



2018 School Choice Rally-Topeka, KS (January 24) Remarks from Adrienne M. Runnebaum, CEF Director of Tax Credits

CEF became a registered Scholarship Granting Organization for the *Kansas Tax Credit for Low-Income Students Scholarship program* in 2015. We provide scholarship support to Catholic schools in the Archdiocese of Kansas City in Kansas (Northeast Kansas). Since 1997, CEF has been serving its mission to provide a quality, faith-filled Catholic education to children in need. Our participation in this School Choice initiative has allowed us to expand our mission to serve low-income families, knowing that education is the key to breaking the cycle of poverty.

We have experienced first-hand the significant and positive impact this program has made in just three short years and we anticipate continued program growth based upon interest from prospective families. When this program was first enacted, our SGO was able to provide 99 scholarships to eligible students. I'm pleased to share that we are now providing over 200 Tax Credit scholarships this school year to deserving families, thanks to our generous donors who are investing in the future of our students. This represents 14 different Catholic schools, many of which are situated in our urban communities and provide a much needed resource for the neighborhoods they serve. Our goal as a SGO is to continue renewing scholarships for current students while also providing scholarships to new families each school year. Without a doubt, our families would be devastated if this program was no longer available to them as a resource.

The Catholic School's Office motto is: "Each child is a masterpiece of God, created with precision for a specific purpose." Our schools are able to serve a diverse group of students from various family structures, socio-economic status, and academic abilities, thanks to the commitment of our dedicated school administrators, teachers and staff. The *Tax Credit Scholarship Program* provides an opportunity for us to welcome even more families into our schools, as we are called to serve those in most need.

Two words resonate in my mind when I reflect on our CEF students, families and schools—**gratitude** and **hope**. Each year, our office receives hundreds of thank you cards from CEF students, parents and school administrators sharing their gratitude for this scholarship opportunity. It is humbling to read their stories. Our families have made significant sacrifices for their child's education and future. They may be lacking in financial resources but be assured that they are giving generously through their gifts of time and talent. This scholarship means more than a "dollars and cents" figure to our CEF families-it represents hope. A parent's hope that their child will grow to be the best version of themselves and use their talents and treasures to make positive impact in our communities and the world. A student's hope for a future filled with opportunities-civic engagement, post-secondary education and the courage to attain their dreams for themselves and their families.

We want all Kansas students to have quality educational options, no matter what path a parent may choose. Effective School Choice programs should *empower* families to choose the academic setting that they know is best for their child's needs.

We look forward to continuing our work in this program as we strive to make a family's educational dream a reality.