



Announcing the Early Childhood Education Fund



In partnership with the Seattle Foundation, Dick and Sharon Abrams established the Fulcrum Early Childhood Education Fund in December

2017. Ever since the Abrams developed the West Coast Paper Scholarship Fund 15 years ago, they have been inspired by the impact that academic scholarships have had on the lives of young people. Nearly a decade ago, the couple started discussing creating another fund, also focused on education—a personal passion. They began talking with educators and parents to better understand how a new type of fund could be best used. Without exception, everyone agreed that investing in early education would yield critical results.

The Abrams partnered with the Seattle Foundation to increase awareness of the Fulcrum Foundation and to encourage support of their

newly created endowment. Through this process, Dick and Sharon came up with the Fulcrum Early Childhood Education Fund, “If we are going to help society in general, across the spectrum of financial need, ethnicity, and more, Catholic schools are leading the way.”

“In Catholic schools, students are given an anchor in life—a moral compass,” says Dick Abrams. “Religion is important to us personally, but it is not the reason that we feel so strongly about Catholic school systems. You do not have to be Catholic to attend and benefit.”

The Fulcrum Early Childhood Education Fund will focus on tuition assistance, facilities grants, assessment programs, teacher education/certification training, curriculum materials, and toddler programs.

Kaitlyn O’Leary, Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum,

Instruction, Early Learning, Government Programs, for the Office for Catholic Schools states, “The amount of data indicating the positive effects of early childhood education on children’s physical, mental, and emotional health as well as economic security and overall success later in life is astounding. Investing in early childhood education for our archdiocesan schools will not only help our schools better prepare students for kindergarten, but will yield fruits well beyond students’ early years. I am so excited to expand the Catholic early education options available to families in western Washington. This fund will allow us to open more early childhood programs, expand existing programs, and continue to strengthen and enhance our programs, grounding them in our Catholic faith.”

For more information about the Fulcrum Early Childhood Education Fund or how to contribute to the endowment, please contact Conne Bruce at 206.748.7989 or conne.bruce@fulcrumfoundation.org.



Lt. Governor of Washington State, Cyrus Habib, speaks to Catholic school students visiting Olympia, WA.

To Olympia!

January 30 was a special day for over 150 students who travelled to Olympia, Washington, to attend “Catholic Schools Day at the Capitol.” Representing Washington State Catholic schools, the students, teachers and administrators spent the day in Olympia visiting their lawmakers and learning more about legislation to improve school safety. Kristin Dixon, Superintendent of Catholic Schools in the Archdiocese of Seattle, testified about Senate Bill 5514, a proposal to notify all schools—public and private—when there is an emergency.

The event, organized by the Washington State Catholic Conference (WSCC), was among many activities taking place for our Catholic schools during Catholic Schools Week.

“It was very special to see so many of our students in uniform walking around the state capitol interacting with Washington State policy makers,” said Fulcrum Interim Executive Director, Julie Coleman. Lieutenant-Governor Cyrus Habib, Senator Lisa Wellman, chair of the Early Learning and K-12 Education Committee, and Chris Reykdal, Superintendent of Public Instruction, were three

of the many legislators who presented. “We wanted to share the good news of Catholic schools with policymakers,” said Joe Sprague, Executive Director of the WSCC. “It is important for key policymakers to hear the positive story about Catholic schools. It is essential that they understand how inclusive our schools are, including for those with limited economic means, and the significant academic achievement and community support Catholic schools provide.”

There are 100 Catholic schools in Washington State, educating over 28,000 students.

Celebration of Light: Cancelled

On February 8, 2019, the Fulcrum Foundation made the unprecedented decision to cancel the 2019 Celebration of Light. The National Weather Service was calling for a blizzard, and snow had already started falling to the north. Due to the safety risks associated with the snow storm and in consideration of attendees traveling for the evening from as far away as Bellingham and Vancouver, the decision was made to cancel.

The last time Seattle experienced a snow event similar to this year’s was 1962. The 2019 snow storm impacted Seattle’s neighborhoods and communities in different ways, and

forced the cancellation of Fulcrum Foundation’s critical fundraising event.

