



## ST. MARY'S ACADEMY

*Today's Young Woman. Tomorrow's Leader.*

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**MEDIA CONTACT:**

Mary Ann Albright  
St. Mary's Academy  
1615 S.W. Fifth Ave.  
Portland, OR 97201  
[www.stmaryspdx.org](http://www.stmaryspdx.org)

Direct: 503.721.7715  
Cell: 503.984.2777  
Fax: 503.223.0995  
[maryann.albright@stmaryspdx.org](mailto:maryann.albright@stmaryspdx.org)  
[@stmaryspdx](#) on Twitter

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### **St. Mary's Academy to host 18<sup>th</sup> Annual Food for Thought Luncheon**

Portland, Ore. – Sept. 22, 2011 – Forty percent of students at St. Mary's Academy receive financial aid to attend Oregon's premier college-preparatory high school for young women. That translates to 250 students. This year, the average financial aid package is \$4,450, and more than \$1.1 million will be given out in tuition assistance. This would not be possible without St. Mary's Academy's yearly Food for Thought Luncheon.

The 18<sup>th</sup> Annual Food for Thought Luncheon will take place Nov. 10 in the Grand Ballroom at the Hilton Portland & Executive Tower, 921 S.W. Sixth Ave., in downtown Portland. Individual tickets and table sponsorships are available now, and money raised goes toward St. Mary's Academy's Tuition Assistance Program. Major sponsors as of today include the Clark Foundation, Mike and Tracey Clark, Tom and Marilyn Fink and Bob and Sue Harold. The Food for Thought Luncheon is chaired by Kimberly Cooper, a member of the St. Mary's Academy Board of Directors and a parent of a junior at St. Mary's. Last year's event raised more than \$355,000, and event organizers hope to top that figure this year.

The keynote speaker is Christine Carter, Ph.D., a sociologist at the Greater Good Science Center, UC Berkeley, and author of "Raising Happiness: 10 Simple Steps for More Joyful Kids and Happier Parents." Dr. Carter studies the science of happiness and the role that practicing gratitude and giving plays in achieving lasting joy. Research has found that happier people tend to be healthier, sleep better, live longer, have richer interpersonal relationships and enjoy greater overall professional and personal success.

"Happiness is a tremendous advantage in a world that emphasizes performance," Dr. Carter writes in her book. "On average, happy people are more successful than unhappy people at both work and love."

Dr. Carter has been quoted in Women's Health and Parenting magazines, The New York Times, the Los Angeles Times and USA Today, among other publications. Her television appearances include "The Oprah Winfrey Show," "The Daily Show with Jon Stewart," "CBS Sunday Morning" and ABC's "World News with Diane Sawyer."

The 2011 Food for Thought Luncheon also will feature student speaker Polina Guzenko, a senior at St. Mary's Academy and a tuition assistance recipient. Polina's family emigrated from her native Ukraine in

1999. Her father died before they moved to the United States, leaving her mother to support four daughters.

Polina, a 17-year-old Portland resident, and one of her younger sisters, Katerina, both attend St. Mary's Academy with help from Food for Thought Luncheon supporters and other generous donors. It's been an enriching experience, according to Polina.

"St. Mary's is full of so many awesome people. The students that come here are enthusiastic about learning. My friends are all different, but we all want the same things, to go to college and to be successful in life," she said.

Polina performs with the school's Marian Singers and helps coordinate Blues Bridge Walk, St. Mary's Academy's annual student fundraiser. She's also a member of Tri-M Music Honor Society, and has played the accordion for six years. Next year, she hopes to attend either the University of Portland or Portland State University to study science, and she dreams of one day becoming an optometrist.

Polina is thankful for the support of Food for Thought Luncheon patrons who have enabled her to access a St. Mary's education, which she credits with setting the course for her future.

"I really appreciate what the donors do for the school, and I'm so grateful that I have the opportunity to come here. If it weren't for that, I wouldn't be here," she said. "I can't imagine not being part of this school, part of this community."

For additional information or questions, please contact Mary Ann Albright, Director of Communications, at 503.721.7715 (direct office), 503.984.2777 (cell), or [maryann.albright@stmaryspx.org](mailto:maryann.albright@stmaryspx.org).

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#### *About St. Mary's Academy*

St. Mary's Academy is a Catholic high school for young women located in the heart of downtown Portland that provides a challenging college-preparatory education with a focus on developing the whole person. Founded in 1859 by the Sisters of the Holy Names of Jesus and Mary, St. Mary's Academy is Oregon's oldest continuously operating secondary school and offers a supportive learning environment to a diverse student body from more than 30 urban, suburban and rural communities in Oregon and Southwest Washington. It is the only school in the state to have received three Blue Ribbon awards from the U.S. Department of Education. For more information about St. Mary's Academy, please visit [www.stmaryspx.org](http://www.stmaryspx.org).