment someone.”

*Darryl, Class of 2017*



# PAYING IT FORWARD

## MAKE A DIFFERENCE, RIGHT NOW

*Jon Hicks, Benefactor*

In 2008, my wife started tutoring at CJA at the invitation of one of the board members. I was at a point in my life where I had some resources to contribute, and I was looking for a charity to support. While many of the overseas charities were more than worthy, I knew that there were people living right in my town who were in desperate need. I wanted to find an organization to support that was closer to home, and through which I could really see my dollars help to change someone's life for the better.

As I learned more about CJA, I found it to be just such a place. Over time, I joined the Development Committee, and then the Board. In recent years, with the support of my employer, The Heico Companies, I have been able to offer CJA alumni summer internships, giving them an introduction to a corporate work environment. As CJA has grown its enrollment, developed its College-Persistence Program, and now admitted 3rd and 4th graders, I have only become more impressed by the capabilities of the school's tremendous staff and the determination, resiliency, and great potential of our students.

CJA is so much more than a middle school. The College-Persistence Team provides our alumni with mentoring well beyond eighth grade. My CJA interns were college freshmen. Even though they had been out of CJA for five years, the school helped them to write resumes, prepare for interviews, and dress appropriately for the job. Our alumni, whose families may not have the means or experience to guide them, have a helping hand from the College-Persistence Team. CJA is a trusted advisor who helps them to navigate the educational choices, life circumstances and neighborhood temptations that

CJA relies on both your current and future support to ensure the long-term success of our students. As we continue the process of growing our enrollment, annual gifts and scholarship commitments allow us to enroll more young men each year. A powerful way to support CJA in the long term is to include a provision for our students in your estate plan. **Your future gift, no matter the size, helps ensure that we will be able to serve not only our current students and alumni, but also the young men who will follow in their footsteps in the decades to come.**



challenge them daily as they try to make their way through high school and then into higher education or careers. Our first alumni graduated from college this year, and with others already established in the workforce or in military service, CJA has proven its ability to help fifth graders become productive citizens.

Tragically, this year more than others, violence has placed Chicago in the national spotlight. If you look at the map of shootings in the city, you will see that CJA sits in one of the most afflicted areas. Our students' families live right there, and do their best to give their children a chance. CJA's amazing staff members willingly work right there. While I believe the ultimate solution would be for Chicago's challenged neighborhoods to have strong economies and public schools that perform as well as CJA for all students, I don't want to sit back and wait for that to happen. CJA provides a way to make a difference, at least for some, right now.

At the moment, through the tremendous support of many benefactors, we have been able to raise the scholarships that our students need on an annual basis. However, there will be times in the future when the economy is challenged and resources may be harder to obtain. CJA must be built to survive such times. One way to strengthen CJA for the longer term is to help it build an endowment of future planned giving. For that reason, I have chosen to make a contribution to CJA in my will. By doing so, I can contribute to the long-term viability of an institution that has achieved so much in its twelve short years, and that can grow to achieve so much more in the years ahead.

# CREATING A LEGACY

If you decide to include CJA in your estate plan, we recommend that you seek the help of an estate planning attorney or tax professional. More information on planned giving is available on our website at [www.chicagojesuitacademy.org/plannedgiving](http://www.chicagojesuitacademy.org/plannedgiving).

If you are interested in learning more about making a planned gift to Chicago Jesuit Academy, **please contact Ms. Maria Lefkow Sorensen**, Director of Development, at (773) 696-4907 or [sorensen@cjacademy.org](mailto:sorensen@cjacademy.org).

# LOVING

“What I like about CJA is that of all the students here are like brothers to me and all of us act like a family.”

*Emmanuel, Class of 2019*



# CHICAGO JESUIT ACADEMY BENEFACTORS

The donor roll acknowledges gifts made between June 1, 2016 and May 31, 2017.

