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Seton Catholic Schools Receives \$1.25 Million Grant from Lilly Endowment Inc.

Seton Catholic Schools has received a \$1.25 million grant from Lilly Endowment Inc. to help establish the Faith Immersion Program. The program is funded through Lilly Endowment's Nurturing Children Through Worship and Prayer Initiative, a national initiative designed to help Christian congregations more fully and intentionally engage children in intergenerational corporate worship and prayer practices.

The Faith Immersion Program offers children experiences and faith language that foster a deep connection to prayer and worship. Through three key domains—family, parish school and parish congregation—children develop habits and practices that strengthen how they experience God and express their faith. Seton Catholic Schools are parish schools that have engaged families, and dedicated pastors, making us uniquely positioned for the work of the Faith Immersion Program. Our overall goal is to better understand and implement the best practices that lead children to engage in prayer and worship. The result will be thriving congregations that fully engage and nurture their youngest parishioners in prayer and worship life.

We are fortunate to collaborate with local and national experts who will bring unique expertise to our program. The McGrath Institute for Church Life at the University of Notre Dame, through their "Contours of Wonder" initiative, will support us in sharing learnings and organizing leadership seminars. Dr. Kathie Amidei, a leader in catechesis and child ministry, will advise on family engagement in children's spiritual development. The Archdiocese of Milwaukee's Schools and Worship Offices will help disseminate best practices across schools and parishes. The Pillows With Wings program will integrate faith-based language into trauma recovery, while Boston College's Roche Center will provide Catholic social-emotional learning resources to enhance spiritual and emotional growth within schools.

Pastors of the parishes where Seton operates a school serve on our Pastoral Advisory Council, which is chaired by the Archbishop of Milwaukee and advises the work and mission of Seton Catholic Schools. These pastors recognize that the Faith Immersion Program is integral to their ministry and look forward to the implementation of the program.

"We are humbled to be the recipient of this grant. As a family of 14 schools serving 3,600 students in Greater Milwaukee, our foundation is Catholic Identity. We strive to enable students to know God's love for them and in turn grow in love of God and others. This grant will allow us to implement programs in our parishes that foster a deeper prayer and worship experience for children in collaboration with our partners," said Brian Couch, president and CEO of Seton Catholic Schools.

Seton Catholic Schools is one of 91 organizations funded through the latest round of the initiative. They represent and serve congregations in a broad spectrum of Christian traditions, including Catholic, mainline Protestant, evangelical, Orthodox, Anabaptist and Pentecostal faith communities. Several organizations are rooted in Black Church and Hispanic and Asian American Christian traditions.

"Congregational worship and prayer play a critical role in the spiritual growth of children and offer settings for children to acquire the language of faith, learn their faith traditions and experience the love of God as part of a supportive community," said Christopher L. Coble, Lilly Endowment's vice president for religion. "These programs will help congregations give greater attention to children and how they can more intentionally nurture the faith of children, as well as adults, through worship and prayer."

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About Lilly Endowment Inc

Lilly Endowment Inc. is a private philanthropic foundation created in 1937 by J.K. Lilly Sr. and his sons Eli and J.K. Jr. through gifts of stock in their pharmaceutical business, Eli Lilly and Company. While those gifts remain the financial bedrock of the Endowment, it is a separate entity from the company, with a distinct governing board, staff and location. In keeping with the founders' wishes, the Endowment supports the causes of community development, education and religion and maintains a special commitment to its hometown, Indianapolis, and home state, Indiana. The principal aim of the Endowment's religion grantmaking is to deepen and enrich the lives of Christians in the United States, primarily by seeking out and supporting efforts that enhance the vitality of congregations and strengthen the pastoral and lay leadership of Christian communities. The Endowment also seeks to improve public understanding of diverse religious traditions by supporting fair and accurate portrayals of the role religion plays in the United States and across the globe.

About Seton Catholic Schools

Founded in 2015 as a new initiative of the Archdiocese of Milwaukee, Seton Catholic Schools is a transformational family of schools committed to overcoming economic, social and academic challenges to empower students, families and educators to attain their God-given potential. The Seton Family of Catholic Schools consists of 14 Archdiocesan Catholic parish elementary schools in Greater Milwaukee, serving 3,600 students with the highest caliber of academic and spiritual formation. For more information visit setoncatholicschools.com.