

Where do the dollars go?

A series of articles on how our local communities benefit from donations to the Bishop's Annual Appeal.

St. Joseph Center for Special Learning

Bishop's
Annual
Appeal
Faith • Hope • Charity

Students at the St. Joseph Center for Special Learning in Pottsville have the same hopes and dreams as every other kid: Nickole wants to be a hairdresser and Desiree wants to make her living as a social worker.

Like other school students, they like to have fun, and they like to learn new things: Joey and Dillon really whooped it up on the moon bounce the school brought in for a party at term's end and Daisia enjoyed a lesson in making minestrone soup.

The key difference between these kids and others is that they have intellectual and developmental disabilities. Many are autistic. They need a special place to be encouraged and to learn, to be nurtured and to be challenged to reach their full potential.

The St. Joseph Center is one of three schools in the Diocese of Allentown dedicated to special education. It's a small place – just 18 students – with a giant heart.

“Money from the Bishop's Annual Appeal keeps us functioning day-by-day,” says Principal Julia Leibensperger. “It pays our teachers' salaries. It pays our electric bill.”



Donations to the appeal fund 60 percent of the operating budget of the 56-year-old school, founded by Msgr. John E. Boyle. The school was featured in this year's Bishop's Annual Appeal video.

“Without the Bishop's Annual Appeal,” says Leibensperger, “we wouldn't be here. Our deepest thanks to everyone who gives.”