



4599 Cosby Road | Powhatan, VA 23139 | [belmeadonthejames.com](http://belmeadonthejames.com) | [belmeadonthejames@gmail.com](mailto:belmeadonthejames@gmail.com)

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***Non-profit kicks-off campaign to raise \$400,000 to purchase historic Belmead on the James.***

**POWHATAN, VIRGINIA November 1, 2016** – The newly formed nonprofit Belmead on the James, Inc. today launched a major campaign to raise \$400,000 towards the purchase of the Belmead property in Powhatan, Virginia from the Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament (SBS). The 2,265-acre property is the site where St. Emma Military Academy and St. Francis de Sales High School, established by Louise Drexel Morrell and Saint Katharine Drexel respectively, operated from 1895 to 1972 and educated over 15,000 African American youth. On May 3, 2016, the SBS announced their intention to sell Belmead, and on October 26, 2016 the property was officially placed on the market.

The Board of Directors of Belmead on the James, Inc. (BOJI), countless volunteers, Alumni, and other supporters are working tirelessly to save the cultural, historical, spiritual, ecological, and educational legacy of Saint Katharine Drexel, so that present and future generations of Virginians and Americans can benefit from these treasures. In a time when our Nation and the world have been rocked by vitriol and violence amongst people of different races, creeds and socioeconomic backgrounds, we need a place that speaks to our human potential for justice and healing . . . for ourselves and for our environment. St. Katharine created such a place over 120 years ago in the heart of Virginia, at Belmead. BOJI is committed to maintaining the pristine natural beauty of this sacred space as a warm and welcoming place for **all** God's children. BOJI is dedicated to providing excellent stewardship of the natural resources and of St. Katharine Drexel's cultural, historical, spiritual, ecological, and educational legacy at Belmead.

**To accomplish this BOJI needs immediate help from the public.** As a first step BOJI must raise \$400,000 dollars by December 1, 2016, to assist in securing financing to purchase the property. To that end, BOJI is asking 4000 donors to give \$100 dollars as soon as possible, but by December 1, 2016 at the latest. While this a tall order, based on the outpouring of concern expressed during the past six months that this National treasure might be lost to commercial interests, BOJI believes that donors will step forward to save this amazing place – Belmead on the James.

For more information about Belmead on the James, Inc. and the campaign to save Saint Katharine Drexel's Legacy, please email [belmeadonthejames@gmail.com](mailto:belmeadonthejames@gmail.com) or visit the website [www.belmeadonthejames.com](http://www.belmeadonthejames.com) .

You can support our cause by visiting our donation page at <http://www.belmeadonthejames.com/donate> or mailing a check to Belmead on the James, Inc. 4599 Cosby Road, Powhatan, VA 23139.