In her first year coaching the Gesu girls’ varsity basketball team, sixth grade teacher Andrea Carter ’98 led the team to victory in their CYO regional championship, but Carter’s contributions to Gesu go far beyond any addition to the school’s trophy case.

A 1998 graduate of Gesu School and later of John W. Hallahan High School, Carter majored in education and played basketball at Chestnut Hill College, which she attended on a partial scholarship. She had turned down an offer to play for Drexel University because the school didn’t offer a major in education at the time, and teaching was in her blood. As a child she spent an entire summer playing school using old handouts to teach the public school kids on her block. In 2009 Carter fulfilled a childhood dream and returned to Gesu School with a desk in the front of the classroom—not that she spends much time actually sitting there.

Carter is a ball of energy in her 6th grade class, doing whatever it takes to motivate her students and to make learning fun. From down the hall, you can hear her ask her class, “Piece of cake?” “Piece of pie!” they shout, indicating that they understand the concept she just taught. Three to four times a day, the students get a review—and Carter gets confirmation that they understood her lesson—with a game of trash can basketball, which gets the students out of their desks and thinking on their feet. Most importantly, the kids in her class are NEVER AFRAID to make a mistake. She always celebrates their efforts.

After the school bell rings, Carter has more on her plate than just coaching the girls’ basketball team. Carter is also busy pursuing her Master’s Degree at Saint Joseph’s University and raising her three-year-old daughter. In addition, she always makes herself available to her students; she remembers her own sixth grade teacher doing the same. All the while, Carter maintains an enthusiastic—and contagious—positive attitude. Carter credits Gesu with molding her into the person and the teacher that she is—especially with regard to her work ethic.

Gesu School isn’t the only place Carter has made her mark. As a collegiate basketball player, Carter made All Conference 3 years, the nationwide Division 3 Hoops Team of the Week twice, and was the number eight rebounder in the country as a junior. Unfortunately, a serious knee injury sidelined her for a year. Those were especially tough times; just getting to class on crutches was a challenge, let alone balancing the burden of rehabilitation with keeping up her grades and paying for school. But with perseverance, determination, and the support of her coach and the college staff, Carter returned to the court the following season for her senior year.

Before coming to teach at Gesu, Carter taught for two years in another Catholic school in the inner city. She coached high school basketball for a number of years, and still mentors three girls from one of the teams she coached. Carter strives to be of service to her mentees and players, chipping in with extra support, like giving someone a ride home from practice so she doesn’t have to take the bus, or giving her mentee an opportunity to earn some money by babysitting. When people ask her why she goes out of her way for the girls, she says, “They need someone, too. People did that for me.”

“Gesu School taught me to believe in myself,” Carter explains. Now she’s passing that sense of self-worth and determination forward—to her students, her colleagues, her peers, and her athletes—in the very same halls where it all started.
From the President

Dear Friends of Gesu School,

As my first year as president of Gesu School comes to a close, my key learning was that our children want and need our help in creating a bright future. Sixth grade teacher and alumna Andrea Carier commented in an article in the newsletter that “Gesu taught me to believe in myself.” Beginning in the pre-kindergarten classrooms, Gesu instills confidence in the children—I cannot tell you how many of our young students stop by my office to share their work, show off their reading ability, and, then, ask for a sticker—CONFIDENCE!

Gesu’s mission is to provide a quality, innovative education to our neighbor children to empower them to break the cycle of poverty and violence. Consider the following evidence of our neighborhood’s extreme need for the hope and confidence Gesu instills:

Philadelphia’s three poorest zip codes fall within Gesu’s primary service area. In these three zip codes, 475–56% of the population lives at or below the federal poverty line (2011 Philadelphia: State of the City by The Pew Charitable Trusts).

As Mayor Michael Nutter stated during the annual Mayoral Luncheon, “the poverty reduction strategy for Philadelphia is education.” Childhood poverty has a profound impact on learning. Achievement gaps for disadvantaged children begin before they start school and widen throughout their school careers. But, research shows that change is possible.

Gesu shows that change is possible! Thank you for helping us to transform the lives of our children.

Peace and blessings,

Bryan H. Carter
President and CEO

THREE CHEERS!

Alumni Leya Egea-Hinton ’02, Desmond Shannon ’02, and Shakeeta Parker ’02 completed their M.Ed.’s at Saint Joseph’s University this spring while participating in the first cohort of SJU Alliance for Catholic Education. Ms. Hinton taught at Gesu for two years as part of the program, and will be returning to teach 4th grade at Gesu next year... Alumna Caterra Rivers ’02 completed her M.Ed. at Penn this spring while teaching at Mastery Charter School through Teach for America.... First grade teacher and alumna Sams and Assistant Dean of Students Troy Sams were married in October. (Yes, to each other!)... Advanced writing teacher Dr. Eileen Erwin gave birth to baby Laurel in January... Gesu thanks and will miss: Andrea Carter commented in an article in the newsletter that “Gesu taught me to believe in myself.” Beginning in the pre-kindergarten classrooms, Gesu instills confidence in the children—I cannot tell you how many of our young students stop by my office to share their work, show off their reading ability, and, then, ask for a sticker—CONFIDENCE!

