

# High schools find new ways to share their vision

**By Renée Newberry**

*Special to the Review*

Fifteen years into the 21st century, social media is going strong, new technologies are emerging at lightning speed, and educators focus on developing students who relate to the world personally and globally.

In the archdiocese of Baltimore, two high schools have found ways to make more meaningful connections on social media. Another is adding a global punch to its curriculum. An all-girls school made a major advertising push during a Thanksgiving Day football telecast, launched a new website, and renovated for a more welcoming front entrance.

These marketing innovations are bolstering each school's Catholic identity or mission.



*A screen capture shows Calvert Hall's new SocialToaster program. (Courtesy Calvert Hall)*

## **Calvert Hall partners with SocialToaster**

Marc Parisi, the director of communications and marketing at Calvert Hall College High School in Towson, said part of the conversation at the school last July touched on how to better use social media to get out its message.

Parisi contacted SocialToaster, which had partnered with colleges but never before with a high school. The site sends subscribed fans of "Team Calvert Hall" an email, where a click allows them to share new CHC posts on their chosen social networks and, in turn, reach more people, such as alumni, parents, students and prospective families.

Calvert Hall has 700 fans so far who enjoy knowing what's happening at the school, Parisi said.

"As they recruit more fans and post," he said, "they get points and can win things like Calvert Hall sweatshirts and tickets to games."

"We know who we are," said Parisi, explaining that posts from the LaSallian school are about more than athletics and academics.



*Cristo Rey Jesuit High School social studies teacher Travis Henschen, second from left, led a team that included, from left, Lemuel Bourne, Keynell Washington and Corey Washington in the inaugural Baltimore High School*

### **Cristo Rey seniors develop winning proposal**

"We didn't go into it thinking it would market the school," said Cristo Rey Jesuit High School social studies teacher Travis Henschen, about a student-developed proposal for a mobile app that took top honors and a \$5,000 prize in the Baltimore High School Innovation Challenge.

The challenge, Henschen said, was "to come up with an innovative idea to improve the community."

He advised a team of seniors, Lemuel Bourne, Corey Hairston, Justine Mudiay and Keynell Washington, in putting together a proposal for "a mobile app to better connect the entire Cristo Rey Jesuit community," according to the Cristo Rey website.

"A problem we have is most students don't have adequate Internet access at home," Henschen said. "Social media presence is disparate. You could access everything at one place on your phone (with the app)."

Project-based learning and corporate internships are requirements for Cristo Rey Jesuit students, who are now developing the mobile app.

"Since students came up with this app and are implementing it," said Henschen, "it's proof they are engaging in learning."



*Students at The John Carroll School in Bel Air will begin financial literacy and entrepreneurial studies coursework in 2015. (Courtesy The John Carroll School)*

### **John Carroll flexes curriculum**

The John Carroll School president Richard O'Hara said developing a Financial Literacy and Entrepreneurial Exploration program (FLEX) to launch during the 2015-16 year is the result of the Bel Air school thinking intentionally about its mission.

Four characteristics strike O'Hara about graduates: "a strong sense of self, a moral compass, a global perspective and the capacity to pursue personal and professional aspirations."

"Two international students last year started a business (as their senior project) to send care packages from back home in China to international students in the U.S.," O'Hara said.

Their tagline, he said, was, "Not just delivering boxes ... delivering emotional connections."

FLEX was inspired in part by that project. Led by Larry Dukes, who is completing a stint as the school's athletic director, it will offer electives in entrepreneurialism and

business ethics.

O'Hara said the goal will be for students to take "a creative, visionary approach to employ all they have learned to solve real, critical problems. Knowledge is not to be left on the shelf; it is to be applied to advance the real good."



*Mercy High School was a prominent advertiser on the 2014 Turkey Bowl. (Courtesy WMAR TV Channel 2)*

### **Mercy places charism front and center**

President Mary Beth Lennon said the "Mercy High School Red Zone" advertisements during the 2014 Turkey Bowl between Calvert Hall and Loyola Blakefield were the brainchild of communications director Tess Veloso, inspired by Mercy's colors, red and white.

Veloso said feedback shows Mercy as a positive part of the Catholic school community.

Lennon said the school also "launched a newly designed website that includes access for prospective students and families to interact with Mercy from inquiry through acceptance," streamlining the process.

"Everything we are doing," Lennon said, is informed by the charism of Sister Catherine McAuley," founder of the Sisters of Mercy, driven by hospitality.

To that end, Mercy renovated its front entrance.

"The new entrance aligns with Mercy values," she said. "McAuley dedicated herself to offering education and training to girls. We're doing things that are authentic to Mercy."

The new entrance prominently displays a statue of the Blessed Virgin Mary with the inscription at its base, "Thou art all beautiful."

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