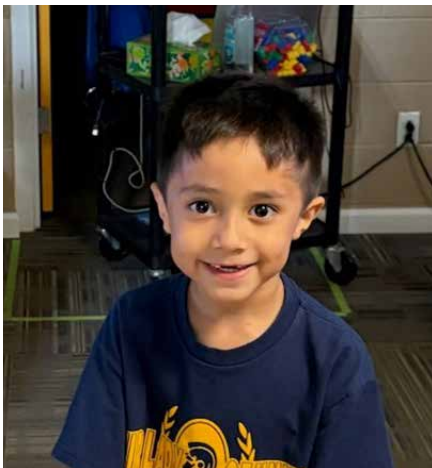




CATHOLIC EDUCATION
FOUNDATION

Impact Report 2025



Transforming Lives,
One Scholarship at a Time.

Mission & Leadership

Scholarships that **inspire hope and create stability** for students, schools, and communities.



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Together, we are shaping futures, strengthening families, and forming disciples who will carry their faith into the world.

Dear Friends of the Catholic Education Foundation,

On behalf of the Board of Directors, it is my joy to share with you the Catholic Education Foundation's Impact Report.

Your generosity is doing far more than creating access to faith-based education, it's transforming lives. Because of you, 1,972 scholarships were given in the 2024–25 school year, totaling \$5,020,949 in tuition assistance. Behind every number is a child and family filled with greater hope.

Across the Archdiocese of Kansas City in Kansas, CEF partners with 22 Catholic schools to ensure that a faith-filled education remains accessible to families who need it most. Eighty-one percent of the students we serve are ethnic minorities. One hundred percent of our scholarship recipients graduated or advanced to the next grade level this year. More than 90% of our graduating seniors plan to continue their education after high school.

These outcomes are not accidental. They are the fruit of sacrifice. Yours.

This year also marked meaningful growth for our mission. Scholarship funding has increased 101% since 2020, and the average award has grown 46% over the past five years. For the 2025–26 school year, we are projected to award \$5,506,157 in scholarships — a testament to both the growing need and the unwavering commitment of our supporters.

We were especially proud to honor Our Lady of Unity Catholic School as the 2025 Archbishop Joseph F. Naumann CEF School of Excellence. Their story, rooted in faith, unity, and perseverance, reflects the very heart of Catholic education. Schools like theirs are forming young men and women who are academically prepared, spiritually grounded, and committed to serving others.

You will read in this report about students like Leonardo and families like the Pickens family. Their stories remind us why this work matters. A scholarship is more than tuition assistance. It is stability. It is belonging. It is faith formation. It is opportunity.

At Gaudeamus 2025, our community gathered in extraordinary fashion, raising a record-breaking \$4.4+ million for scholarships. It was a powerful reminder of what is possible when we come together for our children.

As Board Chair, I am deeply grateful for your trust, your generosity, and your belief in this mission. Together, we are shaping futures, strengthening families, and forming disciples who will carry their faith into the world.

Thank you again for making Catholic education possible for so many students and their families.

With gratitude and hope,

Denise Mills

Chair, Board of Directors

Catholic Education Foundation

Our Schools

CEF partners with 22 Catholic schools throughout the Archdiocese of Kansas City in Kansas to put Catholic education within reach for students most in need.

Bishop Ward High School, *Kansas City, KS*

Hayden Catholic High School, *Topeka*

Holy Cross Catholic School, *Overland Park*

Holy Family Catholic School, *Topeka*

Holy Name of Jesus Catholic School, *Kansas City, KS*

Holy Trinity Catholic School, *Paola*

John Paul II Catholic School, *Overland Park*

Mater Dei Catholic School, *Topeka*

Most Pure Heart of Mary Catholic School, *Topeka*

Our Lady of Unity Catholic School, *Kansas City, KS*

Resurrection Catholic School at the Cathedral, *Kansas City, KS*

Sacred Heart Catholic School, *Emporia*

Sacred Heart Catholic School, *Ottawa*

St. Benedict Catholic School, *Atchison*

St. Gregory the Great Catholic School, *Marysville*

St. John Catholic School, *Lawrence*

St. Matthew Catholic School, *Topeka*

St. Patrick Catholic School, *Kansas City, KS*

St. Paul Catholic School, *Olathe*

Sts. Peter and Paul Catholic School, *Seneca*

St. Rose Philippine Duchesne Catholic School, *Garnett*

Xavier Catholic School, *Leavenworth*

2025 Archbishop Joseph F. Naumann CEF School of Excellence Our Lady of Unity Catholic School

Each year, we celebrate the remarkable work happening in these communities through the Archbishop Joseph F. Naumann School of Excellence Award, now in its 21st year. Each year, this award honors one K-8 Catholic school supported through our traditional scholarship program that exemplifies five essential pillars:

