



Commentaries

Investing in the future of our local church



Sarah Hanley

By Sarah Hanley • Posted December 2, 2019

My name is Sarah Hanley, President and CEO of the Catholic Foundation of Greater Philadelphia (CFGF). But telling you this isn't just to allow you to get to know me – it's to share with you the vital role that our Catholic faith plays in my life.

I grew up in Delaware County, attended Villa Maria Academy Lower School, Academy of Notre Dame and Drexel University. I'm an active member of St. Kevin Parish in Springfield along with my husband and two sons. I'm proud to be a Catholic Philadelphian through and through!

I believe our faith and its values have been instrumental in forming me into the wife, mother, daughter, leader, colleague, and friend I am today. I trust that God is with us through every blessing and obstacle we face, taking us on a journey that leads us to where he needs us most. I know that as part of his plan, he brought me to CFGF.

Working at the foundation has taught me more about faith, compassion and stewardship than I could have ever imagined. It's also taught me just how important our faith is and the approach we take is built on those teachings. The work of the church is literally changing lives. It's sheltering the homeless, feeding the hungry, bringing peace to the afflicted, and helping those who need us the most. And as stewards of Christ's many gifts, it is our baptismal call to continue this work and to share the Gospel message.

But in an ever changing world, we must take a step back and ask ourselves, "How exactly are we doing this?" How do we show people all the good work our church is doing during a time when Mass attendance is declining? How do we help support and sustain the important work being done in our parishes and by our dedicated clergy? How do we communicate that our Catholic faith is rooted in the values of kindness, humility and love?

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Most importantly, how do we bolster our Catholic institutions that are living these truths each day to ensure they're available to future generations? These are questions we all ask ourselves, and just over six years ago, so did our founding board members.

In 2013 this group of dedicated, Philadelphia Catholics came up with an idea that they thought might provide answers to these questions and lead to solutions to sustain our local church. These individuals knew they were being called to do something important, something that would change the way we approach stewardship and provide a new, innovative way of supporting our faith.

After careful research, devoted time, and a great deal of prayer, these individuals established a nonprofit organization whose sole purpose was to grow philanthropy to support, sustain and grow the good work made possible through the dedication of so many. Through these efforts, CFGP was established.

Today CFGP operates as an independent, nonprofit community foundation with the mission of growing philanthropy according to the teachings of Jesus Christ. Just as our founders intended, we are grounded in the principles of faith and service. And while we have a deep understanding of our faith, we also have the professional knowledge of how to develop and grow support for Catholic causes. We do this through charitable fund management and development consulting, allowing these two services to ensure an investment in the future of our faith.

CFGP's methodology is straightforward. Our charitable fund management allows both individuals and institutions to invest in a cause they care about and do so through a foundation that has an unparalleled knowledge of Catholic stewardship. Their investment in that cause will set up a financially stable future for that entity, allowing it to grow and prosper.

Our development consulting services enable our Catholic institutions to focus on their most important responsibility, carrying out their mission, while our staff assists with their fundraising and development efforts.

By combining investment management and fundraising services, CFGP is working in concert with you, the faithful, and our archdiocesan institutions, to ensure the values of our faith that we learned as children will also be available to our children, their children, and many more generations to come.

This column will help you get to know who we are and what we do. We'll be sharing tips on investing in charitable causes, fundraising strategies for the ever-changing giving landscape, stories featuring the impactful work of some of our clients and donors, and so much more.

As I mentioned, working at CFGP is a blessing, and I'm humbled that God's plan has brought me here. I look forward to sharing more about our work with you. To learn more about CFGP, visit www.TheCFGP.org.

Sarah Hanley is the president and CEO of the Catholic Foundation of Greater Philadelphia.