

# Gala Goals

## ST. EUGENE CATHOLIC CHURCH & SCHOOL

Each year our church and school work together to host an annual gala with the proceeds primarily supporting special projects and needs at the parish school. Past gala funds have gone toward school technology upgrades, flexible furniture for classrooms and shared spaces, and capital improvements such as carpet replacement. This year, our goal for the school is to purchase new, age-appropriate outdoor play equipment for our Early Childhood program's playground (in development).

**Why are we buying playground equipment when we already have a playground?** Our playground on the south end of the property is adequate for our older students, with the majority of equipment rated for ages five to twelve. Our youngest students in PreK and Kindergarten comprise 30% of our student body, but cannot safely use much of the existing equipment. In order to develop to their full potential, kids need to explore and play freely in a space with age-appropriate risk, not hazards. This past summer, a team of teachers and volunteers worked together to build an outdoor space for Early Childhood in

*Play is an important vehicle for developing critical cognitive and social skills. The philosophy that young children learn best through open-ended, self-directed play permeates the design of our products, creating a foundation for learning that will last a lifetime.*

the backyard of the CCO house. Student have had a blast with the mud kitchen, digging in the sandpit, playing on the slide mound and pretending away in the playhouses that have been passed along to us. However, the space is small and an inadequate substitute for a permanent playground with toys and structures created with younger children in mind.

Play is so important. Riding on a trike helps children develop their coordination and balance. Climbing at a young age helps hone spatial and directional awareness, and also boosts physical skills such as balance, hand and foot coordination, and agility. Loose parts play promotes creativity. Our goal is to create a safe environment for our students that addresses those developmental needs through play.

We take pride in providing **#TheEducationYouPrayFor**. Join us for our 2021 virtual gala on April 16th-17th so we can achieve our goals together! [www.steugenegala.com](http://www.steugenegala.com)