- Joyfully Catholic
- Intentionally Self-Giving
- Forwardly Thinking
- Diligently Achieving
- Prudently Managed

This year, **Our Lady of Unity Catholic School** was awarded this honor. The school has a story rooted in faith, community, and growth. In 2007, St. John the Evangelist and Sacred Heart parishes came together to form Our Lady of Unity Parish in Kansas City, Kansas — a union built on shared values and a deep commitment to Catholic education.

The school's story began much earlier, in September 1912, when two dedicated Benedictine nuns opened the doors to just 45 eager students. As the years went on, the school continued to grow and thrive. A new building was completed in 1951, and in 1973 the two parish schools officially joined together as Our Lady of Unity Catholic School.

Today, that same spirit of faith and unity continues to guide them. With 189 students and counting, the school family keeps growing, learning, and living out their mission to nurture minds, hearts, and souls.

“We are truly honored to be recognized as a School of Excellence! Our students, teachers, and staff have worked tirelessly to strengthen our programs and foster growth both spiritually and academically. We could not be more proud of our students for their outstanding achievements and for the beautiful ways they continue to grow in their relationship with Jesus.” – Cally Dahlstrom, Principal

This year, Most Pure Heart of Mary in Topeka and St. Rose Philippine Duchesne in Garnett were selected as finalists.



Stories of Impact



Attending a Catholic school has brought me closer to my faith in Jesus.

Meet CEF Scholar Leonardo Estrada Pineda

As the son and grandson of Honduran immigrants, Leonardo (Leo) Estrada Pineda carries a deep sense of gratitude, faith, and purpose. A proud CEF scholarship recipient and senior at Bishop Ward High School, Leo is an honor roll student, member of the National Honor Society, and active in Friends in Faith and Campus Ministry. He has completed internships and participated in Servant Leadership Camp and BCYC, always striving to honor his family's sacrifices through hard work and service.

“Without the opportunity to attend Bishop Ward, I know I would not be on the same path I am today,” Leo shares. **“Attending a Catholic school has brought me closer to my faith in Jesus and impacted my life on a whole other level.”** Inspired by his love of science and exploration, Leo is taking college courses and plans to pursue a degree in engineering or astronomy, with the goal of helping others and supporting his future family, mother, and grandmother—just as they have supported him.

Meet the Pickens Family

At Bishop Ward High School, CEF scholarships play a vital role in making a Catholic education possible, with at least 70% of students relying on that support to attend. Zavion Pickens, a senior at Bishop Ward, is one of many students who have thrived because of this opportunity. Known and loved by teachers and peers alike, Zavion is respected for his joy, responsibility, and determination. Coming from a single father home, structure, discipline, and faith have always been important values. Bishop Ward's safe, faith-centered environment and small class sizes provided the consistency and support Zavion needed to grow academically and personally, helping him move from receiving extra services to performing on grade level within two years through hard work and perseverance.



For the Pickens family, the impact of CEF scholarships extends beyond one student—it has supported all three brothers, allowing them to attend Bishop Ward together and grow in a close-knit community. Zavion's father expressed deep gratitude for the opportunity, saying, **“Honestly, I couldn't do it without the scholarship and without the support of everyone involved.”**

Today, Zavion has been accepted to Benedictine College as a Freedom Fellow, where he plans to study electrical engineering, while his younger brother, Raphael, continues to flourish socially and academically at Bishop Ward. Their story reflects the mission of Bishop Ward and CEF: providing not just an education, but a holistic experience that nurtures the mind, heart, and future of every student.

