



“We have realized that we are all on the same boat, all of us fragile and disoriented, but at the same time important and needed, all of us now called to row together, each of us in need of comforting and helping each other.”

—Pope Francis, March 27, 2020
Extraordinary Blessing, *Urbi et Orbi*

Fulcrum Foundation's Newsletter | Spring 2020

Stronger Together

We hope this spring edition of the Fulcrum News finds you and your loved ones safe, healthy, and adjusting to this new environment in which we find ourselves.

The COVID-19 pandemic is a time of firsts—school buildings are closed, classes are remote, and people are working from home. These changes are new and sometimes uncertain, but they have revealed an important truth:

We are stronger together.

It's a truth we have taken to heart. It's a truth that guides Fulcrum's way forward in our unchanging commitment to our mission to support the Catholic schools in the Archdiocese of Seattle.

For nearly seven weeks, more than 21,000 students (pre-K through 12th grade) have continued with their curriculum online and have achieved a 99% remote attendance rate! Their teachers pivoted nearly instantaneously to teaching in this new environment and did so with enthusiasm and energy, even while likely feeling uncertain and anxious. The commitment they have to their students

is to be commended at the highest level. The students are thriving, parents and grandparents and others are providing support, and learning continues.

But these weeks have not been without challenges. Nearly all of the schools in the archdiocese face cancelled (or moved-to-online) auctions and other fundraisers as well as reduced parish support due to the state-wide “stay-at-home” orders. Many parents have lost jobs and are having difficulty making ends meet, including making tuition payments. Yet, the schools continue to serve their children and have not turned their backs on them. The projected revenue loss from these factors is currently estimated at over \$10M through June 30, though we will not know the full toll for some time, especially if school closures extend into the fall months.

Recognizing the need to react swiftly to these circumstances, the Fulcrum Foundation Board of Trustees boldly approved a COVID-19 Emergency Relief Fund, with a goal to raise \$10 million above and beyond our normal fundraising efforts. The board is also seeding this fund with \$1 million to address the immediate financial needs of the schools facing unprecedented hardship. We will go wide with our fundraising efforts for this fund later this summer and we intend for this initiative to last as long as this virus impacts our schools.

Additionally, the Fulcrum Foundation, the Archdiocese, and Catholic Community Services/Housing Services (CCS/CHS) are partnering together, at the request of Archbishop Paul D. Etienne, in joint COVID-19 emergency relief efforts for our collective ministries, including for parishes who are faced with empty pews each week. A portion of the gifts raised in this partnership will provide aid to the archdiocesan schools and will be counted in Fulcrum's COVID-19 Emergency Relief Fund.

In this “crisis of the century,” extraordinary measures are necessary and our community needs institutions it can count on. Fulcrum promises to stand in solidarity and provide unwavering support to the schools that are an essential part of that community. But we cannot fulfill this commitment without you.

We know times are difficult, yet, as always, we ask that you continue to give to Fulcrum what you can, when you can. Because we are, and always will be, stronger together.

Thank you for being a trusted and valued partner to Fulcrum and Catholic schools. Stay safe and well. Our thoughts and prayers are with you all.

—Vivian Shannon
Fulcrum Executive Director

Catholic Schools Lead in Virtual Learning

“Who would have known I would do homeschool online?” said Ida, a local grandmother, raising her grandson Aahmir, a second-grader at Holy Family Bilingual Catholic School in White Center.

Before COVID-19 forced schools to go all online, Ida had never logged onto a computer.

“I said to the school, what is Google Classroom?” Ida recalled. Holy Family Bilingual’s office administrator, Jesika Santillan-Zapata, talked Ida through how

to make sure Aahmir is on track with virtual school.

“We lead with equity and because of Fulcrum, school never stopped for our students. Our demographic is very similar to the public schools in White Center. When COVID-19 happened, the other schools said ‘we can’t’ do virtual school. Our Catholic school said ‘we can,’” shared principal Larkin Temme.

