LAWRENCE CATHOLIC ACADEMY

RELEASE: LAWRENCE CATHOLIC ACADEMY: Grand Opening and Dedication of the Tom and Jean Yawkey Center, the New Recreation Center at Lawrence Catholic Academy

For Immediate Release: September 11, 2026

Lawrence Catholic Academy (LCA) announces the Grand Opening and Dedication of its newly constructed recreation center, the Tom and Jean Yawkey Center. The opening of this recreation center is the final phase of the creation of the new Lawrence Catholic Academy campus in Lawrence, MA. LCA is the first entirely new-construction urban Catholic school to be built in the Archdiocese of Boston in more than half a century.

Tom and Jean Yawkey were longtime owners of the Boston Red Sox, deeply committed to the Greater Boston community and passionate about baseball and amateur athletics. After 70 years of Yawkey ownership, the Boston Red Sox was sold to its current owners, but the Yawkey Foundation has continued the couple's legacy of quiet generosity in many areas, including urban settings such as Lawrence, MA.

For the past 20 years the leaders of the Yawkey Foundation have been generous supporters of LCA and the Cor Unum Meal Center. With its gift of $3 million, the Yawkey Foundation is the largest funder of LCA's successfully completed $30 million capital campaign. Through its longstanding relationship with LCA, the Foundation has been one of the organization's most significant long-term partners and generous financial supporters. Many other nonprofits serving Lawrence have benefited from the Foundation's support as well, including the Boys & Girls Club of Lawrence, the Notre Dame Education Center, Elevated Thought, and Lazarus House.

Father Paul B. O'Brien, President of Lawrence Catholic Academy, said: "The support from the Yawkey Foundation and its trustees has been a unique gift for the children and families of Lawrence. Yawkey has made a very major commitment to providing children in Lawrence the educational facilities they deserve to become the future leaders of our city and state."

The new Tom and Jean Yawkey Center is a 6,871 square foot building with an outdoor artificial turf field. As an athletic space, the recreation center will allow LCA to have daily gym classes indoors, introducing a comprehensive physical education program for all students and allowing for the expansion of LCA's athletic teams. As an auditorium space, the recreation center will provide for school-wide assemblies and events; flexible gatherings for various larger segments of the school population; and activities for parents and students. The recreation center will include a retractable stage, allowing for musical, theatrical, dance, and other artistic performances.

Alicia Verity, Chief Executive Officer of the Yawkey Foundation, said: "For twenty years, it has been our privilege to stand quietly behind Lawrence Catholic Academy and the Cor Unum Meal Center, and to watch what steady, patient support and the strong leadership of LCA's dedicated team can help build. The children, families, and community of LCA deserve nothing but the best, and this Recreation Center is our way of helping make that true. We could not be more delighted to know that these walls will soon be filled with the sound of students running, playing, and simply being kids together. That joy is exactly what Tom and Jean Yawkey hoped their legacy would bring to communities like Lawrence."

Located in Lawrence, MA, LCA offers a strong college preparatory program, including a comprehensive STEM curriculum. The school provides top-quality religious education, strong expectations for students' responsibilities to the world and the local community, and hands-on opportunities for service to others. One hundred percent of LCA's eighth graders graduate to high school every year (90+ percent to selective schools).

LCA's new school campus replaces three woefully inadequate buildings constructed between 1906 and 1926. Students in each grade (PreK-8) now enjoy two fully modern school classrooms and increased space has allowed for the doubling of LCA's Early Childhood Education program. The school's enrollment capacity has been expanded to 600 students. Construction of the Tom and Jean Yawkey Center began in the fall of 2025 and is located on the footprint of the original school buildings.

The total cost for the construction of the new school and recreation center is $30 million ($24 million for the school and $6 million for the recreation center). Fundraising has been successfully completed and includes, remarkably, 18 gifts of $1 million or more.

Grand Opening and Dedication Schedule: Friday, September 11, 2026

The Dedication and Grand Opening will take place outside the Tom and Jean Yawkey Center on Parker Street at 12:15 p.m. Trustees of LCA, Yawkey, and civic leaders will participate.

Students will be welcomed into the Yawkey Center at 12:45 p.m. and they will be seeing the inside for the first time.

At 1:00 p.m. there will be a Dedication Ceremony and Blessing inside the recreation center, featuring leaders of LCA and the Yawkey Foundation.

At 1:15 p.m. LCA will provide games and food for students inside the gymnasium and out on the adjacent turf field.

Lawrence Catholic Academy is located at 101 Parker Street in Lawrence. On-street parking may be scarce. Your best option is to park one block away in the parking lot of Saint Patrick Parish (118 South Broadway) or the Cor Unum Meal Center (191 Salem Street).

About the Yawkey Foundation: For more information, please visit www.yawkeyfoundation.org

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