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More Than 60 Scholarship Recipients of Chester Community Charter School Convene to Express Appreciation to Benefactors

In a City with a 31.4% Poverty Level and 9.7% College Graduate Rate, The School's Program has enabled more than 170 students to pursue exceptional high school education

Chester, PA., May 22, 2014 – Chester Community Charter School (CCCS), the largest K-8 charter school in Pennsylvania, recently convened its first-ever reunion of more than 60 distinguished graduates, from the classes of 2009-2013, to express their gratitude to Vahan and Danielle Gureghian who, through their foundation, provided them with the vast majority of the scholarships that enabled them to attend highly selective private and parochial high schools. More than 170 graduates have benefited from the scholarships.

Through CSMI, an education management company of which he is CEO, Vahan Gureghian and his team began managing CCCS 15 years ago and have turned the school into a model for changing lives in poor neighborhoods with historically low performing schools. Today CCCS educates more than 3,000 K-8 students – two thirds of Chester Upland's K-8 population– in 11 buildings on 3 campuses. The school features rigorous academics, advanced technologies and a hands-on teaching philosophy that provides more time, attention and support to students. This fall the school will be rolling out an enhanced Music and Art Program.

"Today we saw progress, we saw vision becoming reality, but most of all we saw the seeds that everyone at CCCS and the management company work so hard to plant. Those kids are the seeds, they are the ones who will never forget, and who will go on to give back, to ensure other kids' lives are turned around," said Danielle Gureghian.

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Each year, since its inception the Gureghian Charitable Foundation has provided academic scholarships to Chester Community Charter School students pursuing education at tuition-based, private, parochial and out-of-district high schools.

Student recipients of the Foundation's scholarships are currently enrolled in, or are now graduates of, a broad array of prestigious high schools in Pennsylvania and Delaware including Cardinal O'Hara High School, Episcopal Academy, St. Joseph's Preparatory School, Tower Hill School, the Tatnall School, Wilmington Friends School, Archmere Academy, St. Mark's High School, St. Elizabeth High School, Padua Academy, Salesianum School, Ursuline Academy and Neumann and Goretti High School. Many former scholarship recipients have matriculated to area colleges and universities, including Bryn Mawr College, Neumann College, Saint Joseph's University and Widener University.

Vahan and Danielle Gureghian, who had not been previously notified that the students would be gathered in their honor, received awards from the charter school's alums including a book of words of appreciation and "selfies" provided by each of the graduates. Commenting on the alumni gathering, Danielle Gureghian said: "We are moved by this amazing gesture and continue to be in awe of the achievements made by this distinguished group of CCCS graduates. Vahan and I want each recipient, past, current and future, to continue to work hard and to make full use of every open door and opportunity awarded to them."

VIDEO – Remarks from Vahan and Danielle Gureghian – <http://youtu.be/OodzLwYXxz0>

Dr. David Clark, Superintendent of Chester Community Charter School said, "I am very proud of the academic growth, maturity and educational achievements of every member of each of our graduating classes at CCCS. They are our greatest success story. I have seen many of these graduates come to our school, as young children, and grow-up before my very eyes, into forward-thinking, intelligent young adults. We have many graduates, now, in college and doing well, all because we believe in providing opportunity, and expanding their horizons beyond our great campus.

"With the generosity and financial contributions of the Vahan and Danielle Gureghian Foundation," he added, "we are able to give our students a chance to compete and excel in academically rigorous institutions, and the ability to succeed beyond their wildest dreams."

Mark Battinieri, Director of Student Outcomes at CCCS said, "In 2009, we had seven students graduate and attend a few of our area's most prestigious high schools, due to the support of our unique High School Placement Program and the Vahan and Dannielle Gureghian Foundation. This year, we have more than 50 students planning to attend these same prestigious schools. That's huge!" He continued, "We teach our students to

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set high expectations of themselves and to work hard to fulfill their dreams. We also teach them a sense of home and community and the importance of “paying it forward” and creating opportunities for others.”

VIDEO – Footage from the CCCS Alumni Reception and Thanks to Benefactors – <http://youtu.be/SNHrr26-aQI>

Michael Dixon, CCCS graduate and rising sophomore at Widener University, majoring in International Business, said, “It is an honor, for me, and my fellow alums, to finally meet the two individuals who have made such an impact on our lives, Mr. and Mrs. Gureghian.” He continued, “I come from a single-parent home, where my mother did the best she could to ensure I was raised right and educated well. She worried, constantly, about where I would end up, and I will never forget the day that I found her, crying in the middle of our living room floor, as she read a letter that stated I would receive a full-academic scholarship to Cardinal O’Hara High School, thanks to the Vahan and Danielle Gureghian Foundation. You will never know how much this scholarship has meant to me.”

Mika Reed, CCCS graduate and a rising senior at Neumann College majoring in Psychology said, “I can’t thank CCCS and the Gureghian Foundation enough for the opportunities it has created for me. The support I’ve received has been immeasurable.”

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. Since that time, the school has steadily grown to include more than 3,000 students. www.chestercommunitycharter.org

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Photo 1



Caption 1

Dr. David Clark, CEO, Chester Community Charter School, addresses Vahan and Danielle Gureghian, the benefactors of the Guerghian Charitable Foundation, announcing that more than 70 past and current foundation scholarship recipients were gathered in their honor, to show appreciation for their contributions of approximately \$8.5 million, from 2009 to date, resulting in 175 scholarships. The city of Chester, Pennsylvania has a poverty level of 31.4%, and only 9.7% of its residents hold a bachelor's degree or higher, as compared to Pennsylvania statewide bachelor's degree level of 27%.

Photo 2



Caption 2

Vahan Gureghian, CEO, CSMI, LLC and benefactor of the Gureghian Charitable Foundation, embraces CCCS alum, Mika Reed, scholarship recipient and, now, rising senior at Neumann College, at a recent reception held by the school. The reception honored Vahan and his wife, Danielle, for their contributions resulting in \$8.5 million in academic scholarships to more than 175 students, since 2009. The Gureghians received awards from the charter school's alums, including a book of words of appreciation and "selfies" provided by each of the graduates.

Photo 3



Caption 3

Michael Dixon, Chester Community Charter School (CCCS) graduate and rising sophomore at Widener University, majoring in International Business, expresses his sincere appreciation to Vahan and Danielle Gureghian, the benefactors of the Guerghian Charitable Foundation (seated), at a recent reception held by the school, to honor Vahan and his wife, Danielle, for their contributions resulting in \$8.5 million in academic scholarships to more than 175 students, since 2009.

Photo 4



Caption 4

More than 60 scholarship recipients and former graduates of Chester Community Charter School, the largest K-8 charter school in Pennsylvania, convened to network and express appreciation to scholarship benefactors Vahan and Danielle Gureghian. Since 2009, approximately \$8.5 Million in aid has been given to 175 students.

Photo 5



Caption 5

It's all smiles at the first-ever meeting/reunion of more than 60 distinguished Chester Community Charter School (CCCS) graduates, from the classes of 2009-2013, each of whom has received academic scholarships from the foundation established by Vahan and Danielle Gureghian. CCCS, the largest K-8 charter school in Pennsylvania, invited alums to network with fellow recipients and express appreciation to the Gureghians, whose contributions, since the inception of the foundation, represent \$8.5 million in scholarship funds for 175 students.