



Foundation for the Advancement of Catholic Schools

Providing students of all faiths an opportunity to receive an outstanding education.



Celebrating 25 Years of Faith, Community and Education 25th Annual St. Patrick's Day Breakfast



On Monday, March 17th, the Hartford Marriott Downtown was filled with joy, tradition, and heartfelt support as nearly 400 guests gathered to celebrate the **25th Annual St. Patrick's Day Breakfast**—an inspiring milestone in support of Catholic education. This special anniversary event highlighted the unwavering commitment of our community to the bright and promising students of Catholic schools within the Archdiocese of Hartford. Attendees were warmly welcomed by student greeters and speakers from St. Paul Catholic, Northwest Catholic, and East Catholic High Schools, as well as Corpus Christi School— each representing the excellence of Catholic education.



We were honored to welcome **Dennis House**, Co-Ancor at WTNH ABC News, as Master of Ceremonies, and **Kevin J. O'Connor**, SVP, General Counsel, and Corporate Secretary at Lockheed Martin Corporation as Guest Speaker. Kevin, a founding member of the very first St. Patrick's Day Breakfast, delivered a heartfelt reflection on the event's history and its lasting impact.

Special thanks to **Mayor Arunan Arulampalam** for joining us and bringing greetings from the City of Hartford. We were also deeply grateful for the spiritual guidance offered by **Rev. Thomas Hoar** and **Rev. Edmund Nadolny**, who opened and closed our morning with prayer.

One of the most touching moments came from student essayist **Hailey P.**, a FACS scholarship recipient from East Catholic High School. In her winning essay, she shared:



"The day I walked into East Catholic I instantly knew how life changing this school was going to be for me. The learning environment created here has made it so I can participate in any activity I want with the constant support of my peers... The opportunity to meet others who want to pursue a career similar to mine has been an inspiring experience I wouldn't have been able to have without this scholarship."

Additional student essayists and scholarship recipients from all three Archdiocesan high schools also introduced themselves, sharing dreams for the future—making it clear just how transformative the gift of Catholic education can be. We extend our heartfelt thanks to all who attended and supported this unforgettable celebration. Here's to the next 25 years of hope, opportunity, and faith-filled education. We can't wait to see you next year!



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PRESIDENT'S LETTER

Brian A. Giantonio

Greetings to all our FACS Friends,

What an exciting year for our Archdiocese!

Pope Leo XIV, the first American born Pope, donned his papal robes this May. Such an interesting man! In the words of Archbishop Broglio, Pope Leo is 'A shepherd for a troubled world'. A thought-provoking choice of words.



At our recent St. Patrick's Day Breakfast, speaker Kevin J. O'Connor, echoed this concern, highlighting ***"the need for the values that are taught in our Catholic schools"***. His words remind us that the formation of character - grounded in faith - is more essential than ever.

A visit to the website of the Catholic Schools in the Hartford Archdiocese, (www.catholicedaohct.org) underscores this message with their simple but powerful phrase "There's something greater here". This is true. Success in life does begin with a commitment to the greater good and that sentiment was a major motivation behind the creation of our Foundation.

FACS awards scholarships that assist families of all faiths and ethnic backgrounds in affording Catholic schools throughout the Archdiocese of Hartford. At the heart of teachings within the Catholic schools is the focus on **morals, compassion, and truth.**

We continue to see an increasing need for our scholarships as many families continue to struggle with meeting their basic needs yet yearn to provide to their children a strong start in life by their attending Catholic schools. To date, we were able to award just over \$430,000 for the 2025 - 2026 academic year, putting a Catholic school education within reach for hundreds of families. Yet there are many more students who require FACS' help and for that we need you!

Our Archdiocesan High Schools continue with their high graduation rates and impressive list of colleges for matriculation (see page 11). **Our graduating high school classes are not only entering college strong in their knowledge base but also with a strong moral compass.**



We are very grateful to all our FACS Friends like yourself. You have made our mission possible for the last 43 years.

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Brian A. Giantonio".



