

The MBNA Foundation & Retired Executive Announce \$350,000 Challenge Grant to City Catholic School

Board Chair, John Grega, and principal of Father Charles Hall Catholic School, Kathleen Filippelli announced the school's first ever challenge grant. The MBNA Foundation is offering a dollar-for-dollar match on funds raised by the Friends Network of Father Charles Hall up to \$250,000. Donations raised for tuition assistance, endowment and program support qualify for the grant.

"We could not be more thrilled about this great opportunity coming from one of the school's best partners. MBNA has played a unique role in reinvigorating our school, especially at the Middle School campus," Mr. Grega stated. "The difference in our Middle School facilities is quite remarkable thanks to the earlier support of MBNA, and now this new grant makes a statement of confidence in our future. Not only will this MBNA challenge grant help us meet current needs but it will also help us build financial stability for the future."

In addition to the company's challenge grant, former MBNA CFO, Vernon Wright, and his wife have added \$100,000 to the grant, for a total of \$350,000 in possible matching funds.

The Friends Network of Father Charles Hall, which consists of corporate, philanthropic and community leaders, is taking the lead in helping to realize the full potential of this challenge grant. A spring fundraising event is being planned and the school has been hosting tours in an effort to increase people's awareness of the positive effect the school has on the community.

The two campuses of Fr. Charles Hall are located in West Baltimore. The lower school, which includes the PreK through 5th grades, is in the Sandtown-Winchester neighborhood, and the middle school, which includes 6th through 8th grades, is

located in the Greater Rosemont neighborhood.

Ninety-nine percent of the 240 students at Fr. Charles Hall are African-American, and 87% meet the federal guidelines for free and reduced lunch, an indicator of poverty. Despite this, families pay an average of \$2,000 per child towards the cost of tuition and the students consistently perform at or above grade level in math and reading. This year more than 70% of the students are performing at or above grade level.

Father Charles Hall participates in the Partners in Excellence program, which offers tuition-assistance to low-income families with students enrolled in Catholic schools in Baltimore city. Although Partners In Excellence and other forms of tuition assistance have helped Fr. Charles Hall meet much of the unfunded tuition needs, the need continues to grow.

For more information about the grant or to learn more about Fr. Charles Hall Catholic School, contact Principal Kathleen Filippelli at (410) 225-7555 or the Middle School Head, Ms. Daisy Jackson, at (410) 566-1231.