

Cristo Rey's \$5.35 million footprint

By Jennifer Williams

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Cristo Rey Jesuit High School in Baltimore is not asking what the City of Baltimore can do for it. Rather, in a unique report, the Catholic high school is detailing what the school has done to help strengthen the city.

"Cristo Rey Jesuit's essential mission is to educate Baltimore City students for leadership and professional success for Baltimore," said Jesuit Father John W. Swope, president of Cristo Rey and one of three school representatives who compiled the Economic and Community Benefit Profile. "We are deeply grateful for the investments that businesses, individuals and foundations have made in Cristo Rey Jesuit, and our commitment to accountability obliges us to present this report."

The profile of the 5-year-old school, located at 420 S. Chester St., details how it has brought significant revenue and revitalization to a corner of Fells Point - \$5.35 million to be exact.

Baltimore City Councilman James B. Kraft, a St. Casimir parishioner who represents the city's First District, said "the amount of information we're getting from this report is just tremendous."

"When you look at their ability to measure their direct financial effect on the community, it's just amazing to me," he said.

He pointed to statistics such as the fact that all 78 members of the school's first graduating class in 2011 were accepted to college, the fact that 54 of the school's 300 students live in the First Council District and the fact that the school worked to tabulate how many community members used their facility.

“One of the complaints we get so often is that the kids who go to a school don’t live in the neighborhood,” he said. “When you have 54 of the 300 students living right there in the council district, you have a trust. You have a sense of how the school fits in, who lives in the neighborhood and what their role in their own community is.”

City resident Mary Beth Lennon, director of communications for Cristo Rey Jesuit, said school leaders are proud of how they are “strengthening a historic neighborhood and a historic parish.”

“We are deeply committed to the community,” she said.

Although the report is financial in nature, she said, “you can’t put a price on the vitality we brought to Eastern Avenue and Chester Street with a flourishing school and with the appearance of revitalized buildings with an attractive streetscape.”

Following are some of the details of Cristo Rey Jesuit’s economic footprint:

- Cristo Rey Jesuit has spent \$7.25 million renovating the former Holy Rosary school and convent, which yielded 15 jobs and \$127,000 in fees to the city. Planned construction in the next five years (including information technology investments, HVAC upgrades and relocation of administrative offices) is estimated at \$3.75 million and 10 new jobs are likely as a result of the construction.
- Every student at the school has performed community service, which totaled 4,200 hours in 2011.
- Nearly 25 percent of the school’s employees live in the East Baltimore community, within one mile of the school. Payroll for these staff members (a total of more than \$530,000) is returned to the immediate community through household spending.
- The school’s annual operating budget totals \$5.2 million, including payroll

for 60 local employees and annual local tax and fee revenue of \$200,000.

- Cristo Rey Jesuit's signature Corporate Internship Program provided \$1.6 million in revenue to the school in 2011, with 85 corporate sponsors helping 300 students discover and refine career aspirations. By providing 40 hours per month of meaningful employment to each student, the sponsors are making a long-term commitment to increase the quality of the Baltimore region's labor force. Cristo Rey alumni will be in a position to make a significant contribution to the overall economic competitiveness of the region.
- Ancillary spending by students, staff and visitors accounts for \$142,000 at local restaurants, caterers and retail and grocery stores.

In addition to these statistics, some 450 community members have also used the Cristo Rey Jesuit facility to host a variety of meetings.

Tony Sochurek, director of finance and facilities for the school, also assisted in compiling the report.

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