



DIOCESE OF DES MOINES

PRESSRELEASE

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Cristo Rey Des Moines project on indefinite hold

After two years of intensive research, community discussion and study, it has been determined that the proposed Cristo Rey Des Moines project be put on indefinite hold with the Cristo Rey Network until additional philanthropic financing can be identified.

Cristo Rey is a college preparatory high school in the Catholic tradition exclusively for low income students of all faiths whose needs are not being fully met in a traditional public school. Cristo Rey Network schools employ an innovative Corporate Work Study Program that provides students with real world work experiences.

With the support of a congressional grant, the Diocese of Des Moines began a feasibility study in September 2009. The study was conducted to determine if there was a need, interest from students and parents, and support from the business community based on the guidelines from the Cristo Rey Network (CRN) to establish a Cristo Rey school in Des Moines.

In the fall of 2010, the CRN approved the Des Moines feasibility study, certifying that there was sufficient need, interest among parents and students, and support from businesses to make Cristo Rey a success. Pending appropriate and sufficient funding, Cristo Rey Des Moines could be established.

Even though the feasibility study was approved, there was not sufficient philanthropic support. The Cristo Rey Network requires \$2 million upfront funds for the first year of operation. Based on guidelines from the CRN, the local Cristo Rey Advisory Board determined

it would need a total of \$10 million in start-up funds for the first five years of operation. In addition, a basic endowment of \$10 million is needed to sustain the school. The endowment is necessary to create an ongoing, stable model that does not rely too heavily on annual fundraising.

Thus, the total amount needed to be raised is \$20 million for viable operation. In the Des Moines community, between \$4 million and \$5 million dollars for this purpose was identified.

“Having a solid financial foundation for a Cristo Rey Des Moines project is essential to ensure its long term viability,” said Bishop Richard Pates. “I am convinced that our community would benefit from a Cristo Rey school and plan to continue to advocate for needed educational institutions for children in our community who have the capacity but presently lack opportunity.”

Bishop Pates further noted: “The feasibility study identified approximately 8,000 students in the greater Des Moines area who qualify for the reduced and free lunch program. This is the target audience of a Cristo Rey School. According to our study, 360 of the 8,000 students benefit from a program that is transformative.”

The opportunity for capable but underprivileged youth has been valuable in other Cristo Rey Schools. The possibility of having a local Cristo Rey school is on indefinite hold should one or more donors choose to support this unique model of school which, over time, could benefit thousands of deserving young people.

The Diocese of Des Moines includes 81 parishes in 23 counties in central and southwest Iowa.