

journey to rejuvenation
 Escape from your daily routine with a 5-minute vacation.
 And discover inspiring destinations that embrace renewal. [escape now >](#)

Web MSNBC

[Make MSNBC Your Homepage](#) | [MSN Home](#) | [Hotmail](#) | [Sign In](#)



[Newsweek Home](#) >> [Society](#)

Newsweek **Who's Next 2007**



Education: The Rev. John Foley

As head of the Cristo Rey Network, he helps low-income kids get to college.

By **Barbara Kantrowitz and Karen Springen**
 Newsweek

Dec. 25, 2006 - Jan. 1, 2007 issue - The best ideas are often bred in desperation. A decade ago, Father John Foley and his Jesuit colleagues were in the midst of creating a new college-prep high school for students from Chicago's Pilsen and Little Village neighborhoods, a low-income area largely populated by Mexican immigrants. Even finishing high school was a lofty goal for many of these youngsters; in the inner city, a 50 percent dropout rate is not unusual. Coming up with a curriculum that would turn likely dropouts into college grads was a major challenge, but figuring out how to pay for the school seemed an even bigger obstacle. Clearly, the parents could not afford much tuition. The church couldn't sustain it, either. The worthy project was in danger of failure before a single student had enrolled. So Foley turned to a management consultant he describes as "original in his thinking." Two weeks later, the consultant, Richard Murray, returned with the suggestion that the students themselves could pay for their education by working at local companies. "It was a brilliant idea," Foley says. "That was the birth of this whole thing."



Jesse Chehak for Newsweek

'Imagine them going to the 60th floor of the Sears Tower and finding they have a desk,' Foley says of his kids

2007: WHO'S NEXT? [More](#)

- Mitt Romney: America's First Mormon President?
- Deval Patrick: Star Politician on the Rise
- Heartland: Kathleen Sebelius
- Intel: Silvestre Reyes
- The Military: Conrad Crane
- International: Ségolène Royal
- Business: Kim Ng
- Environment: Majora Carter
- Religion: Bishop Katharine Jefferts Schori
- Islam: Ingrid Mattson

[Story continues below ↓](#)

advertisement

Newsweek

- [Subscribe Now](#)
- [Table of Contents](#)
- [Periscope](#)
- [My Turn](#)
- [National News](#)
- [Politics](#)
- [World News](#)
- [International Ed.](#)
- [War in Iraq](#)
- [Business](#)
- [Enterprise](#)
- [Tech & Science](#)
- [Health](#)
- [Society](#)
- [Education](#)
- [Entertainment](#)
- [Tip Sheet](#)
- [The Boomer Files](#)
- [Columnists](#)
- [Letters & Live Talks](#)
- [Multimedia/Photos](#)
- [Search Archives](#)

Video

U.S. News

Politics

World News

advertisement

audible.com[®]

over 30,000 titles.

Sign up today and receive a **FREE AUDIOBOOK**



[Click Here](#)

50+ **everything eons**
www.eons.com

- [Business](#)
- [Sports](#)
- [Entertainment](#)
- [Tech / Science](#)
- [Health](#)
- [Weather](#)
- [Travel](#)
- [Blogs Etc.](#)
- [Local News](#)
- [Newsweek](#)
- [Multimedia](#)
- [Most Popular](#)
- NBC NEWS**

- MSNBC TV**
- [Today Show](#)
- [Nightly News](#)
- [Meet the Press](#)
- [Dateline NBC](#)



- [Subscribe](#)
- [Give a Gift](#)
- [Renew](#)
- [Change Address](#)
- [Classroom Subscriptions](#)

NEWSLETTERS

- Sign up for our **Web Exclusive Alert** e-mail newsletter
- Sign up for our **World News Update** e-mail newsletter
- Sign up for our **Live Talk Alert** e-mail newsletter
- Sign up for our **Political Perspectives** e-mail newsletter

READER SERVICE

- [Make Newsweek Your Home Page](#)
- [RSS Feeds](#)

Newsweek Business Directory

Stop searching, start finding!

