



REACH

— REGIS HIGH SCHOOL —



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From the Director Beyond the Walls

Education has become “too selective and elitist,” Pope Francis said at a question and answer session marking the 50th anniversary of the Second Vatican Council’s Declaration on Christian Education. Taking questions from administrators and faculty members of Catholic schools, the Pope spoke about Catholic identity in education and warned about the dangers of exclusion and educating within “the walls” of a selective and safe culture. These are challenging words from a popular Pope! We do not have to agree with these words, but the observations about Catholic education cannot be ignored.

For many New York City families the promise of a Jesuit education can seem like an unscalable wall. The insurmountable tuition, an unfamiliar culture, a social scene far removed from the poor, and an educational system in which financial means and academic success correlate directly all contribute to homogeneous student bodies at many elite schools. REACH is uniquely built to address this exclusion. For 14 years REACH has gone beyond the walls and has sought out the excluded, the financially challenged, the bright, those with potential, and those who normally would never approach a Jesuit high school. At its beginning, the Reverend Chris Devron, the founder of REACH, established the foundation for REACH to be a program and network of educators accompanying young men beyond the walls of education. For over ten years, REACH’s second director, Mr. Todd Austin, guided young men in forming their hearts, their minds, and their souls. Mr. Austin oversaw the growth of the program into what it is now—a successful three-year educational and leadership program serving Catholic boys in their middle-school years. Together both of these men have accompanied hundreds of young men who have matriculated to fine Jesuit high schools in New York and great colleges and universities throughout the country.

Today, our current REACH students, alumni, parents, grandparents, faculty, staff, and friends form the REACH community that continues to accompany young men throughout their middle and high school years. We join together to continue the generosity of the foundress of Regis and the work of St. Ignatius.

What is that work?

Well, it is to educate for change. We seek to educate and challenge the hearts, minds, and souls of our students in order to radically transform the world to be closer to the image that God has intended. As the new REACH



Program Director, I am keenly aware of the blessings that this program has had in Mr. Todd Austin and his many years of service to the program. He has cultivated and grown the program into what it is today. As we move forward into REACH’s 14th year of existence, I urge us all to renew our commitment of making sure Jesuit education is accessible to those who would never consider it so.

I am deeply humbled each week with the depth of care and commitment to learning that our students display each Saturday. As a REACH staff we remain deeply committed to our roots of preparing young men for opportunities in New York City and beyond. Our current students compete for scholarships at highly selective Catholic high schools including Regis, Fordham Prep, Xavier, and the Loyola School. Our alumni are advancing in the fields of education, law, business, social work, and the arts. Whether you are reading this as a parent, grandparent, student, alum, friend of the program or as a donor we count on you as our companion in mission. We rely on your time, treasure, and talent as we journey with our students. Your generosity of time, talent, and treasure makes this program possible. Your generosity is affirmation of the important work of educating our students in the Jesuit, Catholic tradition. Thank you! Thank you for allowing us here at REACH to dream a little bigger.

Deo et Patriae Pietas Christiana Erexit,

Rev. Mario M. Powell, S.J.
REACH Program Director



Student Profile:

Jefferson Guaman

Jefferson Guaman is a REACH third-year student from Jackson Heights, Queens. He currently attends Voice Charter School in Long Island City, but has recently accepted a scholarship to enroll in the Regis High School Class of 2020. He was interviewed by Mr. Doug Eickman, REACH's Dean of Mathematics, to reflect upon his experiences as a student of the Program.



Jefferson and his mom at a recent REACH event earlier this year.

Q: Where are you and your family from? What is your neighborhood like?

J: We are from Jackson Heights, Queens. Our neighborhood is mostly Hispanic, but there are some people from Bangladesh too. My experience of the neighborhood has been that there's a lot of kids. Everywhere I go, you see moms, dads, with practically a whole family around them, and so there are a lot of

education centers around where I live.

Q: Where do you go to school, and what's your school like?

J: I go to school at Voice Charter School, in Long Island City. My school mainly focuses on music, that's why it's called Voice. Our day's extended compared to regular schools since we have one extra music period every day. The lessons we learn in music, they connect with the

lessons we learn in Math, ELA, and everything, and I find those connections very helpful. I like that my school is a small community—my class is only 27, and we've known each other since the first grade. We've grown very close, and we've taught each other new things, new ways to solve problems, and new ways to look at things.

Q: How did you and your family find out about the REACH Program? What were your first thoughts about the program?

J: From my principal, Mr. Headley. I thought that the program was going to be a challenge, especially the three weeks in Scranton. I thought it was something new, and I was very excited, because I was thinking of meeting new people, with practically the same traits as me. They were Catholic, and they were intellectually skillful [*one of REACH's five principles—ed.*], and I guess I knew that it was another challenge to get to know them and to attend class with them.

Q: What did you hope to get out of the REACH program when you were applying?

J: I hoped that at the end of those three years I would be prepared to go on to a competitive high school.

Q: How would you describe your experience of the REACH program to someone who was unfamiliar with the program?

J: I would describe REACH as efficient, very preparing... and community-based. I think it's the three weeks in Scranton that really make me say that, because we're all in the same dormitory and we share our rooms with our roommates. I think that having a roommate has really helped me grow a lot, because I've gotten to know someone for three weeks, in the same room, and sometimes we've had to interview each other. I say preparing

because in my last year, while I've been applying to high schools, I've been really well-prepared by them, giving me advice and having lots of one-on-one meetings with me, so that their partner schools can see me as a stronger applicant to be admitted into their schools.

Q: Is there a particular memory that most clearly stands out to you as you reflect on your time in the REACH program?

J: I think this may be a little silly, but I think recreation stands out most clearly in my mind. I think after spending so much time together in the classroom and in the dorms, I think it's also really important to see someone on the field, to see how they work together with teammates, to see how they interact. Also, it's just a lot of fun!

Q: What's the most challenging thing about the program? What made those challenges worth overcoming?

J: Yes, it's definitely challenging. I was challenged practically from the moment I was first admitted into the program. I made a commitment that I would perform strongly in every class, and that isn't easy. Also, while it wasn't the first time I had been away from my parents, it was challenging to go away for three weeks. It was a very unique experience, because I was mostly hanging out with kids my age. I had to learn a lot in the classroom, but I also got to enjoy myself. It's definitely been worth it—since day one, it has been all planned out, so that every moment counted, so that I would be prepared for my future, not only for the end of the program, but beyond.

Q: How has REACH changed you as a student?

