

# A day of giving results in over \$56,000 for Catholic schools

BY AMY WISE TAYLOR  
THE CATHOLIC MISCELLANY

**CHARLESTON**—The first ever “Giving Day” for Catholic schools in the diocese turned into a windfall of cash for several participants.

Pledges are still trickling in for some schools, but the most recent total tally is over \$56,000; the majority of which came from four schools: St. Mary Help of Christians in Aiken, St. Anne in Rock Hill, Cardinal Newman in Columbia, and Bishop England in Charleston.

Each one said they used fundraising tips from the Catholic School Development team, and the more tips they used, the more money they raised.

Peggy Wertz, principal at St. Mary Help of Christians, said they followed each of the 10 suggestions for promoting and carrying out Giving Day, and they raised over \$30,000.

“It was the easiest one-day event I’ve ever been a part of, and for such a big return,” Wertz said.

The Giving Day, which is sponsored for free by the National Catholic Education Association, was held over a 24-hour period Jan. 30-31 and was open to all Catholic schools.

St. Mary’s marketing committee followed the simple suggestions, such as send out email blasts and create posts for social media to entice online giving. They also placed “giving envelopes” in the offertory at church. Most importantly, Wertz said, they held an easy fundraising event that involved the students and school community in a fun day of racing friends in laps around the gym, complete with a pizza party.

The children paid a \$5 registration



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fee to walk laps — which covered the cost of the party and other incentives — and collected pledges from friends and family for how many laps they could do. With some kids walking over 100 laps, those donations added up.

“We thought our goal of \$25,000 was stretching it,” Wertz said, “but we wanted to have a big goal, and then we surpassed it!”

Cardinal Newman brought in \$6,600 through social media and email donations, said Terry Hodaly, a school spokeswoman. They plan to use other fundraising suggestions from Catholic School Development for the upcoming Midlands Gives event in May. She said they want to see how the school Giving Day impacts the already-established fund-



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Above, St. Anne School posted updates throughout the Giving Day on Facebook to encourage donations. Left, Anne Fenton Massie participated in the Lap-a-thon at St. Mary Help of Christians to help raise money on Giving Day.

raiser, noting that they don’t want the two campaigns to detract from one another.

This was the first year the diocese participated in the NCEA event.

Another school that exceeded its goal is St. Anne, which garnered \$7,465. Shaileen Riginos, principal, posted live on Facebook about the giving day, and Kym Deer, Dean of Students, put up a video of first graders saying why they love St. Anne. Deer said the kids were pretty popular.

The most effective strategy they undertook, however, was getting the children to participate. Deer said she printed flyers with the Giving Day logo and “had the kids hand them to every car that came through morning drop off.”

The message on the flyer encouraged everyone to use the last 1.5 hours of the campaign to make a big impact. Coupled with the smiling faces of the students, it was an awesome strategy.

“We literally sat and watched the numbers go up for that last hour,” Deer said. “It really was a great day. It was incredible to see that when we all work together for the students, we can have an incredible impact on Catholic education.”

Wertz encouraged all of the schools to take advantage of the fundraising day next year, noting that the tips from school development were

very helpful.

She offered two pieces of advice:

Earmark the money for something. St. Mary tagged their donations for technology and technology improvements. Wertz said it seems like people are more willing to donate when their money isn’t going into some nebulous pot, but is being used for a specific purpose.

Also, involve the kids.

“Involving the children in some small way really did make a difference in our response,” she said.

Bishop England High School, which raised about \$4,400, plans to include their students in a fundraising event next year, said Lisa Doyle, development officer.

“We’ll definitely get involved. It’s a good message all around,” she said.

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by Richard Williams



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