INROADS College Links-Atlanta: AT&T/Cristo Rey Partnership

INROADS College Links partnered with AT&T to integrate the INROADS’ College Links program in Cristo Rey School of Atlanta, supplementing their highly effective out-of-school programming with wrap around leadership development services, including mentoring, hands-on career exploration and immersion activities with INROADS corporate and community partners. Results from this exciting partnership are shared in the report that follows.

Program Activities

The INROADS College Links 2017-2018 program year included more than 94 hours of training, development and hands-on activities under the national theme Unlock Your PSAs: Passions, Skills & Abilities. Cristo Rey students received weekly after-school sessions onsite at Cristo Rey in addition to joining the other College Links-Atlanta scholars at the monthly Saturday Development Sessions and the June National Career Academy in Baltimore, MD.

Monthly Development Sessions

Monthly Saturday Development sessions were held at the Georgia Pacific Building in downtown Atlanta. Cristo Rey students began attending the Development Sessions in January 2018, including the following topics:

- **January 13, 2018: Presentation Skills & Mentor Overview** - Cristo Rey students received program orientation and introduction to the other College Links-Atlanta scholars.
- **March 10, 2018: Teen Summit at the YMCA** - College Links-Atlanta scholars attending the Coalition of 100 Black Women’s Teen Summit at the YMCA, which featured sessions on healthy eating and cooking, financial literacy, mental health and fitness.
- **March 31, 2018: College Links Virtual Mentor Hangout** - Cristo Rey scholars joined the national College Links audience for the College Links Virtual Mentor Hangout, which provided scholars with access to professionals in a variety of career fields. Five simultaneous conference calls took place for the following fields: Science & Engineering, Health Care, Technology, Law and Business & Entrepreneurship. Each hangout was led by a Moderator with two to four mentors sharing lessons that helped them become successful and answering scholar questions.

Top: Cristo Rey College Links Scholars; Left: Kevin Jennings & Marquel Jones (seated front) help participate in the Atlanta video skit for NCA; Right Middle: Vision board activity at Cristo Rey after-school session; Right Bottom: Zavier & Zavion Harris-Smart participating in the budgeting activity.
April 2, 2018: Corporate Visit with Delta Airlines - Technology and engineering scholars participated in a corporate visit at Delta Airlines, which featured Delta employees sharing career information on marketing, finance, and the managing the customer experience.

April 14, 2018: Goal Setting & Electronic Resume - Scholars learned the importance of setting goals and various goal types and established their own long-term, short-term or specific goals. They also learned how to create and present an electronic resume. The group worked on their final team presentation including brainstorming a theme and assigning roles.

May 12, 2018: Goal Setting Part 2 & Final Group Project - Scholars continued their work on goal setting through a group Vision Board activity. They created goals for the National Career Academy (goals for the group vs. individual goals). The group also completed their final video project for the National Career Academy, including finalizing the script and video production, which also included a discussion on sample careers in the film industry with Actor Cedric Pendleton and INROADS Alumnus Philipps Simone.

**Afterschool Sessions**

Afterschool sessions were held at Cristo Rey on Wednesdays after school. The topics for these sessions expanded on the topics presented at the Saturday Development sessions, including:

- **February 7, 2018: Express Yourself - Presentation Skills** - The focus of this session was Presentation Skills and Public Speaking, including tips for researching topics, considering the audience and steps for preparation. Students also took a pre-program knowledge survey.

- **February 14 & 15 2018: Finance – Money Matters Parts 1 & 2** - The focus of this session was on financial responsibility, strategies for prioritizing purchases (needs vs. wants), cost comparisons, and budgeting.

- **February 21, 2018: Money Management** - Students learned more about managing money, homeownership and insurance through a series of wealth management videos and case study review.

- **February 28, 2018: Interest and Investing** - Students learned about the stock market, interest rates and compounding interest, investing principles, investing for youth and types of investments.

- **March 7, 2018: Peer Pressure** - Students were engaged in stories about successful teens and young adults, including a discussion of desiring to fit in, the potential negative effects of succumbing to peer pressure, and the importance of speaking up.

- **March 14, 2018: Introduction to College Road Map** - Through a road map activity, students learned the tasks that are required to reach college. They also received an introduction to scholarships and grants.

- **March 28, 2018: Mapping and Teen Organizations** - This session exposed students to membership and leadership opportunities with teen organizations, and how to use this as a strategy to stand out with college applications.

- **April 11, 2018: College Prep** - Students learned what to consider when choosing a college and plotted out their target colleges list.

- **April 18, 2018: Finance Part 1** - Students were introduced to setting budgets, creating a plan and being financially responsible.

- **April 25, 2018: Finance Part 2** - Students were engaged to explore finance terminology, managing debt, creating a plan for a specific purchase.
May 2, 2018: Goal Setting – Students discussed their personal goals, learned more about goal setting through a TEDx video, and learned about creating vision boards.