The Gesu community is saddened by the loss of two important members of our circle. Paul Cannon, Jr., volunteer coach of the boys JV basketball team and a Gesu parent, passed in August 2011. The team honored Coach Cannon’s memory at a regular season game by presenting his family with a framed T-shirt and a framed sweatshirt from the 2010-2011 undefeated season.

Rev. James Deverueux, S.J., former provincial of the Maryland Province of the Society of Jesus, passed this winter. Fr. Deverueux was instrumental in Gesu’s establishment as an independent school in 1993. He first introduced our founding board chairman Win Churchill to Gesu School, and, as provincial, made the decision to allocate $1,000,000 to help Gesu School begin the renovations of the old Prep building we currently occupy. Thanks to Fr. Deverueux’s leadership, Gesu is celebrating its 20th anniversary as an independent school in 2013.

Management Team

Bryan H. Carter, President/CEO
Sr. Ellen Convey, IHM, Principal
Sr. Pat McGrenra, IHM, Assistant Principal
Rev. Neil Voich, SJ, Assistant Principal
Susan Martinelli Shea, Team Lead, Operations

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Death Row Exoneree John Thompson, State Treasurer Rob McDermott, Mayor Michael Nutter, and Others Captivate Students with Their Stories. 

Students hear first-hand accounts of the lives of wise and influential individuals through the Gesu Speaker Series.

Standing before 80 riveted 7th and 8th grade students, John Thompson captivated his audience with the story of his life, his wrongful conviction for a carjacking and an unrelated murder, and the legal proceedings to clear his name. Thompson was exonerated in 2003 after 18 years of incarceration, including 14 on death row in Louisiana’s infamous Angola prison. Gesu’s board chairman J. Gordon Cooney, Jr., one of the Morgan Lewis attorneys who helped prove Thompson’s innocence, joined his client on stage for the presentation. Their incredible story was captured in the book Killing Time: An 18-Year Odyssey from Death Row to Freedom by John Hollway and Ronald M. Gauthier.

Thompson’s ordeal was the culmination of the injustices of urban life he had faced as a young man. Thompson offered this advice to the students: “That environment out there (pointing out the window to Gesu School’s North Philadelphia neighborhood)—it isn’t real… It’s not how we’re supposed to live.”

He explained, “I had good people come into my life… and that changed my attitude…”

Today, Thompson works as the founding director of Resurrection After Exoneration, an organization that helps exonerated individuals reclaim their lives, often after years in prison.

Thompson and Cooney’s powerful presentation on the morality and legality of the death penalty provided students ample food for thought to complement the social justice component of the religion curriculum. Their visit was part of a series of speaker presentations that brought textbook lessons to life for Gesu’s 7th and 8th graders this year. The imprinting lineup also included State Treasurer Rob McDermott, introduced to Gesu by board chairman emeritus Win Churchill; Mayor Michael Nutter; and Alexis Moore, daughter of local civil rights activist Cecil B. Moore.

Death Exoneree John Thompson and one of his attorneys, Andrew Cooney. Their powerful presentation on the morality for thought to complement the social justice component of the religion curriculum.

ATHLETIC CORNER

Track: Coach Pat Leaf and her volunteers trained 89 students on the track team this year. The girls’ team won the Area A Championship and made a strong showing at the Archdiocesan Championship, where Gesu athletes won several medals. The relay team of Rashun (grade 5), Jashir (grade 5), Hamil (grade 5), and Kyler (grade 4) took 1st place in the novice 4x100m. Javier (grade 6) took 1st place in the minors long jump; and Rasham (grade 5) took 3rd place in the novice 100m and 3rd place in the novice 200m. The girls track team also had a great season, placing 5th out of 31 teams in the Area A Championship.

Basketball: Girls Varsity and Boys JV both brought home Region 8 CYO Championship trophies, capping an undefeated season for the Boys JV team. Special thanks to our basketball coaches, Ms. Carter, Mr. Deal, and Mr. James for instilling good sportsmanship and the value of discipline in our student-athletes throughout the exciting season.

Gesu To Lead Discussion on Transforming Inner-City Education at 15th Annual Symposium. Date set for November 1st, 2012.

This year you can join in the discussion tackling the tough issues in inner-city education at Gesu’s 15th annual symposium on November 1, 2012. Join our email list for the latest updates by scanning the code below or by emailing karen.rueda@gesuschool.org.

Did you miss the discussion at last year’s symposium? Visit www.gesuschool.org/2011symposium recap.html to access a recording and transcript.

Gesu Without You 15th anniversary as an independent school in 2013.

