

## **Pryor Cashman Partners With Cristo Rey Brooklyn High School's Corporate Work Study Program, Taking on Five Students as Interns**

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### Press Release

Pryor Cashman LLP is pleased to announce its support for the Cristo Rey Brooklyn High School, a school serving low-income and minority youth in Brooklyn, NY. This marks the second consecutive year that the firm has partnered with the school's Corporate Work Study Program, which provides students with real world work experiences in law firms, banks, hospitals, universities, and other businesses. Pryor Cashman employs five of the school's students as interns.

The Cristo Rey Brooklyn High School uses a proven formula of rigorous coursework, individualized support for all students and an innovative work/study program in which all students are placed in entry-level positions with local companies. Students work full-time one day a week where they gain real world experience and connect with professional role models. The other four days are packed with challenging schoolwork—including two sections of Math and English each day. The income they earn through the work/study program is disbursed directly to the school, defraying 60% of the student's education cost.

“At a time when dropout rates among low-income urban high school students are alarmingly high, Pryor Cashman decided to be part of the solution and partner with Cristo Rey Brooklyn High School,” said Eric Hellige, partner and chair of the Corporate and Securities Group at Pryor Cashman and a board member of the school. “The Cristo Rey program clearly works – 100% of the school's first senior class graduated last year and were offered opportunities to pursue advanced degrees, with an average of six college acceptances each.”

Cristo Rey Brooklyn High School, a Catholic, college preparatory high school, does not receive public funds. Students work their way through school with the help of corporate sponsors to help offset education costs. Almost all the students come from families near or below the poverty level, where the dream of continuing on to college is just that—a dream. Within the national Cristo Rey network, 98% of enrolling Cristo Rey freshmen graduate from high school (vs. the national average of 33% for inner-city males) and 99% of Cristo Rey graduates are accepted into college. By their sophomore year, more than 85% of those students are still enrolled—a much higher rate for not only low-income students nationally, but all students.

“Our program is unlike any other in the country,” says Cristo Rey Brooklyn President Bill Henson. “It offers students a roadmap for real-world success by exposing them to a professional work environment. They witness firsthand the value of a college education while earning their own way through high school. In Brooklyn, where 26% of the residents don't finish high school and 45% earn less than \$35,000 per year, we provide these very special students a hand up instead of a handout.”

## **Pryor Cashman Students**

**Fabian Brunner** – Fabian is a sophomore interested in pursuing a degree in mechanical engineering. In his downtime, he helps run his step-father's car dealership, and even designed and launched the dealership's website. Fabian is fluent in Spanish and loves math. The responsibility of having a job at Pryor Cashman and being accountable for a work product are life lessons and building blocks to a successful future.

**Fanni Lema**– Fanni Lemi is a senior interested in pursuing a degree in finance. Fanni's family moved from Ecuador to New York for a better life and access to more opportunities. And, that is just what Fanni found as a Cristo Rey student and through her work at Pryor Cashman. Pryor Cashman role models help Fanni fine-tune her communication skills and develop her day-to-day business skills. But most importantly, her experience at one of New York's most prestigious law firms has instilled a sense of hard work and discipline. This past summer Fanni worked two jobs to help pay for some of the family expenses. She has been in the Cristo Rey program since its inception and has worked at Ridgewood Savings Bank and Cushman & Wakefield to help offset her tuition expense.

**Angelynn Rodriguez** – Angelynn is a junior interested in becoming a psychologist. She spent the first half of her sophomore year working at Repertorio Espanol before beginning her job placement at Pryor Cashman last spring. This past summer, Angelynn worked to help make money to pay for her tuition and enjoys blogging, photography, writing and learning new things. Her favorite subject in school is English and she is excited about the prospect of attending college.

**Darrel Suarez-White** – Darrel is a freshman who would ultimately like to study culinary arts and become a chef. He is a dynamo and has been described by his teachers as “a mature, motivated self-starter.” He is excited about the Cristo Rey Brooklyn High School program and looks forward to his job each week at Pryor Cashman. “I have always wondered what happened behind the walls of the big, downtown sky-scrappers,” says Suarez-White. “It is inspiring to be a part of what makes this city tick.”

**Mairellene Valerio**– Mairellene is a sophomore and her favorite subject in school is English. She dreams of one day being a writer for *The Tablet*. Last year Mairellene worked at St. Louis Senior Center in Crown Heights, Brooklyn and is gaining valuable professional work experience from her time at Pryor Cashman

The national Cristo Rey network is comprised of 25 high schools around the country that provide a quality, values based college preparatory education to low-income young people of all faiths primarily from inner city communities with limited educational options. They educate approximately 7,000 students, who otherwise would not have access to a quality, college preparatory education. The Cristo Rey Brooklyn High School was the 24th school in the Cristo Rey network and opened its doors in 2008 as Lourdes Academy. In November 2011, it was renamed Cristo Rey Brooklyn High School.