

A.M.D.G SUMMER 2023

DEAR FRIENDS,

One of my favorite poems is "To be of use" by Marge Piercy. Her words capture the selflessness and tirelessness with which so many good people approach their work at CJA:

The people I love the best jump into work head first without dallying in the shallows...

I love people who harness themselves, an ox to a heavy cart, who pull like water buffalo, with massive patience, who strain in the mud and the muck to move things forward, who do what has to be done, again and again.

I want to be with people who submerge in the task, who go into the fields to harvest and work in a row and pass the bags along, who... move in a common rhythm when the food must come in or the fire be put out.

When I read Piercy's words, I cannot help but picture our students and all their hard work during the past school year. Each day, their efforts made them stronger. Our students' median Reading test scores grew at rates that were 1.4 to 3.2 times greater than the median growth rates of their peers nationally. Their Mathematics growth across our 3rd through 8th grades was also incredibly impressive, climbing at rates that were 1.3 to 2.6 times the median national growth rates.

Behind this great success was the "massive patience" of our parents, faculty, staff, volunteers and other supporters who work tirelessly together on behalf of our students and alumni. They know so well that "the food must come in" and "the fire [must] be put out" no matter "the mud and the muck." Their dedication to our shared mission is both extraordinary and inspiring.

On the pages that follow, I hope you enjoy reading a few stories from our families, our alumni and our new school partners. Each story speaks so well to the hard work, courage and goodness that define our CJA community. I am grateful to Ms. Levi and her daughter, Kylie (CJA 2028), as well as Jerrod (CJA 2009), Jae (CJA 2013) and Elijah (CJA 2021) and Barton Dassinger, the Principal of Chavez Academy, for helping us tell the story of our shared work at CJA. Each of them personifies what it means to be a person for others. They are wonderfully good people who "jump into work head first without dallying in the shallows."

Thank you for believing in them and for continuing to believe in the great promise of all our students and alumni.

In gratitude,

Matthe Japach

Matthew Lynch





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EIGHTEEN YEARS OF GROWTH AND COUNTING

In 2005, CJA began with 19 students in two rented classrooms at Marillac House. Today, we serve over 230 students on our campus in Austin. We welcomed our first class of girls in the 2022-23 school year and finished our 50,000 square-foot campus expansion at the start of this school year. Over the next five years, we will grow to annually serve more than 400 students and 550 alumni while also supporting 1,400 partner-school students through High School Bridge. We can't wait to see what the future holds for CJA!



2013 The south wing of CJA's campus is renovated to create a gym, cafeteria, nurse's clinic and CP office

2005



2012

CJA creates the College & Career Persistence (CP) Office to support



2007

CJA works with the Archdiocese of Chicago and St. Martin de Porres Parish to move to our current campus





2009



CJA's volunteer nurse becomes a full-time employee, and a full-time social worker joins the staff

2018



CJA launches High School Bridge to help students across Chicagoland find their best-fit high schools



2022

CJA welcomes our first class of 3rdand 4th-grade girls

2018



To better serve our diverse learners, CJA launches the **Learning Resource** Center



2016

To address the needs of students who enroll at CJA as emerging readers, CJA expands enrollment to students starting in 3rd grade 2023

CJA opens 50,000 sq-foot campus expansion to grow our enrollment to 400 students





A LEGACY OF SISTERHOOD BEGINS

This year, Sandra Levi enrolled her daughter, Kylie, in CJA's inaugural class of 3rd-grade girls. Ms. Levi heard about CJA from a friend who spoke highly of CJA, and from the moment she toured, she knew CJA was the right choice for Kylie. Here, **Ms. Levi** and **Kylie** speak about their experiences and why welcoming girls to CJA is so important.

What's it like being the first class of girls?

Kylie: It's like you've been chosen to be in a movie. It feels a little bit special.

What made you choose CJA?

