



“ Although we might not all look and act alike, we are all children of God with a purpose and talents to share with one another.” - EMILY,

CLASSMATE, PEER MENTOR

fire  
FOUNDATION

2016 Annual Report

# Dear Friends

*and Supporters of Inclusive Catholic Education:*

Thank you for all you do to spark the flames of our FIRE.

As we reflect on the highlights of fiscal year 2016 and look forward to the opportunities that lie ahead, there is no doubt.

The FIRE Foundation's mission is profoundly blessed.

By the generosity of faithful donors. By the dedication of caring educators. By the talent of energetic volunteers. But most of all — FIRE is blessed by God's grace.

**“And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that always having all sufficiency in everything, you may have an abundance for every good deed.” – 2 CORINTHIANS 9:8**

Your investment in FIRE's mission is shaping the hearts of young learners in powerful ways and prompting them to live more fully, love more unconditionally and care more deeply.

Here are a few highlights of 2015-16:

- FIRE Foundation welcomed a new partner school — St. Charles Borromeo — expanding opportunities for inclusive Catholic education in the Northland.
- FIRE Foundation welcomed its first affiliate partner — FIRE Foundation of Northeast Iowa — in the Archdiocese of Dubuque. Plans to welcome a second Midwest affiliate are underway.
- Revenue grew by 22 percent over 2015 making it possible for FIRE to grant an unprecedented \$380,000 to support inclusive Catholic education during the 2016-17 academic year.
- Planning for FIRE's first ever inclusion conference kicked off. The conference, scheduled for February 2017, is expected to draw up to 300 educators and parents hoping to enhance inclusion initiatives at Catholic and parochial schools.

We ask for your prayers as we continue this journey — that FIRE may continue to be blessed with sufficient resources to help schools open their doors and hearts to students with special learning needs. We remain deeply grateful “for every good deed” that supports our students' success.

In Peace and Gratitude,



Peggy VanDyke  
Board President



M. Lynn Hire  
Executive Director

## Our Mission

Our mission is to provide children with special needs the opportunity for an inclusive Catholic education in their home parish schools.

## Our Story

Inclusive education — where children of ALL abilities are welcomed to schools and learn side-by-side — is widely recognized as a best practice in education. In fact, a large body of research demonstrates that children who learn in inclusive environments achieve higher academic success both during and after high school.

Inclusion is also a mandate of our Catholic faith. Our Holy Father Pope Francis and Catholic Social Teaching call us to embrace and walk side-by-side with our brothers and sisters on the margins. A 1978 pastoral statement by the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops leaves no doubt about our responsibility: “There can be no separate Church for people with disabilities. We are one flock that serves a single shepherd.”

The FIRE Foundation (aka: Foundation for Inclusive Religious Education) was founded in 1996 by a group of parents who shared a common dream — to attend their parish schools with siblings and friends and to grow together in knowledge, faith and friendship with their peers. Long before inclusion was recognized as a best practice, FIRE’s founders knew they were on the right track. Inspired by the Holy Spirit, and fueled by passion and determination, these inclusion pioneers convinced parish, school and diocesan leaders to say yes. They persuaded friends and associates to invest financial resources. They launched an “experiment” that would evolve into a best practice model replicated across the country.

Since 1996, through the efforts of parents, a dedicated board of directors, exceptional educators and community members who



embrace inclusive Catholic education, over \$4 million dollars have been raised and countless lives have been impacted in a powerful and positive way. FIRE offers financial grants for qualifying schools within the Catholic Diocese of Kansas City-St. Joseph. These grants assist with the cost of special education teachers, para-professionals as well as training and resources, enabling schools to educate children with special needs alongside their peers.

The FIRE Foundation raises money and raises awareness and advocates for inclusion of ALL God’s children in Catholic schools. We believe that inclusion enhances the education of all children, regardless of ability, by teaching acceptance, compassion and the value of every child of God.

# Keep Our FIRE Burning Brightly

*Opportunities to Support and Strengthen Inclusive Catholic Education*

**VOLUNTEER** We're always looking for folks to serve on event committees and to help out in a variety of ways. What a great way to have some fun and meet people who are passionate about meeting kids' special needs. Call Julie at 816.756.1858 ext. 252.

**JOIN** Become a Friend of FIRE! You'll serve on a team of parents from your parish community. Friends of FIRE meets six times a year to share ideas, help raise money and to expand awareness about FIRE's impact.

**CLICK** It's quick, easy and safe to donate on line at [firefoundation.org](http://firefoundation.org). You can make a one-time donation or set up monthly gift giving. Just click on the Donate button in the upper left corner of the screen and follow the prompts.

**MAIL** Yes, we accept (and welcome) checks. Whether it's \$5, \$50 or \$500, we love receiving money in the mail to support our mission.

**ATTEND.** Our FUNdraising events are open to everyone. Join us at the Play with FIRE golf tournament, Purses with Purpose or FIRE Ball gala.

**DESIGNATE** Every fall, the United Way launches its giving campaign through area employers. You can write in Foundation for Inclusive Religious Education, and your pledge will benefit FIRE.

