



November 24, 2022

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Dear Fellow St. John Fisher Parishioners, Parents, Alumni, and Friends,

One year ago, we publicly launched **The Fisher Falcon Education Foundation** with a simple letter just like this one. While not flashy, we hoped it would explain why the Foundation's establishment was so important to the future of St. John Fisher. We had confidence in the generosity of our community, but admittedly, we were nervous about how big of an impact we could have in our first year as we humbly asked for your support. We shouldn't have been so nervous. It will come as no big surprise that our expectations were exceeded, and so, it is with a great sense of gratitude and extreme hopefulness about the Foundation's long-term potential that we write again this year.

Through a mix of year-end gifts in response to this letter, matching gifts from donors' employers, ticket sales for the inaugural Oktoberfest, families remembering loved ones with memorial bequests to the Foundation, and alumni collecting for our cause at formal class reunions and informal get-togethers alike, **the Foundation raised over \$100,000** to add to our previously reserved savings in our first year of operation. **THANK YOU! THANK YOU! THANK YOU!**

As important as the raising of the funds, though, is the **immediate impact** those funds have made on the lives of our students, faculty, and staff of St. John Fisher School. Specifically, the Foundation helped provide the following financial support to SJF in the last year:

- \$30,000 to complete the purchasing of interactive "smartboards" for all SJF classrooms
- \$20,000 to award our Class of 2022 Msgr. McElligott Scholarship winners
- \$35,000 to cover SJF tuition costs for families in financial need
- \$75,000 to subsidize the School's 2022-23 operating budget

Every single penny donated is appreciated, and you can be confident will ultimately be invested 100% directly into our beloved School's successes, of which there are so many. Amidst an unprecedentedly challenging backdrop of COVID-related disruptions and distractions these last two years, it has been simply amazing to witness how much the School has achieved under the leadership of Mrs. Nash and Mrs. Larmon, with the helping hands and hearts of our dedicated and talented faculty and staff, and in partnership with our hardworking students and parents.

The recently published National Assessment of Educational Progress reports highlighted how Catholic schools nationally have outperformed traditional public schools in combatting learning loss from COVID and show "how community-focused, mission-driven leadership can benefit children," according to an article in the *Wall Street Journal*. In fact, "**if all Catholic schools were a state, their 1.6 million students would rank first in the nation across the NAEP reading and math tests for fourth through eighth graders.**" Those trends are equally apparent at St. John Fisher. They are a testament to our faculty meeting the challenges of COVID-era teaching head on, and importantly, in person, and investments in our children's future continuing despite the myriad of other emergency issues school leadership faced. For example, two years ago, the decision was made to invest in a full-time Reading Specialist position and the introduction of a school-wide reading curriculum. These investments are showing fantastic results: our *median* progress against expected learning growth in reading last year was 112%, and 70% of our students met or exceeded their grade-level standards in reading vs. 30% state-wide in Illinois. Similar progress is earlier stage but ongoing in math, where additional investments like those for the reading program are targeted in the coming years.

The Fisher Falcon Education Foundation is an independent, not-for-profit 501(c)(3) organization that protects and promotes the mission and resources of St. John Fisher School in Chicago, Illinois by raising funds for investment in people, programs, and facilities that enhance the educational experience and opportunities for its students and faculty, therefore enriching the quality of life for its greater community.

www.FalconEducationFoundation.org

10200 South Washtenaw Avenue, Chicago, Illinois 60655

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These types of successes don't mean everything is perfect, however, or that there is not a persistent need for more to continue to compete and produce at the highest level. And it's not more of one thing; it's honestly more of everything – more capital to invest into ongoing curriculum and technology refurbishment, more resources to better support the diverse and individual learning needs of our students, and more money to go into the pockets of our teachers to name just a few of our most pressing priorities. The Illinois State Board of Education reported that last year, the Chicago Public Schools spent over \$20,000 per student. In comparison, at St. John Fisher, our average tuition and fee revenue per student was just over \$5,000. This is a meaningful funding gap that we nonetheless have overcome, but to continue the legacy of achievement and advancement SJF has for so long embraced, we need that spending limit per student to go up. We just don't want to and don't believe it's fair to put that burden solely on our tuition-paying families.

This is where the Foundation comes in, and where you, our fellow parishioners, alumni, and friends, come in. **We all benefit from the continued success and vitality of St. John Fisher School.** All our lives are enriched by the daily presence in our community of eager and excited young minds challenging themselves to grow academically, athletically, and in lives of faith and service to God and each other. We cannot take that presence for granted. It requires continued commitment to sharing each of our gifts – whether time, talent, our treasure – with our next generation of Falcons as so many before us have shared with us.