For more information on the campaign, visit www.gesuschool.org/campaign.html or contact Sean Lavelle at (215) 763-9077 or sean.lavelle@gesuschool.org.

Animals at the Local SPCA Enjoy a Special Delivery from Concerned Students. A unique after school class inspired the idea to assemble the 750 handmade toys for the dogs and cats at the shelter.

The story began last fall, when trustee Keith Pension began teaching the Humane Society’s anti-dog fighting curriculum in the afterschool program, making Gesu the only school in Philadelphia to complete the program and Philadelphia just the third participating city. The course included a visit to the local SPCA, where students conceived the idea of making enough toys for every animal in the shelter.

On June 4th students delivered the fruits of their labor—over 750 toys for the dogs and cats, as well as other comfort items. The students also had the opportunity to observe in the shelter’s Operating Room.

“I was actually a bit unsure of the kids’ capacities for observing invasive surgery,” Pension admits. “But all thirteen were remarkably poised and attentive, asking thoughtful and rather advanced questions. A few politely excused themselves, but two stayed to watch a post-op dissection. They impressed both surgeons and interns with their knowledge. They couldn’t have made me more proud.”

Two students hope to return to the shelter as volunteers this summer.

Eighth graders Daniel and Muammar were rescued from racing in the Archdiocesan earlier in the day. Eighth-grade students found practical outlets for their energy on the track team this year.

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Animals at local SPCA enjoy a special delivery from concerned Gesu students.............................. p. 3

And much more!

CONGRATULATIONS TO THE CLASS OF 2012!
Our graduates are headed to the following outstanding high schools:

Boys’ Latin of Philadelphia Charter School  
G. W. Carver High School of Engineering & Science  
Country Day School of the Sacred Heart  
Cristo Rey Philadelphia High School (6)  
Delaware Valley Charter High School  
Franklin Learning Center  
Freire Charter School (2)  
John W. Hallahan Catholic Girls’ High School (2)  
Little Flower Catholic High School for Girls (3)  
Mastery Charter School - Simon Gratz High School  
Mastery Charter School - Thomas Campus  
Mercy Vocational High School (6)  
Merion Mercy Academy (3)  
Multi-Cultural Academy Charter School  
Overbrook High School  
Philadelphia Montommy High School (2)  
Preparatory Charter High School  
Saint Joseph’s Prep (2)  
Sankofa Freedom Academy Charter School  
W. B. Saul High School  
School at Church Farm  
West Philadelphia Catholic High School (2)  
Woodlynde School

Students shine at successful gala!
From the basketball team to the art program, students showcased their talents and honored beloved Gesu friend and board vice chairman Bob McAuline, recipient of the 2012 Gesu Spirit Medal.

Thanks to the gala committee led by co-chairs Jennifer and Kevin Kolmer, Pat and Allan Murphy, Ellen Grose, and Jennifer Kolmer, Gesu president Bryan Carter, (back row) gala co-chairs Alix Murphy, Elise Grose, and Jennifer Kolmer. (Not pictured: gala co-chairs Bill Rouse.)

Celebrating a spectacular evening on behalf of Gesu are: (front row) gala co-chairs Jennifer and Kevin Kolmer, Pat and Allan Murphy, Elise Grose, and Jennifer Kolmer. (Not pictured: gala co-chairs Bill Rouse.)

Kaneim proudly displays an award he received at graduation on June 13th. In the fall he will attend Saint Joseph’s Prep, along with classmate Jalen. Other schools the class of 2012 will attend include Merion Mercy Academy, Carver High School for Engineering and Science, and the new Cristo Rey High School. Thanks to you, our donors and volunteers, Gesu is able to dedicate staff resources to ensuring that our students enroll in the best high schools for their individual situations.

and the choir, an incredible recitation of Langston Hughes’ “Mother to Son” by 3rd grader Dhmyni, dance performances choreographed by The Rock School for Dance Education and by the Dancing with the Students program, and a Harlem-Globe-Trotters-esque basketball routine to honor Gesu Spirit Medal recipient Bob McAuline, who had not missed a Gesu game all season.

Thank you to everyone who made the evening a success. If you missed the event, check out highlights on our YouTube channel at www.youtube.com/gesuschoolworks.

Upcoming events:
9/5 First Day of School
11/1 15th Annual Symposium on Transforming Inner-City Education
5/2 2013 Gala
7408 - United Way Donor Choice Number
Please consider designating Gesu School (Gesu Community Service Project) when making your United Way gift.

Corporations can make a huge difference in the lives of Gesu children while receiving tax credits for their contribution through the Pennsylvania Educational Improvement Tax Credit (EITC) program. For more information on corporate giving and the EITC program, contact Kelly Grattan at (215) 763-9077 or kgrattan@gesuschool.org.

If you missed the event, check out highlights on our YouTube channel at www.youtube.com/gesuschoolworks.