Ms. Levi: The openness of all the teachers and staff here. The family style and the close knit community. At Kylie's old school, she didn't get a lot of one-on-one attention, and I noticed that change immediately here.

What are you most excited for Kylie to have access to at CJA?

Ms. Levi: Kylie did most of kindergarten and first grade online during COVID, so she missed some important years in the classroom. She's making awesome progress. One day after school, Kylie told me she likes CJA because she is actually able to learn with the small class sizes. The education is unmatched.

What would you want a parent who is reading this to know about CJA?

Ms. Levi: Enroll your kid! I don't think there are many schools that match CJA as far as curriculum, staffing and the fact that every teacher or staff member that I've seen in the school genuinely cares about the students. This school has an impact not just on your student but on whole families. If you have the opportunity, take advantage of it.

Why was it important for CJA to enroll girls?

Ms. Levi: Girls deserve the same resources. It's a great opportunity for boys and girls. I am so grateful that my daughter has a chance to take advantage of those same opportunities that were given to the boys.

What impact do you think CJA has on the young women joining the campus?

Ms. Levi: The sisterhood and bond that these girls have being the first classes of girls at CJA will create the path for many classes behind them. It will be a great educational experience that they'll have, and they'll know they can do anything. Kylie: We have a bond at CJA, and if we keep supporting each other, then we will become independent women when we grow up.

What would you want the next class of girls who enroll to know about CJA?

Kylie: I want them to feel comfortable, and I want them to show sisterhood to each other.

What do you hope for the future of CJA?

Ms. Levi: I hope that resources are expanded to help keep the school funded and give opportunities to more children.

Kylie: I hope for more girls and more students. I hope they follow a good path in their life. I hope they become leaders: presidents, doctors, scientists, firefighters, a lot of things.

"Enroll your kid! I don't think there are many schools that match CJA as far as curriculum, staffing and the fact that every teacher or staff member that I've seen in the school genuinely cares about the students."



Welcome

Girls Program

CJA's

Growth

Alumni Roundtable Our Unique Approach High School Bridge Our Mission The Class of 2023

Our Financials CJA Supporters

Board of Directors



THINKING BACK, LOOKING FORWARD

Over the past 18 years, CJA has grown from two rented classrooms at Marillac House to our dedicated campus in Austin with a building footprint of 100,000 square feet. We have also continually expanded the ways we serve our students and alumni. Three CJA alumni, **Jerrod Castleberry, Jae Rule** and **Elijah T.,** gathered to reflect on the growth of CJA – both the physical campus and the depth and breadth of support available to students and alumni. They share their thoughts below.

How has CJA's physical location and campus evolved since you enrolled here?

Jerrod: When I started at CJA at Marillac House, you had to do basketball drills and track in the hallways! Having space on the new campus was a blessing. I remember seeing our lockers with our name plates. We were so excited for more space, and the building wasn't even fully in use yet.

Jae: I remember using the atrium for chapel, <u>Pi Day</u>, everything. When I came back and saw an actual music room, a new gym, a <u>Learning Resource Center</u> and the cafeteria: it was so different! We used to eat in our classroom! It's a testament to the ways that CJA secures resources to support students.

What's it like watching the expansion coming together?

Elijah: Looking out the window from <u>Christ the King</u> every day, I can tell it's going to be a really big impact.

What's a favorite memory you have from CJA?

Jerrod: I worked as a summer

intern for Walsh Construction during CJA's first renovation. The doors that you enter through in the atrium, I helped put those up!

Elijah: The best thing for me was cura personalis conferences. I got to see what I needed to improve. One of my biggest struggles was speaking up for myself. Now, when I need help, I advocate for myself.

In 2016, CJA started enrolling students as early as 3rd grade. What were your thoughts when you found out about this change?

Elijah: I think it's really good to bring in more students earlier to get the experience that I got to have.