“We’re in constant communication with our students and families, and make sure to respond to each student to foster a dialogue,” said Katie Laskey, Holy Family’s middle school teacher-leader. “We do a check-in question every morning and a ‘mood meter’ talk about things other than the virus, even planning virtual spirit week. Our teachers are trying to respond to each student’s individual needs each day.”

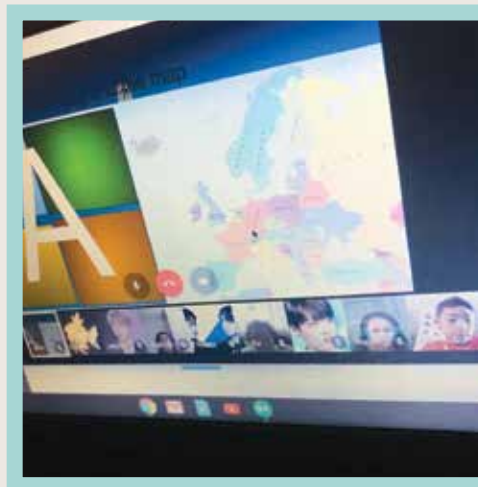
“Thanks to Fulcrum supporters, students who would have otherwise been overlooked in the public system because of a lack of technology resources in their homes have not missed a day of learning with Catholic virtual school in the Archdiocese of Seattle,” said Tom O’Callahan.

Tom and Fulcrum Trustee Jan O’Callahan have worked closely with schools to update

their internal internet access for the past five years through the Fulcrum IT Network Modernization Fund.

“Fulcrum helped a number of our Catholic schools with IT modernization which had them ready to send digital learning home with students. No matter what their socioeconomic status is, their education and school community support continues,” added Jan.

Meanwhile, second-grader Aahmir’s grandmother says she couldn’t be more grateful. “Our Catholic school knows that every family is different and they take the time to meet your needs.”



GRACE Teacher-Leaders Rise to the Challenge

In this time of crisis, teachers are stepping up to lead. The Fulcrum Foundation gave them the tools they needed to do it.



Julie Prepotente, a first-year principal at St. Matthew School in Seattle, credits the Fulcrum Foundation and the Office for Catholic Schools (OCS) for their launch of the GRACE (Guiding Regionally, Advancing Catholic Education) Program. With a total of 135 participants, the GRACE Program offers professional development in instructional leadership for the Archdiocese of Seattle Catholic schools.

In the transition to remote learning, Julie said she relied on the help of two teachers in particular, Martha DeSapio and Greg Hawksford—both GRACE teacher-leaders for St. Matthew.

“Our principals have an incredibly hard job,” Martha said. “The GRACE Program showed us how we can support our principals and our students.”

This method of collective leadership and collaboration provided the GRACE teachers the skills they needed to respond to the crisis. Martha and Greg spearheaded the school’s efforts to move to remote learning after the school buildings were closed. “We set up a plan and offered to send home laptops and even desks for students,” Martha said.

“They were just on it,” Julie recalled. “They came to me and said, ‘We know you have a lot to do—we’ll take over planning the distance learning to help out.’ And then they just took off. It was magical to see.”

Fulcrum’s leadership training helped make it all possible.

“Fulcrum has really been an incredible partner to St. Matthew School over the years, supporting us through many projects and fundraising,” said Julie. “We appreciate everything Fulcrum does to support Catholic schools and to continue the mission of the Church.”

Fulcrum Partnership Grant Helps Transition to Remote Learning

In 2019, St. Michael Catholic School in Snohomish received a Fulcrum Foundation School Partnership Grant to upgrade their technology. The school used the grant to purchase 40 additional laptops and began ramping up its usage of online learning platforms.

Months later, St. Michael's students are thoroughly engaged in remote learning during the COVID-19 crisis, utilizing the exact tools that Fulcrum provided them with.

"I really appreciate the support Fulcrum gave us," said Karen Matthews, the principal of St. Michael's. "If we hadn't had the grant, transitioning to remote learning really would have been much more difficult. The laptops have really helped us communicate with our students."

