



ST. MARY'S ACADEMY

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Twelve St. Mary's Academy students to participate in Artist Statement show at Pioneer Place next month

Portland, Ore. – Nov. 18, 2011 – Beginning Dec. 1, 12 St. Mary's Academy students will have art on display at Pioneer Place in downtown Portland as part of Artist Statement, a two-part juried exhibit put on by the Oregon Art Education Association and funded through a grant from Macy's.

Artist Statement features artwork from K-12 students from around the state. The first part of the exhibit includes 11 installation works at Place, a gallery space on the third floor of Pioneer Place. The second part is a two- and three-dimensional show at Peoples Art of Portland, also on the third floor of the shopping center (700 S.W. Fifth Ave., Portland).

There will be an opening reception on Dec. 1 as part of First Thursday. The show continues through Dec. 4, and is free and open to the public. For more information, go to www.oregonarted.org or <http://placepdx.tumblr.com>.

For their installation, seven art and Campus Ministry & Service (CMS) Team students from St. Mary's worked to increase understanding of the homeless population in Portland. The installation, titled "Homeless in Portland," replicates a homeless camp. It features a shopping cart, sleeping bags, blankets, tarps, posters and a tent, as well as photos and video footage.

The students behind "Homeless in Portland" are Nikki Laitran, Analies Steensma, Maddy Landis-Croft, Lindsay Cannon, Abi Wells, Devon Huck and Jessica Weisensee.

Earlier this month, Laitran and Wells, both seniors at St. Mary's, visited Right 2 Dream Too (R2D2), a homeless camp at the entrance to Chinatown, to interview homeless people for the video portion of the project.

"It's always interesting to hear the stories of people," said Wells, 17. "We want to show people (with our installation) what homelessness is about. They're people. They all have stories, they all have feelings. We want to portray what they have to go through and deal with."

"Homeless in Portland" dovetails with Immersion, a St. Mary's program where each fall all freshmen immerse themselves in the life of some of the poorest people on the streets of Old Town. Students learn

about the issues of homelessness and to get to know the people and the social service agencies that assist those who live on the streets of the community. Wells was an Immersion leader this fall and is active with CMS.

In addition to working on "Homeless in Portland," Laitran was one of six St. Mary's Academy art students whose pieces were selected for the Peoples Art of Portland show. The other students are Carly Januzzi, Molly McMahon, Anna O'Connor, Elyah Oster-Bainnson and Megan Simms. Several of them have two pieces in the show.

Laitran's first piece, titled "Voodoo Doughnuts: The Magic Is In the Hole," is colored pencil on paper. The 18-year-old AP art student drew a bunny character on a stage surrounded by dancing Voodoo Doughnuts.

"I wanted to be inspired by their doughnuts because it's such a Portland thing," she said.

Her second piece, "Atargatis Derketo, the Goddess of Assyria," is graphite pencil on paper. Laitran drew a statue of the mermaid-goddess perched atop a lion.

Laitran participated in a juried show last year at George Fox University, and is excited to have the chance to do so again. Artist Statement is a wonderful opportunity for art students such as Laitran and the other St. Mary's participants to show their work to a broader audience, said Kathy Mitchell, a St. Mary's Academy art teacher and alumna and Oregon Art Education Association board member.

"It's an opportunity for them to display their work in a public place and connect with the public and also see other students' work," Mitchell said.

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@stmaryspdx.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.stmaryspdx.org.