



## Impact Report

2022 - 23

## Vision

St. Rita School for the Deaf will maximize our students' full potential by developing the whole child to be confident, contributing members of society so that they may carry the message of Christ's love to all they encounter.

## Mission

St. Rita School for the Deaf is a Catholic school, educating students of all faiths in a Christ-centered, barrier-free communication environment through individualized instruction, personal attention, and direct communication.

## Core Values

**Communication** Ensuring we allow all to communicate effectively in a respectful manner

**Catholic** Recognizing that each person is unique, created for a specific purpose and valuable in the eyes of God

**Family** Nurturing healthy relationships with those we love and those we have yet to know

**Education** Empowering each person to achieve his or her full potential through an individualized approach to learning

**Innovation** Willingness to explore and support new ideas and methods in learning





# Dear Friends of St. Rita,

Greetings! As the President of St. Rita School for the Deaf, it is with great pleasure and gratitude that I present the Impact Report for the 2022–2023 year.

This past year has been a testament to the invincible spirit of our school community. Despite the challenges posed throughout this past year, our commitment to providing exceptional education, fostering an accessible environment, and nurturing the unique talents of our students remained steadfast. Together, we continued to embrace innovation and adapted to changing circumstances, ensuring that our students continued to receive the support they needed to thrive.

The core of our mission at St. Rita School for the Deaf is to provide our students with an

education that caters to their individual needs and empowers them to achieve their fullest potential. Throughout the year, our dedicated team of educators and staff worked tirelessly to implement the best practices, leveraging materials and resources and catered to diverse learning styles and modes of communication. We are proud to report that the accomplishments of our students continue to grow.

We continue to foster strong partnerships in the community to broaden our students' experiences and teach others about embracing a more accessible and supportive environment. On and off campus experiences provide opportunities for our students to explore their interests and talents.

Students continue to gain confidence to express themselves fully.

None of the achievements would have been possible without the unwavering support of our donors and stakeholders. Your contribution, big and small, along with your prayers have made a tangible difference in the lives of our students. Your belief in our mission and dedication to the students have laid the foundation for a brighter future for the St. Rita community. From the bottom of our hearts, we express our deepest gratitude to each one of you.

As we embark on a new school year with optimism and enthusiasm, we remain committed to building upon our successes, addressing challenges, and expanding our reach to every deaf and hearing child to receive the specialized education and support they deserve to develop their communication and language.

On behalf of the entire St. Rita community, I extend my heartfelt appreciation to our exceptional staff, devoted parents, dedicated volunteers, and the students whose perseverance continues to inspire us daily. Our collective efforts have brought us this far and together, we will continue to make a lasting impact on the lives of our students and the broader community.



***With immense gratitude and anticipation for the future,***

*Angela M. Frith*

Angela M. Frith, President

**"I truly feel like I am leaving my child with family when I drop him off. Also, it's not only his teachers that I feel care for him. Everyone at St. Rita's seems to have a part in the overall care of the students. We walk down the hallway and someone (who I don't necessarily know) will greet him by name."**



## Talent and Retention

Motivated faculty and staff bring out the best in our students. The experience and expertise that they share with each other helps students be successful and confident. They are the “heart” of the school and our most valuable assets who carry out the mission each day so each child has the opportunity to grow academically, socially, and spiritually. Through recognition, professional and personal development, and recruitment the school strives to retain qualified, motivated, and effective faculty and staff.

- **Faculty and staff completed 794 hours** of professional development. **35 staff attended additional training** outside of the required professional development. **72% of the learning** took place online.
- **94% (72/77) of the employees** are returning for the 2023–2024 school year.
- **93% of faculty and classroom assistants** received recognition for going above and beyond to make the school a great place to be. They were able to pick each category of beverage, snack, and a favor which included the principal subbing for a class, duty-free lunch, grading papers, or making copies.
- **100% of the faculty and staff** were recognized at the start of the school year and second semester with a handwritten note from the principal.