J: I think REACH has changed me because it taught me to be more diligent and to try to avoid careless mistakes. They've taught me to know that mistakes happen, but that you can always be more careful and more thorough with your work. For example in math class, I've always been affected by small errors on tests, but with my teacher's advice, I've noticed that I've become a lot more persistent and more organized. I know now that if something's challenging,

don't just give up on it, and if something seems easy, don't underestimate it.

Q: How has REACH changed you as a leader?

J: Well, I think that REACH has changed me as a leader because it has taught me to be more open to growth, because sometimes there might be people who might disagree with me, and the program has taught me to react in a way that is

“I think it's kind of remarkable how in three years it has taught me so much that I didn't even think about before. So I think it's the kind of thing that stays inside of you forever.”

more peaceful, but also to hear them out and listen to what they have to say. Sometimes you have to be willing to change your mind and agree with them. You can't be ignorant of your own flaws; sometimes you have to be humble about what you did wrong, and you have to admit that.

Q: How has REACH changed you as a spiritual person? As a Catholic?

J: So in Scranton, at the end of every day, we would sit down in a circle as an advisement, and we would talk about our highs and lows of the day, talk about certain things that made our day interesting, sad or happy. And stuff like that. And at the end, we would say a prayer written by one of our advisement saints, like Ignatius of Loyola, Aloysius Gonzaga, etc. I guess through those prayers— we were taught one prayer each year—taught me a lot because through them they say thanks to God, and we work to be better each day. I

think it's unique because you get a one-on-one conversation with God and you kind of get to reflect on what you did wrong and what you did right, and that helps you to be better each day.

Q: What would you say the most difficult thing about the REACH program is?

J: Well, I think the classes can be pretty tough. The material can be very difficult. You have to have good stamina in order to stay on task and to keep up with the classes, since they're one year in advance of your regular school, the grade that you're in. I think they challenge you in every aspect, inside and out of the classroom—they require you to stay focused so that you won't get left behind, but they'll offer you the support you need if you fall behind a bit too.

Q: If you had to say something to a young man who was thinking about applying to REACH but wasn't sure, what would you say?

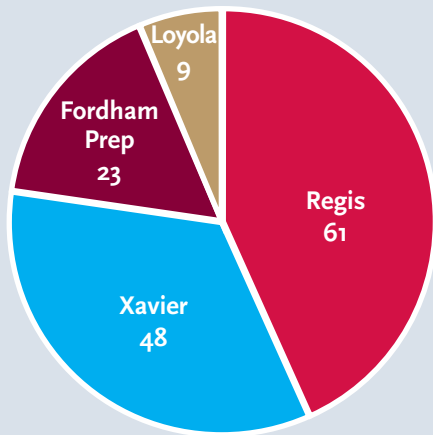
J: I feel like after these three years I won't really leave the REACH program behind. It's kind of in me, because those three years have taught me a lot. I think it's kind of remarkable how in three years it has taught me so much that I didn't even think about before. So I think it's the kind of thing that stays inside of you forever. The REACH experience is something that's going to be permanent throughout your whole life, so it's definitely worthwhile. You'll be academically, socially, and spiritually ready for high school.

Q: Complete the sentence: REACH is

J: Hmm... I don't want to use unique. I guess I would use remarkable. It's kind of mind-blowing, because in such a short time it has taught me so many things, things that I wouldn't have learned otherwise. And they've planned things out so perfectly, it's just all set up so neatly, so that even if you make a mistake, it almost seems like it's a mistake that adds on to your learning experience. My feeling of being part of a community just keeps growing, so yeah... remarkable.

REACH By the Numbers

Since 2009, 141 REACH alumni have graduated from a core high school.



141 of 209 REACH Alumni High School Graduates have attended a Core High School, according to our Alumni Directory.

96% of REACH Alumni who matriculate into Regis graduate from the school.

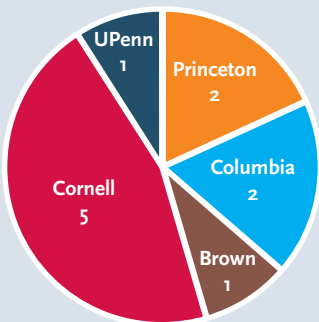
REACH Alumni have a 92% retention rate at Xavier High School.

No REACH Alumnus has withdrawn or left Fordham Preparatory or The Loyola School.

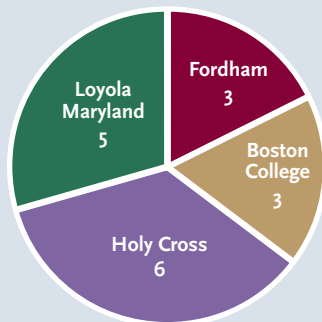
For the High School Class of 2015, REACH graduates maintained a 94% retention rate at Core Jesuit High Schools.

REACH's "Core High Schools" are the Jesuit high schools of New York City: Regis High School, Xavier High School, Fordham Preparatory School, and The Loyola School.

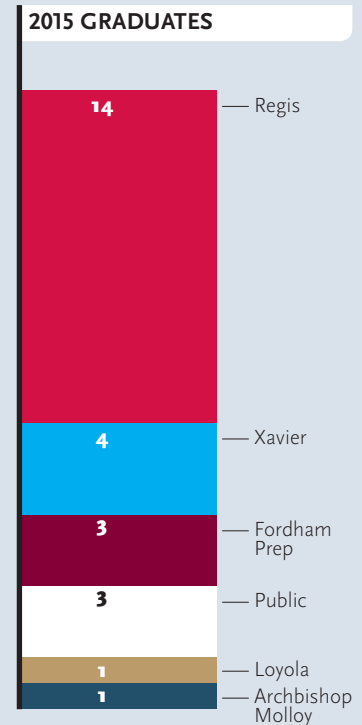
In its history, 11 REACH alumni have enrolled in Ivy League institutions.



