



**Francesca Pellegrino
Recognized by
Montgomery County as a
“Woman Making History”**

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**Montgomery County Recognizes
Francesca Pellegrino with the 2022 Women Making History Award**

Virtual Celebration by County on March 24 at 7:00 pm

(Kensington, Maryland) Montgomery County Maryland has selected 31 dynamic women – including Francesca Pellegrino – as recipients of the 2022 Women Making History Award.

Montgomery County Executive Marc Elrich announced in the county’s press release: “Congratulations to the 31 outstanding women who are receiving this award for their invaluable contributions and selfless service to others. They have all made significant contributions in Montgomery County and shown exceptional leadership, serving as an inspiration. As we honor the women who have made history, we must also continue to build a culture of empowerment and opportunity for the next generation of female leaders.”

Francesca Pellegrino is the Founder and President of the Catholic Coalition for Special Education (CCSE) which has worked since 2004 to help families and students with disabilities access a Catholic education in the state of Maryland and District of Columbia.

“Receiving notice from Montgomery County of this selection and recognition was a delightful surprise. I am honored that the county has taken note of my work and believes that it is worthy and has made a positive difference for the people of this county I call home,” said Pellegrino.

“Our goal at CCSE is to advocate for students with disabilities so that all students desiring a Catholic education can find a place at the table and a school to call ‘home.’ Catholic schools are uniquely qualified to serve students with disabilities precisely because they are Catholic. Including students with disabilities in Catholic schools helps ensure the Unity of the Body of Christ and demonstrates that no matter the differences all children have unique gifts that they bring as valued members of a school community,” said Pellegrino.

Nominees were submitted by their peers based on criteria such as unselfish leadership and hard work in their field, exceptional leadership in civic activities, developing or supporting programs resulting in positive social action, and being an inspiration to others as a role model. In addition, nominees had to either reside or work in Montgomery County.

Montgomery County will hold a free celebration via ZOOM on Thursday, March 24 at 7:00 pm, where members of the public can meet the winners and participate in a panel discussion to learn about the award recipients and make connections. The link to register for the celebration is: bit.ly/mocowomen22.

Francesca Pellegrino and CCSE can't make a difference alone. On Friday, April 8, CCSE will celebrate its 17th annual Spring Benefit. And this year the benefit will be in-person once again. Please join CCSE and together continue to expand educational opportunities to an ever-larger universe of deserving students. Visit <https://ccse.ejoinme.org/2022SpringBenefit> for tickets and details.

CCSE has awarded grant monies to 31 Catholic schools in nine Maryland counties totaling \$1,100,000. CCSE has reached over 9,000 students, teachers and families.

CCSE supports Maryland and DC Catholic schools by providing seed grants to expand or create sustainable programs enrolling two or more students with 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 offers technical assistance and training – all free of charge – to help schools be the best they can be in serving and teaching all God's children inclusively.

CCSE also provides scholarships to Catholic school teachers pursuing advanced degrees in special education and offers workshops and other training /coaching support to Catholic schools to help them meet the needs of students with disabilities at the classroom and administrative levels.

The mission of the [Catholic Coalition for Special Education](#) 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.

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