### 81% of \$315,553

solicited from foundations was received to help fund portions of talent and retention, speech and language, and phonological awareness. Thank you for supporting these programs and initiatives:

Elsa Heisel Sule Foundation  
Erma Bantz Foundation  
Jack J. Smith Charitable Trust  
L & L Nippert Charitable Foundation  
Pfau Charitable Foundation  
PNC Bank  
SC Ministry Foundation  
Spaulding Foundation





**"To me and my family St. Rita staff are professional, kind, caring and supportive of my child."**



## Phonological Awareness

All K-12 classrooms implemented phonological awareness instruction as a part of the school's strategic plan to improve overall literacy development.

For students with hearing loss, teachers provided instruction with sign language phonology. Instruction includes the five parameters of signs (handshape, location, palm orientation, non-manual makers and movement). Students were taught to recognize commonalities in parameters across multiple signs (two signs using the same handshape), blend parameters, and manipulative parameters.

For students who are hearing but have communication needs, teachers provided instruction in traditional phonological awareness skills. Using a systematic, multi-sensory approach to meet the diverse needs, students were instructed in skills that helped them attend to, discriminate, remember and manipulate sounds. Instruction also included the use of St. Rita Phoneme Signs that were developed by faculty at the school.

- **68% of the student populations** improved in the area of phonological awareness based on classroom observations and data.

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↗ Click here  
to see the ASL  
class practice  
a prayer

# American Sign Language (ASL)

199 people enrolled in Wednesday night sign language classes for 3 sessions for 9 weeks each. The classes give others an opportunity to connect with deaf culture and enable participants to converse with

deaf and hard  
of hearing  
persons in the  
community.

A petition offered at school masses asked that priests and others in the Archdiocese of Cincinnati

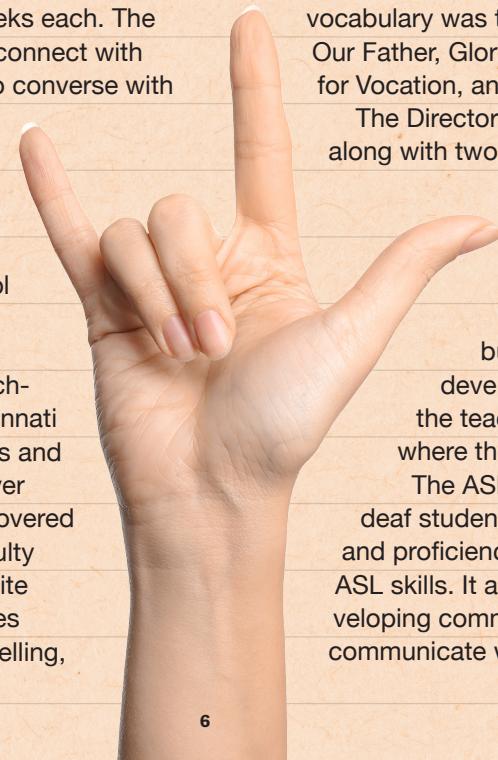
learn ASL to connect with our students and those in the deaf community. The prayer was answered through a donor who covered the cost of 12 classes taught by 5 faculty members to 5 members of the Carmelite Daughters of Elias and 1 priest. Classes included general skills in ASL fingerspelling,

vocabulary, and sentence structure. Religious vocabulary was taught as well as the prayers: Our Father, Glory Be, Hail Mary, Child's Prayer for Vocation, and the Apostle's Creed.

The Director of Curriculum and Instruction along with two staff members collaborated with other schools for the Deaf to create an ASL Curriculum Guide for deaf and hearing students in K-12. It is a flexible, spiraling guide building on specific strands to develop fluent signers and allows the teacher to meet the students where they are linguistically.

The ASL Curriculum Guide assists deaf students in demonstrating fluency and proficiency in receptive and expressive ASL skills. It assists hearing students in developing communication skills to effectively communicate with others.

↗ Register  
for an ASL  
session



# Sharing Our Stories

This past year, one of our goals was to engage and connect with people through storytelling. The stories put faces to the services we offer every day, it set us apart from the competition, and helped define our vision.

Take a moment here to click on some of our stories from the past year.