May 9, 2018: Visioning & Goal Setting – Students continued their discussion of planning and setting goals and how to create digital vision boards. Using their current goals, they created physical vision boards.

May 16, 2018: Goal Setting (specific target NCA) – Learning to set specific goals for an upcoming event/activity and how it relates to being more effective and efficient was the theme of this goal setting workshop. The scholars had to design personal and tactical goals to create a successful outcome for the June National Career Academy at Morgan State University.

National Career Academy
Five of the Cristo Rey students were among the 110 high school scholars that participated in the inaugural National Career Academy (NCA) from June 20-28, 2018 at Morgan State University. NCA had the full support of the venue host, Morgan State University, including the President’s Office, the Honors College, the Earl G. Graves School of Business, the Schools of Engineering and Architecture, the School of Global Journalism and Communications, the School of Computer, Mathematic & Nature Sciences, Undergraduate Admissions and Residence Life.

Participants received more than 50 hours of business and STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Math) training and team building activities, including:

- The Finding Your Passion Workshop Series provided six hands-on workshops in supply chain, capital markets, engineering/architecture, biomedical research, a mock trial, and video production.
- The Dress for Success Fashion Show showcased business-appropriate and stylish collegiate apparel for males and females ages 14-19. As a part of the College Links impression management curriculum, we sought to draw connections between confidence in physical appearance and success in educational settings, interviews, internships, and entry-level positions. Each of the 19 models (two were Cristo Rey students – La’ Renzia Henderson and Marquel Jones) received the outfits that they modeled to take home. Fifteen students had the opportunity to support the Fashion Show behind the scenes as production and wardrobe assistants. 25 students received door prizes of JCPenney professional accessories, including neckties and bowties, wallet sets, dress socks, purses, and earring sets.
- The Career Workshop Series featured workshops on Gallup’s StrengthsQuest Assessment for freshmen and sophomores, the STAR Technique for Resumes and Interviews for juniors, and the INROADS Internship for seniors. All of the Cristo Rey students participated in the StrengthsQuest Assessment workshop.
- Each student participated in two of six Corporate Visits to Under Armour, Baltimore Center Stage, Lockheed Martin, U.S. Supreme Court/D.C. Superior Court, Johns Hopkins University, and Stanley Black & Decker. Students were able to receive mentoring and advice from employees in a variety of career fields during these visits.
- The Mid-Atlantic Unity Day BBQ: The Network You Need, To Go Where You Want, hosted by the INROADS Alumni Association and the Mid-Atlantic Region, provided networking training for scholars and interaction with INROADS Alumni and current INROADS Interns.
o The Confidence M.O.D.E. (Mastery, Obstacles, Determination and Execution) Keynote with Coach Jena Burgess and Joey Price helped students learn how to evaluate and build the components of their own confidence in gender-based sessions that explored the distinct differences between women and men when it comes to their relationship with confidence.

o The Hack<IT> Upstart Powered by STEMBoard and INROADS, a coding and pitch competition that allows students to develop innovative technology solutions to challenges facing their communities and country, included tracks for cybersecurity, electrical engineering and entrepreneurship. Students in each track were awarded medals for 1st, 2nd and 3rd place teams, with each first-place team receiving a $500 prize for their pitch.

o Companion events for the Hack<IT> Upstart included the Opening Session: Solving Community Challenges with STEM, with INROADS CEO Forest Harper, Morgan State University President Dr. David Wilson, Mayor of Baltimore Catherine E. Pugh, and Lockheed Martin Executive Rainia Washington. The closing Fireside Chat: Finding Your Passion in STEAM and Business featured Brittany Young (B-360) Aisha Bowe (STEMBoard) and Brandon Andrews (Values Partnerships).

o Awards for leadership and the Hack<IT> Upstart were presented to scholars at the Awards Soiree, a culminating event for NCA and the College Links program year.

o Scholars received opportunities for leadership, teambuilding, and public speaking practice through opportunities to emcee, introduce speakers, and participate in evening Scholar Lounge activities. Elected student leaders led their peers in the College Links Town Hall, a closing debriefing session on the last day.

NCA received the following media coverage:

o WJZ 13 CBS Baltimore: National Career Academy Offering Scholars Jump on STEM Careers
o Technically Baltimore: Morgan State is hosting a national youth STEAM conference

Participants, Recruitment & Retention

Ten (10) students from Cristo Rey of Atlanta participated in INROADS College Links-Atlanta during the 2017-2018 program year. College Links-Atlanta gathered the following demographic information on students:

- **Classification**: 70% were freshman and 30% were juniors.
- **Gender**: Participants were 70% male and 30% female.
- **Ethnicity**: 80% were African-American/Black and 20% were Hispanic/Latino.
- **School Lunch**: 90% were eligible for free or reduced school lunch.
- **Household Income**: 40% had household incomes in the $25,000-$49,999 range.
- **Zip Codes**: Students resided in the following zip codes: 30012, 30083, 30087, 30152, 30291, 30297, and 30314.

