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FEATURED

Cristo Rey Atlanta Jesuit High School, businesses partner up

Margot Carvallo Dec 15, 2016



Special Photo
Jesus Sabino

A prosperous future can be reached by Cristo Rey Atlanta Jesuit High School's graduates through its work program.

The Chicago-based Catholic high school system, with a location in Midtown, requires all its students to participate in its Corporate Work Study Program and to spend one day a week during their four years of high school going to work at one of many local corporations.

"My experience at Intercontinental Hotel Group is different from my other experiences over the last two years in corporate work-study because I get to connect to people and their experiences, and also because I get exposed to departments that I never knew existed in a hotel, such as human resources, engineering and finance. I have learned that a hotel is not just a place you come and go to stay," said Cristo Rey junior Jesus Sabino, a Buckhead resident who works at Dunwoody-based IHG, one of the school's corporate partners.

Not everybody makes the cut. To be admitted at Cristo Rey, the student's family must meet the financial criteria.

"We serve students who qualify for free and reduced lunch. All prospective students must be 14 years old by Sept. 5, 2017 and be eligible to work legally in the U.S. in order to participate in the program," said school President Bill Garrett, a Sandy Springs resident.

Students should also have good grades and strong a work ethic. Due to the uniqueness of the academic program, all prospective applicants must show good attendance and discipline records.

The school, located at 680 W. Peachtree St., has a total of 385 students in ninth through 11th grade.

"Next year we will welcome another class, at which time we will reach full capacity, about 525 students," Garrett said.

The corporate work study program was conceived in Chicago in 1996 at the first Cristo Rey school. The Atlanta campus opened with its freshman class in July 2014. At the time the corporate work study program had 41 corporate job partners.

To date there are 32 schools nationwide and 101 corporate partners such as IHG, Huddle House, AT&T Mobility, Bank of America, Southern Company Gas, UPS, LaAmistad, Lenbrook, MARTA and Northside Hospital.

Companies interested in participating in the program agree to pay Cristo Rey \$30,000 per year for a full-time equivalent employee.

"Monies go directly to the school and offset 60 percent of the cost to educate students," said Garrett.

These companies are then assigned a team of four students who share a job, each performing it once a week with a rotation on Mondays, said Garrett.

By the time these students graduate from Cristo Rey, "they will have worked in some of Atlanta's top-performing companies," Garrett said.

"Each student works at one of our corporate work study partners five full days a month. They earn the majority of the cost of their education and gain valuable, real-world jobs skills, contacts and experience that simply cannot be replicated in the classroom," he said.

Sarah Alvarez, communications director and volunteer services, said, "We began a \$25 million capital campaign in October 2014 and have raised \$23.1 million, only \$1.9 million to go."

Funds are being used to renovate the school's space and build a gym.

More Information

www.cristoreyatlanta.org