- St. Rita School featured on What's Happening in Health (Local12)
- St. Rita School president answers life calling to help kids grow (Fox19)



where we resumed our excellent standard of small class sizes (no more than eight children per class) and speech therapy. Students have direct communication with all of their teachers, which means we don't use interpreters, everyone can sign.

Educating goes beyond our classroom walls into the community. We offer a free playgroup for children with special needs who are up to three years old. During this time, parents have the opportunity to meet with other parents and caregivers of children with special needs while the children can interact and play with each other. Parents can learn strategies to support their child's language and communication development.

Continuing our innovative programming allows us to continue to provide additional community support. This holiday season, I want to take this opportunity to say thank you to all those who for years have supported our legacy. This season of giving reminds us to be grateful for gifts that have been given to us and for those gifts that are yet to come.

May this season of giving allow us to listen with our eyes, ears and hearts to bring goodness and light to all so our children can live in a positive environment that allows them to thrive.

Angela Frith is president at St. Rita School for the Deaf. For more information, visit [www.srsdeaf.org/giving.aspx](http://www.srsdeaf.org/giving.aspx).

For 107 years, St. Rita School for the Deaf has educated children, pre-kindergarten to 12th grade, across the Greater Cincinnati region from its classrooms in Evendale. FILE PHOTO

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students were given a technology device to learn online with their teachers; schedules were adjusted and speech and language therapies continued. We adjusted and pivoted in long term to ensure our students had access in their language with online resources, videos and other learning tools. This meant teachers and staff going the extra step to interpret the

videos so they could be understood by the students.

We were able to deliver and accomplish our mission although it looked different than we planned. We continue to serve our community of deaf children or hearing children who need sign language as their main mode of communication.

Now, we're back in the classroom

- St. Rita's students happy to see representation on football's biggest stage (WLWT5)
- Long-time St. Rita staff member retires after 56 years (WLWT5)
- St. Rita alumnus and professional golfer Kevin Hall reflects on the PGA Tour (WCPO9)
- Kevin Hall honored at St. Rita Scholarship Benefit (Fox19)



## Beyond the Classroom

The Work Study Program plays an important role in the students true understanding of what their future may look like. It allows students to personally experience a variety of different jobs to get an idea of their own skills and interests. Hands on experiences are unique and can't be replicated in the classroom. The partnerships and collaborations of local businesses helps students gain skills and real life exposure to jobs and careers.

### Thank you to the following partners:

Gorman Farms  
Kinetic Vision  
Major Tire  
Matthew 25 Ministries  
Sharonville Public Library

The Healing Center  
Timeless Recording Studio  
Walgreens  
Wyoming Coffee

Email [workstudy@srsdeaf.org](mailto:workstudy@srsdeaf.org) to learn more about the program and becoming a partner.

# Student Data

Over the past four school years, St. Rita has seen an increase in the poverty rate of students and their families. The school provides breakfast, lunch and snacks to the students. Sometimes these become the child's only meals during the week. Having a nutritious meal gives children the energy and focus they need so they can learn. Over 51% of the students qualify for free and reduced lunches; however, we know this percentage is larger than applications that are received.

St. Rita School for the Deaf educates any student that has a communication need where sign language or augmentative communication might be of benefit. This includes students who are deaf, hard of hearing, and hearing who have communication needs. Help-