The students were under the direction of Cristo Rey faculty member Alexis Johnson through flyer distribution and information sessions. Thirteen students were initially recruited, but three were unable to participate due to transportation and scheduling issues.
Eight students regularly attended the afterschool sessions. Initially, freshmen and sophomores were the target for recruiting as it was determined that this populations had a block of time on Wednesdays to attend the afterschool sessions. To ensure enough students were participating, the target was expanded to juniors. These students were already fulfilling the work requirements of the school’s curriculum and were not always able to commit to the Wednesday sessions.

Eight of the ten students on the current Cristo Rey roster plan to return for the 2018-2019 program year.

**Participant Feedback and Success Stories**

The Cristo Rey students integrated well into College Links-Atlanta and as a result of their participation in the program they have become more confident and received exposure to information and resources that support their development and goals.

![Bar Chart](chart.png)

**How has College Links participation helped you?**

- 95% Set College & Career Goals
- 96% Explore College & Career Options
- 96% Prepare for Success in College
- 89% Develop Passions, Skills & Abilities
- 89% Support Development as an Independent Learner

- **New Information:** Cristo Rey students shared that College Links sessions provided them with new information and new ways of thinking, and gave them ideas on what they could accomplish in their present-day lives and in the future:
  - “This session (College Road Mapping) sparked more interest in STEAM programs/activities, which will help prepare me.”
  - “College Links has been most valuable to me by helping me create a clear path into my future.”
  - “College Links has helped me to follow a path and to have discipline.”
  - “This (goal setting) has given me an outlook on my goals and how to get there.”
On the pre-survey, students stated that they had low knowledge of public speaking and financial literacy skills, and moderate knowledge of how to plan for life after high school. On the post-survey, the students gave the following results when asked to answer if they knew much more know versus pre-program on a list of subjects.

- **Student Engagement**: Cristo Rey students found the College Links sessions to be “important and interesting” and “a useful way to build relationships with their peers.” They liked that the sessions were interactive and engaging:
  - “The sessions were always interactive and engaging and I feel that I am not only learning lifelong skills that will make me successful, but I am also attaining these skills.”

- **NCA Impact on Future**: 99% of scholars agreed (with 54% strongly agreeing) that the workshop topics and content covered during NCA provided new information to contribute to their professional development. 95% of our scholars stated that they could apply what they learned to enhance their performance as an intern or in an academic setting.

- **NCA Student Testimonials**: When asked how participating in the National Career Academy affected their career, educational and personal goals, the top five responses were: improved networking skills, provided clarity on choosing a career path, boosted confidence, helped to overcome shyness/improved public speaking and presentation skills, and inspired to pursue goals.
Success Stories:

- Many of the Cristo Rey students began the program very shy and did not have strong interpersonal skills. By May, the Cristo Rey students were standing out from the others, including some of the second year students, during the Saturday Development sessions. They were exuding confidence and were the first of the students to volunteer to speak or accept roles when asked.

- La ‘Renzia Henderson, a freshman at Cristo Rey, was extremely shy when she first began the College Links program and had difficulty maintaining eye contact. By the time of the NCA in June, she had gained confidence and improved presentations skills, and was a member of the Hack<IT> Upstart team that won first place in the entrepreneurship track. Her team received individual medals and a prize of $500 for their pitch on The Sweet Sixteen Switch—a chip-operated device that blocks cell tower connections from vehicles to prevent any distractions for drivers.

- Kevin Jennings, a freshman at Cristo Rey, was inspired by the College Links conversations on financial literacy to design an app. He received a Leadership Award during the Awards Soiree at the National Career Academy.
# Budget Report

Following is an accounting for how the AT&T funding was used:

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### Evaluation: Learning From Successes and Opportunities

The pilot program between INROADS College Links, AT&T and Cristo Rey was a successful venture, resulting in growth and new opportunities for the participating students. INROADS College Links was able to establish a positive and efficient working relationship with Cristo Rey of Atlanta, which has laid the foundation for future work together. There are two areas of consideration for strengthening the program in the future:

- **Opportunity for Increased Interaction with AT&T**: We would like to expand on our partnership with AT&T by integrating the ERGs into programming as speakers and mentors, and hosts for job shadowing opportunities. We could additionally use support for in-kind space for program events.

- **Afterschool Session Frequency**: Due to the work requirements embedded into the Cristo Rey curriculum, the frequency of afterschool sessions must be considered. The freshmen and sophomore students do not have as many requirements, resulting in space in their schedules. As students progress into their junior and senior years, their schedules may not accommodate weekly afterschool sessions due to their internship requirements.

### Conclusion

We would like to thank AT&T for all of its support of INROADS College Links and look forward to continuing our partnership to serve and prepare emerging leaders for tomorrow's workforce.