



Press Release: March 24, 2017

Dr. Sheilah Lynch and Tom Hogan to Co Chair the CCSE Gala Tonight

(Kensington, Maryland) – The sold out, annual, signature fundraising event for the Catholic Coalition for Special Education will take place this evening in our nation’s Capital. The Board of Directors is pleased to announce our Gala Co-Chairs Dr. Sheilah Lynch and Mr. Tom Hogan.

Dr. Lynch, a Chevy Chase Plastic Surgeon, appreciates the outpouring of support for the Gala and says, “Sharing in the journey to help children with disabilities and their families, is a community effort that we all must join and support.”

The Catholic Coalition for Special Education (CCSE) works to engage and encourage Catholic schools and archdioceses to educate children with disabilities in inclusive classrooms alongside their peers.

Dr. Lynch’s husband and Co-Chair Attorney Tom Hogan, a Principal of F/S Capitol Consulting, of Providence and Washington, DC, has faith in the future for those with disabilities living in the community.

Mr. Hogan’s faith in the future is a result of his family’s past. His cousin Nancy was born in Rhode Island in the late 1950s with severe disabilities, at a time when segregation and institutionalization of those with disabilities was the primary option. Nancy resided at the storied Ladd Center, which housed over 1,000 residents with disabilities, and is the subject of a documentary film.

Mr. Hogan’s family decided to take action decades ago and his father entered state politics and pioneered legislative changes in the 1960s and ‘70s to fund and establish day programs for children with disabilities and their families, which enabled them to again live together, while also accessing needed resources. For more challenging cases, funding was found to purchase a network of residential homes across the state, where smaller groups of residents, including Nancy, lived together with supervision. Nancy’s father and Mr. Hogan’s uncle, George Gunther, became the head of Ladd Center, and shared a goal with Mr. Hogan’s father and others, to ultimately shut down the Ladd Center.

“On March 24, 1994,” Mr. Hogan notes, “ironically the same date of our 2017 Gala this evening, the last of the Ladd Center residents stayed overnight, and the following day they were transferred to group homes or to their families while the state of Rhode Island padlocked the front door thus ending the institutionalization of those with disabilities in Rhode Island.

“These former residents were no longer shut away from society, and instead began living among the rest of us in dignity with the opportunity to seek and reach their highest individual potential. In June of this year, Nancy will celebrate her 58th birthday at her group home, where she has lived a pleasant and happy life,” Mr. Hogan proudly reports.

“The programs at CCSE strive to unlock that individual potential. And my family, along with the determination of many others, shows what great changes can result from a robust community effort. That is what the Gala for CCSE is about, and Sheilah and I are appreciative to be associated with such a fine organization,” said Mr. Hogan.

Mr. Hogan emphasizes that donations are always needed and may be given through the website at <http://bit.ly/give2ccse>.

Through CCSE's *Believe in Me! Program*, Catholic schools located in Washington, D.C. or Maryland may receive seed grants to expand or create sustainable programs enrolling two or more students with cognitive disabilities. Funding may be used to hire and train special educators, purchase equipment and materials, or provide appropriate accommodations and modifications to the curriculum.

CCSE also provides scholarships to Catholic school teachers to attend professional development and training classes.

The mission of the [Catholic Coalition for Special Education](#) is to ensure that children with special needs are able to attend and receive an appropriate education in their local Catholic elementary schools and high schools. In the words of Pope Benedict XVI "no child should be denied his or her right to an education in faith, which in turn nurtures the soul of a nation." CCSE provides grants and technical assistance to help Catholic schools in Washington, D.C. and Maryland achieve this goal.

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