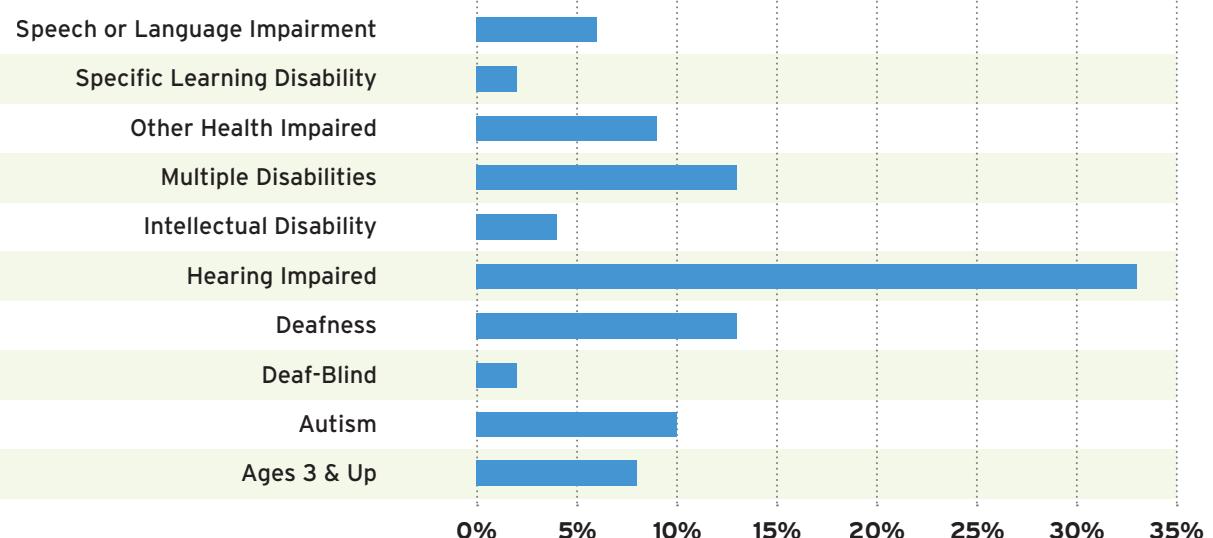


ing students develop meaningful communication is the foundation of St. Rita School for the Deaf.

The school audiologist provides hearing tests to students, assists teachers and staff in implementing amplification in the classrooms, troubleshoots any amplification issues, and provides listening therapy to students according to their IEP.

 Interested in helping provide nutritious snacks or paying a balance on a student's breakfast or lunch fees? Click here to make a donation.

**Student Eligibility Categories 2022-23**



All classrooms are equipped with Roger Systems. This assistive listening device is designed to improve speech understanding and communication for individuals with hearing loss. It can help overcome background noise and enhances sound quality. Roger Systems can also be used with hearing students who have attention disorders.

Under current legislation, childhood hearing aids are considered cosmetic devices by many insurance providers in Ohio. The Ohio House voted to pass House Bill 152 which

would require health insurers to cover costs for childhood hearing aids. Now it is in the Ohio Senate for consideration.

The school has a program that will loan students hearing aids during their day so they can benefit from the access to sounds and amplification. The school audiologist creates ear molds and fits them for each student. The school accepts used and old hearing aids from the community to turn into credit so we can buy supplies such as batteries and molds so there is not a cost to the students' families.



## Reading and Math

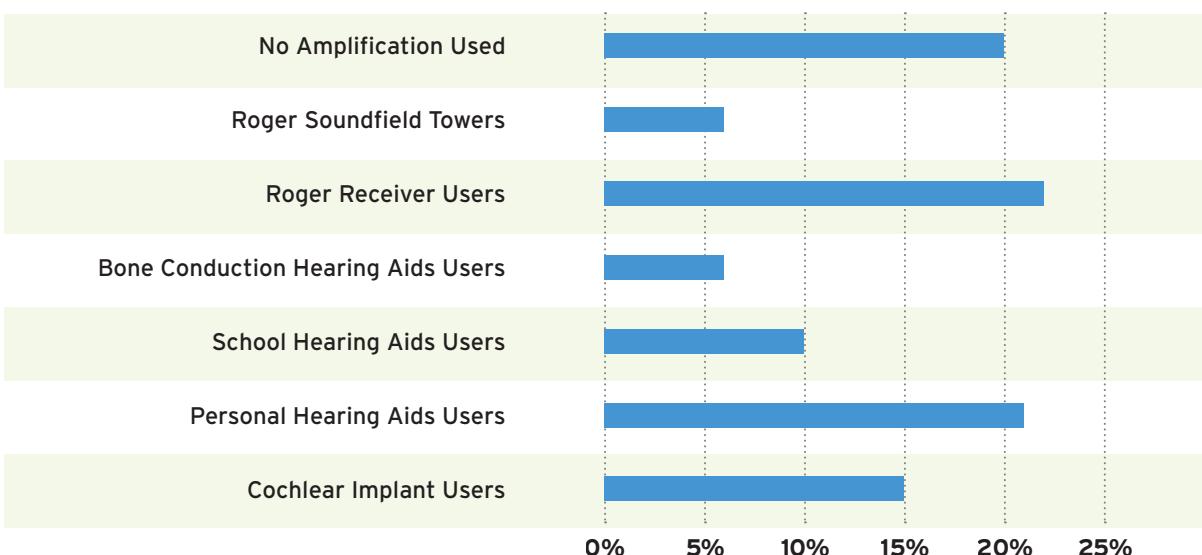
**70%** of the student population maintained or increased their reading level compared to the previous year's assessment.