Scholarship Impact

Total Numbers for the 2024-25 School Year

1,972

Scholarships Given

100%

Graduation and Advancement Rate

\$5M

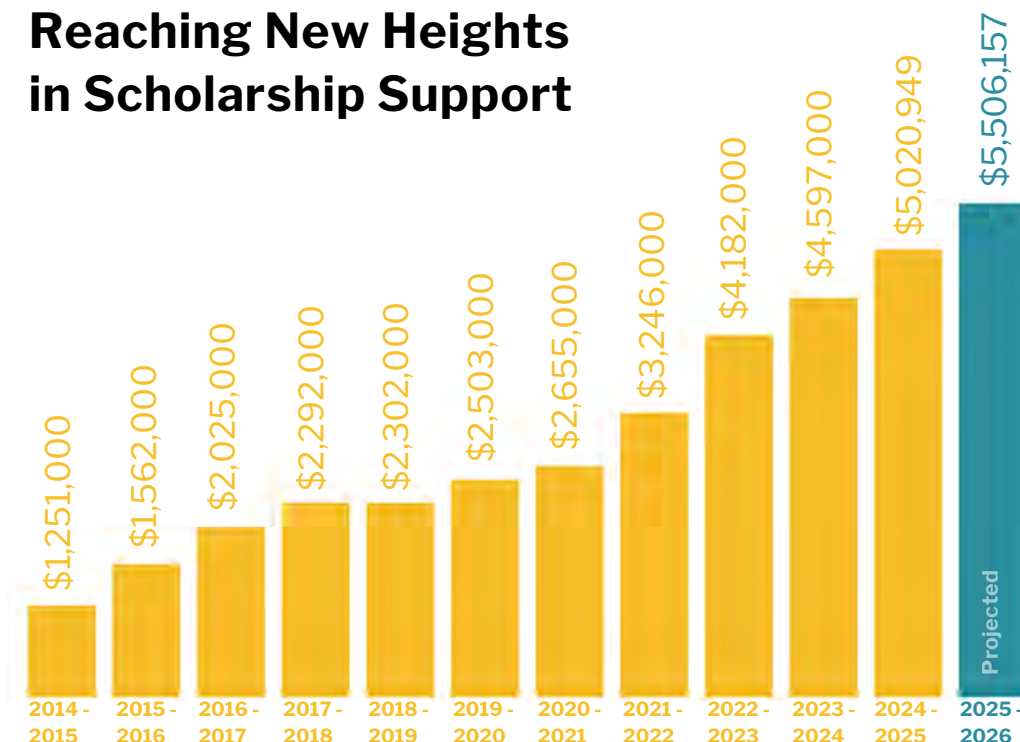
Awarded in Scholarships

More than **90%**

of CEF Graduates Plan to Continue Their Education after High School

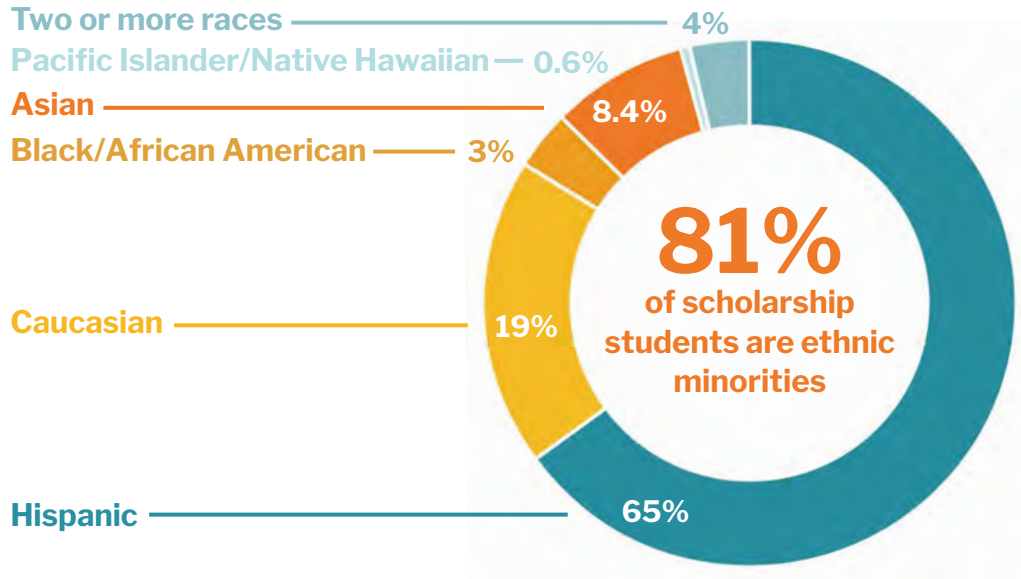
This year, the average CEF scholarship award is **\$1,943, up 46%** compared to the average five years ago. Since 2020, the amount of funding that CEF is providing annually has **INCREASED BY 101%**.

Reaching New Heights in Scholarship Support



Since 2007, CEF has provided **25,916 scholarships**,
nearly \$37.76 million in funding.