**Bolded names** are scholarship benefactors.

## IGNATIUS CIRCLE

*\$100,000  
and Up*

Anonymous  
CA Student Living  
Chicago Blackhawks Charities  
John J. and Virginia B. Gearen Family  
The Gies Foundation  
Joel and Stacy Hock  
Bill McIntosh  
Susan and Steve Wolfe

## RODRIGUEZ CIRCLE

*\$50,000  
to \$99,999*

Anonymous (2)  
**Matthew J. and Christine C. Botica**  
**James and Catherine Denny Foundation**  
Grant and Peg Brady Dove Foundation  
**Mary and Paul Finnegan**  
Mullooly Carey Foundation  
Perkins Malo Hunter Foundation Fund

## BELLARMINI CIRCLE

*\$25,000  
to \$49,999*

Abra Prentice Foundation, Inc.  
Anonymous (2)

Helen Brach Foundation  
Fred J. Brunner Foundation  
**The John Buck Company Foundation**  
**The Mark Cavanaugh Memorial Scholarship Group**  
Howard & Dona Cohen  
Regan and Philip Friedmann  
Marie P. Gallagher and the 312 Foundation  
Paul Gearen  
Eileen M. Golan  
Daniel P. Haerther Trust  
Seth and Dorothy Hemming  
**John and Lisa Hendrickson**  
IMC Financial Markets  
Janus Foundation  
**Michael and Lindy Keiser**  
**Jim & Sara Lynch**  
Raskob Foundation for Catholic Activities, Inc.  
Chris and Kathy Perry  
**Jim and Michelle Ryan**  
**William and Barbara Schmidt Family**  
Foundation, Inc.  
James Tyree Foundation  
Wellington Management Foundation

## XAVIER CIRCLE

*\$10,000  
to \$24,999*

Advocate Bethany Community Health Fund  
Aileen S. Andrew Foundation



# IN THEIR CORNER

## EVERY STUDENT IS EXCEPTIONAL *Toya Shaffer, Parent*

When I think about CJA I think of a great community with strong leadership, love and opportunity to grow. Chicago Jesuit Academy has entered the Austin community and excelled like no other school in its area. The love and the hard work that are put into every student is exceptional. Most boys that attend Chicago Jesuit Academy leave as young men understanding what it takes to achieve their goals.

Chicago Jesuit Academy has a great community that stands behind its name. The leadership in this school is phenomenal. The staff and volunteers work hard and help these young men appreciate the love that's given to them within the community and from their families. Although some young men reject the love at first, by the time they graduate they're embracing it. Being in this element with strong leadership and love opens the door for great opportunities.

Although there are many other schools just steps away none of them compare to CJA. CJA offers small class sizes, they allow their students to grow according to their will to learn, they have tutors for certain subjects and have social workers on hand to help

children cope at different levels. CJA also keeps in contact with their students after graduation. They help young men stay on track near or far.

The majority of the young men that attended CJA come back and show their appreciation. They work at the school in the summer or simply come visit the staff during summer break. Remember some of these young men were rebellious and felt like CJA couldn't help turn their life around but when you build a child up they will flourish like no other. It's almost like watching a butterfly transform.

**We all want our children to be successful and carry out their dreams.** In order for that to take place they have to achieve goals and plan for success. CJA understands that teens can't do this alone and that's why they have a great College-Persistence Team in place. CP helps the young men plan ahead and think about their future. CP helps with tuition packages, financial aid, retrieving the proper paperwork, keeping students on track and much more.

When I think of Chicago Jesuit Academy, I think of SUCCESS!!!

