

VERB features

From the Desk of Paul W. Hosch

VERBUM DEI
HIGH SCHOOL

Employees Transforming Urban America — One Student at a Time

Dear friend of the Verb,

Seven years ago, through the encouragement of the late-great John Watkins, Verbum Dei started the **Adopt-A-Student Program (AASP)**. The program has been very successful, and we have seen wonderful connections form between our students and their benefactors. Benefactors like Mrs. JoAnn Busuttill, who began sponsoring her student, LeTroy Timms, as a Verbum Dei freshman, and continues to mentor him as he enters his junior year at Concordia University. When I spoke to LeTroy, he said he enjoys his relationship with Mrs. Busuttill. “She doesn’t judge me—she just wants me to know she is there supporting me and believing in me through her kind words and encouraging texts,” LeTroy said. We also appreciate that many of our AASP supporters do not have the time to correspond with their sponsored students. Regardless, their financial support shows a strong level of commitment and concern, as 85% of our AASP donors remain in the program for the entirety of their student’s four years at Verb.

As the only school in Los Angeles with a unique Corporate Work Study Program, we wanted to bring the connection our individual donors have to the thousands of employees who work alongside our students every day. Thus, we are excited to announce the inception of the **Employee Adopt-A-Student Program (EAASP)**, the first of its kind in the Cristo Rey Network. While our students typically interact with only a small number of employees, we have found that many employees at our corporate partners, once meeting our students, wish they could do more for them. Through EAASP, co-workers will be able to pool their support and collectively sponsor the education of their team of student workers. Participating employees will cumulatively become their students’ sponsors and will receive student assignments and handwritten notes of gratitude that help deepen the connection between our students and the employees who support them.



Crescent Capital employees with student workers Kawika Smith, Jamal Cotton, and Osiel Torres.

Many of our students have unique stories that are both inspiring and filled with examples of determination. Starting an employee giving program gives everyone at our partner agencies the opportunity to invest directly into the lives of students that they already care about, or otherwise don’t have the opportunity to interact with. We are so excited to launch the Employee Adopt-A-Student Program this December, and want to thank Payden & Rygel’s Greg Morrison, and Crescent Capital’s Joe Viola, Cathy Cunningham, and Amy Jagodowski, for their help in developing the program. **Finally, thank you so much for**

being a part of the network of compassionate individuals that ensure Verbum Dei’s success. Stay tuned for the results of our first campaign, where we hope to welcome many new faces to our family of supporters.