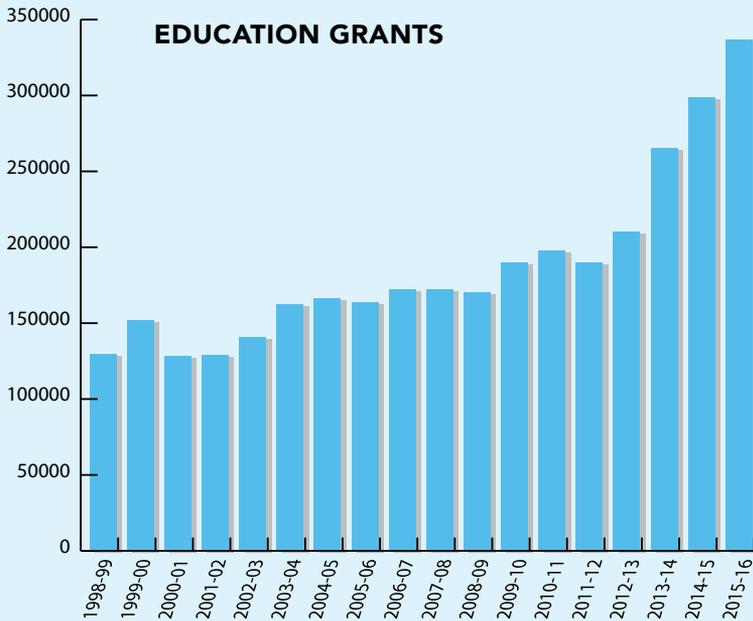
**TELL** If every one of our friends and supporters told just one person about FIRE and invited that person to participate in an event or fundraising campaign, we would double our support.

**DONATE** If that junker in your driveway has lost its get-up-and-go, consider donating it to FIRE. Simply call 1.800.237.5714 and we'll get the wheels in motion for your car donation (and tax deduction).

**INCLUDE** Please remember FIRE in your estate planning. We are happy to work with you to discuss gifts of stock, annuities as well as wills and trusts and other options.

**TAKE** (us to the cleaners)! Hangers Cleaners, that is. They donate 10% of your total bill to FIRE when you sign up by calling 816.941.2262. With just 150 participants spending an average of \$500 per year, FIRE can earn \$7,500+.

"Inclusive education shows us that everyone is welcome in Catholic schools. It opens our eyes and shows us it's okay to be different." - MICHAEL

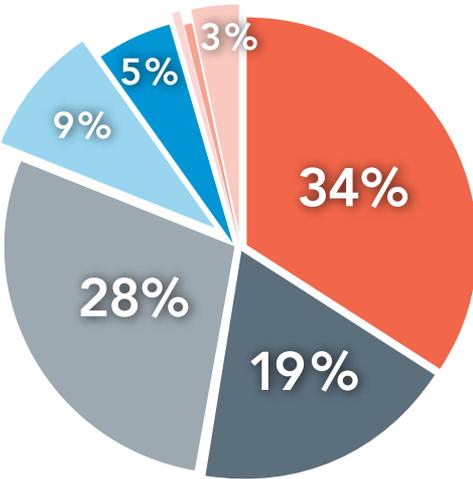


“An education in the fullness of humanity should be the defining feature of Catholic schools. An inclusive education finds a place for all and does not select in an elitist way the beneficiaries of its efforts.” - POPE FRANCIS



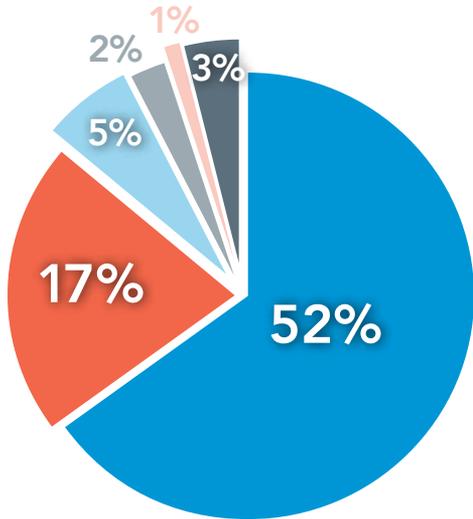
# FIRE By The Numbers

This report reflects donations received between July 1, 2015 – June 30, 2016.



**REVENUES**

● CONTRIBUTIONS.....	220,933
● GRANTS .....	119,950
EVENTS (NET REVENUE)	
● FIRE BALL .....	183,001
● GOLF TOURNAMENT .....	60,404
● PURSES W/ PURPOSE .....	34,300
● INTEREST & OTHER INCOME.....	1,901
● AFFILIATE/CONSULTING INCOME .....	4,750
● IN-KIND CONTRIBUTIONS .....	20,376
<b>TOTAL.....</b>	<b>\$646,494</b>



**EXPENSES**

● EDUCATIONAL GRANTS.....	336,803
● PERSONNEL EXPENSE.....	111,402
● GENERAL ADMIN & SUPPLIES.....	31,311
● TECHNOLOGY & PUBLIC RELATIONS.....	9,842
● PROFESSIONAL FEES .....	8,882
● IN-KIND EXPENSE.....	20,376
<b>TOTAL.....</b>	<b>\$518,616</b>
NET INCOME .....	127,878

Net Income of \$127,878 is carried over to help meet budget goals for the 2016-2017 fiscal year.



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## Stay Up-to-Date

Send us your email address so we can email FIREworks, an e-newsletter that provides the latest and greatest on the people, parishes and projects that bring our mission to life. Send your email to: [fire@diocesekcsj.org](mailto:fire@diocesekcsj.org).

## Follow Us



[www.firefoundation.org](http://www.firefoundation.org)

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*Igniting Inclusive Catholic Education*