

# The Catalyst Chronicle

VOL. I ... NO. 1

THE CATALYST SCHOOLS • ANNUAL REPORT • FISCAL YEAR 2011-12

WHERE FUTURES BEGIN

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Scholars fill the classrooms on day one at Catalyst-Maria

# Doors Swing Open At Catalyst-Maria

After a year of planning, the doors at Catalyst-Maria finally swung open. On August 20, Catalyst-Maria High School kicked off the academic year. And a week later, on August 27, Catalyst-Maria Elementary did the same.

The third campus to join the Catalyst Schools system, Catalyst-Maria is committed to the unique principles of the Sisters of Saint Casimir and the De La Salle Christian Brothers — principles of character, integrity, and social responsibility that have been rooted in Catalyst since the system's first school, Howland Charter, opened in 2006. A public charter school, Catalyst-Maria is dedicated to serving the families of the Chicago Lawn community and its surrounding neighborhoods and continuing the 100-year legacy of the Sisters of Saint Casimir.

Situated beside Marquette Park in southwest Chicago, Catalyst-Maria occupies a four-story, tan-brick building that stretches the length of a city block. The space that this building provides Catalyst helps relieve the over-crowding that exists in many of the surrounding schools.

But it's the people — not the building itself — that embody the true spirit of Catalyst.

"Catalyst-Maria is full of energized and diverse individuals who are prepared to educate young minds every day," says Jasmia Fowler, a special edu-

cation teacher at the school. "I absolutely love being surrounded by people and scholars who are on a common mission."

Young scholars and their families began to learn about Catalyst-Maria during the school's initial recruitment efforts in winter 2011/2012. Ultimately, 1,364 scholars applied for 550 open seats in grades K-5 and 9. In the final tally, 176 ninth graders and 380 elementary scholars joined the Catalyst-Maria ranks.

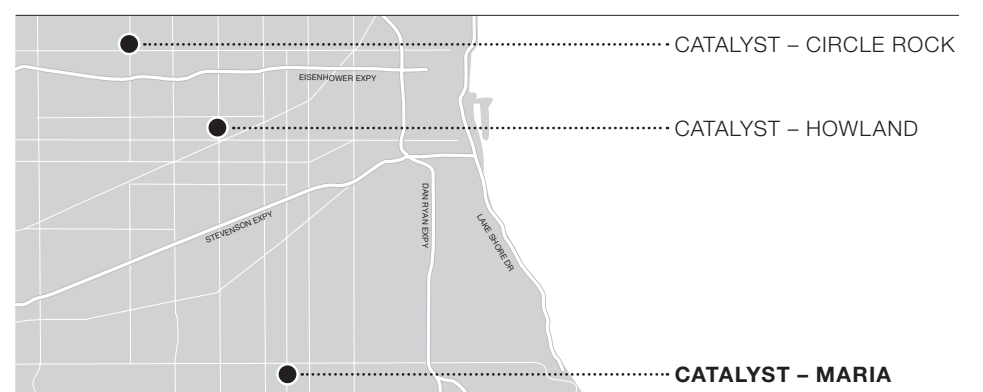
Whenever there are more applicants than seats in a specific grade level — as there were in 2012 — a random lottery is held to determine who will be able to enroll. The one exception to this process occurs when a sibling of a current scholar applies; the sibling is given automatic admissions preference.

"We were very inspired by the community's enthusiasm for Catalyst-Maria," says Gordon Hannon, Catalyst Schools CEO. "And I can't tell you how excited we are to have these wonderful scholars in our classrooms."

At eventual capacity, the school will serve 1,100 young scholars K-12.

During the summer months of 2012, as Catalyst-Maria prepared to welcome the first of these scholars into its halls, teachers and staff members took the opportunity to connect with scholars and their families through written communications, picnics, and other community events. By the time August rolled around, everyone was eager to get the school year started.

"I just couldn't wait," says second-grader Alexis. "This is my favorite school ever."



## IN BRIEF

# The Catalyst Schools Put Graduates On Path to Success

Elementary school is a stepping stone along the path and not a destination. Catalyst prepares its scholars to enter and succeed in some of the best high schools in the city, including traditional public, charter, selective enrollment, and private schools.

Their success in high school is a testament to their hard work in grades K–8. After high school, it's on to college and a satisfying career.

In 2008, thirteen young men and women graduated from Catalyst. This is where they are now:

Iowa Central University, Alabama A&M University, Harold Washington College, Fisk University, Columbia College, Chicago, Furman University, Morehouse University, and St. Mary's University, Minnesota.

Two more scholars from the class of 2008 will begin college in 2013–2014.

Here is what is happening to the 114 Change Agents who graduated in 2012:

One-hundred percent have been placed in high schools with a track record of college placement.

