

# Atterbury Publications' **Pennsylvania** Nonprofit Report<sup>sm</sup>

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### Visit to N. Phila. School Is Positive

by L.A.Rode

Community Partnership School (CPS) in North Philadelphia hosted an informational tour of the facilities for members of the community Feb. 21. Head of School Eric Jones led the morning event, along with board members, staff and parents.

CPS is located on the second floor of the Honickman Learning Center/ Comcast Technology Labs at 1936 N. Judson Street. The building is the home of Project H.O.M.E.'s after school program.

The 60 CPS pre-K through 3rd graders, outfitted in Germantown Academy (GA) uniforms and following the same curriculum taught at GA, spend their days in spacious, cheerful classrooms, each equipped with eighteen computer terminals. The school opened its doors three years ago and will add a grade per year until it reaches 5th grade; then it has ambitious plans to grow the current 12 students per grade to 36 students per grade, creating three sections of 12 students.

But CPS has no plans to graduate its first 5th grade class in two years, and say "good bye, good luck." Eric Jones said that when kids come to CPS, they "come for life." Mr. Jones' vision, shared by passionate board members like Mark Kormen, is that the relationship will continue in weekend and evening support such as counseling and tutoring. The admission process mirrors that of all private independent schools, since that is what CPS is, a private independent school, which receives no state funding.

...see Visit School page 2

### Community Partnership School

• Founded in 2006, CPS is the product of a collaboration between Germantown Academy, the city's oldest private non-sectarian day school, and Project H.O.M.E., a nationally- recognized social service organization. Head of School is Eric C. Jones, who came from Episcopal Academy, Newtown Square, where he was Director of Diversity/ Community Life.

• CPS provides a chance for talented youth in the North Central Philadelphia neighborhood to receive the best private school education through 5th grade, in preparation for attending the region's most competitive middle schools.

• CPS is a nonprofit, non-sectarian, and achievement-oriented alternative to the Philadelphia public school system.

• 6:1 is the ratio of CPS students to CPS faculty, which employs 21 full/ part-time staff with private academic school/early education teaching certification.

• \$15,000 is approximate cost of one student's tuition.

• \$14,100 is average financial aid package per student during current year.

#### The Students:

• Students are selected after a rigorous admissions process similar to that at Germantown Academy. The school seeks motivated children with supportive families.

• Students excel through small classes and curriculum designed to encourage

...see Partnership School page 2

**... Partnership School from page 1**

• The school will number 60 in pre-K through 3rd grade this September; a grade will be added each year until the school reaches 5th grade.

**The Program:**

• Is being assessed through a five-year tracking study to qualitatively demonstrate its students' improvement. On a recent standardized reading test, three quarters of CPS 2nd graders scored above the national average for all students in Reading Comprehension.

**Budget Information:**

**Expenses**

- The budget for '08-'09 = \$1 million.
- Instructional salaries/expenses account = 58 percent.
- Administrative/development expenses = 27 percent.
- Rent/plant = 15 percent.

**Income**

- 6 percent will come from parental tuition payments.
- 25 percent will come from corporations/foundations.
- 68 percent will come from individual donations.

Call CPS at 1-215-235-0461 for information. ■

**...Visit School from page 1**

But unlike, other private independent schools, CPS is not tuition driven. It can't be. Because, while it costs \$15,000 per year per child, the most a family pays is \$1,000. Tuition is on a sliding scale, and even if a family pays \$5.00 per month, that financial contribution provides the basis for a 'partnership' with the family, and establishes an investment and participation from them that Jones says is crucial to the school and child's success.

Jones said that the word "Partnership" in its name is intentional, since it is creating an environment where children can succeed in partnership with the family and the school. And succeed they will, if Jones and his staff of dedicated teachers and loyal and engaged parents have anything to say about it. These kids

are academically ready to attend the Philadelphia's private independent and Catholic schools. Also intentional, is the choice of location. While most private independent schools occupy acres in more affluent communities, CPS is located in the neighborhood it serves, primarily North Philadelphia's 19121 and 19132.

The vision of CPS, 10 years in the making, was to provide quality, affordable education, "right here in the neighborhood." CPS is making a difference, answering a need for safe, good schools with the best educational resources made available through private gifts, corporate and foundation support. So successful is this model, that CPS has taken its show on the road, hoping that other urban communities will be inspired to set up similar schools.

Though it was inspiring to listen to Mark Kormen about his reasons for supporting the endeavor, and to Eric Jones about the mission of the school, the highlight of the morning was 12 children who performed martial arts movements in unison learned in the after school program, along with the mother of a 1st grader who spoke emotionally about the school's impact on her daughter who wakes up every morning eager to get to school. For the gathered group, many of whom have affiliations with Philadelphia's private independent schools, the message was clear: CPS kids are headed in "our direction once they leave here," said one.

*The author is executive director of CHASS, a partnership between Chestnut Hill Academy and the Springside School, which facilitates collaboration on initiatives and projects which strengthen and serve both schools. ■*

**Overheard...**

- "Everybody can be great, because everybody can serve."  
- Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.
- "Real generosity toward the future consists in giving all to what is present."  
- Albert Camus

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