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Area Catholic Schools Receive Grants to Support Inclusive Education Programming

Catholic Coalition for Special Education (CCSE) congratulates this year's recipient schools of its "Believe in Me!" grants, along with a Catholic school teacher who is receiving a tuition assistance grant to pursue an advanced special education degree.

This year, CCSE has awarded \$85,000 total to these four schools and teacher. Grants may be used by the schools to hire special education staff, purchase materials necessary to provide appropriate accommodations and modifications to the curriculum and for professional development.

In addition, CCSE recognizes that there is a chronic and pervasive shortage of special education teachers qualified to provide individualized special education instruction in the classroom. To help offset this shortage, CCSE has established the *Teacher Tuition Assistance Grants for Advanced Degrees in Special Education* to provide financial assistance to teachers and other professionals.

Fernand Lavalée, Board Member and Chair of the Grants Committee, said "We were overwhelmed and moved by the professionalism, profound commitment and deep love for every student that distinguished the manner in which each of the applicant schools strives to serve its community.

"This year, CCSE initiated what we intend to be an ongoing dialogue on how we can partner with each school not only during the grant period, but also afterwards as they continue their programs and commitments to serve our target students. We are delighted with the wonderful response, and we look forward to long and fruitful relationships with them."

The 2017 recipients are:

Holy Redeemer School, Kensington (Montgomery County): Holy Redeemer is a new CCSE grantee school whose rallying cry is "Go RED – Respect Everyone Daily!" The school will use its grant to fund a resource teacher and expand its existing inclusion program using a team approach and considering the total environment of its students.

St. Louis School, Clarksville (Howard County): This grant will continue to assist the school in the second year of its St. Louis IX Program. The school welcomes back its two students from last year and will use its grant to support the salaries and benefits of its special educator and para-educators. St. Louis School is a leader in the Archdiocese of Baltimore for other schools considering implementing programs for students with intellectual disabilities.

St. Mary of the Mills School, Laurel (Prince George's County): St. Mary's is a CCSE grantee school ready to educate several students with intellectual and developmental disabilities. St. Mary's has a long history of inclusive education. Following several years of transitions, it is now looking forward to continuing that tradition which has become an integral part of the fabric of its community.

The Academy of the Holy Cross, Kensington (Montgomery County): This grant will continue to help fund the salaries of the special education teachers serving the Moreau Options Program at the high school. The program, launched three years ago with CCSE's support and embraced by the community, continues to expand. This year it is educating 13 students, two of whom will become the first graduates under the program in May 2018.

In addition, CCSE has awarded a tuition assistance grant to **Riley Weber** who teaches math and language arts at St. Mark School in Catonsville (Baltimore County) and who is a PRIDE (Pupils Receiving Inclusive Diversified Education) program teacher. Weber is nearing completion of a Master of Arts in Leadership in Special Education - Exceptionalities at Notre Dame of Maryland University.

The mission of the [Catholic Coalition for Special Education](#) is to ensure that children with special needs are able to attend and receive an appropriate education in their local Catholic elementary schools and high schools. In the words of Pope Benedict XVI “no child should be denied his or her right to an education in faith, which in turn nurtures the soul of a nation.” CCSE provides grants and technical assistance to help Catholic schools in Washington, D.C. and Maryland achieve this goal.

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Thank you to our 2017 Sponsors & Supporters!

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