



ST. MARY'S ACADEMY

Today's Young Woman. Tomorrow's Leader.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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St. Mary's Academy teacher back from memorable White House Holiday Reception

Portland, Ore. – Dec. 20, 2011 – St. Mary's Academy Music Director Kathy Briggs had looked at the White House in photos and on television, but those glimpses didn't compare to seeing 1600 Pennsylvania Ave. in person and getting to shake hands with President Barack Obama and First Lady Michelle Obama.

Briggs was among a number of community leaders and volunteers from around the country invited to the White House Holiday Reception on Dec. 14. The invitation came after Briggs participated in a teleconference with the First Lady in November. Even though it meant flying to the East Coast on short notice, the opportunity to attend the reception and meet the President and First Lady was too special to pass up.

"It was so amazing. It was so fun and such a thrill," Briggs said.

Before attending the reception, Briggs went to a briefing at the Eisenhower Executive Office Building, where she heard from key members of the Administration's Office of Public Engagement. Then, it was on to the White House.

"It was very beautiful. It took my breath away," Briggs said. "The White House is beautiful on its own, but to see all the Christmas decorations was incredible."

Later, Briggs got an even more incredible site: seeing Marine One land on the lawn behind the White House and the President and the First Lady disembark. She got a closer view of the Obamas when they addressed the reception guests, and even got to shake hands with both of them and wish them a Merry Christmas.

"They were so at ease and thanked everyone for coming and being their guests and for all the work we do in our communities and as leaders," Briggs 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.