



# Foundation for the Advancement of Catholic Schools

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




Brianna W.,  
Student Speaker

Amazed. Inspired. Grateful. That’s how we felt after the **23rd Annual St. Patrick’s Day Breakfast**. We were thrilled to be able to celebrate our Catholic school students in-person this year at the Hartford Marriott Downtown on St. Patrick’s Day morning. It was a festive celebration hosted by Emcee and WFSB Anchor Irene O’Connor.

We were honored that The Most Reverend Henry J. Mansell, D.D. welcomed our guests with the opening prayer along with greetings from Governor Ned Lamont and Mayor Luke Bronin on behalf of the State of Connecticut and City of Hartford. Brianna W., class of 2024 FACS recipient and selected essayist was our student guest speaker. Brianna

shared the following in her essay: “The various benefits of a Catholic education, such as the faithful environment, have greatly impacted students’ lives. ‘As we let our own light shine, we unconsciously give other people permission to do the same,’ was once stated by Nelson Mandela. I learned how to share my light with the world as a result of the contributions from my Catholic education. Simultaneously, my school has inspired me to help guide others to discover their spark, talents, and passions. Therefore, the Foundation for the Advancement of Catholic Schools has given multiple students a brighter future, filled with hope and purpose.” Brianna is certainly a bright light.

Guest Speaker Staff Sgt. (Ret.) Johnny “Joey” Jones was a very engaging and moving speaker with such an inspirational message. He shared his mindset for overcoming adversity, finding a positive perspective, leaning on those around us and finding strength in oneself. Rev. Michael J. Dolan delivered a heartfelt closing prayer.

The net proceeds from this event provide four-year renewable scholarships to Archdiocesan elementary and high school students. Every year, FACS looks to increase the number of awards and reach even more students like Brianna W. We hope to see you at this great event next year! 



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## PRESIDENT'S LETTER

*Brian A. Giantonio, Esq.*

Greetings FACS Friends,

Today our world is experiencing all types of change and "new normals". Change can be invigorating and positive, or it can be unsettling and frightening.

We are experiencing change in our Archdiocese. This includes parish and school consolidations, re-assignment of pastors and the announcement and upcoming installation of a new Archbishop.

Change ushers in new possibilities, it may reinvigorate people and it may raise cautious optimism in others. While change is evolutionary, it does draw upon the strength of individuals and organizations whose steady, consistent and trustworthy approach to their interactions with others remains paramount. These individuals and organizations embraced change while maintaining their commitments to those they serve.

The Foundation for the Advancement of Catholic Schools remains strong and committed to assisting children attending the Catholic schools in the Archdiocese of Hartford so they may receive an exceptional faith-based educational experience. For forty years, since 1983, FACS has been a steadfast presence in the Archdiocese of Hartford and in its commitment to assist financially needy young men and women who desire a Catholic school education.

FACS is an independent federal tax-exempt non-profit. We have a strong, dedicated Board of Trustees and Staff who work tirelessly to benefit those children and families who seek the solid foundation and extraordinary education provided by Catholic schools. We are proud to be in partnership with donors like you who believe in us and expect us to remain consistent in our mission and our actions.

Together, with your support, we will continue to provide our beloved children with an excellent Catholic education, rich in our faith, to better embrace, adopt, and harness the positive changes they will experience during their lives and resist negative influences. Thank you for your continued generosity.

Sincerely,



*There are simple ways anyone can make a difference.*



Would you like to know how you can leave a lasting legacy and save on your tax bill this year? It's easy.

**Buy low, give high.**

For a bigger tax break, give appreciated stock. You will receive a charitable deduction based on the fair market value on the date the stock is transferred to us, and you'll completely avoid capital gains tax. So give smart, give stock.

**Max out your charitable deduction.**

You can deduct up to 50 percent of your adjusted gross income when you make gifts of cash and up to 30 percent for gifts of property.

**Make the gift that pays you back.**

If you establish a charitable remainder trust and transfer assets to the trust before December 31, you will be eligible for a charitable income tax deduction this year. You also remove these assets from your estate, which can lower estate and inheritance tax.