Jae: If I had come to CJA two years earlier, that's two extra years of this type of education. When I go and hang out with the third and fourth graders, I think, "I can't wait to see who you grow into over your six years here."

How do you feel about CJA welcoming girls?

Jerrod: I'm super happy because in addition to the girls coming in, you have everything they're building. The whole

point of CJA is to get resources and a chance at an education that a lot of people can't afford. So, let's enroll more young men and women, too.

Jae: Having the girls here now, seeing how strong, funny and bright they are, it's hard to imagine having CJA without them.

Jerrod: It's the thing that's been missing. Elijah: When I graduated, I knew CJA was talking about adding girls. I was thinking, "Girls: that doesn't sound right!" I was just so used to it being all boys. But as I come back here and see the girls, I'm happy to see them getting the same experience that I had.

What was it like having social workers on campus?

Elijah: Working with a social worker was fun, just having somebody to talk to about school, home or just life in general. They were there to listen.

Jerrod: Some of the biggest things in life come from being able to control emotions, and when you don't necessarily have the resources to learn to identify and manage those emotions, it can be a problem. The earlier you can get started on that stuff and build on it, the world ends up better too.

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Elijah, were you able to work with the Learning Resource Center (LRC), or Jerrod and Jae, would an LRC have been helpful when you were here?

Elijah: I love Math. When I was at CJA, I did not like Math. At CJA, people worked with me weekly on Math. Now, I'm going into Trigonometry. Jerrod: There's no one type of CJA student, so you need to look student by

student. I'm sure the LRC would have been helpful. Sometimes I'm jealous [of current students], but that's how it should be!

What have been your experiences working with the College & Career Persistence (CP) Office?

Jerrod: There were times I was coming to CJA's computer lab on the weekends,

and they'd sit with me to do college applications. Ms. Walsh and Ms. Finch drove me to Denison and moved me in. Looking back, I wasn't even going to CJA at the time, but your relationship with CJA doesn't stop just because you leave here.

Jae: I remember how complicated the high school application process was; having to fill out different applications and take different tests for different

types of schools. My mom was really committed to finding the right place, and CP helped us walk through that. **Elijah:** CP is not just for supporting you to get into high school or college. Everyone is just really helpful.

What do you hope for the future of CJA?

Jerrod: I hope that the school can continue to thrive and keep the same

reputation. To keep enrolling students that are going to represent those grad-at-grad qualities and go out there and be successful young men and women.

Elijah: I hope CJA continues to expand and do what it's doing now. Because CJA has been a help for me, and I bet it's going to help kids younger than me.

Jae: I hope CJA will be the standard of education everywhere. If the world could

see what's going on inside these walls and see what it really means to care for students, we'd be in a much better place. You can't be what you can't see, and you can't put value on opportunity. Seeing those opportunities through CJA allowed me to grasp that I could go so many places as a young black man.

Jerrod: It's crazy how far the school has come. It has farther to go, and that's a good thing.

WHAT MAKES CJA SPECIAL

At CJA, we embrace the Jesuit principle of *cura personalis*, care for the whole person. This means we approach our work holistically, supporting each student academically, spiritually, physically and emotionally.

97%

of CJA alumni graduate high school in five years or fewer. Ninety-four percent of CJA alumni graduate in four years compared to 47% of young Black men who graduate within four years from the three Chicago public high schools nearest to CJA's campus.



CO-TEACHING MODEL

There are two adults in each CJA classroom, allowing students to receive more individualized, consistent care and strengthening classroom culture.



EXTENDED SCHOOL DAY AND YEAR

Our 9-hour school day and 11-month school year ensure we can support academic growth, provide experiential learning opportunities and incorporate co-curriculars into the school day.



LEARNING RESOURCE CENTER

CJA is not an academically-selective school. We provide learning interventionists, including a speech and language pathologist, to ensure students have the tools they need to thrive in the classroom.



WRAPAROUND SERVICES

Our team of social workers and full-time nurse care for the physical and emotional health of each of our students.