Anonymous (4)  
Muriel Jean-Jacques and Seth Axelrad  
The Believe Scholarship  
Mary Claire and Terry Belton  
Sheila and Robert Berner, Jr.  
Thomas L. & Kathleen G. Bindley Charitable Trust  
Dan and Merrie Boone Foundation  
Mary Grace and Kevin Burke  
Mary Anne Carpenter  
Thomas R. and Mary E. Cellitti  
Midwest Province of the Society of Jesus  
David C. and Jill Christian  
Dan and Maureen Connolly  
Conway Family Foundation  
Bob and Loretta Cooney  
Philip H. Corboy Foundation  
Rick and Regine Corrado  
Michael W. and Barbara V. Davis  
Henry J. and Joan M. Deiters  
Warren and Mary Jo DeMaio  
The John & Susan Dewan Foundation  
Mr. and Mrs. Charles V. Doherty  
Carol J. and Patrick E. Dwyer Family  
Michael and Peggy Dwyer  
Brian and Elizabeth Farmer  
Gallagher Family Foundation  
Gary and Karen Gardner  
The Jerry and Kathleen Grundhofer Foundation  
James P. and Brenda S. Grusecki Family Foundation

## SCHOLARSHIP CIRCLE

*These donors are generously sponsoring students through gifts received outside the 2016-2017 fiscal year.*

Thomas and Irene Benedict  
Jason Baine  
Stephen and Sarah Baine  
Bob Casey  
Michael and Lindy Keiser  
William and JoAnn Kunkel  
The Lee Family  
The Howard and Kennon McKee Charitable Fund  
Martin and Lauren Modahl  
Steve and Catherine Saunders  
Trust Under the Will of John G. Searle - Searle Family Trust  
Jim and Tricia Valenti  
Joseph F. Vosicky, Jr.  
David and Peggy Wilson

## TRANSFORMATIVE COMMITMENTS

*These donors have generously made commitments of \$200,000 or more during the 2016-2017 fiscal year in support of the students and alumni of Chicago Jesuit Academy.*

Anonymous  
CA Student Living  
Haag Family Foundation  
The Gies Foundation  
Michael and Lindy Keiser  
Bill McIntosh  
Susan and Steve Wolfe

# INTELLECTUALLY COMPETENT

“Science class has inspired me to want to do more of my own experiments and learn about what’s going on around me. I hope that my love for Science can help me in the real world.”

*Derrick, Class of 2017*



Debra and Jordan Hadelman  
Bob and Patty Huffman  
Jewel-Osco  
Ken's Foods  
Philip B. and Maureen Kenny  
Jim and Sue King  
Thomas and Margaret Kittle-Kamp  
Michael and Marian Kneafsey  
Bruce and Kristin Koepfgen  
Ross and Sheila Krogh  
Bill and Marta Krug  
John and Deborah Lahey  
Josh and Cathy Langford  
Pete and Jean Lawrence  
Greater Milwaukee Foundation's Virginia  
and Joseph Mallof Family Fund  
Kevin and Kate Maloney  
Steven D. and Margaret H. McCormick  
Terry & Sue McDermott  
Charles W. Mulaney, Jr.  
Becky and Mike Murray  
Scott and Nora Murray  
Nasgovitz Family Foundation  
William T. and Lezlie O'Donnell  
O'Gorman Family Charitable Fund  
Mary O'Neil  
Bob and Kay Otter  
Mr. and Mrs. Robert L. Parkinson, Jr.  
Liz and Tom Parrott

Sheila and John Pigott  
Polk Brothers Foundation  
McDonald/Raffin Family  
Maralyn and Michael Reilly  
Tom and Emily Reynolds  
Tom and Linda Rinella  
Arthur Munsey Robinson Charitable  
Foundation  
Romano Family  
Mark Rowley  
Ruthie and Rich Ryan  
Sage Foundation  
Sanborn Family Foundation  
Margaret M. Schmidt and Kenneth J.  
Danila Fund at the Boston Foundation  
Sarah M. Schmidt  
Dr. Scholl Foundation  
Sebastian Family Charitable Foundation  
Mr. and Mrs. Bruce R. Sents  
John F. Smiekel Foundation  
Adrienne Meisel and Rand Sparling  
Emily Heisley Stoeckel  
Roger and Anne Taylor  
Cherryl Thomas  
Patrick & Heather Thornton  
Janet and Henry Underwood  
Renaat and Susanna VerEecke  
VNA Foundation  
The Welch Family