**72%** of the student population maintained or increased their math level compared to the previous year's assessment.

Interested in learning more about the loaner program?

Contact  
[eryerson@srsdeaf.org](mailto:eryerson@srsdeaf.org)

### Amplification & Roger Systems Usage 2022-23





The actual cost for educating a student at St. Rita is \$51,000. Tuition revenue comes through several sources ranging from \$4,000-\$45,000. The gap to fill is tremendous and since the beginning, we have relied on donors to help.



## Financials

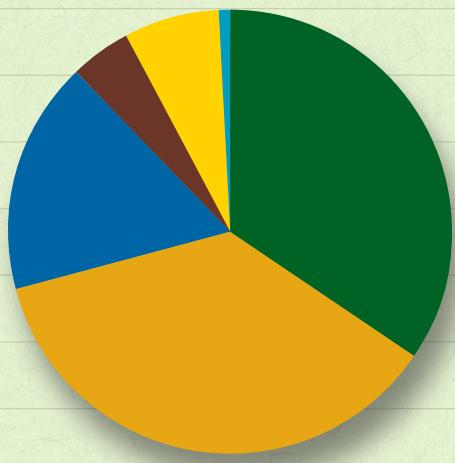
To open doors of opportunities for the students, alleviate high tuition costs, and foster a learning environment that meets each child where they are, please consider making a donation.

St. Rita School for the Deaf continues to provide individualized instruction, personal attention, and direct communication in small class sizes with specialized teachers, speech and language pathologists, and support staff. The school continues to look for sustainable solutions that close the gap between actual costs and tuition.

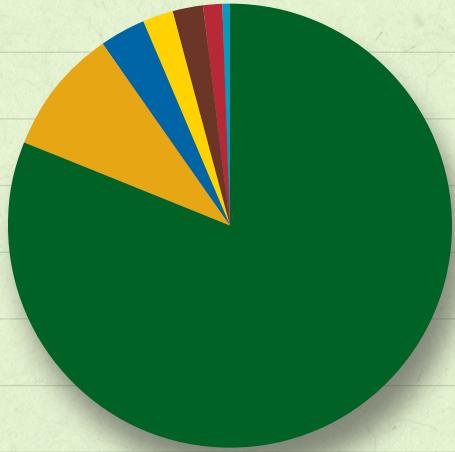
Tuition fees often fall short of covering the true expenses

involved. At no point in time do we want to compromise the St. Rita experience with limited financial aid or strained resources for any student or their families.

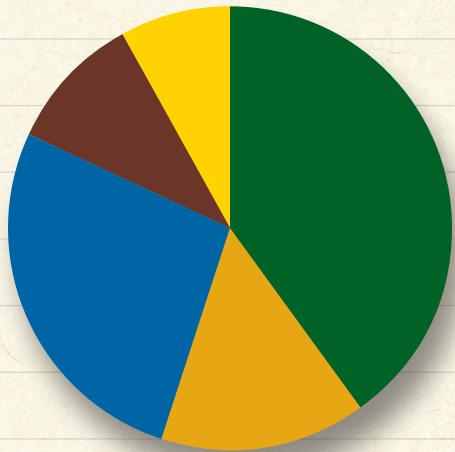
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## Income



## Expenses



## 2022-23 Tuition Revenue Source



1720 Glendale Milford Rd.  
Cincinnati, OH 45215

513.771.7600 • [www.srsdeaf.org](http://www.srsdeaf.org)