17 REACH alumni are currently enrolled in Jesuit institutions.

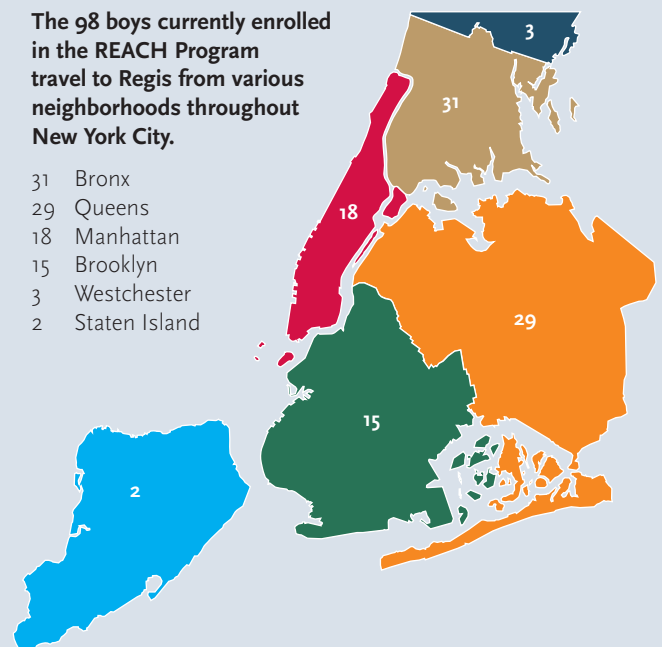


28 boys will graduate from the REACH program in 2016, and 26 boys graduated in 2015. Last year's 26 REACH graduates are attending the following high schools:



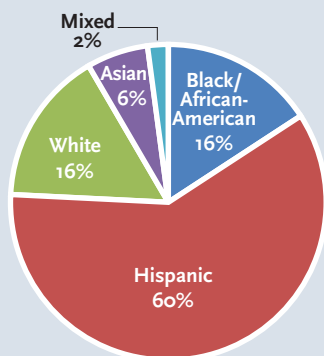
The 98 boys currently enrolled in the REACH Program travel to Regis from various neighborhoods throughout New York City.

- 31 Bronx
- 29 Queens
- 18 Manhattan
- 15 Brooklyn
- 3 Westchester
- 2 Staten Island

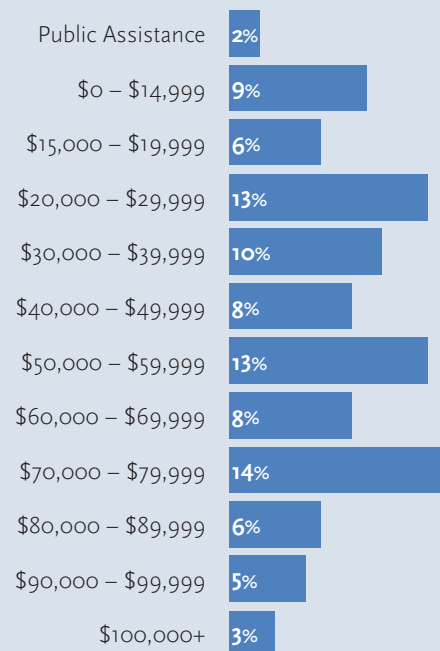


Meet the Staff

Students in the REACH Program come from diverse backgrounds. The ethnic breakdown of current REACH students is as follows:



REACH students come from families who demonstrate financial need, with respect to their ability to pay a Catholic high school tuition. Approximately 48% of REACH families earn less than the median New York City family income (\$50,711).



MARIO POWELL, S.J.

REACH Program Director
Loyola High School
Boston College, BA | St. Louis University, MA | Boston College M. Div., STL

Born in Little Rock, Arkansas and raised in Ewa Beach, Hawaii, Fr. Powell, S.J. has had a long history with Jesuit education beginning with his own at Loyola High School in Los Angeles. After completing his undergraduate studies at Boston College in history, Fr. Powell entered the Jesuits. As a Jesuit, Fr. Powell has completed a Master's in American Studies at St. Louis University and taught at Cheverus High School in Portland, Maine. Prior to his arrival at Regis, Fr. Powell completed a Master's in Divinity and a License in Sacred Theology both at Boston College. He was also ordained a priest in 2014. Fr. Powell currently is completing his first year as REACH Program director.



DOUG EICKMAN

Dean of Mathematics
Regis High School '05
Amherst College, BA | New York University, MA

Doug has worked for the REACH Program as Dean of Mathematics since 2010, and he has served as the Second Year Advisor since 2013. A proud native of Brooklyn, Doug went to a small, Catholic grammar school near Coney Island before attending Regis High School and graduating in 2005. He completed his undergraduate work at Amherst College, graduated from NYU with a Masters in Mathematical Education in 2010, and has been happily puzzling middle school students with mathematical riddles ever since. Currently, he teaches Geometry to 1st and 2nd Years and Algebra to 3rd Years while also serving as an administrator on REACH's leadership team.



JAMES KENNEDY

Dean of English Language Arts
Regis High School '02
University of Virginia, BA | New York University, MA

James joined the REACH leadership team in September of 2015 as Academic Dean for English Language Arts. Before joining the team full time, James had taught with REACH's summer program in 2015 and 2011, as the ELA instructor for 3rd years. He has also been a member of the English faculty at Regis High School since 2007. During his time as a teacher, he earned a Master's degree from New York University's Draper Program in Humanities and Social Thought. He received his undergraduate degree from the University of Virginia, where he was a Jefferson Scholar. His own time as a Regis student (class of 2002) formed the foundation for his adult journey as a lifelong learner and person who seeks to serve others.



ALAN GARCIA

Assistant Director and Dean of Student Recruiting and Admissions
Regis High School '08
Cornell University, BA | University of Pennsylvania, MA

Born in Mexico and raised in the Bronx, Alan Garcia re-joined the REACH team in the summer of 2014. A graduate of Regis High School, Alan is happy to once again call Regis home. After graduating from Regis, Alan completed his undergraduate degree at Cornell University and his graduate degree from the University of Pennsylvania Graduate School of Education. Upon finishing his graduate studies, Alan worked as a Program Coordinator at iMentor, a non-profit headquartered here in New York City that works with low-income, first-generation public high school students. As the Assistant Director of REACH, Alan heads the recruiting and admissions effort, in addition to various other administrative duties.

When Opportunity Knocks

Parent Profile: Janny Gédéon | Mother of Grégor Guerrier

REACH takes immense pride in the swift initiation of new families to its community. Janny Gédéon and Gregory Guerrier (parents of first-year student Grégor Guerrier) not only grace us with a passionate and curious son, but also represent REACH's continued expansion and service throughout New York.

FAMILY BACKGROUND

Where were you born and where did you grow up?

I was born in a small town on the Northwest part of Haiti called Saint-Louis-du-Nord. At a very young age, my family moved to the capital city, Port-au-Prince. I immigrated to the United States in 1987, lived in Boston and moved to New York two years later.

Where was your son born and where did he grow up?

Grégor was born and is being raised in New York City.