## MARQUETTE CIRCLE \$5,000 to \$9,999

Anderson Family Foundation  
Anonymous (3)  
Erwin K. and Nancy C. Aulis  
The Bank of America Charitable Foundation,  
Inc.  
Anthony L. and Jean C. Barbato  
The Charles W. & Patricia S. Bidwill  
Charitable Foundation  
Big Shoulders Fund  
Ralph J. Blust  
Kathy Byrne  
Chicago Board of Trade Foundation  
Joseph and Mary Collins  
Liz & Jeff Coney  
Michael and Kate Cooney  
Thomas and Anita Croghan  
Jane and Brian Crowley  
Jeff DiStefano  
Tom and Sheila Doar III  
Michael and Mary Flynn  
JP Morgan Chase Foundation  
Dr. William and Mrs. Jayne Gilligan  
The Goetz Family Foundation and Sean &  
Katie Meehan  
Beverly & Warren Hayford

David and Nancy Hines  
James and Deborah Hopkinson  
Justin and Hilarie Huscher  
The Timothy B. Johnson Gift Fund  
William G. and Joan A. Kistner  
Mark K. and Mary E. Lahey  
The LaValle Family  
Eugene and Kandace Lenti  
Rick and Christina Malnati  
Kathryn & Tim Martin  
Michael and Mary Anne Mason  
The McDevitt Fund  
W. P. McDevitt  
Michael J. and Elizabeth M. Miller  
Martin and Lauren Modahl  
Jane Moore  
Marianne Moore  
Donna B. More  
Michael and Emer Mulvihill  
Jim and Letitia Murphy  
Richard & Mary Beth Murphy  
New Frontiers Foundation  
Michael and Kay O'Halleran  
James J. O'Sullivan, Jr.  
Megan O'Brien  
Lonnie Odom and Leslie Lombre  
Martha Pacold  
Roderick and Lynne Palmore  
Martin J. Perry and Barbara J. Williams



# TEACHABLE MOMENTS

## **CURA PERSONALIS**

Mike Mason, Faculty Member



My first two years of teaching were spent in a failing public school district in Mississippi. While I loved my time in my small-town community, my professional development as a teacher was a sort of baptism by fire. I quickly learned that my school district and many other school districts like it were under constant pressure from the state to operate on shoestring budgets and perform on standardized tests. Numbers, at the bottom of balance sheets or score reports, were more important than the students themselves. Students who were in dire need of academic and social-emotional interventions were rushed through the public-education system without any proper guidance concerning their futures. I remember thinking to myself then that this assembly-line mentality was not the way education was supposed to work. Students deserve schools that develop their character as well as their academics, that encourage them to aspire to achieve in life after school, and that show them that they are loved and valued as individuals.

As a life-long Jesuit-educated student, I understand the critical importance of *cura personalis*, or care for the entire person, in the development of young students. I choose to teach at Chicago Jesuit Academy precisely because *cura personalis* is at the very heart of our day-to-day work with students. At CJA, students are not represented as a line item on a balance sheet,

nor is their value measured by a standardized test score. Instead, they are seen as gifts of God, who each day are becoming more open to growth, intellectually competent, religious, loving and committed to doing justice in the service of others. Consequently, any decision made concerning our students at CJA is based first and foremost on whether or not it will help our students be more successful in life. **This holistic approach allows faculty, staff, families, our community and generous benefactors to work in partnership with our students as they develop.** And it is CJA's specific focus on *cura personalis* that counts the most when our students encounter life's many obstacles. It's in these moments when I am most proud to say that I work at CJA. The network of love and support that we establish with our students and families is powerful, and lasts long after they graduate CJA.

Hence, my passion for CJA is reinforced each year when alumni return to visit. There is no greater feeling in the world than to watch them develop into young gentlemen who are enthusiastic about the endless possibilities they have in their futures. I am comforted by the fact that CJA provides our students an opportunity to be who God wants them to be, and I feel privileged to have an opportunity to play a role in this school on a daily basis.

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“I am working to be the leader that I believe I am and I’m trying to help the others around me become great leaders, too.”

