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Cristo Rey's First Graduating Class Includes TD Bank Success Story



Bank

The idea is, you take a hard-working, smart kid that might otherwise not be able to get a quality Catholic School education, mix in great private sector companies dedicated to their communities and kids, stir, and you get the Cristo Rey School, and a success story just like that of Alexis Taitt and her internship at TD Bank.

Alexis graduated just two weeks ago, and everyone couldn't be more proud of the lovely young lady that excelled not only in her school work, but also in her entry-level position at the Montague Street TD Bank location, where Ralph Bumbaca, senior vice president/lender, Brooklyn and Staten Island, helped her achieve her graduation and work goals.

"Alex has been such a pleasure and we are so happy to have had

her working with us," he says. "She grew so much, took on tasks that we had never initially anticipated and we are so proud to have had the chance to watch her blossom and grow this year. She will be a huge success anywhere she goes after this program," Bumbaca said.

The Cristo Rey School is on Aberdeen Avenue in East New York, Brooklyn. The Catholic high school offers a rigorous curriculum, along with a unique work-study program. The students are divided up into teams of five, and each student takes on one-fifth of a full-time entry level position, at dozens of participating companies. The team will earn \$31,000 over the course of their internship, which pays for 60 percent of their tuition. The school is set up so that each grade is out the same day of the week, ensuring that no students miss any coursework.

TD Bank, who signed on as a

partner, loved the program so much that this year they came back bigger and better than ever. They are the first company to hire a second intern, this one to work at Mercy Home of New York, one of the non-profits that the bank works with.

"TD Bank is proud to have been a partner with the Cristo Rey School and have our interns Alex and Emmet working with us," added Bumbaca. "The program has enriched the lives not only of our interns, but also of the bankers that encountered them in the work place. We look forward to continuing relationships that enhance the life of those in the communities in which we live, work and employ our team members."

The Cristo Rey School has approximately 45 companies that they work with, including Cullen and Dykman, Long Island University and St. Francis, among many others.

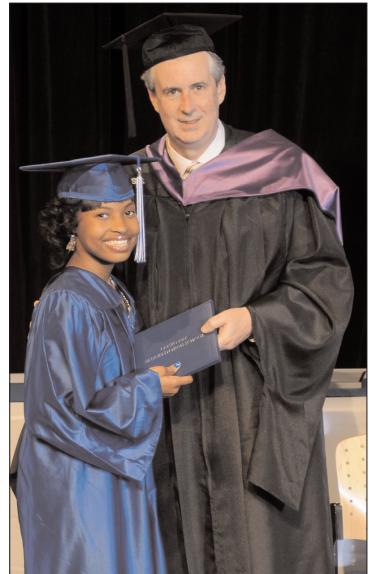
"We say that they are doing entry level clerical work, so each one starts off with the basics, but we do have some job sites where the kids work in the mail room, others where they help with everything from marketing to project development," says Jen Krasowski, senior program coordinator of the co-op work-study program at the school.

"The students that have worked at TD Bank have had a wonderful experience. They have the option at the end of the year to evaluate their experience and they both requested to go back this year," added Krasowski.

The school, which is in its fourth year, celebrated its first graduating class this year. And they have 100 percent college acceptance and have received over \$1 million in merit aid for the seniors to go on to college.

Alexis is going to Canisius College in Buffalo in the fall.

"Alexis has such a great personality and she really pushed herself," said Krasowski. "She



Alexis at graduation on June 8, 2012 at St. Francis College with President Bill Henson after she received her diploma.

puts everyone else before herself: her family, friends, supervisors, and teachers. Alexis has done a 180 to become the young woman she is today, being more confident in who she is and what she wants and realizing she can get anything she wants. It has been really inspiring watching her change and develop into who she is as a student, employee and young woman in society today."

Krasowski says she is so happy that TD Bank and Bumbaca pushed Alexis, and gave her projects you wouldn't typically give a student.

"They saw something in her and went with it. They developed a relationship with her and incorporated her into their life and atmosphere at TD Bank."

As for some icing on the graduation cake: Alexis was also the recipient of "The Jocelyn Marie Deaver 'Reach for the Stars' Award" which is awarded to the female student who is committed to her community and demonstrates the greatest will to succeed in college and in life.



Alexis Taitt with Principal Jenny Dolan after receiving this award.
Photos courtesy of Cristo Rey School