How would you describe your current neighborhood?

We live in Jamaica, Queens a very diverse residential neighborhood. It is very quiet, but not too far from the main busy commercial street and easy access to transportation.

EDUCATION

Where does your son attend school? Why did you decide to enroll him in this school?

Grégor has been attending Immaculate Conception Catholic Academy (formerly known as Immaculate Conception School) since kindergarten.

Immaculate Conception School was the best choice because we had been in the parish for many years. I wanted my son to be part of a school community where Catholic faith as well as the human and civic values that we try to instill in him would be emphasized.

How did you first hear about REACH? What attracted you to the program? What were your initial reservations, if any?

Last fall, my son's school's principal, Ms. Breen sent a note home informing me that she had chosen Grégor among 4 others to apply for the REACH program. I had never heard about REACH before, but had heard about Regis. The son of a friend of mine who went to Grégor's school currently attends Regis and he was constantly telling us how great the school is.

I was honored that Ms. Breen had recognized my son's aptitude for more academic challenges and that she trusted that the REACH program could help him expend his love of learning.

I was excited for the great opportunity that Grégor had, a chance to get into Regis and the other Jesuit High Schools in New York City. The only reservation that I had was that he would go away without me or family for three whole weeks for three summers.

Did you attend a REACH Open House [with your son]? If so, what did you take away from that event?

Yes, I did attend the REACH Open House with Grégor. I liked that the panel of young men was able to convince me that this would be a good program for my son to be a part of. Furthermore, parents of current REACH members were great in talking to us about the process. They were able to answer some burning questions that we had about the program and what our role would be as well as what the commitment would mean for the entire family.

How did your son react to REACH?

When Grégor heard that his principal nominated him for the REACH program, he felt very much honored that Ms. Breen thought that he was good and deserving enough to be

considered and he wanted to give his best. He felt good about himself. After he heard what the program entailed at the Open House, he was looking forward to be a part of it. He welcomed the idea of having more challenging academic work.

REACH

Why did you ultimately decide to have your son apply to REACH? What was the application process like for you?

As a parent, we have to take seriously the cues that our children give us. There was no doubt that Gregor needed to be challenged. The REACH opportunity came at the right time. An opportunity like this only knocks once. There was no question in my mind that the REACH program would be a good fit for my son.

The application process was very smooth as everyone involved in the REACH administration walked the parents through what was needed to be done. It was very straight forward. The REACH staff (Mr. Garcia) treated everyone with so much respect that I felt even more that the program was a fit for my son. He gave us ample time to fill out the application and make decisions. There was always someone available to guide us through, answer questions and just simply talk to.

How did you feel about sending your son away to Scranton for 3 weeks?

At first, I was a bit reluctant to send my 10 year old away for three weeks without me or a family member. I was afraid that Grégor would not adjust, that he would miss me (those were my own feelings because Grégor could not wait to start his journey). To make matters worse, the Wednesday before they went to Scranton University, I

took Gregor and Bertin [a friend, also accepted as a candidate for REACH] out to celebrate and while riding his scooter Grégor fell and got a buckle fracture in his left wrist. We spend the major part of the night in the Emergency Room. He had to wear a splint and an arm sling for three weeks (his entire stay at Scranton). I questioned while waiting in the ER if I should let him go, but when the nurse told me that it might be a good idea to skip “camp”, I replied without hesitation that was NOT an option. Even with that accident, we kept coming back to the fact that the opportunity that was given to Grégor was far much greater than the fear that we were experiencing, and we definitely could not pass on it.

While your son was in Scranton, how did you feel about the weekly communication?

The first week was a bit hard not to talk to him every day, but it got better. Between the short emails, the letters, the ten minutes phone calls on Saturday mornings and the constant Twitter posts, I was re-assured that Grégor was doing just fine and was becoming more independent. I was glad to hear that he made up his bed, kept his room clean and put his dirty clothes in the laundry bag.

When your son returned from Scranton, did you notice any changes in him?

I noticed that Grégor became more independent in doing his academic work and a bit more organized. He became a bit more social with his peers and his “ability to whine” had decreased. Furthermore, his thinking has matured and his faith has deepened.

How were the 3 weeks at Regis over the summer? How did you and your family make the proper accommodations to have your son at Regis by 9 AM and picked up by 5 PM?

The three weeks at Regis over the summer were a challenge, but just fine. Because Bertin is also in the program, I shared the responsibilities with his



family. I made the morning drop off and Bertin's family did the afternoon pick up. That went very well. The challenge was getting to Manhattan from Queens by subway on rush hour, but we did it and the boys survived.

How have the first few months of REACH Saturdays been going?

So far, all is going well. Grégor is loving his classes and is eager to go to Regis on Saturdays. He has made many friends and is excited to see them every week.

THE REACH IMPACT

How has your son changed since joining REACH? How has your family changed, if at all?

Grégor has become more independent both in his thinking and his academic work. His language skills and vocabulary have become more sophisticated as he uses many of the words that he has learned both this summer and this fall semester. His organization skills have gotten slightly better but there is a lot more room for improvement.

Because education is very important in our family, we have always made sure that Grégor has everything that he needs to focus on his studies. We have not really changed but rather improved in giving Grégor the resources he needs to succeed.

How have you been able to balance your son's commitment to his school and to REACH?

This Fall, Grégor has signed up for almost every club that exists in his school because he is convinced that high

Value Added

Alumni Profile | Kwaku Frimpong

REACH encourages alumni involvement and support, and few have demonstrated a commitment to the Program quite like Kwaku Frimpong (REACH '05). A member of the inaugural REACH class, Kwaku matriculated to the Loyola School before attending Providence College. He serves as the Vice-Chair of Finance on the REACH Alumni Board while maintaining a career as a Financial Analyst.

This year marks your 10 year anniversary of graduating from the REACH program. Has your time at

REACH influenced these past ten years, and if so, how?

I can't believe it has been 10 years since I graduated REACH. It feels like yesterday I was spending summers at the University of Scranton. My time with the REACH program has influenced many things throughout my educational and professional career. I have confidence in everything I do because I know how to prepare myself, balance my time, and dedicate the time and effort needed to succeed. These are values that were instilled in me during my REACH summers, and they haven't left me since.

After graduating from REACH, you went to The Loyola School. How would you describe your experience there? Were there any similarities in terms of the Jesuit identity of both REACH and Loyola?