A Gift for the Future: Leave a Legacy That Sustains Catholic Education



At the Foundation for the Advancement of Catholic Schools (FACS), we believe in the enduring power of Catholic education to shape lives and communities. As someone who shares this vision, you have the opportunity to make a lasting difference—one that reaches far beyond your lifetime.

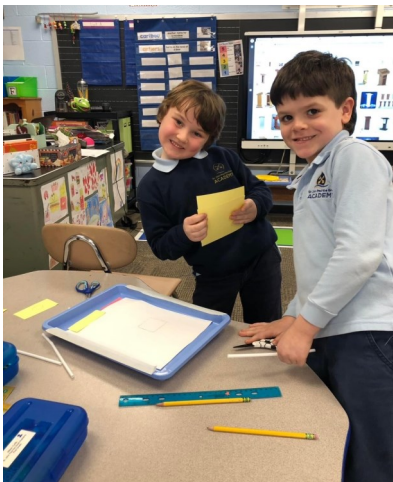
By including FACS in your will or estate plan, you help ensure that future generations of students receive the faith-filled, high-quality education that has been the cornerstone of our mission since the beginning.

Why consider a bequest?

A bequest is a simple yet powerful way to support Catholic education without affecting your current financial situation. It offers flexibility, peace of mind, and the chance to make a larger impact than you may have thought possible.

Here are just a few reasons to consider a bequest to FACS:

- ♦ **Preserve Your Legacy**—Leave a meaningful legacy that reflects your values and commitment to Catholic education.
- ♦ **Support What Matters Most**—Ensure our schools and students continue to thrive for generations to come.
- ♦ **Easy to Arrange**—A bequest can be added to your will or trust with simple language and guidance from your attorney.
- ♦ **Changeable at Any Time**—You can modify or revoke your bequest at any time, providing complete flexibility.
- ♦ **Potential Estate Tax Benefits**—Depending on your estate's size and structure, your gift may reduce estate taxes.
- ♦ **Honor Loved Ones**—Create a tribute in memory of someone dear or celebrate a loved one's values with your gift.



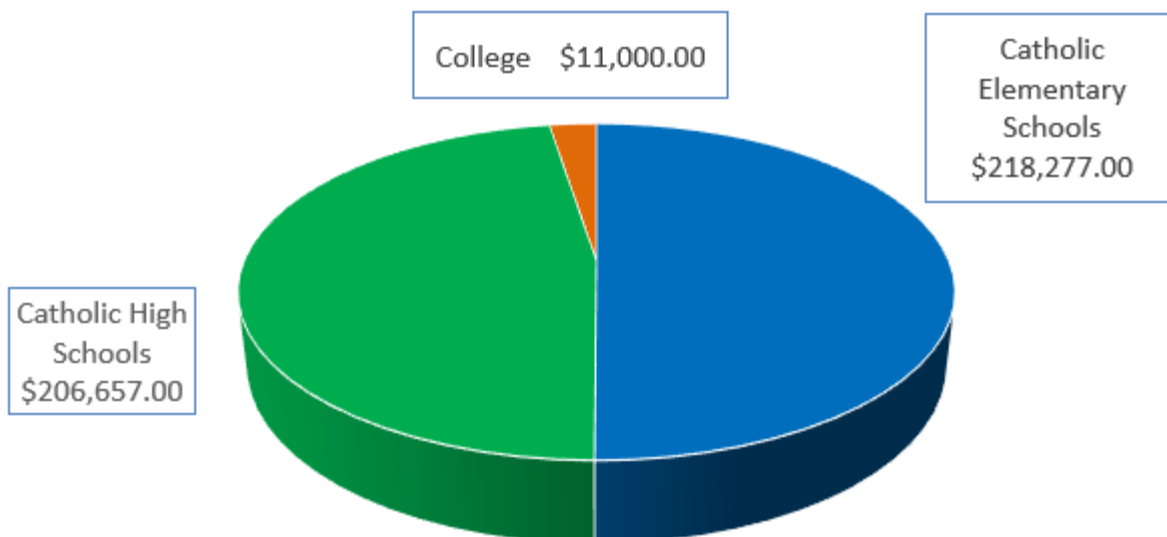
If you've already included FACS in your estate plans or would like to learn more, we invite you to reach out. We'd be honored to thank you personally.

