

News Release

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Chester Community Charter School Grads, Now Attending Archmere Academy, Organize Food Drive at Their Former School

7,500 Pounds of Food and 500 Backpacks Were Contributed

Chester, PA, March 18, 2016 – Recently, [Chester Community Charter School \(CCCS\)](#), the largest K-8 charter school in PA, received more than 7,500 pounds of healthy and nutritious food and 500 backpacks, which were donated by the prestigious [Archmere Academy](#), in Claymont, DE, in an effort to combat food insecurities that plague not only CCCS students, but the city of Chester, at large.

CCCS Food Service Director Nichole Taylor says that during lunch and breakfast, students constantly ask for additional food after they have been served, and concluded that not everyone was receiving a balanced meal, at home. Taylor added, “We wanted to ensure that our students were eating well after they left our campus, as well as on weekends, so we decided to team up with the national nonprofit organization, [Blessings in a Backpack](#), to bring additional healthy food options to our students.”

Mark Battinieri, director of advancement, CCCS and assistant secretary for [The Gurgehian Charitable Foundation \(TGCF\)](#), a nonprofit organization that provides academic scholarships to CCCS students to attend private secondary schools, also took notice of the students’ food insecurities, and met with Lauren Gerber, a religion teacher and moderator for Archmere Academy’s Community Service Club, to supplement the Blessings in a Backpack donations. Mr. Battinieri and Ms. Gerber, together with JaNyiah Rothwell and DaNaizah Brown, CCCS alumnae, Gureghian Scholars, and current Archmere Academy 11th-graders, collaborated to organize a food drive for CCCS, from the Archmere student body.

Prior to the event, Ms. Gerber, Ms. Rothwell and Ms. Brown organized a school-wide assembly to educate Archmere students about food disparities, food injustices, and hunger, in places such as the students’ hometown of Chester. Ms. Brown and Ms. Rothwell then requested that their peers donate nourishing food for the students of CCCS. The entire Archmere Academy student body – approximately 500 scholars – contributed to the drive.

Ms. Rothwell explained, “When I attended CCCS, I didn’t fully understand the disparities that my peers faced. As former students, we want to make sure that our CCCS family eats nutritious meals, every night. We thank our classmates at Archmere for purchasing the food, and donating the backpacks, to our CCCS brothers and sisters.”

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“At Archmere, the CCCS community is a huge part of family, thanks to the Gureghian scholars who attend, each year. They bring so much life and energy to our campus, so it was without question that we would want to join in providing food for CCCS students, and their families,” said Ms. Gerber.

Mr. Battinieri commented, “CCCS’ mission is to ‘grow the whole child,’ and to us, that goes beyond the classroom. Health and wellness are crucial to the academic performance of students, so if they do not get the proper meal, it will most certainly affect their schoolwork.

“According to Philabundance,” he continued, “in the city of Chester, 44.5 percent of individuals are ‘food insecure,’ which means they only have access to ‘reduced quality’ food, which leads to the consumption of unhealthy foods that contribute to obesity. Additionally, there are an estimated 8,000 people in the City of Chester, who are ‘very food insecure,’ and do not have sufficient means to put food on their tables.

“We give thanks to Archmere Academy, and especially to our former students, there, for their continued support for CCCS students, both current and alumni, and their willingness to volunteer for such a necessary cause. We look forward,” he added, “to collaborating with them on more impactful events like this, in the future.”

In addition to the 7,500 pounds of healthy food options, CCCS students also received the 500 backpacks, in which the food was packaged and delivered.

About Chester Community Charter School

Chester Community Charter School opened its doors on September 9, 1998, serving 97 students from its modest, four, meeting rooms, in the lobby of the Howard Johnson Hotel, in Chester, PA. Since that time, the school has steadily grown to include more than 3,000 students in 11 state-of-the-art-buildings, spanning three campuses. Through collaboration with the Gureghian Charitable Foundation, and CCCS’ High School Search and Selection Program, more than \$9.5 million in scholarships and financial assistance to prestigious private secondary schools has been awarded to 225 of the school’s graduates, since 2009. <http://chestercommunitycharter.org>

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