One of the main similarities was realizing that there will always be an adjustment period when trying something new. When I first joined the REACH program, the transition took time to get accustomed to. I was not used to doing school work during the summer, as well

being on a college campus away from home for an extended period of time. With Loyola School, I was not used to going to school on the Upper East Side and being surrounded by people of different backgrounds. I was born and raised in the Bronx, and up to that point that was all I knew culturally and socially. I eventually became accustomed to both and began to thrive and succeed in both REACH & Loyola School. But all transitions take time; it just took me time to realize that. Both REACH & Loyola emphasized the importance of being a man for others. Being selfless for the community and your peers is something that I learned from both institutions.

Where did you go to college and what is your current career? How did you make these big life decisions?

I attended Providence College for my undergraduate degree in Providence, RI. (Go Friars!). I currently work as a Sales Associate for the financial research firm CreditSights. I decided to attend Providence College because I was blessed to be the recipient of the MLK Full Tuition Scholarship as well as the



schools and colleges do not only look at the grades but also the extra-curricular activities that a prospective student is engaged in (Thank you, Mr. Kennedy). It has been challenging but we have been able to manage. His work load is heavier, but because he has become more independent, it has been easier to balance everything.

What has been the most noticeable change in your son since joining REACH?

Academic independence might be the most noticeable change in Grégory since

he joined REACH. He seems that he does not need us to be after him to study and do homework, he knows what to do and when.

ADVICE

What would you tell a current 5th grade family contemplating REACH for their son?

It is a great opportunity and it only comes once. It is a long term commitment, but it is totally worth it. This program not only will challenge the mind of your son, it will also form

him to become a citizen of the world and a strong member of the Catholic family.

Why would families consider applying to REACH?

Families should consider applying to REACH in order to take part in a program which mission is to form Catholic boys for life. This program is an entry point to success as it prepares your child for and through high school and gives him an opportunity to follow a great path to college.

PC Friar Scholarship. It was truly a blessing and surprise that I will never forget. I received both with my letter of acceptance and decided that I wanted the financial stress that college brings to be very minimal for my family and for myself. I also knew that I would have the opportunity to join the track team there and to compete for a school in the Big East Conference was a dream for me.

I decided to start working at CreditSights based on my internship there the summer before senior year of college. I had a great experience as an intern. I networked with many great people and always felt comfortable enough to ask questions so that I could learn. That level of comfort made choosing to accept an offer to work there after graduation easy for me.

Can you share a favorite memory from your days as a REACH student?

Too many to name, but my one vivid Memory was when my REACH class of 2006 got Father Devron a personalized Chicago Bulls Jersey and a fresh pair of Air Force 1's to match at the end of the summer Regis session. It was great.

The recent Alumni basketball tournament was a great success! How did idea come about and what are your takeaways from the event?

I just thought about some of the fun and successful alumni events that Loyola School does for their

alums. I wanted us to do something reminiscent of something all REACH students loved, which was basketball during Recreation. It worked out well because it helped bridge the gap a little bit between the older alums and the younger alums and provided a different setting than our usual alumni dinner or lunches. My classmates and I met a lot of the alums that are currently in high school and college. It was great, can't wait for next year's tournament.

How did you get involved with the Alumni Board for REACH?

I was asked by [former program director] Mr. Todd Austin if I was interested in getting more involved in alumni efforts for the REACH program. I gladly said yes and spoke with him further about his vision for an alumni board to bridge the gap between the older alums and younger alums. We thought it would be great to have a formal body to help manage our constantly growing alumni base. We kept the communication going and here we are today.

What are the goals of the Alumni Board for this year and the future?

Just to keep our REACH alumni involved and engaged with the program. The REACH alumni network has the potential to be a very strong resource for us if we manage it and use it the right way. REACH constantly produces young men who are intellectual

competent, socially aware of their surroundings, and diligent workers. If we can put events together that keep us in touch with each other and involved with the program, we will see over time the power of this network only grow. To say that you are friends with guys who became CEO's, Presidents, Founders of companies is a great resource for anyone. The REACH program is on that trajectory of producing young men who will eventually be in positions of such leadership. It will take time, but it will happen. So for us to maintain those relationships with our alums from the 5th grade to after college and beyond is something that we are hoping to continually accomplish any chance we get through various programs.

If you could share one piece of advice or wisdom with our current REACH students, what would it be?

You may not fully understand it now, but as time passes you will realize that you will be a part of a very strong network. Never hesitate to ask questions, because that is how you learn. If you are ever in a situation that you would like advice on, don't hesitate to get in touch with a REACH alum who may have gone through a similar situation. Whether it's choosing a high school, choosing a college, looking for an internship or summer job, REACH will always be a resource for you. Our alums are always readily accessible and willing to help.

Take a Leap of Faith

Alumni Profile | Geoffrey Ogando-Reyes

The REACH Program not only sends its students to Regis High School, but also to three Jesuit Core High Schools in New York: Xavier, Fordham Prep, and Loyola. Geoffrey Ogando (REACH '13) is currently a senior enrolled at Fordham Prep in the Bronx, having been a REACH Alumnus and served as a Counselor for Camp REACH in Scranton.



How did you hear about the REACH Program?

I was first introduced to the REACH program by my fifth grade teacher. By the fifth grade I had developed a consistent record for being an above average student and thankfully he was able to notice that. Little did I know that the “academic summer camp” I was signing up for would change my life as drastically as it has.

What (or who?) made you decide to attend?

Although my parents definitely did affect my decision to attend, I felt that it was a no brainer to be a part of REACH. I remember completing the application and wondering why in the world it was such an extensive process. The only conclusion I could come to was that REACH was a program that was incredibly selective. Because of this, I felt grateful for the opportunity I was given.

How did your first summer in Scranton and at Regis compare to your expectations of that first summer?

Going into my first summer of REACH I felt that my experience was going to be reminiscent of my elementary school. I thought that I was going to be challenged but as long as I dedicated some effort to my classes I would be rewarded with success. After my first week, I was shocked at how different my experience actually was. I felt that I was surrounded by students who were in many ways smarter than I was. I soon realized that in order to make it through REACH, I was going to put 110% into everything I did.

Can you share a memorable story from your time at REACH?

I find it extremely difficult to pick out a memory from all the years I spent at REACH. From the weekend trips to the daily activities to the musicals I feel that the experience as a whole made REACH what it is. Instead, I can definitely say that a remarkable part of the REACH experience is the relationships I have been able to hold on even in my high school years.

What is your number one passion as a young man? Why?

