



They Made All the Difference: Life-Changing Stories from Jesuit High Schools

Eileen Wirth Ph.D

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At a time when so many public and private school systems are burdened with woes, Jesuit high schools are thriving. Enrollments, budgets, and endowments are growing; alumni support is strong; and the schools enjoy an impressive reputation for academic and athletic excellence. Jesuit educators are even taking bold steps to develop new schools to serve poor and disadvantaged students.

Eileen Wirth, a university professor and parent of a Jesuit high school student, explains how the remarkable success of Jesuit high schools is rooted in a centuries-old vision marked by acute sensitivity to the individual, fierce commitment to excellence, concern for the poor, and a spirituality that prizes self-knowledge and flexibility.

By visiting Jesuit high schools all over the country, conducting interviews, studying countless books, and visiting every Jesuit high school Web site, Wirth learned—and eagerly shares with her readers—how Ignatian spirituality imbues every conceivable dimension of a Jesuit high school education. From football to freshman retreats, fund-raising to finding God in all things, *They Made All the Difference* details the incomparable success of Jesuit high schools and their far-reaching effects.

Jesuit high schools make a world of difference.

Their graduates make a difference in the world.

Take a look at any Jesuit high school in the United States, and immediately you'll be struck by the fact that there is something different about its academics, as well as its athletics, student life, discipline, and spirituality.

But what makes these high schools so different and also so successful?

The key is a compelling educational vision that dates back nearly five hundred years to St. Ignatius of Loyola.

Throughout this book, that vision is articulated and shown to be embodied in the students, faculty, and alumni of Jesuit high schools. Through fascinating and life-changing stories from Jesuit high schools, biographies of notable Jesuit high school alumni (including, among others, journalist Tim Russert, comedian Bob Newhart, Olympic medalist Kate Johnson, and actor/singer Harry Connick Jr.), and individual profiles of each Jesuit high school, readers will come to know and admire the schools and the people who make a significant difference in today's world because of the centuries-old vision they follow.

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