

Marian Educational Outreach is a ministry of the Catholic Diocese of Evansville committed to providing opportunities for students with unique learning needs to reach their highest potential while remaining in the Catholic school system.

When you support Marian Educational Outreach, you open the doors of Evansville diocesan schools to children with unique needs. Without funding from MEO, many children would not be able to attend our Catholic schools allowing all students to benefit from an inclusive education. Thank you for helping foster a culture of acceptance and compassion where ALL students can belong, learn, and succeed.



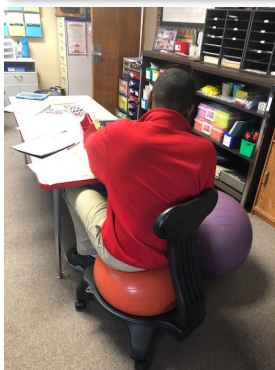
Fund-An-Item 2019: Flexible Seating



Thanks to the generosity of over 40 individuals who attended My Parish Has Talent 2019, we were able to successfully fund our Fund-An-Item project for 2019! Flexible seating is a way of arranging a classroom that accommodates all learning styles, and increases engagement for ALL students, especially those with a

physical or cognitive disability. Items that can be used for flexible seating depend on the teacher's creativity, but typically utilize wobble stools, elastic bands, fitness balls, bean bags, standing desks, armchairs and even couches.

Seating plays a large role in making sure all students are comfortable in their classroom. If they're comfortable, they're more willing to learn and retain information. Flexible seating also motivates them to take an active role in their learning and are therefore more empowered. This is VERY important for students with special needs. We think this is a trend in education that will continue and we hope to continue to make this opportunity possible for other schools in the diocese.



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Our Sincerest Thanks

The Board of Directors would like to thank the following individuals for their service as board members of Marian Educational

Vince Bernardin · Cherie Burgdorf · Mollie Francis
Sally Sternberg · Traci Welp · Sally Wedding

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Kate and Logan Ledbetter · Joe Keith · Lindy Coughlin

Stay up to date with the organization by checking out our website.

www.meoforkids.org

Watch for updates on My Parish Has Talent 2020!

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Westside Catholic Flourishes from Fund-An-Item 2018

By Kelsey Meier, Jessica Wilson, and Kristen Arnold, and Annie Rose Keith
As taken from an update at the 2019 MEO annual gala, My Parish Has Talent



Opportunities abound for students at Westside Catholic School thanks to your donations to Fund-An-Item 2018. At the 2019 annual gala, WCS principal Kelsey Meier, special education teacher Kristen Arnold and first grade teacher Jenna Lappe updated guests on the progress of the expansion at both WCS campuses. Not only have they installed a sensory room at both the elementary and junior high campuses, but they are currently implementing practices and teaching approaches to make their Math and Reading classes fully inclusive for grades 4-8. "This has allowed our students with special needs the opportunity to receive accommodations and access to an individualized curriculum all while being educated alongside their peers," said Arnold.

Through your generosity from Fund-An-Item 2018, the team at WCS has also been able to become knowledgeable about the *Response to Intervention* process and utilize it daily with students. This program helps them identify students who may be struggling early on. The progress of their students using the interventions help general classroom teachers identify the best ways to meet their needs. Their hope is to continue to make it possible for students, who learn differently, to find success at WCS. They want to open up this opportunity to students across the west side of Evansville...all while receiving a Catholic education. Follow along with Westside Catholic and Holy Spirit schools on their respective Facebook pages and school websites!



"We are immensely honored for the opportunity MEO has given us to help grow our special education program and school as a whole...Thank you again for graciously helping us raise funds to help our students thrive and reach their full potential!"

-Kelsey Meier

Mater Dei Student Succeeds with Help from Resource Program

By Kelly Ubelhor, MD Resource Teacher



Like Raymond, everyone loves Robbie Key. This 2019 Mater Dei graduate is known for his contagious smile and unmatched knowledge of sports (especially baseball). Robbie's story is truly a success story.

Robbie was diagnosed in seventh grade with a specific learning disability. At the time, his mother worried about finding the best program for him. Thankfully, because of her faith in the Catholic school system and its teachers, she chose to send Robbie to Mater Dei. Robbie jokingly says being a Key and graduating from MD are his greatest achievements.

School has not always come easy to Robbie, but two things have always remained consistent: his work ethic and his positive attitude. Robbie has said, "I've definitely had some obstacles, but hard work and my accommodations have helped me overcome them." He is also known for his determination. When he decides on something, he makes a plan and then goes after it. A perfect example of this was his desire to attend the Career and Technical Center.

For the last two years, Robbie participated in the Radio and TV program at the Career and Technical Center. Baz (Robbie's radio name) could be heard on channel 90.7 WISR on Mondays and Fridays from 7-8am. He says he enjoys "getting to go live on the air and connect with the people in the tri-state area." In the future, he plans for a career in TV, radio, or film editing. No matter which he chooses, one thing is for sure: he will be successful.

Teachers Attend Inclusion Conference:

Thank-you, Koch Foundation, for your generosity!!

