

THE ST. LEO FUTURE FUND



Securing St. Leo School as a Vital Community Asset

St. Leo School is happy to announce the establishment of the St. Leo Future Fund, a forward-looking financial reserve that will ensure that St. Leo School will be here to serve students for generations to come.

Our school has experienced a major resurgence in recent years, with a revitalized classical curriculum and enrollment growth of 40 percent. Now is the time to solidify that growth and secure the future of St. Leo School.

How much are we trying to raise?

The school needs an endowment of about \$2.5 million to cover costs not paid by tuition, fundraising efforts and parish subsidies. This will be a perpetual endowment, generating enough income, in combination with other sources, to support the needs of the school.

We are very happy to report that in just a few weeks, the SLFF has already received more than \$400,000 in commitments. Combined with nearly \$200,000 in existing commitments, the campaign is already close to one fourth of the way to completion.

Why is such a fund necessary?

Catholic schools operate on a three-legged financial stool. The only sources of income are tuition, parish subsidies and fundraising/donations. Almost no Catholic schools support themselves on tuition alone. To do so would put the cost of the school well beyond the reach of most families. At most Catholic schools, even full tuition with no financial aid covers barely half of the total cost to educate.

Tuition at St. Leo has been increasing at a level far outstripping inflation for several years. Many years ago, our longtime pastor Msgr. Paul Olmstead made a sizable donation to the school in order to sustain its operations. Over the years that fund has decreased in value, and the cost of operating the school has increased.

St. Leo Church is currently extremely supportive and pays a sizable annual subsidy to the school, but diocesan guidelines, national best practice and good management dictate that we now turn to donors.

Will donations to this fund be used specifically to fund St. Leo School here in Ridgway?

Yes. Donors can - and very often do - restrict their donations to be used in for very specific purposes. Honoring donor wishes is our first responsibility and we take it seriously.

Your accountant or wealth management specialist can offer guidance on how best to structure your donation. The advancement office at ECCSS can point you to local people who specialize in these issues. We can also provide templates that other donors have successfully used.

What is the relationship between St. Leo School and Elk County Catholic School System?

St. Leo is one of five schools that make up ECCSS. The others are St. Boniface, St. Marys Catholic Elementary, St. Marys Catholic Middle and Elk County Catholic High School.

ECCSS provides administrative support to all the schools. Prior to joining ECCSS, the principal at St. Leo was responsible for budgeting, financial aid distribution, information technology and a host of other services now provided by ECC. This allows the principal to focus on being the educational leader of the school.



A strong team of local volunteers has agreed to steward this effort for our school.

If you have questions we encourage you to reach out to one or more of them:

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ECC includes St. Leo in many of its annual grant requests, generating tens of thousands of dollars per year for SLS. This year, the administrative team at ECC has written close to \$150,000 in grant requests specifically for St. Leo.

Each school, however, needs to be sustainable on its own. Income from parish subsidies, tuition and donations for each individual school has to cover the costs incurred by that school. Approximately 80 percent of expenses at ECCSS schools go toward paying the salaries and benefits of faculty and staff.

Is St. Leo Church represented on the ECCSS board of directors?

St. Leo has more parishioners on the ECCSS board of directors than any other church. Each parish in St. Marys, Kersey and Ridgway appoints two directors to the board. The representatives from St. Leo are Atty. Jim Martin and Mrs. Dawn Foringer.

The President of ECCSS (Sam MacDonald, a St. Leo parishioner and parent of seven children enrolled in the school) is also a voting board member, as is the system's Vice President of Catholic Mission (Fr. Justin Pino). As such, four of the 14 members of the ECCSS board of directors are from the St. Leo parish.

Will donors be publically recognized for their donation?

Except in circumstances where donors specifically request anonymity, donors will be recognized for their contributions.

Major donations (\$100,000 or more) will have an opportunity to name a classroom in their honor or in the honor of the name they designate.

Other naming and sponsorship opportunities exist. Please contact Jane Bryndel or Sam MacDonald for more information.

Can I spread a donation across two, three or five years? Can stock or other investments be accepted as donations? Can I name St. Leo School as a beneficiary in my will or my life insurance?

To all of these questions, the answer is yes, yes, and yes.

If I am interested in making a contribution but would first like a tour of the school, can that be arranged?

Absolutely. Mrs. Kucenski loves nothing more than to showcase the classical education that St. Leo School is providing to students. Please contact her at 814-772-9775.



St. Leo School works every day to shine the light of Jesus Christ on the children of our community, who are the backbone and future of our wonderful parish. The faculty, staff and students at St. Leo School would like to thank you for your time and attention as you prayerfully consider your support for this campaign.