The Fisher Falcon Education Foundation is the primary channel through which you can give such a financial gift to St. John Fisher School. As you can read in the enclosed pages or on our website (www.FalconEducationFoundation.org), it is the key coordinator among our many efforts to seek creative, alternative, and capital-efficient ways to finance the increasing operating costs of our School.

As we noted last year, in this holiday season of thanksgiving and hope, we know many worthy causes seek your financial support. We firmly believe we have something so special right here at home that it deserves top consideration among those causes. Our goal is for this annual appeal to generate \$75,000. We will need everyone who contributed last year and more to achieve this goal, so **please consider a gift or pledge to the Foundation** as part of your holiday giving plans and don't be afraid to share how important you think it is for all of us to support the future of St. John Fisher School with your friends, neighbors, or fellow alumni when you do. You can contribute online or by returning the enclosed donation form in the mail. It is an important investment in our shared futures at a critical time and a meaningful way for you to help St. John Fisher School continue to reach its ambitious goals.

With sincere gratitude and in partnership with Mrs. Maura Nash, Principal; Fr. Ken Budzikowski, Pastor; the Parish Council; and the School Advisory Board, Happy Thanksgiving!

The Board of Directors of The Fisher Falcon Education Foundation

Make a Donation @ www.givecentral.org/ffef

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YES! I will help St. John Fisher School advance its mission with a **gift of \$100.**

OR: I prefer to support The Fisher Falcon Education Foundation as follows:

\$75 \$250 \$500 Other Amount: _____

Optional: My gift is recurring monthly quarterly annually.

Please direct my gift to the following fund (default is Endowment):

Operating Endowment Purtell/McGrath Tuition Assistance

McElligott Scholarship Campus Improvement

Please dedicate my gift in honor of: in memory of:

No, I am unable to give a gift at this time. I included my contact information below, so I can stay up to date on SJF news and events.

Payment information:

Online: Make your gift online today at www.givecentral.org/FFEF.

Check: Make payable to *The Fisher Falcon Education Foundation.*

Credit Card: MasterCard Visa Discover American Express

Name on Card: _____

Card No. _____

Exp. Date: _____ CW/CVC Code: _____

For our records:

Name: _____

SJF class year, if alum: _____

Cell: _____

E-mail: _____

Address: _____

Falcon Giving Circles

SJF Stewards
\$5,000 or More

Blue and White
Boosters
\$1,000 - \$5,000

Falcon Friends
\$500 - \$1,000

Strategic Plan
Sponsors
\$75 - \$500

Sustaining Supporters
\$75 or Less

Estate Planning

I would like to receive information about including The Fisher Falcon Education Foundation in my Estate Plan.

Matching Gift

My employer will match my gift. Please follow up with me to ensure we maximize the impact of my support for The Fisher Falcon Education Foundation.

**THANK YOU for helping St. John Fisher School achieve its mission.
Embracing curious minds. Nurturing compassionate hearts.
Questions or Feedback: e-mail info@FalconEducationFoundation.org**

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Falcons Are Grateful for You!

Join fellow Falcon friends and family in support of St. John Fisher School's Season of Giving.

Your donation will support the Fisher Falcon Education Foundation.



Academic Excellence

What is the FFEF?

- An independent, not-for-profit 501(c)(3) organization
- Led by a diverse group of SJF school & parish volunteers
- Raises funds to improve the SJF School experience by:
 - Modernizing classrooms with tools & technology
 - Helping families in financial need.
 - Increasing scholarship opportunities for graduating 8th graders
 - Improving school buildings & campus grounds



Tuition Assistance

Who benefits?

- The Fisher Falcon Education Foundation benefits the students, teachers and families of SJF
- There is a 100% return rate to SJF school
- The community at large benefits from the continued success and vitality of St. John Fisher School.



Campus Improvement

What's next?

- In its first year, the Fisher Falcon Education Foundation has raised over \$100K through programs & events such as Oktoberfest, Day of Giving, alumni outreach, memorial donations, and more
- This year, and beyond, the Foundation's goal is to creatively offset the rising cost of high-quality education



Learn more

www.FalconEducationFoundation.org
info@FalconEducationFoundation.org



Give today!

Scan the QR code or go to www.givecentral.org/FFEF to donate

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