



Angel Scholarship Fund

URNS TAX DOLLARS INTO EDUCATION ASSETS



ANGEL

SCHOLARSHIP FUND

*Turning taxes into tuition with the
Catholic Community Foundation*

STORY BY CAROL KOVACH • PHOTOS PROVIDED BY ST. BARNABAS SCHOOL

A state law enacted in 2021 makes it possible for Ohio taxpayers to positively impact the lives of Catholic school students and receive a state tax credit. Contributions to the Angel Scholarship Fund — a state-recognized scholarship-granting organization coordinated by the Diocese of Cleveland and the Catholic Community Foundation — provide tuition assistance to students with financial challenges.

Taxpayers benefit from a dollar-for-dollar tax credit against their state tax liability of up to \$750 per individual or up to \$1,500 annually for married couples who file jointly. The tax credit lowers tax liability and students with the greatest need are prioritized for scholarship awards. This is an opportunity for taxpayers to make a “no-net-cost” donation that is eligible for the credit in the 2023 tax year, if the donation is made by April 15.

One school that has benefited from ASF is St. Barnabas in Northfield, which has nearly 500 students. After learning about ASF, school officials jumped at the chance to help families with their tuition costs. Another major benefit of ASF is reducing the parish subsidy to the school.

Erin Faetanini, St. Barnabas principal, said she learned about the program at a principals’ meeting and shared the idea with the parish and school finance



committee. Father James Kulway, St. Barnabas pastor, said his finance council agreed it was imperative to share this news with the parish and to ask for their support of ASF.

When the program began in 2022, St. Barnabas received about \$92,000 for scholarships. That amount more than doubled in 2023, thanks to the combined efforts of the parish and school.

While changes in the state budget have expanded scholarship opportunities like the EdChoice program and send additional dollars to private schools (including Catholic schools), Erin said it makes sense to participate in ASF as these scholarship dollars will help ensure that a Catholic education is affordable for all St. Barnabas School families. All schools in the Cleveland Diocese participated in ASF this year, she added.

Two parents with children in the school shared their experience with ASF and urged fellow taxpayers to take advantage of the program.

Jessica Endress has three children at St. Barnabas and serves as the school's marketing and development director. She said ASF helps reduce the parish subsidy for the school, which allows the parish to allocate more money for other parish needs. At St. Barnabas,

that meant more funds were available for some capital improvement projects.

Elaine O'Connell also has three children in the school and a fourth, who is an alumnus and attends Benedictine High School.

"My parents live in the Toledo Diocese and they participate in the program," Elaine said, noting taxpayers can select a specific school for their contribution. If they don't, the money goes into a general fund.

"People trust what we've been doing with the money we've received. They will see a benefit in their tuition payments next year," she said, noting the increased ASF participation will help more families.

"We've been doing renovation on our existing buildings," Father James said, including the rectory and former convent. The work allowed relocation of the parish offices to the former convent, providing additional space and flexibility for parish needs, including meeting rooms.

"We've also done renovation to the school and recently opened a new outdoor learning lodge in a repurposed building," Erin added. In addition, St. Barnabas plans to improve teachers' salaries and to adjust the pay scale, which will be helped by the financial flexibility that ASF makes possible.

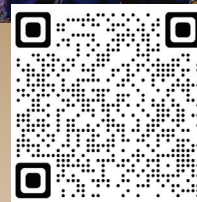
St. Barnabas continues to time ASF communications to coincide with peak giving, such as November-December (end of year) and February-March (tax time) in order to maximize the message. Erin said the strategy worked since St. Barnabas was among the schools with the highest ASF participation in 2023. They also received a grant from the Catholic Community Foundation to produce a video to help market the program. Interviews with parents, Father James and Erin were featured in the video. Erin also spoke at the school's Christmas concert and Grandparents' Day and shared the video.

"It's nice knowing that you can contribute in such a meaningful way and get a return on your tax dollars," Elaine said. †



LEARN MORE

Visit catholiccommunity.org/angel for more details about the Angel Scholarship Fund and how to participate.



Click on the QR code to learn more about the Angel Scholarship Fund.