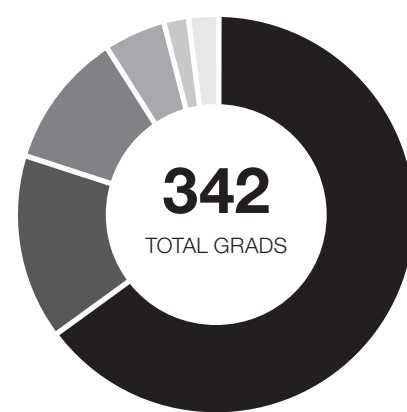
A record 14% were accepted into CPS selective enrollment schools — the top schools in the city and some of the best in the country.

Of all 342 graduates, 99% are in high school and on track to graduate on time (within four years).

As Catalyst's young scholars continue to move on to successful high school, college, and professional careers, they carry with them the Catalyst dedication to character, citizenship, and compassion. The Catalyst community could not be more proud of them.



Catalyst-Maria teacher Jamia Fowler leads her 9th-grade classroom



### Where do Catalyst Graduates go to High School?

65%	High-Performing Charter Schools
15%	Private Schools
11%	CPS Selective Enrollment Schools
5%	CPS College & Career Academies
2%	District Schools
2%	Out-of-District Schools

## BUSINESS

### Financial Statement

July 1, 2011–June 30, 2012

REVENUE	
Local	\$ 6,846,179
Federal	875,272
State	728,041
Individual	69,291
Foundation	340,668
Scholar Fees/Other	205,534
Event/Corporate	60,100
Organizations	177,848
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>\$ 9,302,933</b>

EXPENSES	
School Programs:	
Circle Rock	\$ 4,068,295
Howland	3,642,837
Maria	506,244
Support:	
Development/Marketing	74,940
Administration	766,507
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$ 9,058,823</b>

### Corporate, Foundation, Government, and Organization Donors

July 1, 2011–June 30, 2012

Clune Construction Company, Food Service Professionals, GE Capital Corporation, Illinois Network of Charter Schools, McGuire Woods, ProLogis, Roof Management LLC, Urban Partnership Bank, US Bank, Advocate Bethany Community Health Fund, Barnabas Foundation, BP Fabric of America Fund, Code Family Foundation, Donald P. and Byrd M. Kelly Foundation, Perkins Malo Hunter Foundation, Steans Family Foundation, The Fanny R. Wurlitzer Foundation, The Kurzman Family Fund, The Oak School PTO of Hinsdale, Walton Family Foundation, William G. McGowan Charitable Fund, Inc., State Board of Education

### Individual Donors

July 1, 2011–June 30, 2012

Alberto Guerrero, Annette and Steven Lamon, Anonymous, Bro. Ed Siderevitz, Bro. Michael C. Fehrenbach, FSC, David D. Riefe, David P. Poitras, Debra and William Anthony, Dick and Marianne Drogosz, Dr. and Mrs. Charles Crowder, Earl and Darlene Teatak, James Mendelson, John J. Conerty LLC, Jolleen Wagner, Judy Sagilio, Julia Wade, Kathleen Cahill, Lee Halford Jr., Magdalene Rose, Marilu V. Hancock, Michael T. Clune, Mike and Anne Schrauth, Mr. and Mrs. Gregory Mooney, Mr. and Mrs. Michael Kelly, Mr. and Mrs. Paul Krug, Mr. Brian Musso and Ms. Heather Headley, Mr. Craig Culbertson and Ms. Laura Laplaca, Mr. David Baldwin and Mr. Phillip Poznanski, Mr. George V. Johnson, Mr. Gordon Hannon, Mr. Jerry Berg, Mr. Lee Miller, Mr. Mike Herman and Mr. Bernard Bartilad, Mr. Richard Morley, Mr. Stephen Saunders, Mr. Steven R. Brown, Mr. Tom Catania and Mr. Don D'Ercole, Ms. Amy Soudan, Ms. Cate Brady, Ms. Jean Barbato, Ms. Joycelynn Stone, Ms. Mary Olson, Ms. Susan Wallace, Patricia W. Fess, Richard and Cynthia Hurd, Richard Wholey and Deborah L. Wholey, Robert and Marlene Hannon, Robert and Marietta A. Walsh, Suzanne C. Strohschein, Valerie and Robert Chudy, Gary Fisher

Thanks to all of our supporters.

## COMMUNITY

### Ignatian Volunteers Make an Impact at Catalyst

You've heard it said before: It takes a village to raise a child. If Chicago's Catalyst Schools have anything to say about it, it probably takes even more than that.

"At Catalyst, we know parents can't do it all alone and neither can a school," says Michael Fehrenbach, director of mission and communications at the Catalyst Schools. He says that effective partnering is an important element in helping children — many of whom face significant obstacles in life — to move on to high-performing high schools, universities, and productive and satisfying careers.