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# SHARING OUR STORIES

## A WONDERFUL METAMORPHOSIS *Lucy Gaven, Volunteer*



The thought of being a part, however small, of CJA's mission to provide a super education to boys from the West Side, where their other choices leave a lot to be desired, made deciding to volunteer there an easy choice. I have long believed that every person is the sum total of the experiences and relationships they have had, and CJA adds wonderful addends in the equation for students whose lives include way too many negative, disruptive ones. The teachers, and the whole staff, at CJA are remarkable; they never give up and they never get mad – the perfect combination. They ask for perfection and accept less than perfection, always asking for better.

As a result, I get to watch young men grow into disciplined seekers of knowledge. It's a wonderful metamorphosis to observe. To be able to participate in the process is a fantastic opportunity – not only does it get me out of the house and let me hang out with super people, but it keeps my brain active and flexible. When one-on-one with a sixth grader, with the assignment to master the formula of photosynthesis, sends

me home to find out what animals are predators to rats – well, what's cooler than that? And although it's a little too late to be a civil engineer in this life, what I've learned about building bridges and designing roller coasters with the fifth graders has me ready to roll for the next time around.

Kids and plants are a lot the same – give them the nutrients and environment they need, and they can develop into remarkable and wonderful living things that make the world a better and more beautiful place. The Agriculture program I help out with is great, not only because it gives me a great metaphor, but also because it provides an outlet for students who need to work off frustrations digging and delving. They need proof that the world is full of hope, and that they can help create wonderful things, and they benefit from anything that expands their world into areas that aren't a usual part of West Side living. Plus it's just fun to go out and play with those young men, and try to be a plus-one in their equation of life. So the bottom line is: CJA is pretty much stuck with me.

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“I just want to say that without a doubt I have the best school. I’m happy to get this chance and I just want to say thank you.”

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Congratulations to the first Chicago Jesuit Academy alumni to earn their bachelor's degrees.



*Damarcus Lacy, CJA Class of 2009  
Knox College, B.A. Economics*

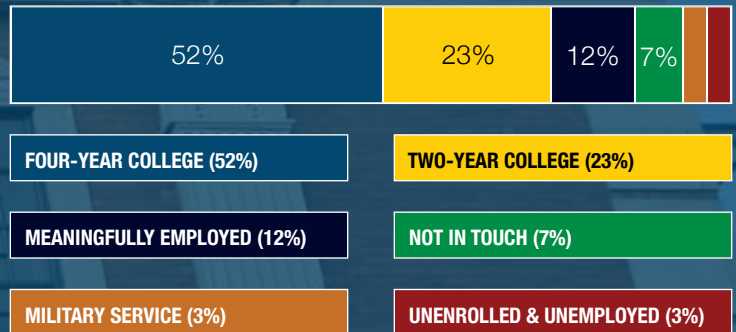


*Emiliano Vargas, CJA Class of 2009  
Occidental College, B.A. Economics*



Deon Taylor, CJA Class of 2009  
Southern Illinois University, B.A. Business

### CURRENT STATUS OF CJA COLLEGE-AGE ALUMNI



Overall, 98.6% of CJA alumni have graduated or are on track to graduate high school within five years.

Of our college-age alumni, 90% are enrolled in two- or four-year colleges, serving in the military or meaningfully employed.

CJA's College-Persistence Team is in active contact with 96.7% of our alumni.

*Throughout the City of Chicago, fewer than 6 in 100 African-American young men who attended a Chicago Public School (CPS) high school have earned a four-year college degree by their 25th birthday, according to a 2014 study by the Consortium on Chicago School Research at the University of Chicago.*



## CHICAGO JESUIT ACADEMY

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Fax: (773) 638-6107  
info@cjademy.org  
www.cjademy.org



"I want to thank you not only for supporting me but also for giving your time and money to Chicago Jesuit Academy. I hope you understand how much I have learned and how much I appreciate your kind support!"

*Jaq'won, Class of 2017*



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