Visit us online at: www.facshartford.org or
call our office: 860-325-5096

By planning a future gift today, you are helping us build a stronger tomorrow—one student, one school, and one community at a time.

We are proud to announce the generous support provided to students through our foundation this year.

2025-2026 FACS SCHOLARSHIPS AND GRANTS TOTAL \$435,934.00



Catholic Elementary School Scholarships - 206 awarded

Catholic High School Scholarships - 79 awarded

College-Bound Senior Scholarships - 2

Total Scholarships Awarded - 287

FACS Funds

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Celebrating the Success of Our 25th Annual St. Patrick's Day Breakfast

Thank You to Our 2025 Sponsors and Attendees

The Foundation for the Advancement of Catholic Schools (FACS) extends our heartfelt thanks to all who made our **25th Annual St. Patrick's Day Breakfast** such a memorable celebration. This milestone event was a true testament to the power of community, tradition, and shared purpose.

We are especially grateful to our **sponsors and attendees**—your support and presence helped bring this event to life and further our mission of supporting Catholic education across the Archdiocese of Hartford.

A special thank you to our 2025 Sponsors and Attendees!

Our **Presenting and Corporate Sponsors** are proudly listed below:

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Your generosity and continued partnership make a lasting impact in the lives of students and families we serve. We look forward to gathering again next year in faith, fellowship, and celebration.



Stellar Student Spotlight

Meet some of our current FACS high school scholars and discover their stories



Aaron B. — Northwest Catholic High School

What do you plan to do once you graduate from Northwest Catholic High School?

I plan on attending American University in Washington, D.C. with a major in journalism.

What do you plan to study in college and what is your dream career after college?

I plan on taking a route in photojournalism, mixing both of my skills and passions. My dream career after college is becoming either a national/international correspondent, a news anchor at mainstream media outlet (CBS, NBC, ABC for example), or a sports commentator.

What blessings have you received from your Catholic school education and how have those blessings helped you? Through my Catholic school education, I have been positively guided both academically and ethically. Having gone through three Catholic schools, I have always been encouraged to do my best in the classroom, on the golf course, and in my service to others through altar serving.

Is there a teacher that has inspired you or helped you with your academic career? How? My AP U.S. History teacher, Mr. Drew Mitchell, inspired me to dive deeper into my passion for U.S. History and his teaching style encouraged my already passionate work ethic. His constantly engaging classroom setting and willingness to sit with me after school to review homework and assessments made me a much more attentive student and a critical thinker and reader who efficiently took in information.

What will you miss most about your school? What I will miss most about Northwest Catholic is the close-knit community that welcomed talents of all kinds. For me, it was the fact that my peers embraced my work as I began getting into photography and graphic design and their continuing support through junior and senior year.



Makayla B. —St. Paul Catholic High School

What do you plan to do once you graduate from St. Paul Catholic High School? I plan to study Political Science at Sacred Heart University.

What do you plan to study in college and what is your dream career after college? I am planning to major in Political Science, but minor in history and possibly Spanish. My real dream is to go on to law school and become a lawyer. I would like to pursue a career as a prosecutor.

What blessings have you received from your Catholic school education and how have those blessings helped you? I received many blessings from my Catholic school education, but the biggest one is to always trust in God's plan. I have been blessed with an excellent education, amazing friends, and a supportive family because of God's plan for me. He has helped me to develop these relationships, and He has helped me to figure out what I want to do in the future. I am eternally grateful for all of God's blessings and I am excited to see what plan He has for me in the future.