And that's where the Ignatian Volunteer Corps comes in. The Ignatian Volunteer Corps places adults in a variety of service programs, including schools, and the Catalyst Schools have directly benefited from these placements. Professional men and women who have lived successful and productive lives come to Catalyst via the Ignatian Volunteer Corps and serve as

exemplary role models and mentors for Catalyst scholars.

Fehrenbach explains, "They come from the worlds of business, finance, education, health care, and other fields, and this has given them a depth of experience that Catalyst scholars can benefit from on a daily basis."

Current Ignatian volunteers at Catalyst assist teachers in science, math, and reading. They also work with Catalyst's graduate support and community outreach teams, serving as peaceful and calming presences amid the turmoil of urban life.

"They come from the worlds of business, finance, education, health care, and other fields, and this has given them a depth of experience that Catalyst scholars can benefit from on a daily basis."

"As a person of faith, I feel compelled to live what I believe," says Paul Krug, an Ignatian volunteer. "I think faith without works is empty. This country's schools have been having serious trouble since the 1970s. Partnering with Catalyst is my way of living my faith and trying to be part of the solution to a problem we haven't found a way to solve."

## THE ARTS

### Drawing Out Artists at Circle Rock Charter

Artists have no problem finding an outlet at the Catalyst Schools Circle Rock Charter, a K–8 charter school in west Chicago's Austin neighborhood.

"We believe in the imagination here at Circle Rock," says Principal Michael Kasang. "And we give the imagination every possible opportunity to exercise itself."

Evidence of this is not hard to find. During the past year, Circle Rock scholars have been named winners of three City of Chicago awards for their expertise in ballroom dance.

"You've never seen box steps like these," notes Community Outreach Director and foxtrot enthusiast

Sharon Morgan.

Catalyst-Circle Rock scholars participated in a variety of other arts programs, as well.

For instance, scholars took part in the Chicago Children's Choir, which opened the door to a city-wide performance for Mayor Rahm Emanuel's inauguration as mayor of Chicago. In addition, spoken-word events provided opportunities for young Catalyst poets to give voice to their experiences in literary form. Dramatic performances engaged parents and neighborhood partners. And tumbling provided scholars with knowledge about how the body works and human anatomy — not to mention the thrill that accompanies a successful back flip.

"We do everything we can to draw out the inner artist in our scholars," says Colleen Halsey, Circle Rock's on-site art teacher. "And these young artists certainly do not disappoint."

## SPORTS

### Howland Athletics Has Fans Howling With Joy

soccer has been a staple in the sports scene at Howland for several years. But Fall 2011 marked the exciting introduction of middle school soccer for both boys and girls. The middle school teams did not disappoint in year one, competing in a number of thrilling matches.



Catalyst-Howland basketball players Demarcus, Devonte, and Draion

The 2011–2012 school year proved to be an electrifying time for sports programs on Chicago's west side.

Howland Charter, located in the west side Chicago neighborhood of North Lawndale, saw plenty of productivity from its Catalyst Tiger athletes.

In Fall 2011, Tigers athletics kicked off with boys' flag football and girls' volleyball. The grades 5–6 flag football team enjoyed spirited matchups against six peer schools. The grades 7–8 flag football team, led by sure-armed quarterback Jaylen Jones-Coleman, fared slightly better.

The girls' volleyball teams for grades 5–6 and 7–8 were new additions to the Catalyst sports roster. And while teams went through the growing pains of an inaugural season, they showed plenty of potential to grow.

"Our team spirit is strong," says Coach Joel Macias. "And with each practice, we get a better grasp of the skills that it takes to be good volleyball players."

Boys' and girls' elementary school

## NOTABLE QUOTABLES

"...they teach us how to help one another and how to be safe and to get good grades."

— Armon regarding "What I want people to know about my school..."

"I learned how to stay bully-free and I am learning the keys to having good character."

— Amar regarding "One way I've changed since I came to Catalyst..."

## EDUCATION

### Finding Achievement in the Numbers

Catalyst-Howland — like all of the Catalyst schools — is a data-driven institution. Regular assessments give teachers immediate feedback about how their scholars are progressing. The school uses several meaningful tools to learn about scholar growth. The newest one, which was added to the repertoire this year, is the Achievement Network — ANet, for short.

"We're very enthusiastic about the insights that ANet provides us," says Catalyst-Howland teacher Tiffany Moise.

Overall, ANet brings three key benefits to Catalyst-Howland.

First, ANet's assessments are aligned to the Common Core Standards — national academic standards for all schools — allowing Catalyst's administration to monitor and close gaps in scholar learning.

Second, ANet experts teach partnering educators, like Catalyst faculty and staff, new ways to analyze results, identify gaps in learning, and create and assess the effectiveness of action plans designed to address the gaps.

