



The Freedom Institute  
Christopher Marker, CEO  
2706 Horseshoe Dr. S. Naples, Florida  
239-427-1776  
[Chris.Marker@FreedomInstitute.net](mailto:Chris.Marker@FreedomInstitute.net)  
[www.freedominstitute.net](http://www.freedominstitute.net)

## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

January 6, 2026

### **Freedom Institute Announces Plans to Expand to Ave Maria with \$1 Million Matching Grant Opportunity**

Naples, FL — The Freedom Institute, a rapidly growing and innovative education model redefining high school learning, plans to expand into Ave Maria, supported by a \$1 million matching grant from the Dekko Foundation. The grant will match community contributions dollar-for-dollar, up to \$1 million, accelerating Freedom Institute’s ability to bring its distinctive educational approach to one of Southwest Florida’s fastest-growing communities.

The expansion reflects the extraordinary demand and momentum surrounding Freedom Institute’s model, which blends personalized academics, career preparation, civic leadership, and emerging technology education. Enrollment interest has surged as families seek alternatives to traditional education that better prepare students for real-world success.

“This matching grant is both a vote of confidence and a call to action,” said Freedom Institute CEO Christopher Marker. “Dekko’s Foundation’s matching donation is challenging our community to learn more, come alongside this work, and invest in a proven education model that is changing lives and shaping our future leaders.”

## **A Different Kind of Education**

Freedom Institute was founded with a clear mission: to equip students with the knowledge, skills, and character needed to thrive as responsible, independent, and purpose-driven citizens. Its model emphasizes:

- Personalized learning paths tailored to each student
- Career exploration, internships, and dual-enrollment opportunities
- Civic literacy, leadership, and service
- Early exposure to high-demand skills, including artificial intelligence and emerging technologies

This approach has fueled rapid growth and national recognition, drawing families, educators, and community leaders who believe education should be relevant, rigorous, and aligned with the future.

## **Why Ave Maria and Why Now**

Ave Maria is experiencing significant growth, with families actively seeking high-quality educational options that reflect strong values and forward-looking preparation. Freedom Institute's expansion would create a new learning center designed to serve students while strengthening the broader community through workforce readiness, innovation, and civic engagement.

The \$1 million matching grant means every dollar contributed by donors will be doubled, creating up to \$2 million in total impact to support facilities, staffing, and program development for the Ave Maria expansion.

"This is a rare opportunity for the community to play a direct role in shaping the future of education in Ave Maria," Marker said. "By participating in the match, donors are not just giving, they're investing in students, families, and the long-term vitality of our region."

## **An Invitation to Invest in the Future**

Freedom Institute invites community members, business leaders, and philanthropic partners to join this effort and help unlock the full matching grant. As a federally recognized 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, the Freedom Institute accepts tax-deductible charitable contributions in support of its mission. These investments will ensure more students have access to an education that prepares them not just for college, but for life.

For more information about the Ave Maria expansion or how to participate in the matching fund, visit [www.givebutter.com/freedominstitute](http://www.givebutter.com/freedominstitute) or <https://freedominstitute.net/ways-to->

[give](#). You can also contact Eva Aspegren at 239-913-9599.

### **About the Freedom Institute**

The Freedom Institute is an innovative high school program offering personalized and flexible learning pathways that build critical thinking, financial literacy, and the foundations of engaged American citizenship. Through an AI-enhanced curriculum, a blend of high school and college courses, and real-world experiences—including internships, college and career preparation, and job placement—students gain the skills, knowledge, and values essential for economic freedom and workforce success. The Institute’s American Dream Conversations at Freedom series brings civic, business, and thought leaders directly to students to share lessons about life, liberty, and the pursuit of excellence.

**###**