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Media Resource Page: [click here](#)

Chicago Jesuit Academy Celebrates First Graduating Class

Innovative West Side Middle School Graduates Are Heading to Prestigious High Schools

Chicago, IL – Chicago Jesuit Academy, a four-year-old full-scholarship college preparatory middle school for young men serving economically disadvantaged families on Chicago’s West Side, will celebrate the graduation of the school’s first class, the Class of 2009, on Friday, May 29, 2009. The commencement ceremony will be held at the McLaughlin Center for the Performing Arts at Saint Ignatius College Prep at 6:00 PM. The evening will feature student speakers, commencement speaker, Asst. U.S. Attorney Brian Lewis, and student awards before the conferring of diplomas.

All 15 members of the Class of 2009 have earned admission to prestigious college prep high schools including: Loyola Academy, Latin School of Chicago, Saint Ignatius College Prep, Chicago Waldorf School, Holy Trinity High School, North Lawndale College Prep, Christ the King Jesuit College Prep, Walter Payton College Prep, Culver Military Academy in Indiana, and The Thatcher School in California.

Most of CJA’s students are from single-parent families living below the poverty line who could never afford a private Jesuit education if the school did not provide full scholarships for each student. The young men entered Chicago Jesuit Academy as fifth-graders, testing, on average, at a mid-third grade level in reading and math. Now, as eighth-graders, they test at a 10.5 grade level in the same subjects. During their 4 years at the Academy the students have progressed 7 grade levels. This great progress helped the Academy earn the honor of being named a “Top 25 Private Elementary School” by *Chicago* magazine.

CJA’s first graduating class has earned over \$675,000 in scholarships to support their high school education. The students have been awarded various scholarships through their respective high schools and through scholarship programs including the Daniel Murphy Scholarship, the LINK Scholarship, and the Midtown Feeder Award.

The May 29 graduation ceremony will feature 3 student speakers each expressing their gratitude, a trait the Academy believes is the hallmark of a gentleman. One young man will thank the Chicago Jesuit Academy teachers, each of whom will then be presented with a letter from a graduate. Another student will thank the Class of 2009 Scholarship Benefactors and will present Matt and Christine Botica (Matt is the chairman of the Academy's board; he and his wife Christine are also scholarship benefactors) with a plaque on behalf of all of the scholarship benefactors. And finally, a young man will thank the parents of the graduates for their unwavering care, commitment, and belief in their children. The commencement speaker is Chicago native Brian C. Lewis, Asst. United States Attorney, a former LINK scholar, and graduate of Chicago's Saint Ignatius College Prep. A graduate of Princeton University, he earned his J.D. from Georgetown University Law Center where he was editor-in-chief of *The American Criminal Law Review*. In addition to diplomas, 5 "Grad at Grad" awards will be presented, each to the young man who most embodies the traits of a graduate at graduation: Committed to Doing Justice, Open to Growth, Intellectually Competent, Loving, and Religious.

Please visit our [media resource page](#) for more information and for a detailed agenda of the evening's events:

[Media Resource Page URL: http://www.jesuits-chi.org/CJA_Graduation_2009/index.html]

All media are welcome to attend!

About Chicago Jesuit Academy

Chicago Jesuit Academy is a full-scholarship, college preparatory, Jesuit, Roman Catholic middle school for young men from modest economic backgrounds. The Academy is distinguished by small classes, an extended academic day and a longer school year to prepare students for success in college prep high schools, universities, and positions of community leadership. Chicago Jesuit Academy helps students develop as young men who are open to growth, religious, intellectually competent, loving, and committed to doing justice in the service of others, in accord with the Jesuit mission and tradition. The school's success in its mission is made possible by the disciplined sacrifices of our students, parents, faculty, staff, volunteers and benefactors. To learn more about the Academy, please visit www.cjacademy.org.