Is there a teacher that has inspired you or helped you with your academic career? How? I have had numerous teachers that have inspired me throughout my academic career, but Dr. Gnoza, my sophomore year history teacher, truly helped me to recognize my love of history. Whenever I was in his class, I was always so excited to learn and knew that I wanted to pursue it in the future. My senior year history teacher, Mrs. Kelly was also a major academic influence on me. She teaches AP Government and Politics, and that class is something that I really enjoyed. It helped me to understand how important it is to be educated in

civics and politics. This class also helped me understand the judicial branch, and how I wanted to be a part of it in the future. Additionally, my Spanish teacher, Señora Lebron-Rojas, has had a deep impact on my academic career. She has taught me the wonderful language of Spanish and has shown me how important it is to learn a different language. Her class was something I always enjoyed. She not only taught me so much about the language of Spanish, but showed me whole new cultures as well.

What will you miss most about your school? High school was the best four years of my life. I met so many wonderful people, learned so much about myself and the world, and created so many memories I will cherish forever. Unfortunately, all great things must come to an end. What I will miss most about Saint Paul Catholic High School is the close knit community I had been a part of. I will dearly miss coming to school everyday and seeing my friends. They were the best part of school. I will also miss being a part of the Debate Club and competing every month, but I know that our team has a bright future!



Elizabeth M.—East Catholic High School



What do you plan to do once you graduate from East Catholic High School?

I am thrilled to attend Salve Regina University in the fall, where I will pursue studies in biology and compete in both Women's Basketball and Women's Volleyball. I also intend to explore all the clubs and organizations the university offers. I eagerly anticipate immersing myself in the wealth of opportunities available both on campus and in Newport.

What do you plan to study in college and what is your dream career after college? My academic focus in college will be biology on a pre-med track. Following the completion of my undergraduate degree, I plan to pursue a Master of Science in Physician Assistant Studies, ideally in a program within Connecticut. My career aspiration is to work as an orthopedic physician. For my first job, I hope to be located in the Hartford/Manchester area to remain close to my family while pursuing my career.

What blessings have you received from your Catholic school education and how have those blessings helped you? One of the biggest blessings I've received are the people that I've met. From students to teachers and coaches, the focus has always been on building relationships. I'm surrounded by people who push me to become the best versions of myself while encouraging me to keep going. The diverse group of people that I've been able to bond with has been crucial to my academic and sports journey. I've had the blessing of being able to grow such a strong support group who I know can help me be successful. The people you meet at East Catholic are always able to help and assist you whether it's a teacher, coach, or student. The community is a blessing and every one single person is a part of that blessing.

Is there a teacher that has inspired you or helped you with your academic career? How? My religion teacher, Mrs. Quackenbush, has been an invaluable resource. Whether I came to her with personal matters or academic concerns, I always felt like I could talk comfortably to her. Her knowledge and approachable demeanor allowed me to discuss any situation, and she always offered guidance on different ways to handle those situations. Beyond teaching curriculum, she has taught me different life lessons that I can apply to my everyday. After having her as a teacher for two years, I always knew that if there was anything that I needed help with, Mrs. Quackenbush would be there to guide me through it.

What will you miss most about your school? What I will miss the most about East Catholic are the extra curricular and student life experience. In particular, I will miss being a part of the girls' basketball team. Over the years, the team has become like a second family, playing a crucial role in my development as a person. Being a part of the team was a privilege, and the opportunity to create and deepen relationships significantly enriched my connection to the school. Through the triumphs and challenges of being part of such a remarkable team, I was always able to find joy in the experience and in my team.

A Memorable Day at the 2024 Annual FORE FACS Golf Classic!

The 14th Annual **FORE FACS Golf Classic** was one to remember! Despite Mother Nature cutting our game short with intense weather, the spirit and flexibility of our players were truly commendable. We are especially grateful to the TPC for generously providing return play certificates to all participants.

Thanks to our sponsors incredible support, we were able to bring together a wonderful community of golfers, enjoy great camaraderie, and raise vital funds to support FACS and our students. A special highlight was once again welcoming student golfers from our Archdiocesan High Schools—talented, respectful, and exceptional young athletes who inspire us every year. Your generosity makes our mission possible, and we thank you for helping FACS continue to grow and serve.



Empowering Future Leaders

Beyond his work as a dedicated Trustee of FACS, Doug Coté serves as Advisor for the Northwest Catholic High School Stock Market Club.

