Dear Friends,

We are excited to share the second edition of our Gesu School Spotlight! These pages provide a glimpse into our Gesu classrooms and the principles that make a Gesu education so invaluable and unique in today’s educational landscape.

Each day, our exceptional faculty and staff teach a rigorous academic curriculum and care for the whole child. Rooted in Jesuit and IHM values, Gesu School offers a holistic education without selective admissions for our neighbor children in Pre-K through 8th grade.

While many Gesu children face the challenges that accompany growing up in poverty, Gesu School instills in them the resilience and confidence to succeed and nurtures them to become their best selves.

Thank you for being part of the Gesu School community. We hope you enjoy the pages that follow.

Peace and blessings,

Bryan H. Carter  
President and CEO

Sr. Ellen Convey, IHM  
Principal

Cover photo: Kindergarten students learn “Silent Night” in sign language.
Learning New Skills in GEM Crochet Club

Decades ago, to expand students’ opportunities to explore hobbies and glean new skills beyond sports—often challenging in Gesu’s surrounding neighborhoods—Gesu Chaplain Fr. Neil Ver’Schneider, S.J., created The Gesu Extra Mile (GEM) program. Each trimester, GEM exposes students to new programming—from nutrition and community service to “Real Talk,” with Gesu Counselor Jonathan Jackson, a program centered on helping students navigate trauma in an informal, supportive setting.

This year, the crochet club emerged as a GEM favorite. Students are weaving scarves to keep warm and are enjoying time after school to unwind from their academic work.

“In crochet club, students learn valuable skills that they can apply to life: self-regulation, patience, and self-esteem. Many students struggle in the beginning, but with support from the facilitators and experienced peers, they demonstrate grit by overcoming their challenge. When they make progress, they are proud. Some students even crochet at home to help them self-regulate.”

—Co-Moderators Amanda Rice, Counselor, and Jessica Miller, Grade 4 Girls Teacher and ACE SJU Volunteer
Exploring with STEM & Experiential Learning

Gesu students dive into the sciences starting in Pre-K. Weekly lessons in our science lab accompany classroom instruction and ensure that students get hands-on experience investigating topics from biology to environmental science.

Our STEM initiatives immerse students in these fields and prepare them for top high schools. Each grade uses cutting-edge technology in its classroom and receives weekly instruction in our technology lab. Intentionally small math classes, remedial to advanced, provide individualized instruction.

Pictured here, 2nd graders learn about sugar consumption and its effects on oral health. Fifth graders create models of animal and plant cells.

“This project is important because we learn how plant and animal cells work and how they are similar and different. Making our cell projects was fun!”

–Nia, Aniyah, Rhema, Grade 5

“Science is important today, as we discover new topics that help students understand themselves and their world. The next astronaut or zoologist could be in Room 5!”

–Tammi Crummy, Grade 5 Girls Teacher
Building Character: The MAGIS of Gesu

Our 7th graders pondered their career aspirations and posted them in the middle-school halls. They share their thoughts on grit, answering this prompt:

“If I Knew I Couldn’t Fail....”

FAITH, GRADE 7 Future Entrepreneur and Dance Teacher

“I would become a professional dancer. I would open my own dance studio and teach kids different kinds of dances. This will allow me to SHARE MY TALENT WITH OTHER KIDS AND INSPIRE THEM to become bigger and better than they think they are. If they have goals, they can accomplish them with my help.”

JAVON, GRADE 7 Future Scientist

“I would try to get a job focusing on science. I LIKE SCIENCE BECAUSE IT REQUIRES QUICK THINKING AND HARD WORK TO FIND OUT FORMULAS AND EQUATIONS. Math is also helpful for formulas and cures. With this, I could make devices to help people.”

At Gesu School, we educate the whole child, from academics to character development. To help students confront challenges and strive for success, Gesu intentionally integrates soft skills into our curriculum. In each grade, students embrace the MAGIS of Gesu.
Strengthening Our North Philadelphia Community

Gesu School shares our Jesuit heritage and history with our neighbors at St. Joseph’s Prep. This year, we’ve forged an even stronger partnership. Both schools collaborated for a service project on Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, including a block clean-up, creating art for local senior citizens, and packaging hygiene kits for homeless people. Each day, through the Prep’s Mission and Ministry program, young men visit Gesu to tutor, assist teachers in their classrooms, and share friendship with our students.

A new mentoring program for 5th grade boys engages them with the Prep’s Black and Latino Cultural Club. The program meets weekly and supports Gesu students in their efforts to grow as leaders and stay focused on academics, while discovering their unique contributions to the world.

“Gesu School’s longstanding friendship with St. Joe’s Prep benefits both communities. We thank the young men at the Prep for serving as strong role models and for their commitment to Gesu School each day.”

—Bryan Carter, President and CEO
Forging Friendships & Understanding

At Gesu, our teachers’ creativity is boundless. Second graders in Mrs. Ryder’s class learned a lesson about bullying prevention by making “friendship sushi.” Students made the sweet treats together, strengthening their team-building skills and getting to know their classmates. They even used chopsticks to expand their cultural awareness.

“The purpose of the lesson was cultural awareness, as well as accepting differences and trying new things. Like the multi-colored cereal, each one in our class is unique, so students learned to get to know someone new and appreciate differences. Teamwork was also required as the students ‘built’ the sushi.

We focused on one of the MAGIS ideals: the marshmallow spread is like grit and encourages the students to stick with it! Finally, 2nd graders love a project involving food!”

— Mary Ryder, Grade 2 Teacher
The butterflies were dancing above the sun
They were fluttering all around
As the leaves touched the ground
Flowers were counting the stars in the window
Wind was howling loudly
The rain was falling and sitting on my shoes
It seemed like winter was walking closer and closer
And fall was ending faster
The frogs were singing
As they sat on their lily pads

The tree whispered to its leaves
When the sun rose to wake me up
The squirrels told me to watch their nuts
Grass caught me when I fell
The tires ran on the wet and dewy road
Shoes stomped on the pavement
The streetlights told me what to do
Cars yelled left and right
We all had a good sleep at night
It seemed almost everything came to life
Learn more and purchase tickets: www.gesuschool.org/2018gala