By Beverly Williamson

On March 11 and 12, 2019 twenty two educators from Holy Spirit, Memorial High School and West Side Catholic schools attended the 8th Annual IEP Focus on Inclusion Conference in Indianapolis. Break-out sessions at the conference were presented by thirteen national and state experts on the most-timely topics in Inclusive education. A 5-year study conducted by *Indiana Institute on Disability and Community, Center of Education and Lifelong Learning*, was introduced at the conference that demonstrated students with learning disabilities showed greater improvement in inclusive environments. The goal of this inclusion effort is to assist teachers in the design and implementation of instruction that supports ALL learners. Koch Foundation provided a grant to Marian Educational Outreach to cover expenses for the Holy Spirit and West Side Catholic teachers to attend the conference.



Pictured are conference participants: (Holy Spirit) Kacie Whitely, Jamie Broeker, Brandi Coomes, Patti Sights, Melissa Blythe, Robyn Page; (From WCS) LeAnn Nunning, Sarah Kelley, Erin Schweizer, Jessica Hames, Jaymi Johnson, Leigh Anne Cuttrel; (From Memorial High School) Twyala Carter, Jody Honnigford, Larry Mattingly, Carrie Maurer, Janel Prather, Carol Radel, Gina Tucker; Beverly Williamson, Marie Williams, Sally Sternberg

Classroom Grant Program Expands

By Annie-Rose Keith

In the Fall, the classroom grant committee had the great pleasure of examining ten grant proposals for Marian Educational Outreach's *Destination: Innovation Classroom Grant Program*. These well researched and high quality proposals made the committee's decision very difficult as the passion of the educators that submitted them was very clear. After much discussion, St. James, Holy Redeemer, St. Benedict, and St. John the Baptist were awarded funding for projects that ranged from a sensory pathway for their school hallway to implementation of *Response to Intervention*, a curriculum intervention program designed to help bring students back up to their grade level in any subject.



Our Fund-An-Item focus at My Parish Has Talent 2019 enabled us to successfully fund 4 more projects for Flexible Seating for Westside Catholic School, St. Philip School, Washington Catholic Jr. and Sr. High School, and Holy Trinity School in Jasper. Flexible Seating is the use of different seating options that help students with sensory issues, ADHD, and ASD focus on their work...enabling them to succeed. Please see page 4 for more information in this innovative addition to classrooms!

Marian Educational Outreach awarded over \$14,000 to Classroom Grant Projects during the 2018-2019 School Year!



My Parish Has Talent— A Success!

By Megan Erbacher, Assistant Editor of *The Message*

Gone are the days of traditional desks and chairs placed in neat rows or groups in classrooms, according to Marian Educational Outreach Director Annie-Rose Keith. Educators are learning a major factor in providing students with the atmosphere they need to succeed involves classroom seating, Keith explained to a crowd of more than 200 people.

“What if I told you that incredibly successful classrooms of the future could look like the study centers you see on college campuses or in coffee shops,” she asked. ... “Teachers are becoming more and more aware the style of the seating in classrooms has a major effect on how students behave and learn in their classrooms.” The increasing trend of flexible seating in education was this year’s fund-an-item project at the 9th annual Marian Educational Outreach’s My Parish Has Talent, an expansion of the nonprofit’s Tri-State Idol program. The annual gala and fundraiser held on April 6 at St. Vincent Manor in Evansville highlighted live, local talent and offered both live and silent auctions. Keith said MEO hopes to provide flexible seating for as many schools in the diocese as possible. Specific seating depends on the creativity of the teacher but can include balance ball chairs, elastic bands, tennis balls, bean bags, standing desks, rocking chairs and even couches.



The former MEO Tri-State Idol expanded this year to include kids in grades 8-12, college students and adults. “We thought this was a good chance to highlight our amazing diocesan community and the talented performers in our parishes while supporting our organization,” Keith said. “This would also be a nod to past galas (MEO Tri-State Idol).”



Last year’s fund-an-item project was to expand West Side Catholic School’s special education program. Donations allowed for more growth in the program than Principal Kelsey Meier could’ve ever imagined. Meier said they were able to use the donations to create a sensory room at both the elementary and junior high campuses. “Many of our students utilize these rooms each day,” she said. “Whether it’s to calm their self, to gain focus or take a much-needed break when over stimulated. Often times you can even find some of the staff or me in there to take a much-needed break as well.” Meier said the goal is to continue to grow West Side Catholic’s special education program and open it up to as many west side students as possible.



“My Parish Has Talent is the bigger of our two fundraisers,” she said. “Our goal is to thank our donors and introduce our organization to new members of the community while raising money for specific projects. I really enjoyed meeting everyone. This is a very kind and supportive community and I’m looking forward to what the future holds for MEO.” Thank you for contributing over \$30,000 to Marian Educational Outreach at My Parish Has Talent 2019!

Pictured are the competitors! From top to bottom. Josh Mijares from St. John the Baptist; All Saints; Sts Mary and John; and Resurrexit