Contact us to learn more about these and other giving opportunities:

- ⇒ Make a gift through your will or trust
- ⇒ Give life insurance you no longer need
- ⇒ Donate appreciated stock and save on taxes
- ⇒ Consider a gift of real estate
- ⇒ Make a gift that gives you fixed payments for life
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[www.facshartford.plannedgiving.org](http://www.facshartford.plannedgiving.org)

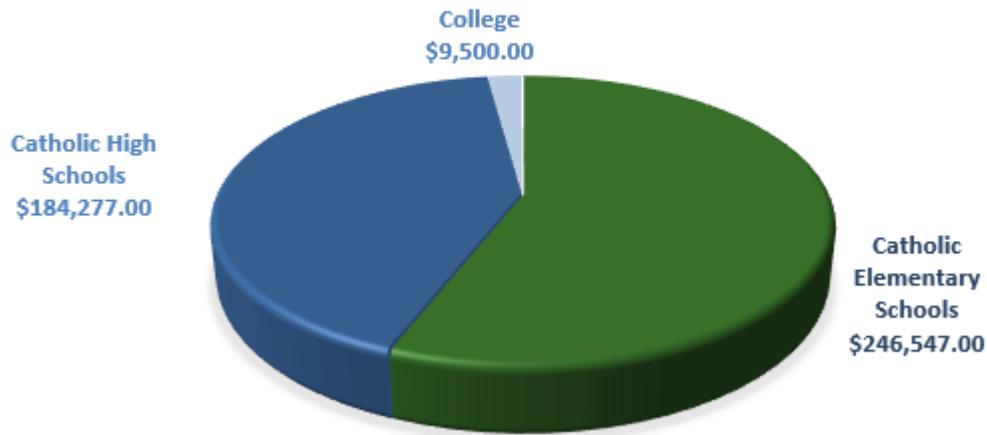


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2023-2024

**FACS SCHOLARSHIPS AND GRANTS**  
**\$440,324.00**



*FACS Scholarships and Grants were awarded from the following funds:*

Archbishop's Fund Elementary and High School	Hartford Endowed Fund	Most Rev. Daniel A. Cronin Fund
Bank of America Fund	Hartford Hope Fund	Pope John Paul II Fund
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**Scholarships awarded to Catholic Elementary School Students - 258**

**Scholarships awarded to High School Students - 89**

**Scholarships awarded to College - Bound Seniors - 2**

**Scholarships - 349      Grants - on-going, to be finalized**

**Grand Total of Scholarship and Grant Awards: \$440,324.00**



**A Big THANK YOU to our *Annual St. Patrick's Day Breakfast* SPONSORS!** On behalf of the Board of Trustees and staff of the Foundation for the Advancement of Catholic Schools, we thank you for your support of the **23rd Annual St. Patrick's Day Breakfast** and for your commitment to our Foundation. We exist because of caring people like you. Thank you for being a part of our community and changing so many lives.

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# Stellar Student Spotlight

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



*Samuel P. –Northwest Catholic High School*

**What do you plan to do once you graduate from Northwest Catholic High School?** After graduating from Northwest Catholic High School I will be attending the University of Scranton, a Jesuit university in Pennsylvania.

**If attending college, what do you plan to study in college and what is your dream career after college?** At the University of Scranton, I was invited to join the Special Jesuit Liberal Arts Honors Program and I will be a member of the varsity swim team. At Scranton, I plan on majoring in both Environmental Science and Philosophy. After graduating, I'm interested in becoming a Jesuit volunteer and traveling somewhere helping those who need it the most. After that my dream job is either to become a teacher or to work in environmental sustainability.

**What blessings have you received from your Catholic school education and how have those blessings helped you?** I have received many blessings from my 13 years of Catholic school education. I think that the most important blessings I have received are the ability to learn more about my faith while also deepening it and becoming a better Catholic. I have also been able to go on life changing experiences such as the Kairos retreat run by Northwest Catholic's Campus Ministry and the trip my Honors Institute for Leadership & Learning class took to Washington D.C. Furthermore, I have greatly appreciated the ability to go to school with the same handful of individuals from kindergarten to our senior year of high school which was very special.

**Is there a teacher that has inspired you or helped you with your academic career? How?** My high school religion teacher and campus minister Mr. Christopher Haddad has definitely had a great impact on my education. Mr. Haddad helped me recognize what I am really passionate about, which is serving others. The programs that Mr. Haddad has run through Campus Ministry, such as regularly volunteering at the Hartford Catholic Worker or the Kairos retreats, have helped shine a light on what is important in my life.

**What will you miss most about your school?** Most of all I will miss the school spirit of Northwest Catholic. Some of my fondest memories are cheering on my fellow classmates at basketball or football games, or my teammates at swim meets. I will also miss the ability to get to know my entire grade and be able to develop strong connections with teachers around the building.



*Zola C. –St. Paul Catholic High School*

**What do you plan to do once you graduate from St. Paul Catholic High School?** I am a student athlete. I play both volleyball and basketball. I plan on continuing my basketball career and hope to play at the collegiate level. I will go to a university that has a good reputation for both basketball and academics. I value my academics and also want to excel in college as well as my athletics.