Doug brings a wealth of experience to this role while mentoring students through the financial markets and fostering skills in investment analysis and economic strategy. Under his guidance, students engage in simulated trading exercises, participate in competitions and gain practical insights into the world of finance. His involvement provides students with invaluable exposure to the financial industry, preparing them for careers and instilling a sense of responsibility in managing resources.





FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, Cynthia Basil Howard

Dear Friends,

For the past 17 years I have been blessed to be the Executive Director of a Connecticut Foundation that empowers youth. What a privilege.

My intention has been to build a successful organization to help children. My own faith-filled family made sacrifices so that my two siblings and I could attend Catholic elementary and high schools.

The focus of my work has been to build this Foundation, to help students and schools, to inspire, to tell the truth, to work with grace, respect and integrity, and to work in partnership with our Foundation's leaders.

You'll see on the facing page a photo of Trustee Doug Cote, a man who takes time from his busy schedule to mentor students. In this issue, you will also find a message from long-time FACS donor Michele D'Amour, who together with her husband Donald have created a scholarship fund which helps many students in both elementary and high schools. It is because of loyal supporters like these that FACS has had a successful and trusted record over the last four decades.

The students who want to attend Catholic schools are brilliant and all they need is someone to give them a chance. That is where FACS comes in. I sincerely want to thank all those who have sustained FACS over the last 43 years. We appreciate your on-going commitment to support our community. It is true that we have made some great strides, however there is still much more we want to accomplish. Would you consider renewing your support in an even larger way this year?

As we embark on our 44th year, may we continue to focus on what is important, and what is important is our precious children.

Successfully educating thousands of students each year, Catholic schools constitute an enormous public service. In addition to academic quality, the schools offer intellectually enriching environments, with an emphasis on moral development, character and ethics, in order to create the future leaders of our world. The impact is great with data to prove their successes. We look forward to celebrating the progress of our students in the coming months which we happily showcase in our publications. And of course, much recognition goes to our FACS Partners who step up to the plate in a big way. Our hope is that you continue to support FACS with great magnitude as a testamentary to your lifetime plan to truly make a difference in this world.

Warmest wishes,

Cynthia Basil Howard



Celebrating the CLASS of 2025!

Your accomplishments at East Catholic, St. Paul, and Northwest Catholic High Schools have set the stage for a future filled with promise and success.



See Where Their Journeys Continue: College Choices of Our Seniors



Albertus Magnus College
American University
Appalachian State University
Arizona State University
Babson College
Bates College
Bentley University
Boston College
Boston University
Brigham Young University
Bryant University
Central CT State University
Colby College
College of the Holy Cross
Connecticut State Community College
CUNY John Jay College of Criminal Justice
Dartmouth College
Eastern CT State University
Elon University
Embry-Riddle Aeronautical Univ
Endicott College
Fairfield University
Florida Atlantic University
Fordham University
Georgetown University
Hartwick College
High Point University
Hillsdale College

Hobart and William Smith
Howard University
James Madison University
John Cabot University
John Carroll University
Keene State College
Lehigh University
Liberty University
Loyola University Maryland
Marist College
Marquette University
Marywood University
Mass. Maritime Academy
Miami University—Oxford
Moravian University
Northern Kentucky University
Ohio State University
Pace University
Palm Beach Atlantic University
Paul Smiths College of Arts and Science
Pennsylvania State University
Plymouth State University
Porter and Chester Institute
Providence College
Quinnipiac University
Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute
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Rutgers University
Sacred Heart University
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Salve Regina University
Seton Hall University