- Accounting
- Advertising & Marketing
- Air Charter
- Air Travel
- Annuities
- Antivirus / Antispam Solutions
- Apartment Loans
- Architects

THE POWER TO TALK MORE EVERY NIGHT.

Unlimited night calling starts at 7PM.

Shop now >

Try Sprint's Network Risk-Free for 30 Days

Sprint POWER UP
Together with NEXTEL

In 2007, "this whole thing"—now called the Cristo Rey Network after the first school—is set to add seven new schools to 12 already running in poor urban neighborhoods around the country. (More are planned for 2008.) The schools have attracted the attention of major philanthropies like the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, which this year announced a \$6 million grant to the network on top of an earlier \$9.9 million investment. Thanks largely to the work-study program and a rigorous curriculum, Cristo Rey has succeeded where so many others fail: the four-year dropout rate for the network's graduation class this year was 6 percent, and 96 percent enrolled in a two- or four-year college this fall.

The model that succeeded so well in Chicago—no more than 550 motivated students, all from economically disadvantaged backgrounds—so far seems translatable to other cities, which is always a difficult goal in educational innovation. Expectations are high: 99 percent of the class of 2006 was accepted to college. Students work one day a week for corporations doing entry-level jobs. Foley believes the work requirement has a major impact on students far beyond what the money does for the schools' bottom lines. "I like to say that it has opened horizons for them," he says.

When the first students went off to their jobs in the fall of 1996, Foley was so anxious that he says "I wanted to hide under the desk." But then he began to hear from employers—most of them in major corporations in Chicago's business district—thanking him for the hardworking students, and from students themselves, many of whom were venturing out of their neighborhoods for the first time. "Imagine them going to the Sears Tower, to the 60th floor, and finding they have a desk there," he says. "On Sundays, they would take their parents down to the city and just look in on the buildings from the outside."

The Chicago Cristo Rey school now sends students to 106 corporations. They spend one day a week downtown for every four days in the classroom. Employers pay the school \$27,000 for each job—70 percent of tuition costs. Tuition is \$2,650, but 60 percent of

- [Islam: Ingrid Mattson](#)
- [Spielberg Takes a Stab at Reality TV](#)
- [Sports: Daisuke Matsuzaka](#)
- [Gymnastics: Nastia Liukin](#)
- [Television: Sarah Silverman](#)
- [Health: Nora Volkow](#)
- [Education: The Rev. John Foley](#)
- [Media: Lara Logan](#)
- [Fashion: Anand Jon](#)
- [Music: The Rapper Common](#)
- [Jerry Seinfeld's Next Move: The Movies](#)

EDITOR'S CHOICE

- [Ornish: Diet and 'Good' Cholesterol](#)
- [Is America Ready for Hillary or Obama?](#)
- [Q&A: Evangelicals Push D.C. on Environment](#)
- [Cose: What Next on Immigration Policy?](#)
- [Al Qaeda's Western Recruits](#)

RELATED STORIES | [What's this?](#)

- [The Boomer Files: The Long Goodbye](#)
- [Decision day for top prep football stars](#)
- [Government sets high grant standards](#)

advertisement

If you're not 50
DON'T BOTHER!



www.eons.com

Newsweek.com

See this year's hottest design trends in our Design Dozen special section

SEARCH THE SITE

FEEDBACK

- [E-mail us your comments](#)

advertisement

I NEED A DEGREE IN:

Business

Education

Nursing

Information Technology

Criminal Justice

More Programs

classesUSA™

Asset-Based Finance
Auto Financing
Auto Insurance
Auto Leasing

POWERED BY DIRECTORY 

families get some aid. This cost includes the students' schoolbus transportation from Cristo Rey at 8 a.m. and from downtown Chicago at 4:45 p.m. "We do all the recruiting, all the HR, we take out all the taxes," says Peter Beale-DelVecchio, director of development. Some students also choose to work in the summer. If they do, they get to keep their salaries. Employers agree not to hire students whose GPA falls below 2.0. To get students ready for work, Cristo Rey requires freshmen to undergo a three-week summer training program where students learn the basics of business behavior—how to shake hands, maintain eye contact, answer the phone—as well as tasks like filing. Parents, most of whom speak little English, are bullish on the program. "They help the students to succeed," says Irma Vargas, whose daughter, Lillian, is a freshman. "She feels important."