I know that throughout my high school years I have developed attachments to certain activities but I am not sure whether or not I am able to say I have grown to be passionate about them. I know for sure that there has grown to be a special place in my heart for throwing javelin. I remember being introduced to it by my freshman football coach and feeling great that I had finally found something I genuinely liked doing.

As you prepare to transition from high school to college, what are your hopes for the future?

As I mentioned before, I would really like to continue my career in throwing javelin. Academically, I have a few options as to what college I would like to go to but I am most interested in pursuing a major in psychology.

Which class was most difficult for you at REACH? Which was most fun?

Mr. Eickman's 3rd year math course was definitely a struggle for me, but at the same time I think it was the most fun class I had at REACH. I remember the class being extremely fast-paced but at the same time I really liked being there. Although I definitely was not the best student, I felt that it was important to try my best and take pride in my work.

What do you see in common from your experience in two Jesuit school programs: REACH and Fordham Prep?

I feel like my experiences as a student in these two Jesuit programs in many ways have been very similar. Throughout both of these Jesuit programs, I have been put to the test on a consistent basis. Regardless of the different challenges I have faced throughout my REACH and Fordham Prep career—academically, physically, or socially—the mindset I needed to overcome them have been the same.

What advice would you give to young REACHians?

There are two pieces of advice I would like to give to young REACHians. First, you get out what you put in. The less you try in any given situation, the less you will learn from that experience. Second, have faith. It is important to have faith, not just in God, but in your parents, and in the idea that everything happens for a reason.

Editor's Corner: Planting Seeds

By James Kennedy | REACH Dean of English Language Arts

I am standing in the REACH storage closet, in the basement of Regis High School. In my hands, I hold a copy of C.S. Lewis's classic, *The Lion, The Witch and the Wardrobe*. I have been a high school English teacher at Regis for 8 years, but recently adjusted roles to become Academic Dean for ELA with the REACH Program. I was preparing for my first 6th grade class, when I noticed that the book had illustrations. Though of course I knew that splitting my time between high school and middle school instruction would be a big change and a welcome challenge, somehow the illustrations drew me up short. Had I made the right decision? This was neither James Joyce nor Shakespeare nor *Frankenstein* nor the AP exam. This was a young adult classic, a fantasy story with allegorical elements, but the illustrations gave me pause. I knew I loved teaching older students. How would I find pre-adolescent 6th graders?

Over the course of the fall, I reflected on this change in my teaching load, and two experiences led me to affirm that, yes, I had made the right choice: teaching and leading the middle school students of the REACH Program is part of my vocation as a teacher.

The first experience was the first Saturday of class with the 1st years. Though I felt a bit nervous going into that first class, my anxiety was immediately quelled by the good nature, the curiosity, and the undeniable energy of these 11-year-olds. Despite it being a weekend morning, these students were lively and engaged. As I asked question probing the depths of C.S. Lewis's classic, many eager hands shot up, some accompanied by "Ooh!" or an urgent look in the eyes. These students demonstrated such eagerness and enthusiasm that I was immediately won over. What's more, although the

conversation was not at the same intellectual level as an AP class picking apart a Shakespearean sonnet, I myself was very stimulated by the students' thoughts and questions. Middle schoolers have an unguardedness and a creativity that most older adolescents lack. The REACH students engaged the text specifically, intelligently, competently, all the while making accurate, interesting statements like, "I think the lamppost represents good and the faun represents evil" or "I've never crawled into a wardrobe, but I would certainly be surprised and somewhat frightened if there were a fantasy world in it!" Throughout the fall, I learned to adjust my classroom demeanor a bit (teaching middle schoolers involves more pure fun and also more active discipline) and each week I grew more and more comfortable with my new students. By the end of the term, we were discussing the text as a Christian allegory, picking over Lewis's details and comparing them to our own Catholic belief. Maybe not James Joyce, sure, but a very high level discussion for talented, eager 6th grade boys.

The second experience that affirmed my decision to work with the REACH Program came while teaching my senior electives at Regis. You see, this year is a special one because the young men I worked with in the summer of 2011 as 3rd year REACH students are now seniors in high school. Several of them are at Regis, and it is a privilege to see them growing up and getting ready for college. A few are even in my senior English elective. As I listen to Carlos Navarette give an insightful and thorough close reading of a passage from *Beloved*, my mind flashes back to working with Carlos a few summers ago. We were developing the basics of topic sentences and using textual evidence as argumentative support. Now, he's masterfully analyzing a

famously difficult book. Or as I read Nic Ortiz's writing, which is polished and demonstrates a unique voice, I recall those basic lessons on parts of speech or the appropriate use of punctuation, from Scranton in 2011. In short, these students have come a long way.

Of course, it was not all peachy keen with either group of students. There were times when the young ones would drive me crazy with repeated requests to use the bathroom or by leaving their lunchboxes all over school. Likewise, there were times when the seniors would seem distracted by college applications or adolescently soporific on even a weekday morning. But such is the nature of education, a work that requires circumspection and patience.

Circumspection and patience are needed because education is a long process, one which takes many seasons and many hands. We work to cultivate individuals in all aspects of life: intellectual, social, and spiritual. I learned that my pride in Carlos's development as a thinker or my joy at reading Nic's mature writing, was the gift of watching seeds, planted by myself and countless other English teachers, parents, mentors and role models throughout the years, finally start to sprout. What's more, being a summer teacher in 2011 had planted seed within me—the seed of a passion for the REACH Program, the students it serves, the good work it does—and that seed was unexpectedly and wonderfully coming to fruit in 2015. Finally, I am inspired to think that—illustrations or not—teaching 6th graders *The Lion, The Witch and the Wardrobe* is be a great opportunity to plant seeds a bit earlier, to tend them a bit more consistently and carefully, and perhaps, someday, to watch with pride, awe, and gratitude as fledgling flowers turn their faces towards the sun.

Editor's Corner: The Value of Teaching the Forgettable

By Doug Eickman | REACH Dean of Mathematics

At the end of the REACH fall session, after a long struggle to teach a diverse group of middle school students some Geometry, I am sometimes left wondering what the point of my efforts is. This isn't because I find REACH Saturdays particularly depressing; on the contrary, teaching REACHians is generally the most exciting and satisfying work that I do. The issue is that each Saturday I am reminded—most recently by a puzzled student posing a question about the *hippopotenuse*—of the challenge of teaching a group of boys, however bright they might be, only once a week. Of how unlikely it is that the things I say to them in the classroom, just ten times a year, will be retained after the course, or even the week, has ended. Where's the value added in these kids' lives if there's not much chance they'll remember, never mind actually *use*, what you've taught them?