## BOOKS

### Literacy Brigade Takes Reading to a New Level

Last academic year, the Catalyst Schools launched the "Literacy Brigade" — a volunteer organization focused on raising the reading level of Catalyst's young scholars.

With one successful experience under its belt, the Brigade kicked off another year of literacy training in October 2012.

Consisting of women from Chicago-area projects, as well as generous volunteers from several Chicago suburbs and communities, the Brigade works with scholars one-on-one and in small groups. Over the course of the year, they'll focus on a variety of literacy skills.



Catalyst-Howland scholar Dominican

And third, ANet allows Catalyst to join a community of schools that work together to identify and share best practices and solves problems. "And this is great," says Nass, "because everyone in the ANet community shares a common goal — and that's scholar success."

Catalyst-Howland uses ANet's reading and math assessment four times per academic year. When the scores come back, the school's leadership analyzes the data by looking at what questions Catalyst scholars got correct (by percentage). The data shows which wrong answers each scholar chose and some possible reasons why he or she may have chosen that answer.

The addition of ANet to Catalyst-Howland's assessment and analysis toolbox helps teachers design and differentiate their lessons and instruction to meet the needs of every Catalyst scholar.

"The feedback we received from these volunteers after working with our scholars was overwhelmingly positive," says Julie Riske, Catalyst-Howland reading specialist. "They loved building relationships with the scholars and knowing that they were having an impact on their lives. Everybody involved in the Literacy Brigade program takes something positive from the experience."

As volunteers, the women observed that the majority of Catalyst's scholars are below level in reading. This fact encouraged them to stay committed the project, as well as inspired them to network and recruit in order to secure greater support for the scholars.

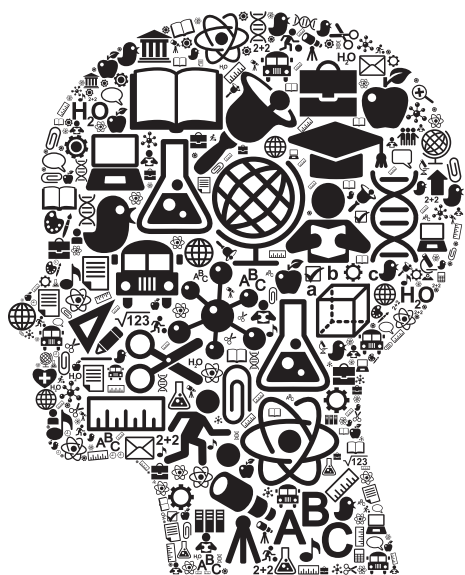
If you would like to volunteer for the all-female Literacy Brigade, please contact Mrs. Yoonshil Shapiro (Catalyst-Circle Rock) at yshapiro@catalystschools.org or Ms. Julie Riske (Catalyst-Howland) at jriske@catalystschools.org.

"One way I changed is my actions and how I can now say what I need help with."

— Diamond regarding "One way I've changed since I came to Catalyst..."

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

# Your Support Helps Build a Better World



Every year, we rely on supporters like you to help us fulfill a meaningful and life-changing mission. We aim to nurture the mind and character of every child who comes through our doors, empowering these scholars to become agents of change in their own lives and the communities they live in. Here's exactly why your support of the Catalyst Schools makes such a difference:

*We are a catalyst for impact.* Of our 342 alumni of high-school age, 99% of them are on track to graduate on time. In fact, 14% of the class of 2012 was admitted to CPS's selective enrollment high schools, considered the best in the country.

*We are a catalyst for college.* Of our first 13 graduates of college

age, ten are enrolled in college and two are on their way.

*We are a catalyst for choice.* Because we and other charters exist, parents have a choice of where to send their child to school — and in three underserved neighborhoods of Chicago, over 1,500 parents chose to send their child to Catalyst. An additional 600 are waiting to attend if seats open up.

*We are a catalyst for positive relationships* to be the defining mark of an excellent education, one rooted in respect for human dignity and productive citizenship.

*We are a catalyst for the arts.* Our scholars sing, dance, draw, and create in cooperation with the best artistic venues in Chicago: Ravinia, Goodman, Chicago

Children's Choir, Muntu Dance, Lyric Opera, and Joffrey Ballet.

*We are a catalyst for building a network of trust and support* through our relationships with neighborhood organizations like Rock Church, Circle Urban Ministries, Austin Coming Together, Concordia University, St. Mary's University, Urban Partnership Bank, Sisters of St. Casimir, De La Salle Christian Brothers, Archdiocese of Chicago, Ignatian and eventually Lasallian Volunteers, and Teach for America.

*We are a catalyst for building a better world.* And we couldn't do it without you. Thank you for believing in us.

**Gordon Hannon**  
CEO of the Catalyst Schools

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## The Catalyst Schools Annual Report 2011-12

THE CATALYST CHRONICLE