**If attending college, what do you plan to study in college and what is your dream career after college?** I want to earn a medical degree and pursue an ambitious career after college. My dream career after college is to become an oncologist, a doctor who specializes in the diagnosis and treatment of cancer. I want to help people with cancer, mentally and physically. I knew many people who had cancer and some who died because of it. My father was diagnosed and succumbed to

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cancer after a 7 year battle. That is where my drive comes from. You need a bachelor's degree and several years in medical school. Courses I would take in college include psychology, anatomy, and bio-chemistry. I believe I can do it with the education and perseverance I have learned from attending St. Paul Catholic High School.

**What blessings have you received from your Catholic school education and how have those blessings helped you?** I have been blessed just to be able to go to St. Paul's. My whole time as a student has been wonderful. The teaching style is excellent and informative. The community is very supportive. I have received blessings such as learning the St. Paul core values. One of the most important values to me is service. I have learned to help others over myself because of St. Paul's ethics. Service is very important and will help me in the future when attending college or applying for a job.

**Is there a teacher that has inspired you or helped you with your academic career? How?** A teacher that has helped me at St. Paul is Mrs. Kromidas, my English teacher. She helped me to assess my writing and understand grammar. This will help me in the future, no matter where I go. It will help me with job interviews, resumes, and papers in the future. I am grateful for her teaching and for helping me understand my work. She inspires me to do the best I can.

**What will you miss most about your school?** One thing I will miss most about my school is all the people who will go through the journey with me. My classmates and friends support each other through our high school careers, academically and athletically. I am thankful I am in such a wonderful group that is like family. I would also like to thank FACS for giving me the opportunity to attend St. Paul and become the best person I can be.



*Jade C. –East Catholic High School*

**What do you plan to do once you graduate from East Catholic High School?** Proceeding to follow my dream career path, after graduating high school, I plan to attend the University of New Haven.

**If attending college, what do you plan to study in college and what is your dream career after college?** By attending the University of New Haven, I plan to study Forensic Science with the end goal of either becoming a crime scene investigator or a detective further on in my career path.

**What blessings have you received from your Catholic school education and how have those blessings helped you?** I believe my Catholic school education has brought me an abundance of blessings. Allowing students, like myself, to broaden their opportunities academically to further their studies with discipline, study habits and a better understanding of religion in the real world.

**Is there a teacher that has inspired you or helped you with your academic career? How?** There are two teachers who I believe have helped me in my academic career since attending Catholic school. Both teachers have helped me further my interest in the subject of science as well as enhanced my abilities studying the subject. These two teachers include Mr. James Robert as well as Mr. Noah Leonard.

**What will you miss most about your school?** From the last four years of my experience at East Catholic High School, I believe the thing I will miss the most about school is the sense of community. I loved having a community of teachers who I could rely on to help me in a time of need. No matter what, they welcomed me with open arms and ears to hear whatever I needed help with and give me their best educated opinion on it.

***WE WISH ALL OF OUR OUTSTANDING FACS RECIPIENTS THE BEST!***



Executive Director, Cynthia Basil Howard, Annual St. Patrick's Day Emcee and WFSB Anchor, Irene O'Connor and The Mulcahy Academy step dancers joined Kara Sundlan and Scot Haney on WFSB's Great Day Connecticut prior to the 23rd Annual St. Patrick's Day Breakfast. 🍀 🍀 🍀

On June 12, 2023, newly ordained Deacon Keith Griffin blessed the FACS office. We were thrilled to congratulate Deacon Griffin in person and be his first office blessing. We are grateful to Deacon Griffin and may God's blessing be with him as he begins his ministry.



## A letter from a FACS recipient's parent...

*Dear FACS,*

*I am writing to express my deepest gratitude for the scholarship funds bestowed upon my family this upcoming school year.*

*My daughter was overjoyed to learn about the scholarship and is incredibly appreciative of your faith in her academic capabilities. This recognition of her hard work and dedication will not only ease the financial strain but also help her finish her last year at her school.*

*Currently, due to an unexpected turn of events, I find myself unemployed and the financial challenges are understandably magnified. As a single parent, I am doing everything in my capacity to ensure that all three of my daughters receive a quality education and are not hampered by financial constraints.*

*I am sincerely grateful for the support you have already provided. Your committee's commitment to fostering educational development is truly admirable, and we appreciate your efforts to make education more accessible to all.*





## FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, Cynthia Basil Howard

Dear Friends,

Children are at the heart of everything we do. We are clear and resolved in our mission. Today, more of us than ever before understand the need for a Foundation whose main focus is to be committed to helping the precious young people throughout our community.

