

PROGRAM/PROJECT update from St. Wenceslaus Catholic Church, Omaha

2-7-2024

Great things are happening at our parish thanks to generous support from the Catholic Futures Foundation of Northeast Nebraska! We have been blessed with many new initiatives here at St. Wenceslaus. Following is a brief report and impact of our grant funds over the past few years.

2021 Grant: Welcome (CRhP 2.0)

In 2021 we received a grant to help us purchase 40 air mattresses to use during our Welcome Weekends. Since that gift, we have had over 600 parishioners enter into discipleship formation through our Welcome program. In addition, we have sent teams of parishioners to assist with Welcome weekends in Grand Island and St. Patrick's in Elkhorn. The positive impact of this ministry was highlighted repeatedly during our recent strategic planning process at the parish. Many lives have been changed for good due to the boost that we received for start-up costs for this program.

2022 Grant: Alpha Bibles

In 2022 we received a grant to help us purchase bibles for Alpha. Bibles are not required for Alpha and all participants attend for free. As a Catholic Alpha initiative, we decided to go the "extra mile" to present *nice* bibles to our guests during their Alpha Day Away. Many commented that it was the first bible they had ever received! It is a beautiful example of the radical hospitality that is a hallmark of Alpha. This level of hospitality would not have been possible without the assistance from CCF. To date, we have had over 120 participants go through Alpha and have started a Youth Alpha in our Catholic school. Many of adult participants have gone on to form small groups or participate in Welcome. The impact has been astonishing.

2023 Grant: Parish Staff Retreat

In 2023 we received a grant to help fund Fr. Tom Sweetser, SJ as retreat leader for our parish staff as well as parish council. Those retreat experiences are scheduled for **June of 2024**, so I do not yet have any pictures from that event. We have been working diligently to form a culture of compassion and care among our staff of 20 people. Last summer, many were able to attend a short retreat day at the Holy Family Center with Fr. Ron Wasikowski. Throughout the year, we have recalled some of the wisdom shared during that retreat day. Last year's retreat helped prepare the staff for our more intense retreat experience this June. The impact of this coming retreat with the staff as well as the parish advisory council members will be *huge*. As we live into our new strategic plan, we will benefit greatly from a professional retreat leader guiding us through a comprehensive evaluation of where we are, and where we want to go as a parish community. It takes a well-formed and unified staff to assist a parish of this size. This upcoming retreat promises to move us forward in a positive and dynamic direction.

We are deeply grateful for the generosity of the donors to the Catholic Futures Foundation. Every grant we have received has produced fruits well beyond our expectations. God is good---and He is working through the wisdom and support of the Catholic Futures Foundation. End of report.