

Wawa CEO Chris Gheysens Kicks off Veritas Speaker Series at St. Augustine Preparatory School in southern New Jersey

Wawa President/CEO Chris Gheysens recently spoke to a crowd of 700 at St. Augustine Preparatory School to kick off the school's new Veritas Speaker Series.

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President/CEO Chris Gheysens took time out of his busy schedule on Monday, September 19, to speak to a crowd of nearly 700 at St. Augustine Preparatory School, and kicked off the school's new Veritas Speaker Series in the process. Gheysens, a St. Augustine Class of 1989 alumnus, impressed the students, staff and faculty as he discussed topics including servant leadership, innovation, value-based goals, and collaboration.

“Servant leadership; It is what we are all about at Wawa,” said Gheysens, explaining the foundation of the culture at the convenience store and fuel chain. “I’m sure this

concept is familiar to you because servant leadership is instilled here at the Prep at the core of the Augustinian Values that dictate how to treat people at work and in everyday life. You learn it and live it every day.”

“We are very grateful for Mr. Gheysens’ presentation to our students,” said Fr. Robert J. Murray, OSA, Ph.D., Head of School at St. Augustine Preparatory School. “He was very engaging and reinforced how these young men can integrate our mission and his message into their own lives. As part of the Prep's commitment to Innovation and Experiential Learning, the Veritas Speaker Series, in the spirit of our patron saint St. Augustine, brings people of various backgrounds, experience, and passions to the Prep to ‘speak truth’ to us. We look forward to more presentations and conversations covering a wide variety of formats and topics as part of the Veritas Speaker Series throughout the academic year.”

The Innovation and Experiential Learning Initiative is an outgrowth of the St. Augustine Prep mission statement: “Setting Hearts on Fire with a Passionate Search for Truth, Unity, and Love.”

The Prep ignites the spark that intensifies throughout students' lives. For some, that spark is lit in the classroom, at Mass, or on the playing field. Yet for an increasing number of young men, there is a need to reach beyond traditional academic platforms, fueling their passion to think differently in order to positively impact the world. Today's students are not driven by the repetition of familiar academia, but rather they crave to be awakened to a world of endless possibility.

The John F. Scarpa Foundation, along with 1976 graduate and alumni parent Carmine Catalana and his wife Dana Catlana, and alumni brothers Orlando Carvalho (class of 1976) and Nelson Carvalho (class of 1968) provided the initial financial investment for the

Innovation and Experiential Learning Initiative. This has spurred hundreds of donors to contribute, resulting in a fundraising total of more than \$300,000 for the initiative.

It is in this vein that St. Augustine Prep wishes to foster that spirit of innovation, experiential learning, collaboration, and entrepreneurship among the school's young men during the most transformative years of their lives. The Veritas Speaker Series is the first component of the new Innovation and Experiential Learning Initiative unveiled by an Advisory board created to advance the program.

The Advisory Board for the initiative is composed of Prep alumni, parents, faculty, staff and community members, co-chaired by Nelson Carvalho from the Class of 1968 and President and CEO of N-Zynne Scientifics, and SGP BioEnergy President and CEO Randy LeTang, parent of a Prep sophomore. According to Carvalho, "Getting Chris Gheysens to kick off the Veritas Speaker Series was a major statement about our commitment to making this an impactful program. We have more impressive speakers lined up, though Gheysens will certainly be a tough act to follow."

Gheysens also spoke about Wawa's success in innovation throughout its history of more than 200 years as it evolved from an iron foundry to a dairy to a convenience store. The Wawa President/CEO advised St. Augustine students that success is about people and their respectful collaboration with one another. He discussed what is involved with bringing a product to market, describing it as "a long process that takes expertise from a diverse set of professionals."



Wawa CEO Chris Gheysens recently kicked off the Veritas Speaker Series at St. Augustine Preparatory School in Richland, NJ.

After his prepared remarks, Gheysens fielded questions from the students, including this one from Matteo Barberio of the Class of '24: "Mr. Gheysens, what is your advice for us who want to be successful leaders and businessmen?" Gheysen responded by saying, "Utilize these years at the Prep, and when you move on to college and figure out who you are and what you believe in; and when you pursue a career and an organization, be sure your personal values align with your professional values. If they don't, it is rare you will enjoy success. When they do, you found the right fit."

About St. Augustine Preparatory School:

St. Augustine Preparatory School is an independent, all-boys Catholic preparatory school located in Southern New Jersey. The school is owned, sponsored and staffed by the Province of St. Thomas of Villanova. The Prep has educated young men since 1959. The school is proudly accredited by the NJ Association of Independent Schools, the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools, the NJ State Educational Association, the Diocese of Camden, and the Augustinian Educational Association. For more information, visit hermits.com or call (856) 697-2600.

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