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LUMEN

For Friends of the Archdiocese of Chicago

A photograph of a priest in purple vestments performing a liturgical rite. He is holding a golden censer in his raised right hand, from which a cloud of incense is rising. In his left hand, he holds a golden chalice. He is wearing glasses and a colorful beaded bracelet. The background shows a church interior with wooden paneling and other people.

WALKING
ON THE ROAD
WITH JESUS



Natalie Battaglia Photography

John and Susan Dewan are volunteers for Josephinum Academy.

The legacy of a Ukrainian father's love of Catholic education lives on through his son

Sometimes the full impact of a person's life only reveals itself in a future generation. So it is with the late Ivan Dromohomyreckyj. His son, John Dewan, and his wife, Susan, have carried on his parents' love of family and passion for Catholic education to benefit deserving children in four archdiocesan Catholic schools. By taking advantage of the fund match by the archdiocese of the Invest In Kids Act (also called the Tax Credit Scholarship, or TCS), the Dewans are helping support the education of some of the area's most needy children, while also being able to direct state taxes they've paid to be provided to their schools of choice.

"TCS is unbelievable for donors and recipients alike and needs to see more light of day," said John Dewan, a champion of the program.

Specifically, the Dewans are lending TCS financial support to Our Lady of Tepeyac in Little Village, Josephinum Academy of the Sacred Heart in Wicker Park, St. Nicholas Cathedral School in Ukrainian Village and Christ the King Jesuit College Preparatory School in Austin. For every dollar donated through TCS, the program provides \$3 of the donor's state taxes previously paid to the school for each \$1 the donor gives. All four schools received matching funds on top of the \$3-for-\$1 TCS state tax multiplier by matching the entire amount once again. The archdiocese matched two donations for two of the schools, and the Dewans matched the other two, enabling the school to get \$8 for each \$1 donated by the donor. Empower Illinois and Big Shoulders Fund are state-approved scholarship-granting organizations that partner with the schools on this program.

Dewan's late parents, Ivan and Hermine "Minnie," highly valued Catholic education. They and their 1-year-old daughter, Margaret, arrived in Chicago on June 11, 1954. John was born two weeks later. His younger sister, Maryan, was born five years later. The young family settled in the West Englewood neighborhood.

Ivan (who changed his name to the English version, John Dewan) worked long hours at a box factory to provide for his young family, including Catholic school.

“I am so grateful that my parents sent us to St. Justin Martyr Catholic School [now St. Benedict the African]. We feel so strongly about Catholic education, and TCS is such a wonderful program for families and donors. It allows people who couldn’t otherwise get a great education to get one. It’s made all the difference in the world in our lives.”

When the Dewans named St. Nicholas Cathedral School as a recipient of their TCS gift, they had no idea that it would soon benefit their 4-year-old relative from Ukraine, Andrii. According to Dewan, it was a blessing from God that his father had left them an apartment building in Ukrainian Village, just a half block away from the school.

“When the war in Ukraine broke out and five of my family members sought refuge here, we were able to sponsor them and put them up in that building. Just two months prior to that, we had made our first TCS donation to that very same school with no idea this was going to happen. My father’s presence seemed to be there at the beginning and at the end, making it a full circle.”



Natalie Battaglia Photography

John and Sue Dewan share a light moment with Josephinum Academy of the Sacred Heart Principal Colleen Schrantz.

With a total enrollment of 200, St. Nicholas Cathedral School has 75 Ukrainian refugee children.

In addition to this sponsorship, John volunteers two days a week at Josephinum Academy, an all-girl Catholic high school and a low-income school with 95 percent of students receiving financial aid, including TCS. “I call Josephinum the sister school of Our Lady of Tepeyac. At Tepeyac, for 13 years in a row, students have had a 100 percent college acceptance rate. College acceptance rates are similarly high at Josephinum. It’s so

important to give the students an opportunity to succeed.”

Additionally, the Dewans had initially approached the president of Chicago Jesuit Academy about lending support but were told that Christ the King High School, which shares its campus, needed the support more. “Christ the King became the fourth

school to benefit from our Tax Credit Scholarship funds. Christ the King does incredible work with these young men and women, most of whom come from very difficult home circumstances.”

Parishioners of St. Mary of the Woods in Edgebrook, the Dewans have supported schools through TCS since 2019.

MORE INFO

To find out more about how you can support Catholic education in Chicago and receive a tax credit from the state, contact Jose Piñones, director of giving, at jpinones@archchicago.org or 312.534.8278.