Fortunately for my psyche, my mind rarely wanders down this path for very long. Spend time around middle school students, and you quickly realize that the value in teaching them is not exclusively found in imparting skills, even very important skills. Nor is it only in the noble goals of teaching them to think more rationally or to problem-solve more effectively.

Instead, when I think about the classroom moments that I consider the *most valuable*, that will pay the biggest dividends in the lives of my students, I can't help but think of the last thing I teach the 2nd Year students each fall. Much of our 2nd Year Geometry class involves the use of irrational numbers, especially π and radical numbers (numbers involving square roots), but middle school students often find these numbers perplexing, even if they can ably perform calculations involving them. So I like to end the fall with a little thought experiment to help REACH students see that these irrational numbers are even weirder than they initially realize.

We begin with a conversation about $\sqrt{2}$, the number which, when multiplied by itself, equals 2. It's one such irrational number—probably the first one discovered by humans. “What is an irrational number?” I ask. My students inform me robotically, “Its decimal form never terminates and never repeats.” In other words, we know that $\sqrt{2}$ is between 1 and 2, but we don't exactly know where. We can zoom in and say that it is definitely between 1.4 and 1.5¹, or zoom in even further and say it's somewhere between 1.4142 and 1.4143. In fact, we can zoom in as far as we like, but the exact numerical value of $\sqrt{2}$ will remain a mystery to us. So it's a number whose magnitude—at least with respect to the rational numbers on the number line—is impossible to measure. An understandable (and among my students, very common) reaction to this information is to say that $\sqrt{2}$ doesn't exist—that *no* number times itself equals 2. That $\sqrt{2}$ is just a made-up math idea, not something from the *real* world; after all, you can't have $\sqrt{2}$ sheep, or $\$ \sqrt{2}$, or a line that is $\sqrt{2}$ inches long...

Or so it would seem. Because the next thing I have them draw is a simple right triangle where the two shorter, perpendicular sides are each one inch. The question is simple: how long is the hypotenuse, the third side? Having studied the Pythagorean Theorem that fall, REACH 2nd Years confidently inform me that the third side must be $\sqrt{2}$ inches long...then pause when they realize what that implies. After all, how could the side be exactly $\sqrt{2}$ inches long, and therefore of an uncertain length, yet with definite endpoints in plain sight? How could the length of a fixed thing, concretely drawn, be irrational?

When the questions start flowing in, I know I have taught them something worth learning. “But how do you *know* $\sqrt{2}$ is actually irrational? Like, maybe we just haven't found it yet?” A great question, and one we investigate in our summer class. “What if those lines

aren't really one inch? Or if that angle isn't really 90 degrees? Maybe there are no right triangles!” Another fantastic question, and the beginning of an entire field of mathematics: measure theory. “How many irrational numbers are there?” Funny you should ask: an infinite number, but an even greater level of infinity than the rational numbers!

It is in these moments that their education is most valuable: when REACH students are slowly having their worlds turned upside-down as they encounter mind-blowing facts, even if it won't help them on the Regis Entrance Exam or the TACHS test. Irrational numbers won't show up in a job interview, and it won't advance your career to point out to your boss that the diagonal of her desk is a line segment whose length is irrational and therefore can't really be measured. The real value here, I think, is in giving my students a taste of both the incredible ability of human thought to comprehend the universe and the universe's equally incredible *unknowability*. It's in striving to light within them a fire of curiosity, or perhaps more accurately, of wonder: a paradoxical sense that we cannot possibly know everything, so we'd better get learning!

Ultimately, that's what allows me to get excited teaching each year, even if I know that, after a little while, almost all of what I say to my class will be forgotten. I don't even want my class to remember why a right triangle with two one-inch legs is so crazy; I just want my students to remember the feeling of their heads hurting, and that for a moment, they understood just how little they understood about the world. It's when I see REACH graduates with these qualities—humbly seeking to learn all they can, passionate about some zany topic, asking curious, even if not correctly worded, questions—that I see the program at its most valuable.

1 Since 1.4 squared is 1.96 and 1.5 squared is 2.25.



It takes a vi

Where were you in the 5th grade? Take a moment to think about it. What was your community like? Where did you go to school? What excited you most? Who took care of you? Every year here at REACH, we have a conversation with our students about the meaning of *community*. And naturally, this conversation looks a bit different with each class. Our first-year students typically describe their neighborhood—the buildings, parks, and people that make up their community. The second-year students, many of whom are preparing to receive the sacrament of



to nominate students for REACH. This happens whenever REACH benefactors talk with others about why they support the program. By the end of their third year, when our students formally graduate from the program, they begin to realize just how grand the REACH community is. In a way, it becomes more difficult for them to remember *when it all started*, but as is often the case with children, we must remind them that it's not so much about how things *started*, but rather the entire village it took to see them through the process.



opportunities to learn, grow, and excel. It is clear that you understand the importance of motivating our students to see the value in character development that is at the core of REACH. You are making a difference in the lives of individual students and their families. Thank you for your gift to REACH.

To our REACH teachers:

“Those who know, do. Those who understand, teach.” – Aristotle. You understand what it takes to be a teacher in our program. It is much more than instruction, and it's nothing short of a



Confirmation, focus on the key people and institutions that make up their community—most notably their teachers and parents. They begin to show appreciation and gratitude for their caretakers. By the time they reach the third year, our students are challenged to think of community in a different way. We tell them that whenever people come together with a common purpose or goal, they are meeting *in communion* with one another.

This manifests itself on a Saturday morning when a family comes together to make sure their son makes it to Regis on time. Or when our teachers meet up after work to discuss strategies on how to best engage students in the classroom. Such coming together is happening right now, as educators across the city gather

There is an excitement to REACH unparalleled by any other high school prep program in New York City. And it is the promise of this excitement—the common purpose around which our various stakeholders gather—that we gratefully celebrate today.

To the nominators:

If there is a *formal* beginning to REACH, it starts with you. Your unwavering belief in your students' potential and your willingness to advocate on their behalf empowers them beyond measure. Thank you for working with us and we look forward to receiving your nominations!

To our benefactors:

Because of your generosity our students continue to benefit from abundant

miracle. Thank you for taking on this commitment.

To our mentors:

Your natural leadership is an integral part of our program. Our hope is that you are able to learn as much from your mentee as he is able to learn from you. Please make an effort to stay in touch! Your bond with him may prove to be one of the most fulfilling relationships you have. Thank you for giving back to Regis in this capacity.

