

We are here to help guide you with your planned giving. To learn more about the endowments or to make a donation, please contact Executive Director, Kristin Smith, at 989.303.9200 or [kristin.smith@ccfmm.org](mailto:kristin.smith@ccfmm.org)

*The Catholic Community Foundation of Mid-Michigan is a registered 501(c)(3), and all gifts are tax-deductible.*

## Grants Provide SPRED ability to share experiences as a community

Thanks to two endowed funds with the Catholic Community Foundation (CCF), students in the Special Religious Education (SPRED) program stayed in touch during COVID and celebrated being reunited.

SPRED program leader Marsha Caylor, who receives disbursements from the Catholic Community Foundation, said the monetary support is a blessing for the program. SPRED is not only a religious education program for Catholics with disabilities; it's a faith community that encourages the growth of life skills through a myriad of experiences. "SPRED's sense of community simply wouldn't be here without catechists, volunteers, grants, and donations."

"With the support of the Catholic Community Foundation's endowments, we can purchase class supplies and have outings for our students, such as bowling, dances, and picnics." While the program was put on pause in many ways during Covid, it didn't completely halt it. There might not have been any extracurricular outings; however, there was one thing that kept the spirit of SPRED alive: snail mail.

By mailing a monthly newsletter, Marsha ensured that SPRED students continued to feel cared for during a time when many felt neglected. In fact, "one student would run to the mailbox, grab the SPRED mail and kiss the envelope in excitement!"



The simple piece of mail symbolized the loving community that SPRED has formed over the last 50 years. Every newsletter would contain a poem penned by Bobby Caylor, a long-time volunteer. Additionally, the birthdays of the month and any updates were highlighted. On numerous occasions, Marsha or her team would include a greeting card with a personalized handwritten note.

As soon as SPRED could meet face to face, they did. Coming back together in the fall of 2022 was exciting for two reasons: the community was reunited, and SPRED was embarking on a year of celebrating its 50th anniversary.

Sister Mary Lou Owczarzak shares that because of the endowment distribution SPRED receives, all students and volunteers can attend events free of charge. Currently, SPRED is promoting a "welcome back" picnic on September, 23rd. The SPRED community is invited; the students' families are invited to attend, too. One parent commented that the SPRED community has many communities in one: a student community, a catechist and volunteer community, and a parent community. "It's a ripple effect that just keeps giving and growing."

The Catholic Community Foundation disbursements have helped the program to spread joy through picnics, field trips, and holiday dances. Kristin Smith, who serves as the Director of the Catholic Community Foundation, "strongly believes in the power of community and is delighted that the disbursements are being utilized to create experiences that support SPRED's involvement in the community. This type of faith-based work is precisely what the Foundation supports."

Currently, the Catholic Community Foundation provides disbursements to SPRED through two unique endowment funds. An Endowment is a permanent fund that is invested for long-term investment returns. Donations to the fund are invested. Part of the interest earned is used for the purpose of the fund, while the rest is reinvested to allow the fund to grow. When an endowment is created there is a guiding document of donor intent – that establishes the disbursement purpose and the restrictions of how the disbursements may be used. The donations are held in perpetuity and never disbursed.

Only a portion of the interest earnings, as set forth in the endowment document, are disbursed for the purpose of the endowment.

The Ann and Richard Blazejewski Endowment Fund was established in 2009 to support the religious education of children with special needs. This fund was created in honor of Ann and Richard Blazejewski, who had a great affection for children, particularly those who required special attention and care for their physical or mental conditions regarding their religious education and spiritual well-being. To date, donations are just under \$10,000 dollars.

**“We are grateful to many donors who made it possible to celebrate the 100th anniversary year of SPRED,” expresses Kristin.**

**“The power of our faith community is at work among our neighbors. We celebrate with SPRED and invite all to share the good news.”  
Donations to one of the two funds are always welcome.**

The Catholic Education Fund was established in 2007 for children with special needs. To date, donations have exceeded twenty-five thousand dollars from over 193 donors. We are especially grateful to the Ladies Auxiliary, Knights of Columbus #4232 who honor deceased members of the community with donations to the endowment.

The purpose of both endowments is for the following:

- Tuition assistance/scholarships based on need for children with special needs who wish to attend a religious education program offered within the Diocese of Saginaw or beyond.
- Textbooks and other teaching supplies for religious education programs for special needs children.
- Educational opportunities that arise to enhance the training of DRE's, CR's and catechists working with Special Needs Children.

It is possible to contribute to both endowments anytime, and everyone can participate in donating.

“We congratulate SPRED's 100 years of building the Kingdom of God.” expresses Kristin. “The power of our faith community can be felt by all through SPRED's work..”

*Written by Emily Hockemeyer*

## *What's Next*

### Foundation Scholarships Application Openings

**2024/2025 College Scholarship  
Application Window**

**Opening Monday, October 2nd**

**Closes Friday, January 5th**

We are excited  
to announce the  
application windows  
for the CCFMM  
College and Catholic  
School Scholarship  
Cycles!

**2024/2025 Catholic School  
Scholarship Application Window**

**Opening Monday, November 6th**

**Closes Friday, January 5th**

## NEW CCFMM Online Grant Portal

Over the past few months the Foundation has been working diligently to streamline our grant application process. We are now utilizing our online application software for grant applications!

**The 2023 Grant Application window is now open! Visit the CCFMM website at  
<https://ccfmm.org/ccfmm-grant-applications/>**

**Here you will find the link to the online portal, a listing of all the available grants and their requirements and more!**

We are proud to provide these grants that help support ministries that reach the poor and vulnerable, enhance community well-being, supports seminarians and priests of the Diocese of Saginaw, supports Catholic education, supplement Catholic school teachers' salaries, support tuition and scholarships to Catholic school and enable ministries to thrive!