The money raised during the event represents nearly half of what the foundation distributes in tuition assistance each year. “When we made the difficult decision to cancel the event, we were in the process of awarding over two million dollars in tuition assistance grants to over 1,500 students for the 2019/20 school year. The award letters were mailed out at the end of February. Well over half of this money was raised at last year’s Celebration of Light,” said Julie Coleman, Fulcrum Interim Executive Director.

The response from the community has been extraordinary, sending donations to counteract those lost the night of the event. Schools and parishes have communicated to their individual communities asking for support. There has been an increase of new donors, and many dedicated donors have made gifts in support of our three core programs: tuition assistance, school partnerships, and leadership initiatives.

This is a defining moment for Fulcrum and for our entire community. Together, the community has ensured that Fulcrum’s programs will not be adversely impacted next year.

Spotlight on a Leader

"We are each of us angels with only one wing, and we can only fly by embracing one another." –Luciano DeCrescenzo

This is how Kristin Dixon, Superintendent of Catholic Schools in the Archdiocese of Seattle, opened her letter to principals shortly after the cancellation of the 2019 Celebration of Light. Kristin asked principals to share with their school communities the important work of the Fulcrum Foundation and to consider becoming "Snow Angels," by offering financial support. In addition, she added "Fulcrum has done so much for our families and their children, our schools, and training aspiring leaders. If your families prefer to donate by check, simply collect them and you can mail them in at a later date." Kristin then closed her letter by writing, "Let's embrace Fulcrum right now and together, we can fly!"

As superintendent, Kristin understands the importance of building relationships and collaborating on many levels. Her work as superintendent spans from high level

vision building with the archdiocese, walking alongside the leadership of the 73 schools in the Archdiocese of Seattle (to date she has made 87 visits to schools in this academic year). Kristin leads with mission, always maintaining a focus on strategic goals to provide clear vision.

Kristin's thoughtful leadership of the Office for Catholic Schools and her commitment to partnering with Fulcrum provides additional leverage to do greater good. As evidenced in the snow angel photo, Kristin intentionally and enthusiastically embraces both the mission of the Office for Catholic Schools and Fulcrum so our Catholic schools can soar.



*Kristin Dixon
Superintendent for Catholic Schools
Archdiocese of Seattle*

New Fulcrum Trustees

We are pleased and honored to welcome three new members to the Fulcrum Foundation Board of Trustees: Kevin Proctor, Clare Henry, and Ignacio Dávila. Each individual brings their unique background and skillset to our board, in addition to the wealth of connections they possess within the greater Seattle Catholic community.

As a product of 12 years of Seattle Catholic education at St. Joseph School and O'Dea High School, Kevin serves as the Health Center Administrator at Sea Mar Community Health Centers where he has dedicated his career to the promotion of preventative health and creating

greater healthcare access for Seattle's underserved populations.

Clare has called Seattle home for over 30 years, both professionally, as a part of Microsoft's Corporate Communication Group, and personally, as a parishioner of St. Bridget Catholic Church, as a parent at Assumption-St. Bridget School, Seattle Preparatory School, and Holy Names Academy. She and her husband recently joined the St. Therese Parish community, and Clare has been serving on Fulcrum's Engagement Committee for over two years.

Ignacio is a man of faith, ideas scout, and people connector. Over the

years, Ignacio has been guided by Salesians and Jesuit spiritual directors who helped him discern his vocation in various business development, engineering, and marketing roles. He and his wife are active members of Sacred Heart Church in Bellevue and Holy Family Church in Kirkland, and have children at Sacred Heart School and Seattle Preparatory School.

Visit our website to learn more about the full Fulcrum Foundation Board of Trustees: www.FulcrumFoundation.org/about/board-of-trustees.



Pictured (left to right): Kevin Proctor, Clare Henry, Ignacio Dávila.



Thank You 2019 Celebration of Light Sponsors!

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Save the Date!
Our Next Celebration of Light:
January 24, 2020