

Daytona Beverages Makes It Possible

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When Father Tim Daly began his work six years ago as the pastor at the Basilica of St. Paul in the inner city of Daytona, he never dreamed that orchestrating a full marketing campaign would be one of his first tasks.

Daly wanted local low-income families to know there was help to attend The Basilica School of St. Paul, the parish school connected with the church, which serves children in kindergarten through 8th grade. The school participates in the Step Up For Students scholarship program (then called Children's First Florida) which enables low-income families to receive scholarships to send their children to a school of their choosing.



But Daly knew that many more families in the area could take advantage of the program.

"There were a few students benefitting from the program at the Basilica School of St. Paul, and when we realized the potential help that the scholarship could offer for so many children, we began marketing the opportunity to the community," Daly said. "We saw that there was a great need in the inner city area of Daytona."

The school began marketing the program with television, radio, print and word-of-mouth advertising.

"Most people hadn't heard of the program, or didn't understand. It is confusing to explain where the money comes from," Daly said. "Some families whose children receive scholarships now still don't know where it comes from."

Step Up For Students administers the Florida Tax Credit Scholarship Program, which allows corporations with certain types of Florida tax liabilities to redirect a portion of that liability to fund scholarships for low-income Florida students. Many scholarship recipients may be surprised to find that funding comes from companies that do business in Florida, like Daytona Beverages, LLC, which is located just five miles from the Basilica School of St. Paul.

In fact, since Daytona Beverages, LLC joined Step Up For Students as a corporate partner in 2010, the company's total contributions have funded more than 1,360 scholarships.

"We are pleased that our corporate contributions are helping so many families in need," said Kevin Bowler, president of Daytona Beverages, LLC. "We are proud to support a program that is helping to strengthen our community by empowering families to choose the best educational option for their children."

Contributions from companies such as Daytona Beverages make it possible for the Paredes boys, Enrico and Felipe, to attend the Basilica School of St. Paul.

Their parents, Maria Gomez de la Torre and Cesar Paredes, who moved to the United States from Ecuador six years ago, both attended Catholic schools in their youth, and wanted the same opportunity for their sons.

“It was important to us to provide a faith-based education for our sons, so when we found out that there was help with tuition, we were so happy,” said Maria, who is known by friends and family as Nanette. “We are proud because we feel that we are giving our sons the best education.”

Nanette says that her family appreciates the small school environment.

“We feel that we are part of a family. For the kids, they feel welcome every day,” she said.

It seems that the Basilica School of St. Paul’s marketing campaign certainly worked. The school now serves nearly 100 students on the Step Up Scholarship who otherwise would not have the opportunity to attend a private school.

“Because of the Step Up program and its funders, our retention rate has been very good,” Daly said.

Additionally, Father Lopez High School, the local Catholic high school where Daly was the president before coming to Basilica School of St. Paul, now accepts the scholarship. Now the students can transition easily from our school to Catholic high school, he said.

“The school is truly integrated into the community,” he said. “Not only do we work with the students, but we work closely with the parents, as well. It’s like a family, and everyone is learning.”