This year's newsletter highlights our past year which would not have been as successful without **YOU as partners in our mission**. THANK YOU. However, the needs of our students are substantial. **We need YOU to help us continue with our**

### **important work.**

An application for scholarship assistance submitted to us this year struck me deeply when I read the section for Principal comments. One Principal wrote about a family situation that she just discovered, telling us that the family has been eating only rice and eggs for months because that is what they could afford. Yet, despite this family's financial hardships, they were working hard to be able to send two children to their local Catholic elementary school because they knew it would provide their children opportunities they did not have and sought for their children.

Another story surrounds a public school teacher whose husband had died in an unusual situation (we don't want to reveal too much of this instance). Due to these extraordinary circumstances, the family needed much therapy. The Mom's comments to us were that the Catholic school welcomed her with open arms, so much so that the school became a family to this mother and children in need. This widowed Mom said sending her children to Catholic school was "the best decision of her life".

And then there is the single Dad of three who drives a school bus, working two jobs because he desires to send all three of his children to Catholic school. I pictured their everyday schedules in my minds' eye and remain in awe of this family and the many families who sacrifice so much for their children.

Finally, I read comments from the Grandparent who is taking care of her grandchild who now resides with her. The Grandmother had retired and expected her life to go one way when her grandchild's family fell apart. This Grandmother so deeply values a Catholic education that she is now cleaning houses to pay for her grandchild's tuition and expenses at one of our Catholic schools.

There are hundreds of stories like these that come to our office each year and these families are desperately looking for assistance. We simply do not have enough funds to help each of them, and that is why the work of our Distribution Committee can be very heavy at times. However, we are hopeful and optimistic about the hundreds of children we do help each year. Our goal is to grow from year to year as we proceed into the future. *Will you help us help these local students?*

If you would like to understand our organization at a deeper level, please give me a call. We foster a culture of kindness and respect. Thank you to our Board of Trustees, our staff, our donors, our educators and related staff who see the meaning behind this work.

They see the uniqueness and value of our children, who are our future, and leaders of the world at large. I invite you to learn more about our work, our partners and our stewardship of our funds. Join with us in making an impact and building the Foundation for the Advancement of Catholic Schools together. Thank you and peace to you.

Yours truly,

*Cynthia Basil Howard*



# CONGRATULATIONS CLASS OF 2023!

We are proud of all the graduates from Northwest Catholic High School, St. Paul Catholic High School and East Catholic High School.





## See where the Archdiocesan high school graduates are headed!

Albertus Magnus College  
Allegheny College  
Anna Maria College  
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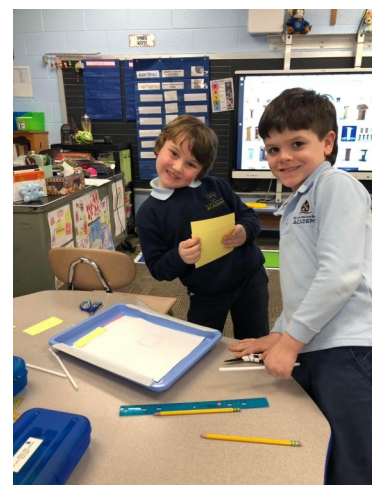


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## The following are excerpts from essays written by high school student scholarship recipients to FACS.

"My education is crucial for my family and me and I am lucky to be given the opportunity to attend such an amazing institution. There are so many others out there who wish to have the opportunities that I am given, and for that I am grateful. Furthermore, being recognized and acknowledged for my continued devotion to both my school and education means more to my family and I than I can begin to express. Knowing there are people out there who yearn to give students just like me amazing opportunities via scholarships, aid, or whatever it may be makes me even more appreciative, and I hope to continue doing amazing things for such selfless people and organizations." - Aubrey D.

*"The support given to me through this scholarship has allowed me to attend Catholic high school and experience a new level of education that I have never felt before. Never once before have I felt so connected to the community which makes it feel like it's one big family."* - Mario R.

"The strong community rooted in Christian values has given me a sense of purpose and direction that I would not have had at a public school. Being able to pray daily with my friends, teachers, and classmates contributes to our solidarity and unity. While no institution is free of division, what brings and holds us together is much stronger than those things which might separate us. If it weren't for the financial support provided by FACS my life, both now and in the future, would be radically different. Thank you so much for providing this opportunity for me!" - Summer T.

"This scholarship has provided me with a plethora of opportunities, some of which are the opportunity to learn, the opportunity to succeed, and most importantly to better myself. I can say with confidence that if not for this scholarship, these possibilities would've been harder for me to come by, and this is due in part to said scholarship allowing my family to afford Catholic high school, an environment that fosters these capabilities." - Peter M.

"This scholarship means a lot to me because having this financial aid allows me to go to a Catholic school. I am very grateful and without this I am not sure where I would be today. Having gone to a Catholic school my entire life truly allows me to love and appreciate the atmosphere and community feel that they provide." - Ciara C.

**With much gratitude, we thank you.  
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