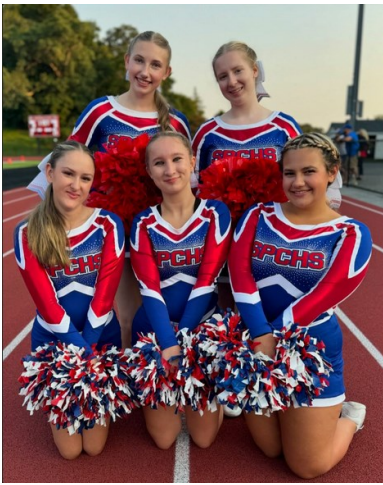
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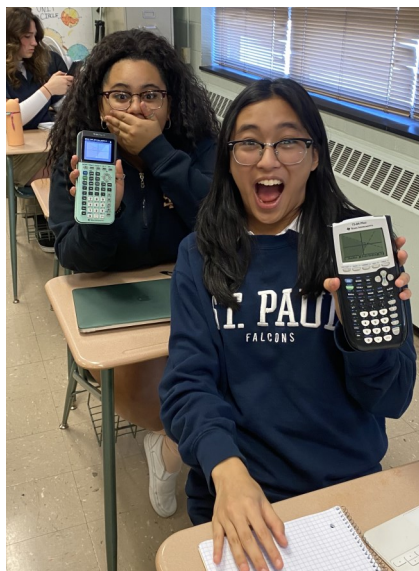


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This list includes donations and in-kind support made between 7-1-2024 and 6-30-2025. We hope to be able to add YOUR name to next year's HONOR ROLL list. Look for our Annual Fund letter which will be sent in late fall: **Investing in Futures - FACS Fund 2025!**

These excerpts are taken from essays written by high school students who received scholarships from FACS.

Thank you for making my dreams come true. These three years have been the best thanks to this scholarship. This scholarship means a lot to me because it is able to support my family in providing a Catholic education for me. Catholic school has been a huge part of my life. I have been able to grow spiritually as a Catholic through my many years of Catholic education...I appreciate everyone who donated to make this scholarship available and I am forever grateful for my president Sean P. Brennan for taking the time to listen and help. Urielle

"More than anything, this scholarship has given me the chance to work towards my pursuits for after high school, without having to worry too much about financial limitations. I believe that it has alleviated stress from my mother, who works so hard every day to provide for me, with little money in her pocket left over. Knowing that she has gotten some financial help with this scholarship, it has allowed me to concentrate fully on all school activities and form connections that will hopefully last a lifetime." Anabel

"There are so many great things about my school. First is the trust they have in their students. When I was in public schools we had security guards at all times. Being here makes me feel safe and that the school trusts me." Seven

"This scholarship has motivated me to strive for academic success and give back to my community. My hard work and dedication to school has been reinforced and I can now strive for bigger things. It has also shown me to give back to others and taught me generosity. I hope that this scholarship can be extended to more deserving students to help lead them to success." Aria

"I have never been happier at any school. With the help of the scholarship my mother's long-term hope and dream was answered. Even after a huge setback, this scholarship that some may take for granted means so much to me because I get to be at the same school as my sister and continue to learn in faith." Anthony



Faith in Action—A Donor's Perspective

"As Catholic business people, my husband and I have long understood the intimate relationship between Faith and Reason and its importance in enabling the human person to lead a life with character and integrity both at home and at work.

In these difficult and challenging times, the ability of current and future generations to be able to afford the kind of education many of us received, rests in our charity and willingness to help others. There are many parents that sacrifice greatly to send their children to Catholic schools and many that simply wish they could but do not have the means. Don and I feel that it is critical that we all work together to enable those that would like to come to our schools can. By supporting FACS we have been a small part in providing for as many children as possible to have the opportunity to be educated in mind, body & soul." - **Michele D'Amour**



Please consider FACS in your charitable giving

Mail a check or visit our website to give online.

FACS

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Weatogue, CT 06089

860-325-5096

FACSHartford.org



Provide Lasting Support for Catholic Education

You can make a meaningful difference in the life of a student by helping to provide access to a Catholic elementary or high school education. By becoming a monthly donor, you offer steady, dependable support that allows the FACS to continue its mission.

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The Annual **FORE FACS Golf Classic and Dinner** is more than just a day on the course—it's a celebration of community and giving. Enjoy a scenic round of golf alongside fellow supporters, all coming together to champion a worthy cause and make a lasting difference.

Please join us!

Monday, August 25, 2025
TPC River Highlands
Cromwell, CT



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