About 50 of St. Michael's 98 students currently use the school's laptops to learn from home. "We've been able to reach all our students," Karen said. "We had parents who were confused about the online learning in the beginning, but we were able to get them laptops with the learning programs already loaded. It's made the process so much easier. You would not believe how much it helped."

Now, due to the access to technology, all K-8 students at St. Michael's can enjoy educational activities such as direct instruction from their teachers, face-to-face-meetings with their classmates, fluency practice, and all school activities while keeping up with the day-to-day curriculum.



"The technology has sewn everything together and helped create a sense of family," Karen said. "Our parents feel very supported and we have been able to keep our curriculum pretty much the same. We've really been able to show our community that we are here and ready to help."

Living the Faith During COVID-19

Braving the front lines of the COVID-19 pandemic is a calling from God for Rasika Sigara, a registered nurse at Swedish Medical Center who takes care of patients moved to the Psychiatry Unit from the COVID-19 unit.

"This is why I'm here. A lot of people have fear about serving those who are sick, but I'm willing to because I have a strong belief, from my going to Catholic school, that God gave me this opportunity and He always guides me. Every single day I feel good about it," explained Rasika.

Rasika is a single mother of two Seattle Catholic high school students who are Fulcrum Tuition Assistance Grant Program recipients and are now, with the COVID-19 school building closures, getting their educations virtually.

Gemini (who goes by "Gem" with a hard "G"), Rasika's daughter, is a senior at Holy Names Academy, deciding which college she'll attend in the fall. Rasika's son, Sandesh, is a freshman at O'Dea High School where he enjoys swimming in the 50-meter freestyle race.



Both teens are profoundly inspired by two things: their mom and their Catholic education that Fulcrum aid supports.

"I would look at my Catholic school education and support from Fulcrum as a way of getting a different perspective. You see how God has a plan for you and how He can guide you through your low points and bring you to your high points," shared Sandesh. "It means so much to me that as a nurse, my mom is courageous and brave enough to expose herself to what can be

really scary because she wants to help people."

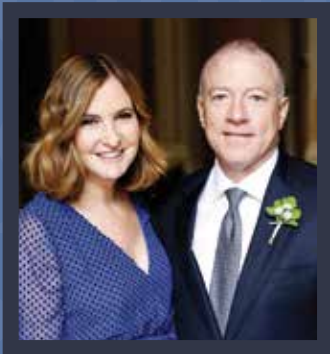
Gem continues, "Some people think that if you're Catholic, you're rigid. But it's not true. I'm more compassionate to people because it gives you more perspective. I'm so proud of my mom's compassion going to work each day knowing she might get sick."

St. James Cathedral is the "church home" where Rasika, Gem, and Sandesh practice their faith as a way of life.

"The teenagers have been 'Faith Mentors' for children with special needs, Gemini has been an altar server, and Sandesh is known for being one of the cathedral's best youth readers. They are like extended family to us," says Theresa Van de Ven, who leads Faith Formation at the cathedral.

Rasika says her "cathedral family" helped inspire her to become a nurse after she immigrated to the area. "The cathedral is always there for me and is one of the many miracles that has happened in my life."

As for the thought of being a health care hero, Rasika sees it as her clear calling. "Patients need us right now and at the end of the day I feel like I did something, thanks to God, who gave me this opportunity."



Fulcrum's 18th annual Celebration of Light was held on January 24, 2020 at the Sheraton Grand Seattle. The inspiring evening highlighted Fulcrum's leadership program and honored longstanding supporters Mike and Mary Lee with the Archbishop's Award. Together, we raised over \$2.1 million dollars, the largest event night total in the foundation's history!

If social distancing rules at the time allow us to do so, please join us at the 19th annual Celebration of Light. Save the date for January 29, 2021.

View the Celebration of Light Photo Album from this year's event on our Facebook page: [Facebook.com/FulcrumFoundation/photos](https://www.facebook.com/FulcrumFoundation/photos).

Thank You

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