



ST. MARY'S ACADEMY

Today's Young Woman. