

### CCSE Awards 2022 *Believe in Me!* Grants

This year, CCSE proudly awarded \$88,000 in seed grants to three schools in three separate Maryland counties (Baltimore City, Prince George's, and St. Mary's) thanks to the generous support of our many donors, foundations, business partners and sponsors. The grant awards are complemented with year-long capacity building Technical Assistance that we cover on a pro-bono basis under a partnership with Notre Dame of Maryland University, Academy of Catholic Educators (ACES).



Ory (center) becomes part of the "Mount Brotherhood."

**Mount Saint Joseph High School, Baltimore:** to revitalize its St. Giles Program and support students with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities.

Mount Saint Joseph strives to be a center of growth and learning that is responsive to the varied educational backgrounds of our students and is marked by the formation of enduring personal relationships. Students like Ory in our St. Giles Program fit into the broad continuum of students we are called to serve, and as fully participating members of our community, are challenged to grow and develop into the men that God intends them to be. In turn, as Ory shares his gifts and talents, his thoughts, his work, and his friendship with the rest of our community, we are enriched with the understanding that he is at once both a unique individual and a young man with whom we share a lot in common. All of this is made possible by the CCSE grant.

Greg McDivitt, Assistant Principal  
Director of Studies

This school is providing educational opportunities to a diverse community of learners including students with disabilities.



Principal Danny Flynn, Pastor Scott Hahn, Francesca Pellegrino and Mary Brogan

**Saint Jerome Academy, Hyattsville:** to add a resource teacher and expand its resource program to include students with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities to meet the growing demand from families.

*St Jerome Academy is thrilled to be a recipient of a grant award. ...This grant award will enable us to expand our resource services through additional professional development for staff, hiring an additional specialist and ultimately by increasing the number of students that we can serve over time. In short, it expands our mission and creates new avenues of inclusion for families currently in our community and those yet to come.*

Daniel Flynn, Principal



Photo by Ashley Bemas, The Catholic Standard

Norah and Julian, pre-kindergarten classmates, on the playground at St. John's School

**St. John's Catholic School, Hollywood:** to add a paraprofessional to support a student with an intellectual disability.

*It is a blessing that Norah has come into the lives of the students and staff at St. John's School.*

### Maggie in Motion

If you ask teachers and principals who have worked with Maggie Hubbard, Ed.D. what they admire most about her, the consensus is that it is Maggie's passion for teaching and demonstrating how to meet the learning needs of all students as well as her knowledge of what works in differentiated instruction and her ability to share that knowledge.

Maggie's unwavering commitment to and passion for creating classrooms where all children can access a rigorous curriculum and thrive as learners distinguishes her work on behalf of CCSE. Maggie is constantly in motion ensuring that the entire instructional team sets a plan for the year and stays on track.

In partnership with Notre Dame of Maryland University's Academy of Catholic Education (ACES), CCSE provides pro-bono Technical Assistance to Catholic schools – schools never receive a bill from CCSE. Maggie is the Assistant Director of ACES, a team of experienced educators

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Photo by Trish Mattingly, St. John's School

Norah uses her iPad to communicate with Instructional Assistant Emma Davis and Maggie Hubbard.

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## The President's Message

### Coming Together

Thankfully, this year, students returned to in-person learning and resumed more normal routines, eager to make up for lost time. Likewise, at CCSE, we too were eager to finally attend in-person events, such as our Spring Benefit and Golf Tournament. 'We Can't Wait' was the theme of this year's Spring Benefit. It was such a delight to be able to gather with our friends and supporters again. And judging by the spirited atmosphere and generous bidding, our guests also were excited to be out again.

### High School Need

As you will read on page 3, Mount Saint Joseph High School in Baltimore has welcomed Ory. The Academy of the Holy Cross continues to lead the way in welcoming high school girls, while co-ed Bishop McNamara High School takes pride in growing its inclusive program.

But we need more Catholic high schools for the burgeoning group of students with disabilities in K-8. And there are still more students waiting with anticipation for a Catholic school to call home. While patience may be a virtue, these children are growing up fast and they can't wait much longer!

### Ongoing Need

CCSE receives numerous requests for assistance throughout the year. One mother's unsolicited message cuts to the core:

"I cried while reading a recent Catholic Standard story because I want so desperately for my daughter to attend Catholic school with her sister and cousins. I cannot explain how defeated my husband and I feel when we drop her off at [public] school. It is so very different from the environment her older sister enjoys—one where prayer and spirituality are interwoven into every aspect of the day; where the children hear stories from the Bible and learn about the saints. Our daughter's disabilities shouldn't hinder her ability to access this Catholic education and environment, as you all surely know."

This is precisely why your support is so critical. Together we can ensure that yet another family is not turned away. We await with anticipation your continuing generosity to expand our capacity to respond positively to all the requests for assistance we receive.

### National Need

Earlier this year, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) invited CCSE to lead Synod consultations at the national level on Catholic inclusive education. Thanks to Steve and Donatella



Francesca & Alex Pellegrino

Brown, we found the perfect partner to help us in the endeavor: Dr. Paul Radich from the Catholic University of America, to whom I am eternally grateful for facilitating our consultations. You can read more about this in the related article on page 5.

Your love and generosity make CCSE's work possible so that families find a place at the table for their children with disabilities. As you gather around your own family table this holiday season, please know how much we appreciate the good you have done and the difference you've made in so many lives. Your critical support enriches our community and truly makes a difference for our children and youth with disabilities, their families, teachers and schools. We look forward to the New Year with renewed anticipation that 2023 may bring the promise of better things to come. Most of all, we cannot wait to see you again!

From the CCSE family to yours, many blessings for a joyful Christmas, much good health and prosperity.

*Francesca*

President & Founder

*"I want so desperately for my daughter to attend Catholic school with her sister and cousins...one where prayer and spirituality are interwoven into every aspect of the day...Our daughter's disabilities shouldn't hinder her ability to access this Catholic education and environment."*

## The CCSE Spirit

CCSE's mission is to advocate for and facilitate an appropriate, inclusive, high quality education for students with developmental and/or intellectual disabilities in the Washington D.C. and Baltimore region Catholic schools to enrich their lives, schools, and the broader community.

The CCSE Spirit is published by the Catholic Coalition for Special Education, Inc. (CCSE).

### Publisher:

Francesca Pellegrino

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# GIVING TUESDAY

Mark your calendar, Giving Tuesday is November 29. Giving Tuesday is a national day of giving that follows Cyber Monday. Please consider making a tax-deductible gift to CCSE.



NCEA

*Seton Awards*

2019 HONOREE

## Spring Benefit 2022: Together At Last!

The excitement of being together at the Catholic Coalition for Special Education's annual Spring Benefit was evident throughout the April 8 event as friends hugged, paddles were raised, and dreams became reality for many who support inclusion in Catholic schools.



Eddie, Nino, Ory, and Karlena and Emcee Tommy McFly

The "We Can't Wait" event theme referred not only to CCSE's efforts to have more high schools open their doors to students with disabilities, but also to the organization's excitement to host guests in-person for the first time in three years. The pandemic caused the benefit to be canceled in 2020 and to be held virtually in 2021.

In a video that aired during the 17th annual event, students with disabilities and their peers spoke about their desire to find an inclusive Catholic high school, especially for boys. The students also were present at the dinner held at Columbia Country Club where they shared their important message with guests.

Tommy McFly of "The Tommy + Kelly Show" and Real.Fun.DC. returned for the second year as the benefit's master of ceremonies.

Co-chairs Mary Brogan and Anna McDermott-Vitak and the Event Committee organized a successful evening filled with smiles and laughter that raised more than \$200,000 in critical funds to help local Catholic schools create or expand inclusion programs.

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Alex Pellegrino, Ben Stevick, Ashraf Ghorbal, Maddie Guay, Genevieve Leary and Liz Grimberg



Our Lady of Mercy Principal Doreen Engel, Maureen and Matthew Rossi, CCSE Board Member Maura Lannan with son Bobby



St. Bartholomew student Karlena with Karen Fogelman, Barbara Brown and Neda Ghassabeh



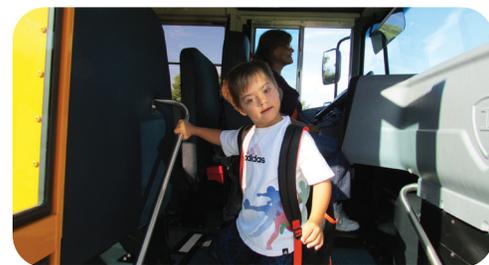
Davide chats with his mother Maria Chiara and Donatella Brown.

## Ory Finds a High School

We have been leading the charge for several years urgently pressing more Catholic high schools to open their doors to young men and women who inevitably are reaching high school age and longing for a Catholic high school education.

We have good news to report!

Last fall we introduced you to Ory, then an eighth grader at St. Louis Catholic School in Clarksville, MD, who was looking for a Catholic high school so he could continue his education and his journey of faith. While he found a closed door at his sisters' and father's alma mater, a different door opened. Happily, Ory started his freshman year this September at Mount Saint Joseph High School, an all-boys college preparatory school in Baltimore sponsored by the Xaverian Brothers.



Then: Ory arrives at St. Louis Catholic School.



Now: Ory arrives at Mount Saint Joseph High School.

The school is welcoming Ory, who has Down syndrome, with open arms and is committed to helping him reach his potential in a fully inclusive environment. Thanks to our loyal and dedicated donors, CCSE awarded a seed grant to Mount Saint Joseph to revitalize its St. Giles program. Ory's mother, Debbie, reports that "Ory is extremely happy at his new school." She added that "it would not be happening without CCSE's tireless efforts."

"We are happy to welcome Ory to our school community because he wanted to be a part of the 'Mount Brotherhood,' and we are a welcoming community. Our philosophy of education and our faith compels us to accept students of all learning abilities because we believe we are all

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Please join us for  
**Spring Benefit 2023**  
 Saturday, March 25, 2023  
 Spread the Joy and  
 Celebrate Inclusion!

## A CCSE Advocate Circle Gift Changes Lives...

When you join the CCSE Advocate Circle, CCSE's recurring giving program, your support enables students with disabilities to receive an inclusive Catholic education.

Your recurring gift of \$10, \$15, \$25, \$35 or any amount, makes the critical difference for children and youth with disabilities, their families, teachers, and schools. Your gift makes parents' dreams of a Catholic education for their children with disabilities come true.

A recurring donation makes a significant impact in providing:

- Seed grants to schools for hiring special education teachers
- Specialized classroom equipment and materials
- Workshops on inclusive education for teachers and administrators
- Tuition assistance grants for Advanced Studies in Special Education
- Technical Assistance/Professional Development for Catholic school teachers
- Signature Holy Hour/Happy Hour events to support parents of children with disabilities

Thanks to your generosity, this year we awarded grants to schools totaling \$88,000 – opening hearts, minds, and doors to students with disabilities. We also provided countless hours of Technical Assistance to schools to ensure that they are using best practices in inclusive education. Please consider a recurring gift by scanning the QR code below.



## Maggie in Motion

*continued from p. 1*

who coach and mentor teachers on best instructional practices.

This year, through ACES, CCSE is providing year-long Technical Assistance to six schools:

- Mount Saint Joseph High School, Baltimore
- Our Lady Star of the Sea, Solomons
- St. Bartholomew, Bethesda
- St. Jerome Academy, Hyattsville
- St. John's Catholic School, Hollywood
- Saint John the Evangelist Catholic School, Silver Spring

Asked why Technical Assistance is so important for Catholic schools, Maggie said, "It helps teachers in a practical way as they 'learn how' to include a child with intellectual disabilities. ... What they then do for the rest of their students works for the student with an intellectual disability." Maggie added, "The goal is for the school to see that inclusion is not about one child, it is about all children, all people in fact.

Photo by Amy Ouseada, Our Lady Star of the Sea



*Maggie Hubbard works with Resource Teacher Peggy Waldheim.*

When it works with one child, confidence grows, and the mission of inclusion becomes more attainable."

Principals and teachers who have worked with Maggie are eager to praise her contribution to inclusive education. Susan McDonough, Principal at St. John's Catholic School in Hollywood said Maggie "is an amazing individual ... She is extremely knowledgeable and eager to share with others her passion for those with special needs."

"Working with Maggie is truly magical. Maggie has such a positive outlook on life that she brings into our school and into our classrooms. She is so excited to help teachers and students alike and fully engages herself when assisting us with our questions and concerns regarding all our students and striving to help them reach their potential," said Jennifer Thompson, Principal at Our Lady Star of the Sea in Solomons.

Barbara Brown, Resource Teacher at St. Bartholomew in Bethesda adds that Maggie is never "short on ideas .... Maggie is passionate about teaching all God's children. This is evident in her continued commitment to mentor and inspire teachers in schools practicing inclusion, that children with special needs are no different than their peers. She shares helpful tools, strategies, and meaningful support to back that up. It is a pleasure working with Maggie."

Maggie embraces her work as part of her faith journey, as she says, "by opening myself to God's call to be a teacher who embraces the reality that every student can learn and therefore should be given the opportunity to learn. ... When you open yourself to His call, you can't help but become closer to Him."

Photo by Ashley Barnes, The Catholic Standard



*CCSE's latest star, pre-kindergartener Norah, was featured in the Catholic Standard's story about becoming a student at St. John's Catholic School in Hollywood, MD which is expanding its services thanks to a grant from CCSE. Norah, at left, sits with pre-kindergarten classmate Emma. Their classmate, Sawyer, is at right. To read this story and other articles, visit [cse-maryland.org/news.html](http://cse-maryland.org/news.html).*

## CCSE Hosts Synod Listening Session



For a synodal Church  
 communion | participation | mission

Sure – you may have heard of the Church Synod on Synodality, but did you participate? Or did you think they didn't mean you? Pope Francis invited the entire Church to meet as smaller faith communities and reflect on their journeying together, in order to discover which processes can best help the Church to live communion, achieve participation and open Herself to mission.



Facilitator Paul Radich, PhD, from the Busch School of Business at the Catholic University of America and Mary Pat Donoghue, Executive Director, Secretariat of Catholic Education at the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops

When the US Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) asked CCSE to organize and host a Synodal Listening Session of like-minded organizations across the country, we realized the Pope really meant everyone. But this gift of invitation also brought us a great task. We knew organizations and individuals interested in and advocating for inclusive Catholic education but we certainly didn't have the technical capability or the knowledge to effectively bring them together. One of our families, thankfully, could point us in the right direction. Enter Paul Radich, PhD, from the Busch School of Business at the Catholic University of America. Dr. Radich generously gave his time as well as his technology and facilitation skills to help us reach over 450 individuals, from 41 states (and the Philippines!) through both online surveys and virtual

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## Sun Shines on Annual CCSE Golf Outing

It was a balmy, sunny day for CCSE's fifth *Believe in Me!* Golf Classic on September 19 as nearly 80 golfers took to the links at the challenging Worthington Manor Golf Club in Urbana, Maryland.

This annual event provides critical funding for CCSE seed grants and training to Catholic schools in the Archdiocese of Washington and the Archdiocese of Baltimore.

"We are grateful to all who came out to play this year and to our generous volunteers who worked so hard to make the day a success," said Frank Pellegrino, Golf Committee Co-Chair. CCSE is grateful to the Golf Committee members including Co-Chair Christine Nawrot and Committee members: Mary Brogan, Sean Fromm, Anna McDermott-Vitak, Roxanne Navarra, and Anne Hummer.

This year's event raised nearly \$50,000, which will enable CCSE to provide financial and technical assistance to Catholic schools, helping to ensure that all God's children are welcome and that a family's dream for his/her child with a disability to attend a Catholic school with his/her siblings and peers comes true.

Friendly competition and camaraderie marked the festive day and CCSE congratulates all golfers for their enthusiastic participation with special recognition going to the first-place winning foursome from John C. Grimberg company which included Eric Barger, Dan Gardner, Josh Gochnauer and Matt Rosewag.



Our winning foursome



Deacon Keith Somerville with his brother, Andre



Golf Volunteers Debbie Docal, CCSE Program & Development Assistant Kate Droege, Roxanne Navarra, Pat Ryan, CCSE Associate Director Anne Hummer, CCSE Board Vice President Mary Brogan, Betty Brown and Niko Navarra-Petrovic

Without our generous sponsors and supporters, this event would not have been possible. CCSE extends our gratitude to:



## High School

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gifts from God with unique talents and we all learn differently. We value the unique differences among our community as we are a reflection of the world around us," said George Andrews, Mount Saint Joseph President.

Ory, who is known for his compassion, thoughtfulness, humor, and spirituality, is navigating learning his bus schedule, changing classes, finding the cafeteria, and making new friends. What Ory likes best about high school "is seeing my classmates from St. Louis School and meeting new friends. I love going to Catholic high school because I can go to religion classes," he said. Ory reports that his favorite subject is science and his biggest challenge so far "is getting to know the names of my new friends."

While Ory moves on to high school, Norah and Marjorie, both of whom have Down syndrome, have just begun their Catholic school journey in pre-kindergarten. With the help of CCSE grants, Norah is joining her brother at St. John's Catholic School in Hollywood and Marjorie joins her siblings at St. Jerome Academy in Hyattsville.

The presence of students with disabilities in the general education classroom provides a catalyst for learning opportunities that students with or without disabilities might not otherwise have. It is a win-win for all.

Today's students are tomorrow's leaders. We are counting on them to apply lessons learned from their positive inclusive Catholic classroom experiences to their own family lives, workplaces and communities.

With your generosity and support of CCSE, we will continue paving the way for the many students with disabilities, sharing what we have learned and providing grants and Technical Assistance services with our area Catholic schools.

## Grant Awards

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*Norah has taught us many things in the short time she has been at St. John's School. She makes our world better every day. There are no boundaries for Norah.*

Susan McDonough, Principal

Is your school already an inclusive Catholic school? Have you encouraged your principal to start the process? Let's not keep all those students waiting!

## Synod Sessions

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meetings. We are grateful to Professor Radich and to his team of CUA students: Antoine Rask, Sienna deGross (an alumna of The Academy of the Holy Cross!), Julia Perez, and Catriona Fee.

Session participants included parents of students with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities whose children had been served in Catholic schools as well as some who had been denied admittance or continuance. It included teachers who had seen inclusion happen successfully and those who were still fighting for it to happen. There were those who wanted every school to simply open their doors



*Mary Brogan and participant Allison Lavallee*

***"Journeying together simply cannot happen when individuals with disabilities are excluded."***

and those who first wanted resources committed and attitudes changed. The expectation for Catholic schools to be inclusive is clearly growing!

Synthesizing all of the feedback was challenging. The most moving responses indicated how deeply wounded some families were by the rejection of their child from a Catholic school. "Journeying together" simply cannot happen in Catholic school communities when individuals with disabilities are excluded on the basis of whom God made them to be, when only the gifts of part of a family are valued and welcomed.

CCSE is deeply grateful for the opportunity we were given to facilitate the involvement of all of these individuals and families in the Synodal process and to share feedback from the sessions with the USCCB. Many participants reported that the experience validated their desire for inclusive Catholic education and gave them hope it might become a reality.

## We Can Help Your School

**FREE OF CHARGE**

### ***"Believe in Me!"* Grants**

If your Catholic school is located in the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Washington or the Archdiocese of Baltimore and is considering expanding or creating a program to enroll two or more students with developmental/intellectual disabilities who would benefit academically, socially, and spiritually from qualified special education instruction, CCSE invites you to submit a proposal for a *Believe in Me!* seed grant.

Grants may be used to hire special education staff, purchase materials necessary to provide appropriate accommodations and modifications to the curriculum, and for professional development.

- To learn more about these grants or training, see: [www.ccse-maryland.org/schools.html](http://www.ccse-maryland.org/schools.html).

### **Training and Technical Assistance**

CCSE's Training and Technical Assistance ensure that schools are equipped and staffed to meet the needs of students with disabilities and that teachers are well prepared to serve all students in their classrooms through select opportunities. Technical Assistance may consist of:

- in-service training, topical workshops and professional development;
- individual teacher coaching and collaborative teaching strategies;
- designing schedules tailored to students' needs;
- defining the admissions process, reviewing IEPs and educational reports;
- establishing a peer mentoring program;
- implementing appropriate modifications and accommodations;
- year-long capacity building assistance customized to a school's needs.

### **Teacher Tuition Grants**

CCSE recognizes there is a chronic and pervasive shortage of special education teachers qualified to provide individualized special education instruction in the classroom. To help offset this shortage, CCSE has established the Teacher Tuition Assistance Grants for Advanced Degrees in Special Education to provide financial assistance to teachers and other professionals.

- For more tuition grant information, contact CCSE at 301-933-8844 or [grants@ccse-maryland.org](mailto:grants@ccse-maryland.org).

## Spring Benefit

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"I was deeply touched by the outpouring of generosity and support for our work," Anna McDermott Vitak, Event Co-Chair, said.

Festive raffle baskets featuring items such as sports memorabilia, a smart television and wine; live auction items including three major concerts, theater tickets and a trip to Tuscany; as well as generous guests who donated through the Raise the Paddle portion of the event helped make the benefit a success.

We couldn't wait to see you in April, and we can't wait to see you again on **March 25, 2023**, at next year's Spring Benefit! **Save the date and Spread the Joy!**



Msgr. John Enzler visits with Liz Grimberg and Alex Pellegrino.



Gala guests Jorge Petrovic with son, Nino, Mary Helen Thompson, Christine Naylor, Deborah Killeen and Dan Thorpe



Steve Ikin, Francesca Pellegrino and CCSE Board Member Christie Nawrot

## Board News - Two Fond Farewells

After ten loyal years, Andy Fois retired from service on CCSE's Board of Directors as he assumed office as the Chair of the Administrative Conference of the United States. We value his contributions to CCSE and commitment to stay involved as a friend of CCSE.

We will also terribly miss Sharon Malley, Professional Advisory Board Member, who has retired, after a long and illustrious career in the disabilities field. Sharon's lasting legacy and contributions to CCSE include authoring and producing CCSE's first publication *Including Students with Developmental Disabilities in Catholic Schools - Guiding Principles for Administrators and Teachers*.

We thank Joe Fitzgerald for accepting a 'promotion' to Treasurer while thanking Patrick Murphy, who after 10 years of dedicated service, has transitioned from the Treasurer position to serve as a Director on the CCSE Board of Directors.

Volunteers form CCSE's backbone and are the heart of our lean organization. Whether on our Board of Directors, Professional Advisory Board, one of our committees or working our events, our work would simply not be possible without them. If you are interested in getting more involved, please do! We all bring many different gifts to the table and for the benefit of the children. Please reach out to us.

Volunteering affords you the satisfaction of helping others in your community and making a difference in the lives of children with disabilities. Chances are you will acquire new friends and new skills along the way!

**We gratefully acknowledge Fitzgerald Auto Malls as CCSE's first Corporate Partner.**

***Fitzgerald* AUTO MALLS**

*Corporate Partners provide unrestricted support to CCSE through annual contributions and employee matching programs and share effective business practices. For more information, contact Anne Hummer [ahummer@ccse-maryland.org](mailto:ahummer@ccse-maryland.org) or 301-933-8444.*

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The Roman Catholic  
Archdiocese of Washington



**Save the Date!**  
2023 Spring Benefit  
Saturday, March 25, 2023



Photo by Ashley Barnes, The Catholic Standard

**If You Believe in Me...I'll Believe in Me!**