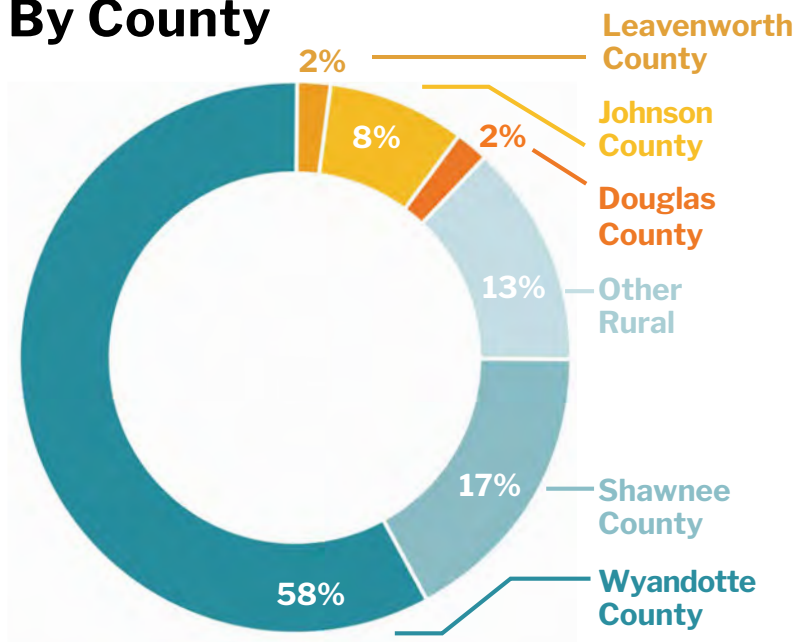
Student Demographics



By Grade Level



By County



“Catholic Education Foundation makes it possible for students across Northeast Kansas to walk through the doors of our Catholic schools. There, they gain not only knowledge, but also faith, virtue, and the joy of knowing Christ.”
 – Archbishop Shawn McKnight

Gaudeamus

Our beloved Gaudeamus is a beautiful outpouring of gratitude and support for Catholic education. The 2025 Gaudeamus gala **honored Monsignor Thomas Tank with the CEF Lifetime Achievement Award** and raised a **record-breaking over \$4.4 million** towards scholarships for students most in need at our Catholic schools.



“By recognizing their need, and actively opening the doors to a quality education, these scholarships are an instrument of hope. But this is just the beginning. Quite often, our scholarships provide a community—a sense of belonging. This is incredibly significant, because it is in the belonging that we show our families that they are not alone - their dignity, their life purpose, is affirmed.”

– Lisa Connor, *Gaudeamus* Chair





“CEF is about giving kids an education. It’s about truly giving that opportunity for a quality academic education, but — even more importantly — an education in coming to know and to love and to serve Jesus. And that really is what our life is about.”

– Monsignor Thomas Tank, 2025 CEF Lifetime Achievement Award recipient



2025 Gaudeamus Leadership

Michael & Lisa Connor, *Gaudeamus Chairs*

Dcn. Dana & Deborah Nearmyer,
Honorary Chairs

Craig & Karen Gaffney, *Patrons Chairs*

Pat & Mel McAnany, *Patrons Chairs*

Michael & Courtney Raupp,

Table Ambassador Committee Chairs

German Berbel & Jamie Wagner

Tom & Suzette Clark

Terry & Peggy Dunn

Tom & Molly Freeman

RJ & Courtney Gildea

Rich Henry

Rita Mies Hyde

Jeff & Laura Jaworski

Rick & Beth Lane

Jeff & Joan Lipp

Rick & Denise Mills

Nelson & Marcia Newcomer

Ron & Cindy Ratkey

John & Rose Shaw

Mark & Amy Thompson

Paul & Mary Thompson

Tom Zarda



“Receiving a CEF scholarship to attend Bishop Ward High School is truly a blessing in helping me pave the way for my future. At Bishop Ward, I have been able to grow stronger in my faith and meet some of my closest friends. But it’s not just that — the teachers and faculty really do care for me and want me to reach my full potential. They provide support and opportunities that I couldn’t have imagined.”