ROBUST SUPPORT OF OUR ALUMNI THROUGH AGE 25

We support our alumni through the transition to their best-fit high school, post-secondary education and meaningful employment.



Alumni

Roundtable

Our

Mission

Faculty

& Staff

EXPANDING OUR IMPACT

CJA launched High School Bridge (HSB) in 2018 to support 7th-10th grade students as they find and persist at their best-fit high schools. By 2026-2027, we will be working in 18 traditional public, public charter and private elementary schools across the Chicagoland area. **Barton Dassinger** is the Principal of Cesar E. Chavez Multicultural Academic Center, one of CJA's current partner schools. Here, he speaks about their partnership with CJA and why finding a strong high school fit is crucial.



Increase in college degree attainment

Students who enroll in a best-fit high school, like those recommended by HSB, are up to six times more likely to earn a college degree than students who undermatch for high school in Chicago.

How would you describe Chavez?

Chavez is a public school of about 840 students in Chicago's Back of the Yards neighborhood. Ninety-five percent of our students qualify for free or reduced-price meals, and over 50% of our students qualify for bilingual services. We are a 21st century community learning center: We have an extensive afterschool program, Saturday programming and a free summer school program.

Why did you partner with CJA in **High School Bridge?**

This was work we were already doing, but we were using school resources to do it. Our school counselor is now actually able to do counseling! So much has been taken off of her plate because CJA is able to invest the time needed in our students' high school transitions.

Chicago's system is unique. It requires a dedicated person to help students and families know how to take it to the next step. After students enroll at their high school, HSB Counselors actually follow up with our students for the next two years. They not only help students on their journey but also give us feedback about our advising process. We see which schools seem to be most supportive for our students, which helps students know which direction to go for their next schooling experience.

What are other ways CJA and Chavez have partnered?

There are academic scholarships available that we didn't know about before and schools we didn't have experience with. Last year, two of our students received full scholarships to St. Ignatius through the Rowe Scholarship, and we had students with two full scholarships to another private school.

CJA let us know of opportunities for students to attend summer camps on scholarships — this was a huge bonus! Our kids have never experienced or been able to access camps. Many have not been out of the city, much less spent the night for weeks in the country. Being able to be kids and socialize with one another and form friendships – we're really grateful CJA offers this.

Why is it so important to help students find their best-fit high schools?

We've wondered if certain schools are really the best fit. Some have the best name recognition and maybe on paper look like the best schools, but they might not know how to best support our students. CJA's College & Career Persistence office has a lot of experience because they've kept track of this over time, and HSB Counselors now use and add to this information.

There's a real concern with not being successful. I have stories of students who have told me about the high school choices they made and how they got involved in some things they shouldn't have. It has consequences.

When we see some of our students getting scholarships, not just in high school, but in college, when we hear that they're in college and they're doing well, that's what we want to hear. The more we can do that, the more we'll feel better about what we're doing every day. I think CJA has a similar vision to what I have for Chavez. CJA works hard helping their students be successful post graduation, and our families are really grateful for the same support.

