

Major Catholic Schools Challenge Grant Announced

\$3.5 Million Grant to Provide Tuition Assistance to At-Risk Students in Catholic Schools in Baltimore City; Business Community Challenged to Match Funds

Earlier today, more than 100 Catholic school students, parents, and educators joined Cardinal William H. Keeler, Archbishop of Baltimore, and Mr. Donn Weinberg, of The Harry and Jeanette Weinberg Foundation, Inc., as they announced a major challenge grant to benefit at-risk students attending Catholic Schools in Baltimore City.

The Baltimore-based Jewish philanthropic foundation announced it will donate \$500,000 this year and \$1 million for the next three years to benefit at-risk students who attend K-8 in one of the 20 participating Catholic schools in Baltimore City. "Weinberg Scholars" will receive as much as \$2,500 in tuition assistance each year, with the student remaining eligible to receive the grant each year of the grant's existence.

Foundation Vice-President Donn Weinberg, in announcing the grant, challenged other local business leaders to make a similar investment in the education of Baltimore youths. "We are grateful for the opportunity to positively influence the lives of so many young people with the life-changing gift of a values-based, quality education. It is our hope that this gift inspires others in our community to make a similar contribution."

The Archdiocese of Baltimore's Partners in Excellence (PIE) tuition-assistance program procured the grant from the Weinberg Foundation and has been charged with raising funds from the community to match the grant. While the Weinberg grant funds must be used for new students, matching funds may be used to fund a number of tuition assistance programs already in existence.

Cardinal Keeler thanked the Foundation for its philanthropic leadership throughout the Baltimore area and applauded them for their remarkable investment in Catholic

education: “We are deeply grateful to the Harry and Jeannette Weinberg Foundation for recognizing the power of education and the hope it provides to children who otherwise would not have the opportunity to end the cycle of poverty in their family and neighborhood.”

The Partners in Excellence program provides partial-scholarships to children from very low-income families wishing to attend one of 20 Catholic schools in Baltimore City. Since its inception in 1996 the program has provided more than \$13 million in tuition assistance to more than 14,000 children. Though most of the families are not Catholic and many are poor by government standards, they choose a Catholic school because they want a safe and positive school environment where students are challenged academically and where strong ideals and values-consistent with their own-are instilled every day.

An added goal of today’s announcement is that more parents will realize that a Catholic education is available to their child, regardless of income and religion, thanks to the generosity of The Harry & Jeanette Weinberg Foundation and so many others in our community. With this goal in mind, each PIE school will be delegating five parents/guardians to advocate in the community on behalf of their school to let people know about the incredible value of a Catholic school education. Not only will these children receive a quality, values-based education, they will also receive the chance to learn and grow in a caring environment.

“Some of our schools exist in some of the most troubled neighborhoods in Baltimore City, but they succeed because of their disciplined structure, rigorous instruction and deep belief in the potential of these highly motivated, yet disadvantaged children” said Dr. Ronald J. Valenti, Superintendent of Schools for the Archdiocese of Baltimore. “Against all odds, these remarkable children of many faiths are doing truly incredible things.”