



ST. MARY'S ACADEMY

Today's Young Woman. Tomorrow's Leader.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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St. Mary's Academy students embrace the true spirit of Christmas with service and charitable giving

Portland, Ore. – Dec. 19, 2011 – At St. Mary's Academy, students are doing their part to ensure that families in need have food, gifts and essential household items this Christmas.

Working through St. Vincent de Paul, St. Mary's Academy adopted 36 families during the holiday season. Students began collecting food and gifts after Thanksgiving. On Dec. 15, students and parent volunteers delivered the Christmas baskets to the families.

Among those taking the baskets to grateful recipients was St. Mary's Academy junior Shelby Wells. Seeing a single mother's Christmas tree go from bare to lined with gifts for her three children was a moving experience for Wells.

"If I don't get anything else for Christmas, that's the best gift anyone could have given me, just the opportunity to do that," Wells said.

The Christmas baskets are just one example of how St. Mary's students are embracing the spirit of giving. The St. Mary's community also worked with JOIN to provide mops, toasters, dishes and other essentials for formerly homeless people through a school giving tree. These items will help smooth people's transitions from the streets to homes.

Earlier this month, about 40 St. Mary's students served lunch and sang Christmas carols at the Northwest Pilot Project Client Holiday Luncheon. Another 20 students went Christmas caroling at the Macdonald Center. St. Mary's students also served soup and visited with diners at the Brother André Café at the Downtown Chapel.

"The opportunity to give is a privilege and responsibility that we want our students to embrace. It gives the season meaning. It gives the girls a sense of what it means to provide for someone else, someone vulnerable," said Maria Fleming, coordinator of student community service at St. Mary's Academy.

"St. Mary's wants our students to be leaders, leaders today and in the future, leaders in their homes, communities, and in the world. We want them to be the kind of leaders who consider everyone, including those who are marginalized and disadvantaged. Projects, like the Christmas baskets, help our students take responsibility for helping others," Fleming 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.