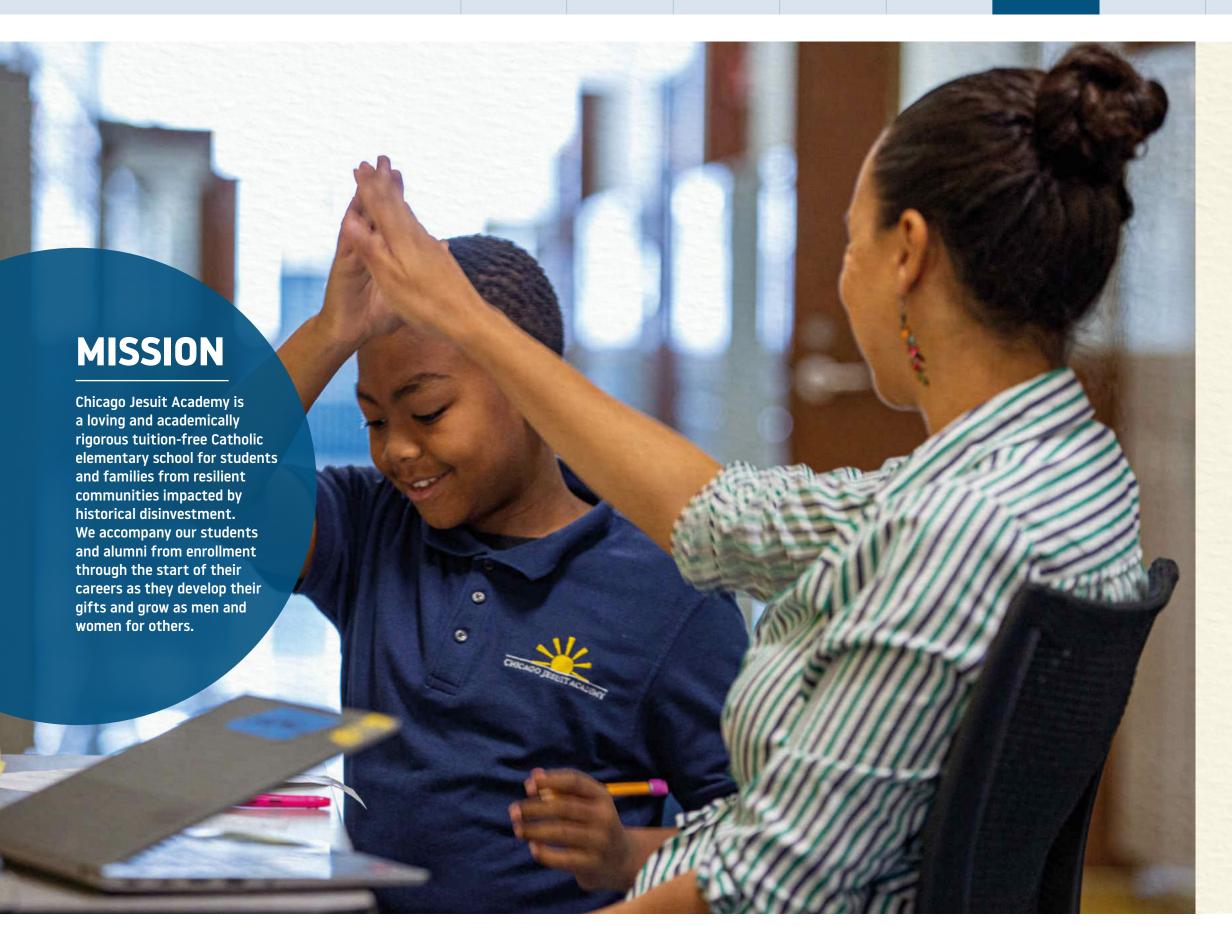


1,400

Students

By 2026-2027, High School Bridge will serve 1,400 students across 18 partner schools, in addition to our CJA students and alumni. The program is offered at no cost to partner schools.

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MEANS

Located in Austin on Chicago's West Side, CJA admits students to all grades in our lower and middle school without regard for their race, ethnicity or religion, and CJA enrolls 3rd-4thand 5th-grade students without regard for their past levels of academic achievement.

We use **small class sizes, extended school days and an 11-month school year** to give personal care to our students and help them develop as whole persons.

We accompany our alumni on their unique paths to meaningful employment and support them throughout high school, their post-secondary education and the start of their careers, always welcoming them back as leaders at CJA and in the broader community.

CJA students, alumni, parents, faculty, staff, volunteers and benefactors **listen to and learn from one another** and make disciplined sacrifices to accomplish our shared mission.

We partner with other schools and the broader community to create access to better educational resources, confront systemic racism and remove obstacles to educational equity.

