

A LETTER ASKING THAT YOU JOIN ME

Let me first introduce myself. My father somehow managed to get our family through The Great Depression and WW II without too much hardship. Young as I was and as often as my wants had to be denied, I had no idea how lucky we were. Our needs were met. We were not on the street or in the thick of battle. I grew up (in spite of myself) and came to realize what responsibility was all about.

My wife, Sue, and I each chose a professional life of service to others. That, I think, was important from the day we met. Sue was an RN, finishing her career with twelve years as a hospice nurse. Most of my years were in the administration of county and state branches of not-for-profit agencies. Although not lacking in needs, neither of us were making the big bucks or have been living on generous pensions. If it were not for a great deal of skillful financial advice along the way I would not be writing this letter. We are not among the wealthy. We are, however, able to do what we never thought possible.

To the point. My wife, who died this past March, and I became aware of Imago Dei Middle School nearly ten years ago. We contributed first through the State's Tax Credit program. Then it was for a few specific needs - things on the "Wish List" but didn't survive the cut process. To visit the school, chat with many of the young scholars and get to know some of the staff, served to convince us that we were absolutely correct in providing our support. These young people have gone on with their educations and, for some old enough today, have assumed the challenging responsibilities of adulthood. Knowing this has made our gift to these kids a gift to ourselves as well.

Having stayed close to the school, I am now doing something without solicitation. In memory of my wife and in our name together, I am pledging up to \$50,000 to be matched dollar-for-dollar in response from others. To be perfectly open, it is my intent to encourage those who have thought they were doing all that they could to join me in raising their level of support and to encourage those who are on the fence or were not aware of the school to come on board.

The "**why now**" is important. As you are well aware, budgets are predicated on professional projections of income and expenses. Late last year, the Federal Tax Codes were amended in a way that benefits some taxpayers and detrimentally effects agencies and institutions which had benefitted from the contributions of those taxpayers. While I will not attempt an explanation of this in this letter, I will say that this change has significantly affected the "income" side of the school's ledger. So I choose this time in order to reduce the days, weeks and perhaps months of distraction from educating our young people - time that "beating the bushes" would take to proceed with a balanced 2024 budget without a deficit carried over from 2023. I am assured that the school was right on the budget target for 2023 until the unanticipated tax "reform."

And so, I ask you to join me in stretching beyond what you ever thought to be possible. Please consider that our wants are, for these kids, NEEDS.

I leave you with sincere wishes for a happy year that surpasses your expectations..

Tom (for both me and Sue)