In Chicago, 82 percent of alumni have graduated from or are currently attending college. One of those graduates (class of 2004) is Angelica Barron, 21, now a sophomore at the University of Illinois in Chicago. Earlier this month, she returned to the school to watch her brother, Oscar Solis, 18, perform in a play for Our Lady of Guadalupe Day. "I don't think I would have gone to college if it hadn't been for this school," she says. In her internship at a law firm, she worked in the library, human resources, information services and accounting. She still remembers how Cristo Rey brought in many schools for a college fair, which helped her classmates see "the opportunities that are out there waiting for us." Her goal is to be a teacher—and pass that gift on to the next generation.

EDUCATION

Learning With Newsweek

- New for parents and teachers: an interactive news section for you and your kids
- Is your high school not getting Newsweek? Click here

© 2006 Newsweek, Inc. | [Subscribe to Newsweek](#)

Rate this story Low  High




Current rating: 4.5 by 23 users • [View Top Rated stories](#)

MORE

Sponsored Features

- **Looking for a degree from a quality school?** Discover Newsweek distance learning.com

- Newsweek showcase.com—your resource for health, education and business opportunities

 Print this  Email this  IM this

TOP MSNBC STORIES

- The best pictures of the year
- Family ID's climber killed on Mt. Hood
- Violent crime up in 1st half of '06
- Abbas insists elections will be held
- Arrest made in U.K. prostitute killings

Newsweek TOP STORIES

- Ornish: Diet and 'Good' Cholesterol
- Is America Ready for Hillary or Obama?
- Q&A: Evangelicals Push D.C. on Environment
- Cose: What Next on Immigration Policy?
- Al Qaeda's Western Recruits

PARTNERS

[washingtonpost.com](#)



Slate

ARTHUR FROMMER'S **Budget Travel**

Sponsored Links

REI Expert Gift Picks
\$20 off \$100 or more Spent at REI. Ends 12/24. Find a Nearby Store.
www.REI.com


MOST RECENT COMMENTS (0 COMMENTS IN TOTAL)

-  [Read All Comments](#)
-  [Comment on This Story](#)

advertisement

The BlackBerry® 8703e™ from Sprint with real-time GPS navigation
Get the power of the nation's largest mobile broadband network.

[Shop now >](#)



[Subscribe to Newsweek — Lowest Rate Available](#)

[Add Newsweek RSS Feeds](#)

[Mobile.newsweek.com](#)

- [ARCHIVES](#) | [MY NEWSWEEK \(BETA\)](#) | [NEWSWEEK RADIO](#) | [ABOUT NEWSWEEK](#) | [SUBSCRIBER SERVICES](#)
- [PRESSROOM](#) | [ADVERTISING INFORMATION](#) | [CONTACT US](#) | [EDUCATION PROGRAM](#)
- [BACK COPIES](#) | [RIGHTS AND REPRINT SALES](#) | [SHOWCASE ADS](#) | [ONLINE AND DISTANCE LEARNING DIRECTORY](#)

[Cover](#) | [U.S. News](#) | [Politics](#) | [World News](#) | [Business](#) | [Sports](#) | [Tech/Science](#) | [Entertainment](#) | [Travel](#) | [Health](#) | [Blogs Etc.](#) | [Weather](#) | [Local News](#)
[Newsweek](#) | [Today Show](#) | [Nightly News](#) | [Dateline NBC](#) | [Meet the Press](#) | [MSNBC TV](#)

[About](#) | [Alerts](#) | [Newsletters](#) | [RSS](#) | [Mobile](#) | [Podcasts](#) | [Site Map](#) | [Help](#) | [News Tools](#) | [Jobs](#) | [Contact Us](#) | [Terms & Conditions](#) | [Privacy](#)

© 2006 MSNBC.com