We call one another to find God in all things and be men and women for others who are open to growth, loving, religious, seeking intellectual excellence and committed to doing justice.

THE CLASS OF 2023

The Class of 2023 will attend the following high schools:

Private Catholic

- Christ the King College Prep
- Cristo Rey Jesuit High School
- Holy Trinity High School
- Saint Ignatius College Prep

Other Private

- Bennett Day School
- Chicago Hope Academy

Selective Enrollment Public

- Chicago High School for the Arts
- Westinghouse College Prep

Other Public and Public Charter

- Lake Ridge High School, (Mansfield, TX)
- Michele Clark Magnet High School
- North-Grand High School
- Ogden International School
- Steinmetz College Prep High School



GRAD-AT-GRAD AWARD WINNERS



RELIGIOUS

Awarded to Christian

Christian reminds us that love is not an abstract concept but an action that transforms our lives and the world. He exemplifies the qualities of someone who aspires to serve others with the unique gifts that God has entrusted to them.

— Ms. Bonaccorsi



OPEN TO GROWTH

Awarded to Benayah

Benayah has acquired the single most impressive streak of independent work completion that we've ever seen. He knows that what he must give the world is a beautiful, miraculous thing, and he is developing each day as we are all called to do.

— Mr. Houlihan



LOVING

Awarded to Jaxson

Jaxson loves because he knows he is loved and that it's his job to magnify that love into the world. And perhaps that's why his classmates unanimously identified him as the one who personified what it is to be a loving soul.

— Mr. Beckley





SEEKING INTELLECTUAL **EXCELLENCE**

Awarded to Josue and Xavier

Josue and Xavier walked with their classmates in their learning, not simply giving answers, but guiding them, allowing them to achieve their own excellence. And when they weren't helping their classmates, they were pursuing their own intellectual curiosity and deepening their learning. Both students understand that they are lifelong learners who have understood that excellence is not an act, but a habit.

- Mr. Mason



COMMITTED TO DOING JUSTICE

Awarded to Jacob

Jacob is respected as the go-to person in his class for advice and guidance. His peers know they can trust him and rely on him. He has not been afraid to speak the hard truth when it has been needed, even when it may cause a ripple amongst his classmates.

- Mr. Kemper

OUR FINANCIALS

Benefactors who choose to support CJA are investing in the long-term future of our students. That investment signals a belief in our students' promise – not only academically, but also as people who are committed to doing justice in the service of others.

SCHOLARSHIP LEVELS

Full Cost \$29,500/year

A Full-Cost Scholarship takes into account the approximate true cost per student per year at CJA. This cost is in line with the amount spent by many suburban public school districts whose average school day is three hours shorter and whose school year is two months shorter than CJA's.

Half Cost \$14,750/year

A Half-Cost Scholarship covers half of the cost of the extended school year, extended school day, full-time school nurse, social workers, reading and math specialists and co-curricular programming which make a CJA education unique and exceptional.

Quarter Cost \$7,375/year

A Quarter-Cost Scholarship covers one quarter of the cost of a student's education throughout their time at Chicago Jesuit Academy.

Four-Year Sustainable Scholarship

More important than the amount of a scholarship commitment is the commitment to support a student throughout their fifth- through eighth-grade years at CJA. We invite our benefactor community to consider a four-year commitment of an amount that is the best fit for them.



If you are interested in learning more about becoming a scholarship benefactor, please contact **Mary Grawe, Vice President of Development**, at (773) 629-8600 or grawe@cjacademy.org.

ANNUAL FUNDRAISING BY PROGRAM

The majority of CJA's annual fundraising is in support of student scholarships, Scholarship fundraising is essential to CJA's continued growth. By raising students' scholarships in four-year pledges, we are able to ensure we have the funds necessary to serve each student through their eighth-grade graduation. Over 80% of scholarship benefactors choose to renew their four-year commitment in support of the incoming fifth-grade class. Some benefactors choose to support specific programs such as our Healthy Students Program, our College & Career Persistence Program, our High School Bridge Program or our

Arts & Music Program. Others give to our General Operating Fund, which directs contributions to areas of the school that need it most.

