



# The Found Coin

September 2025

## CGSUSA Philanthropy News

Banner artwork by Dana, age 9

### *Planning for a New Fiscal Year*

July is the beginning of a new fiscal year for CGSUSA (July 1, 2025-June 30, 2026). Our staff and Board of Trustees spent time in the Spring setting financial and programmatic goals for our work in this new fiscal year. It is always a joy to envision a new year of listening to the Good Shepherd's call as we labor in the vineyard, accompanying His littlest disciples.

This year, we have big fundraising goals for CGSUSA, because we have much work to do! It is a gift to be rooted in our rich history, but called to grow and respond to the needs of this time. We invite you, our donors, members, and friends, to consider how the Good Shepherd is calling you to support our work. Philanthropy is what allows CGSUSA to accompany adults, children, and others in the Church and beyond as they grow in their understanding of the religious potential of children.

Whether through mission courses, scholarships for membership and catechist formation, grants for materials, or through witness and accompaniment with the leaders of our Churches, CGSUSA strives to make an impact with your generosity. Due to the combined generosity of our members and donors, CGSUSA can effectively advocate for the children we serve. We know that children deserve a relationship with Jesus, Our Good Shepherd, and we know that the atrium is the ideal place for the Good Shepherd and the Child to fall in love.

Thank you for remaining with us, for laboring in the vineyard alongside us, and for offering your time, talent, and treasure for the love of the children we serve.

*In this newsletter  
you can expect:*

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Endowment News

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Light Bearers  
Circle

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The Value of  
Membership

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Art and Pearls  
from the Children

# Tending to the Work of CGSUSA: The CGS Endowment Fund

By Claudia Petússon

In 2007, first National Director of CGSUSA, Tina Lillig, in concert with the Board of Trustees, had the wisdom and foresight to establish The Catechesis of the Good Shepherd Endowment Fund through the Oak Park River Forest Community Foundation. They recognized that an endowment is not an embarrassment of riches, but a sign of a fiscally responsible, well-prepared, and forward-looking nonprofit, ready to weather economic downturns and to ensure long-term survival.

The founders of the CGSUSA Endowment Fund also blessed our organization with profoundly wise choice. Our endowment fund is designated as an “educational” fund, thus allowing it to receive corporate matching funds. Over the years we have received matches from Nintendo, the Gates Foundation, General Dynamics, and others. At times these corporations have tripled matched endowment gifts, which has led to significant growth in the corpus of our fund.

Today, we benefit immensely from Tina’s and the Board’s wisdom. In abundant times, the endowment allows CGSUSA to extend its purpose with depth and breadth. In difficult times, the endowment protects staff and programs from drastic curtailment, while continuing to serve members who rely upon the mission and vision of CGSUSA.

Scholarships for Formation Leaders formation and mission communities benefit most from the proceeds of the CGSUSA Endowment Fund, building our future through leaders who form catechists and atria which form our the children in this good work.



*“I am the Vine, You are the Branches.  
Remain in my love.” John 15: 5, 9*

# The CGS Endowment Fund – FAQs

## **What is an Endowment Fund?**

The Catechesis of the Good Shepherd Endowment Fund, held by the Oak Park–River Forest Community Foundation, is a special fund created to provide lasting support for our mission. Unlike regular donations that are spent on carrying out our mission, vision, and purpose immediately, gifts to the endowment are invested. The original gift stays in place, while the investment earnings help sustain CGSUSA year after year. This means your generosity today becomes a gift that keeps giving—supporting the growth and stability of CGS for generations to come.

## **How does CGSUSA use the investment earnings from the endowment fund?**

Our Board of Trustees, in consultation with our staff, has decided to invest the earnings from the CGS Endowment Fund into the formation of formation leaders. This approach is in keeping with the purpose of the endowment. An endowment gift is a “forever gift,” and investing in formation leaders is the gift that keeps on giving to catechists, families, and children.

## **What is the value of the CGS Fund?**

Thanks to the generosity of our donors and the diligent efforts of our Board, the current corpus of the endowment fund is over \$550,000 (depending on the performance of investments). This means CGSUSA receives a check for approximately \$30,000 each year.

## **How do I give to the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd Fund?**

Gifts to the CGS Endowment Fund must be made directly to the Oak Park River Forest Community Foundation. Donors interested in making a forever gift can give online to The Catechesis of the Good Shepherd Fund. The acknowledgement will come from the Oak Park River Forest Community Foundation, but your gift benefits CGSUSA. *Keep in mind, the fund can receive gifts of cash as well as other assets.*

## **Questions?**

If you would like to make a “Forever Gift” to our endowment, please contact Molly Murphy (mollymurphy@cgsusa.org) or Erin Miller (erinmiller@cgsusa.org). Our endowment can receive gifts of cash or stock, and gifts can be made via check or online. *Contact Erin or Molly for more information, as gifts must be directed to the Oak Park River Forest Community Foundation.*

# CGSUSA Philanthropy Committee - Come Join Us!

CGSUSA is seeking volunteers to serve as Philanthropy Committee members.

The mission of the CGS Philanthropy Committee, a standing committee of the CGSUSA Board of Trustees, is to educate, inspire and engage existing and prospective donors to support the mission and programs of CGSUSA.

This committee's goal is to be a valuable resource for identifying, engaging, cultivating, recognizing, and stewarding individual donors. This committee can also help identify or connect corporations, foundations, and other community organizations to build and promote partnerships and financial support.

