

Dear friends,

What an honor it is to be with you once again at our annual Khaki and Plaid gala event for the support of our catholic Schools. As you already know, literally thousands of children have benefitted by the tuition assistance they have received because of your generosity. You may not always know the children, personally. However, I have the privilege of going out to our schools many times and each year and I meet these kids, and often their parents, too. This tuition assistance makes all the difference in their lives!

I know of a young man, now a seventh grader in one of our Catholic Schools, who is the son of a single mom in a depressed part of our city. His grandmother is devoted to raising him right, and she makes every sacrifice she can for him. He was languishing in his local school. A bright and capable boy with the whole world in front of him — but with no opportunity to show the world what he could do. Frankly, he was bored, and the educational system was failing him. Through the tuition assistance of Hope for the Future, the commitment of his grandmother, and the support of a local pastor, I can tell you now that he is an honor roll student now in a Catholic School, dreams of where he will go to High School and College, and serves every weekend at his parish! Being here tonight, supporting our members of the Court, and donating to Hope for the Future makes a concrete, real difference for our kids, our Church, and our City!

As you know, Bishop Mike and I were just recently in Rome making our *ad limina* visit with Pope Francis. Our Holy Father is so devoted

to our youth and to developing the Church and society of the future. Regarding education, the Holy Father has said:

“Education cannot be neutral. It is either positive or negative; either it enriches or it impoverishes; either it enables a person to grow or it lessens, even corrupts him. The mission of schools is to develop a sense of truth, of what is good and beautiful. If something is true, it is good and beautiful; if it is beautiful; it is good and true; if it is good, it is true and it is beautiful. And together, these elements enable us to grow and help us to love life, even when we are not well, even in the midst of many problems. True education enables us to love life and opens us to the fullness of life.”

Your generosity enables truth, goodness, and beauty in our world! Your generosity changes lives! Your generosity changes the lives of kids who might otherwise end up on the streets, in gangs, trapped in dead-end jobs, and with a sense of despair about the future, into kids who are eager to embrace the future and change the world! Your participation is just that concrete!

I want to offer special thanks to all of you who have come tonight. All who have supported the members of our Court this year. And especially I want to thank the members of our Court who said “yes” to putting themselves on the line for the good of kids throughout our Archdiocese. You are shining examples of the truth, goodness, and beauty Pope Francis to which Pope Francis calls each of us. May God bless you! And in the names of thousands of Catholic School kids I say, “thank you!!!”