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## **MORNING STAR INITIATIVE RECEIVES \$1 MILLION GIFT TO HELP REVITALIZE LONG ISLAND'S CATHOLIC ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS**

Uniondale, NY—Michael Pascucci and his family have donated \$1 million to Tomorrow's Hope Foundation ([tomorrowshopefoundation.org](http://tomorrowshopefoundation.org)) in support of the Long Island Catholic School revitalization effort known as the Morning Star Initiative ([morningstarinitiative.org](http://morningstarinitiative.org)), or MSI, led by the Diocese of Rockville Centre's Department of Education, the Marianist Brothers, and Tomorrow's Hope.

Launched in January 2020, MSI is a forward-looking plan to strengthen Long Island's Catholic elementary schools by restoring a robustly Catholic culture, academic excellence, and fiscally sustainable schools. Pascucci's contribution will advance MSI's mission by supporting long-term investments in tuition assistance, technology, academics, recruitment and enrollment, and school leaders and teachers.

Since MSI was launched, the Catholic elementary schools have already seen strong results. Math and reading scores, for example, improved significantly during the 2020-2021 school year despite the challenges of distance learning. Moreover, elementary school enrollment increased slightly this year, the first year-over-year increase in Nursery through 8<sup>th</sup> grade enrollment in two decades.

"We launched Morning Star with the aim of achieving a 'new dawn' for Catholic education on Long Island," says Brother Tom Cleary, Chief Revitalization Officer, Morning Star Initiative and President of Chaminade High School, Mineola. "Thanks to the extraordinary generosity of Michael Pascucci and other donors who have answered the call to support this effort, I am proud to say that this vision is now becoming a reality."

"The Marianists have an extraordinary track record on Long Island, and I am very confident in Brother Tom and the Marianist Brothers who are leading this effort," said Pascucci. "I am hopeful that other individuals and organizations will support this cause to help ensure our Catholic schools have a bright future."

Born on Long Island, Pascucci attended St. Mary's Elementary School in Manhasset. He later became the first member of his family to attend college when he enrolled at Bucknell University and went on to earn an MBA from New York University's School of Business. Soon after, he began his career as an entrepreneur and launched several successful business ventures, including Oxford Resources Corp., one of the nation's largest independent automobile leasing and finance companies; WLNY television station; the private investment company, Duck Pond Associates; and the Sebonack Golf Club in Southampton, N.Y., which he still owns today.

"The education I received in Catholic grade school gave me the foundation I needed to attend college and succeed in my career," said Pascucci. "I strongly believe in supporting this effort for our Catholic schools so they can continue offering those same life-changing opportunities to future generations of children growing up on Long Island."

Under the leadership of Brother Thomas Cleary, S.M. and with the support of Tomorrow's Hope Foundation, more than \$3 million has been raised in support of the Morning Star Initiative's \$10 million goal. The MSI Team is continuing to raise additional funds from individuals and foundations to reach the Morning Star Initiative's \$10 million target.

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