



Region 11 Athletic Ministry  
Archdiocese of Philadelphia

Board of Athletic Directors  
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## The 2026 Region 11 Meredith Merlini Catholic Youth Scholarship Program

The Region 11 CYO Board of Athletic Directors is pleased to continue our Scholarship Program for graduating 8th graders from its member parishes who are continuing their education next Fall at an Archdiocesan or private Catholic high school. The Scholarship is named in honor of Meredith Merlini, the long-time Region 11 coach, athletic director, commissioner, and now-retired Chair of our CYO Board.

In the program last year we received 62 essays for scholarship consideration. We asked the students to write about Catholic icons who would make excellent Patron Saints for Region 11 CYO. An independent panel of eleven former but long-time CYO coaches and administrators who no longer coached CYO nor had children attending elementary school was formed to review the essays anonymously to ensure an unbiased evaluation. The committee initially evaluated all 62 essays and chose 12 essays as finalists. Those 12 finalist essays were then re-evaluated and the judges ultimately chose six students to each be awarded a \$1,000 Region 11 CYO Scholarship.

The 2025 Region 11 CYO Scholarship Award recipients were:

Esther Coyle -- Our Lady Help of Christians parish and Queen of Angels school.

Esther wrote about Blessed Chiara Badano and St. John Paul II, and now attends Nazareth Academy.

Ella Galbreath -- Our Lady Help of Christians parish and Queen of Angels school.

Ella wrote about St. Raphael the Archangel and St. John Paul II, and now attends Gwynedd Mercy Academy.

Tessa Latini -- Nativity of Our Lord parish and school.

Tessa wrote about St. Cajetan and St. Margaret of Castello, and now attends Lansdale Catholic.

Juliana McDonald -- St. Albert the Great parish and school.

Juliana wrote about St. John Paul II and Blessed Benedict Daswa, and now attends Nazareth Academy.

Isabella Oliveira -- St. Genevieve parish and school.

Isabella wrote about St. Monica of Hippo and St. Barnabas, and now attends Mount Saint Joseph Academy.

Caroline Yaegel -- St. Hilary parish and school.

Caroline wrote about St. John the Apostle and St. Monica, and now attends Villa Joseph Marie.

This year we will award five scholarships of \$1,000 each. The eligibility criteria have not changed. The graduating 8th grader must have been a CYO participant during grade school and must be continuing his or her education at an Archdiocesan or private Catholic high school.

Interested 8th graders are invited to submit a **ONE-PAGE** essay in **word .doc or .pdf format only** – no “Google Docs” – on the topic below on or before Wednesday, May 6, 2026 to be considered for one of the \$1,000 scholarships. Use of ChatGPT or similar essay-writing tool is prohibited. **Because the essays will be evaluated anonymously, students should not identify their names or specific parishes in the essay itself. Include the following information ONLY in the email:**

NAME - PARISH - SCHOOL - CYO ACTIVITIES - HIGH SCHOOL ATTENDING FALL OF 2026:

Please return to: [2026scholarship@region11cyo.org](mailto:2026scholarship@region11cyo.org) on or before **Wednesday, May 6, 2026.**

(You will receive an email confirming receipt – if you don't receive one, contact the Coordinator.)

2026 CYO Scholarship Question:

**This being the 250th Anniversary of the founding of the United States, your topic is to write about two or three heroes from the Revolutionary War era who exemplified the values and core principles of the Catholic Youth Organization (CYO).**