If you are interested in learning more about this exciting opportunity to drive the impact and legacy of CGSUSA, please contact Philanthropy Committee Chair, Matthew Irwin ([matthewirwin@cgsusa.org](mailto:matthewirwin@cgsusa.org)), or Erin Miller ([erinmiller@cgsusa.org](mailto:erinmiller@cgsusa.org))



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Katushka Olave,  
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## The Light Bearers Circle: Mary and Don Mirrione

My husband and I have been deeply moved by the way the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd has shaped the spiritual lives of children—not just in our own family, but throughout our parish community. We’ve witnessed a quiet reverence, a sincere joy, and a deep love for God blossom in the hearts of children as they encounter our Good Shepherd in the atrium. It’s something truly sacred—something that forms the soul in a way few other experiences can.

Because of this, we felt called to join the Light Bearer’s Circle. Including CGSUSA in our estate plan is our way of giving back to this precious work that has given so much to us. It is an act of love, hope, and gratitude—a way to help ensure that this beautiful encounter between God and the child continues for generations to come.

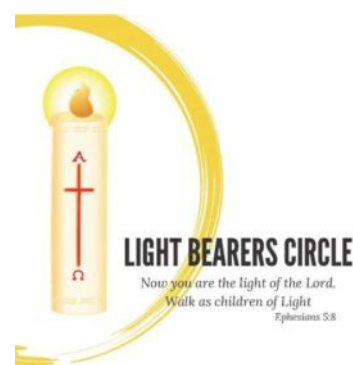
It brings us great peace to know that our legacy will help sustain and grow this mission, supporting catechists, families, and the Church in nurturing the spiritual potential of children—a potential that continues to bless our lives every day.



### Have you designated CGSUSA in your estate plans?

Knowing of your generosity helps us plan for our future. Please contact us to share your plans via our online form so we can thank you!

If you want more information about how to name CGSUSA as a beneficiary in your estate planning, please contact Erin Miller at [erinmiller@cgsusa.org](mailto:erinmiller@cgsusa.org). You can find more information on our website.



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# Art & Pearls from the Children



Art by Cameron, Age 8

## Giving through a Donor Advised Fund

A Donor Advised Fund (DAF) is a simple, flexible way to give to causes you care about. It works like a charitable investment account: you make a donation to your DAF, receive an immediate tax deduction, and then recommend grants from the fund to nonprofits over time. Many donors appreciate the ease of consolidating their giving in one place and the ability to support multiple charities from their DAF. If you have a DAF, you can recommend a gift directly to CGSUSA to help advance our mission. Simply share our legal name and tax ID with your DAF sponsor, and your generosity will go to work supporting children and catechists nationwide.

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# The Value of Membership

CGSUSA is a nonprofit membership organization. Our bylaws are written such that our members elect our Board of Trustees. Our members also pay dues in support of the Association and receive various benefits for this membership, including:

- our printed annual journal,
- access to the materials manual and other online formation content for catechists and families,
- the [Good Shepherd and the Child Podcast](#), which is free and available to all on your favorite podcast platform,
- invitations to online workshops and retreats, and
- regular newsletters with resources for catechists and ministry leaders...[and more!](#)

CGSUSA offers complimentary memberships to religious, priests, and those with financial need. The revenue generated from member dues cover about 55 percent of the actual cost of membership. *Philanthropic gifts are vital to making membership benefits available and accessible to all members. Thank you to our donors and members (individual, organizational, and vendor) for your generosity, which allows CGSUSA to create a membership community inclusive of all who desire to join us.*

To learn more about CGSUSA membership, visit <https://www.cgsusa.org/connect/become-a-member/>



# Growing Seeds: A Sustainable Giving Initiative for CGSUSA Members



Thank you to our 69 recurring donors who have chosen to support CGSUSA through sustainable giving. **We are so grateful for the 42 new recurring donors who have signed up to make monthly gifts since March 2025!**

In 2024, CGSUSA began celebrating 40 years of being an Association of catechists who listen to God with children in the United States and around the world.

**In honor of our 40 years of remaining with children, we launched a new sustainable giving program for CGSUSA members: Growing Seeds.**

As part of Growing Seeds, your regular, automatic gift is simple and convenient, allowing you to spread your philanthropy over time. It also provides CGSUSA with a more predictable source of income so we can focus on sustaining and supporting the religious life of children and those who serve them.

**To select your contribution frequency and amount click [HERE](#) or visit <https://www.cgsusa.org/connect/cgsusa/growing-seeds/> to complete the online giving form. For a minimum gift amount of \$15 per month (\$180 per year), you will automatically be recognized as a CGSUSA Growing Seeds donor, giving you one year of access to the recordings from Between Memory and Hope: 40th Anniversary Celebration as our way of thanking you for your generosity.**



**Hannah, Age 11**



Jocelyn, Age 8, Richmond, VA

## CGSUSA Annual Appeal: 2025-2026

This year, we seek to raise:

- \$175,000 to support CGSUSA's mission, vision and purpose
- \$16,000 to support the Tina Lillig Memorial Fund
- \$7,500 in tribute gifts, honoring catechists, formation leaders, and members
- \$7,500 in memorial gifts honoring those who have gone on to eternal life

Philanthropic support to enhances our impact in the following areas:

- Catechist Formation
- Technology
- Formation Leader Discernment, Training and Continuing Education
- Outreach and Atrium Development
- Infant/Toddler Formation
- International Resources and Support for Religious Communities
- Publications, Events and Educational Resources
- Mustard Seed Growth (support to dioceses, regional groups, etc)

*Thank you for reading!*

**ERIN MILLER,  
STEWARDSHIP  
COORDINATOR**

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[www.cgsusa.org/donate](http://www.cgsusa.org/donate)

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