– Leonardo Estrada Pineda, *Gaudeamus student speaker and proud CEF scholarship recipient*

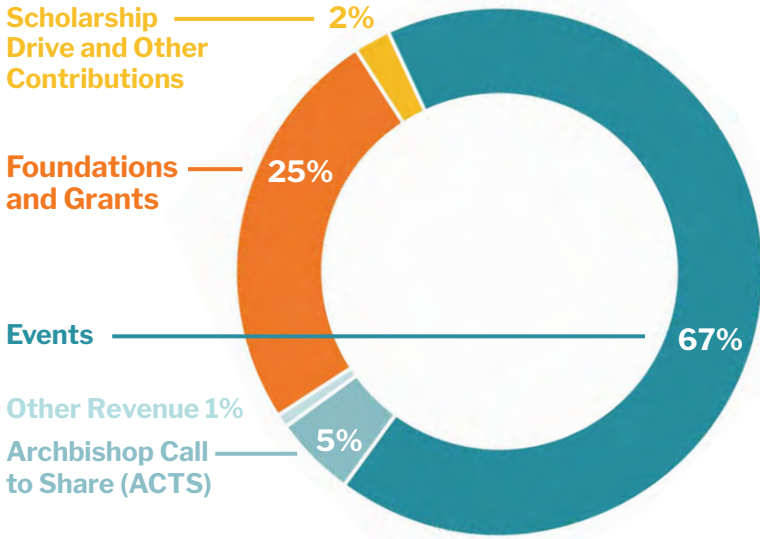


Financials

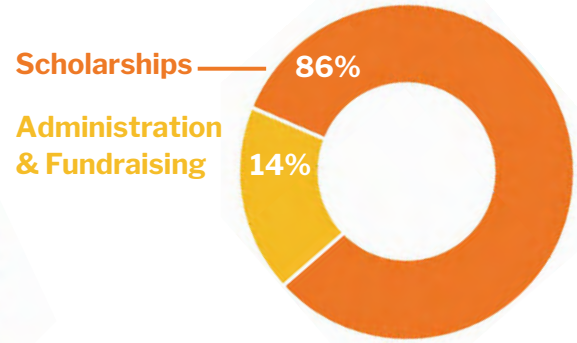
July 1, 2024 – June 30, 2025

Audited financial report reflecting FY 2025

Operating Revenue:



Functional Expenses:



28 Years of Support for Catholic Education



“I am convinced that you are **changing the trajectory of our students’ lives**. More importantly, you are helping our children to **know God and to have a relationship with Him** when they may not learn about Him otherwise.”

Cathy Fithian, principal of St. Patrick Catholic School

86% of every dollar donated directly supports scholarships for students most in need.



Living the Catholic Faith

A Catholic education helps nurture faith in children by grounding their daily learning in the teachings, traditions, and values of the Church.

Through regular prayer, religious instruction, and exposure to the sacraments, students learn not just about the faith but how to live it in practical ways. This consistent formation encourages children to develop a personal relationship with God, understand moral responsibility, and see their beliefs as something meaningful.

Surrounded by a supportive community of teachers and peers who share these values, children are more likely to internalize their faith and carry it with them into adulthood.

Make a Lasting Impact

Join the Seton Society

Inspired by the unwavering dedication of Saint Elizabeth Ann Seton, the first American-born saint and founder of the first Catholic schools in the United States, the Catholic Education Foundation's Seton Society invites donors to follow in her footsteps by creating a lasting legacy.



Through gift planning, donors maximize the impact of their generosity and create a lasting legacy of faith and transformational education for generations to come.

This past year, CEF established the Seton Society and honored 13 patrons for their intention to leave CEF in their estate plans. We look forward to welcoming and honoring more members of the Seton Society in 2026. CEF celebrates their faithful generosity and the lasting impact their support has on our mission.

Among those honored this year is one remarkable couple, whose legacy lives on through their quiet generosity and deep belief in Catholic education—beautifully reflecting the spirit and mission of the Seton Society.



Ellen and Leonard McKinzie were raised in rural Missouri during the Great Depression, where faith, family, and hard work shaped their lives from an early age. That faith guided everything they built together—from raising their four children in Catholic schools to quietly supporting priests, parishes, and Catholic education across the Kansas City area. Leonard, a grocer and business owner, believed deeply that they had been blessed for a reason, often saying, **“We have to give back because it’s so important.”** Their generosity was steady and humble, rooted in gratitude and a desire to ensure strong Catholic schools for future generations. Even in their estate plans, their devotion to Catholic education remained steadfast.

They designated 20 percent of their assets to a donor-advised fund that benefits the Catholic Education Foundation and their other favorite charities, ensuring their support of Catholic schools and the Church would continue to form students in faith, knowledge, and service for generations to come. Their planned gift reflects the way they lived—faithfully, generously, and always thinking about the generations to come.

Learn how your planned gift transforms lives at ceflegacy.org.

Together,
we are shaping futures,
strengthening families, and
ensuring that every child,
regardless of circumstance,
has access to the faith-filled
foundation they deserve.



**CATHOLIC EDUCATION
FOUNDATION**

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cefks.org