To our friends at the University of Scranton:

Ask any one of our REACH students what their favorite part of REACH is and the word “Scranton” will surely be on their list—most likely at the top. Your hospitality ranks second to none,

illage...

and the excitement with which you greet our students is heartfelt. Thank you for making our middle-schoolers feel like “college” kids. No matter what college campus they eventually matriculate to, names such as “DeNaples” and “Byron” will forever be etched in their minds. You can be assured that for the majority of our students, their college aspirations began at the University of Scranton. We thank you for that!

To 10-mile River Scout Camp:



It’s not every day you see a group of city kids complete a high-ropes course in the forests of eastern Pennsylvania. Character development and perseverance are just as important to us as academic aptitude. The lessons our students learn at 10-mile River teach them just that. It is always a highly anticipated trip – thank you!

To our counselors and collegians:

Although some of our REACH parents may express jealousy over the development you see in their children while they are away at camp, you allow parents to sleep well at night knowing their son is being taken care of. The high-fives, bumps and bruises, laughs, and dirty laundry are worth it! Thank you for showing our students what it means to be a *man for others*.

To Regis High School:

To the institution to which we owe our existence. For bringing minds together around a common purpose almost 20 years ago. For challenging itself to think critically about the mission. For continuing to believe in REACH and making sure we are jointly poised for success in Regis’ second century. Regis High School, we thank you!

To our parents:

We cannot stress enough how REACH is a *family* program. REACH cannot enjoy success without the investment



parents and families make in the program. For staying up late nights until your son finishes his homework, for making sure he arrives to class on time, for reinforcing the values learned at REACH, for comforting him through his struggles, and for motivating him to achieve his highest potential. The family is the first community in a child’s life. Thank you for making REACH part of your community!

To our high school partners:

REACH is a great step forward for our students and their families, but high school is where many of their talents come to fruition. We are so proud of our graduates, and we cannot thank you enough for making a top-notch high school education affordable for their families. Thank you for continuing to

work with us and for continuing the promise made here at REACH.

To the volunteers:

For anyone who’s volunteered at a REACH-related event, we cannot thank you enough for your contribution. It is often the people behind the scenes who ensure that things run smoothly. There are too many to mention, but your hard work does not go unnoticed!

To our alumni:

To anyone who has recited the 5 principles, sang the happy birthday song,



or solved a game in CORE we thank you for keeping REACH close to your heart. We encourage you to stay in touch with each other and come back to visit! Please e-mail Fr. Powell with your updated contact information so that you can stay up to date on alumni events.

To our current students:

None of this would be possible without you—your curiosity, your love of learning, your humility, and your motivation to achieve. We are constantly impressed by the talent we have in the REACH program, and our only hope is that you use the talents and gifts given to you to better yourself, your neighbor, and make an impact in your community—however large it may be!

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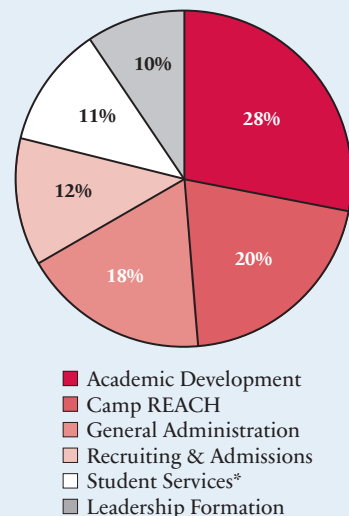
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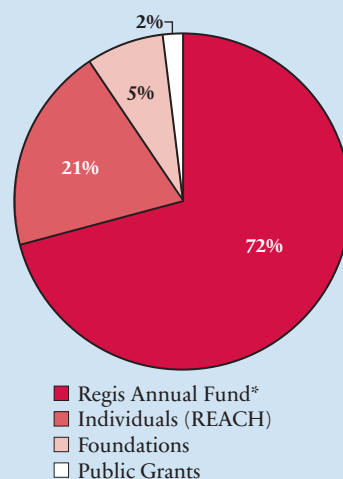
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REACH for the City

Most REACH alumni attend Regis or another Jesuit high school in New York City (alumni also attend other Catholic high schools and selective and specialized public high schools in the city). These high schools immerse students in strong learning communities and provide them with the academic, spiritual and guidance programs needed to ensure that they realize their high potential as college-bound students committed to lives of faith and service. In 2009 the first class of REACH alumni entered college. The REACH Alumni Board coordinated two events during the winter and looks forward to organizing more ways for our alumni to stay connected. It is true testament to the board and to the spiritual formation of the program that our first event was community service.

On December 27th, 10 REACH alums and 1 former REACH math teacher

(Matthew Ulloa '05, Stephen Sanchez '05, Victor Chatelain '07, Daniel Echevarria '08, Christian Landeros '06, Joseph Nivar '09, Justin Hunte '05, Matthew Colon '05, Triumph Windorff '13, Rainer Sainvil '13, Clyde Cole) trekked down to St. Francis Xavier Parish to volunteer their morning and afternoon at the Xavier Mission Welcome Table. Volunteers arrived fully ready to spread their holiday spirit and compassion for the less fortunate community members of Chelsea. Along with other volunteers, our alums helped prepare meals, set tables and assisted with cleaning up the cafeteria. Overall, our alumni group served 1,474 meals for countless patrons and opened the door for future alumni service events at the Welcome Table.

In true REACH fashion our second alumni event was a 3-on-3 basketball tournament. On Saturday, January 12,

60 REACH alums, 1 former REACH director (Rev. Chris Devron, S.J.), 2 former REACH administrators (Kyle Mullins, Brian Daley), and the current REACH staff came together for the 1st ever REACH Alumni Basketball Challenge. Fifteen teams competed in a 3-on-3 tournament which ran from 5:00 P.M. until 10:00 P.M. Every REACH class was represented, which made for some interesting tournament pairings. REACH alums played hard, cordially, and well for the grand prize of Brooklyn Nets versus New York Knicks basketball tickets. The real prize of the evening was the camaraderie that alums shared throughout the evening on the basketball court, in the bleachers, and around the table sharing pizza following the tournament. For more alumni updates please follow us on Facebook or on Twitter (REACH_Program).



Left: REACH Alumni volunteered time at the Xavier Mission Welcome Table during the recent winter break.

Top Right: Phillipe Chatelain, Ruben Garcia, and Matthew Ulloa pose for a photo after winning the 3-on-3 basketball tournament.



REACH

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