Each year, we aim to raise more than our operating budget so we can continue to grow our enrollment responsibly while growing our reserves. With the completion of our campus expansion, our enrollment capacity will double to allow us to serve 400 students. Additionally, our goal is to have a four-year scholarship raised for each student entering our fifth-grade class before they begin 5th grade in June. Our third- and fourth-grade classes are funded separately by other generous donors.

SPENDING BY DEPARTMENT

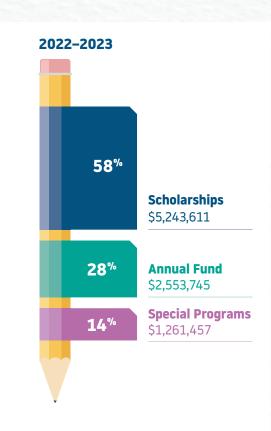
The majority of spending at CJA during the 2022-23 school year directly supported the Academic School Day, ensuring a low student-to-teacher ratio and funding for three social workers, four specialists in our Learning Resource Center and a full-time school nurse. This holistic approach addresses the needs of each student through the Jesuit tenet of *cura personalis*, care for the whole person.

The Development Team accounted for 14% of our expenses and raised \$9.0 million plus an additional \$6.5 million in conditional commitments in support of our students and alumni, which allowed us to close out

our \$40 million capital campaign.

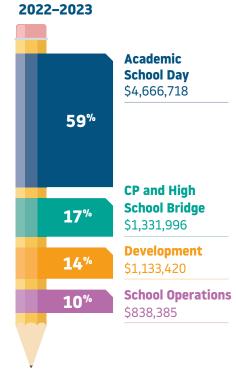
The College & Career Persistence Team worked with our students and their families starting in sixth grade to help them prepare for the transition to high school. They continue this work with our alumni in high school, post-secondary education and in their careers through the age of 25. The High School Bridge team worked with our partner-school students in 7th-10th grade as they navigated their transitions to high school. The Operations Team managed technology, campus safety and the buildings and grounds for our students and alumni.

These data were unaudited at the time of publication. For a copy of CJA's audited financials, please contact Mary Grawe.



Faculty

& Staff



CJA SUPPORTERS

FOUNDERS CIRCLE

The following donors have generously contributed over \$400,000 in support of our students since the founding of CJA in 2005.

Anonymous (5) Barclays Matthew J. and Christine C. Botica

Helen Brach Foundation CA Student Living/Scott Family Foundation

Chicago Blackhawks Foundation

Dan and Maureen Connolly Conway Family Foundation James and Catherine Denny Foundation

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SCHOLARSHIP

The following donors are

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students through gifts

Matt and Kathryn A'Hearn

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Noel G. and Michele V. Moore

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2023 fiscal year.

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received outside of the 2022-

CIRCLE

The following donors have made generous commitments over the past three years in support of our campus expansion and the creation of our girls' program.

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Berkel Midwest Sales and Service, Inc. Bimbo Bakehouse LLC Boar's Head **Bob Evans** Bob's Red Mill Natural Foods Bolthouse Farms Borden Dairy Matthew J. and Christine C. Botica Mary Grace and Kevin Burke Bushmans' Inc. Katie Byrne C.A. Carlin C.J. Erickson Plumbing Co. Camburas & Theodore, Ltd. Campbell's Chelan Fresh Marketing Chicago Baking Company Chicago Bears Football Club, Inc. Chicago Blackhawk Hockey Team, Inc. Chicago Bulls Chicago Cubs Chobani Clyde's Donuts Fred J. and Leona Conforti Dan and Maureen Connolly

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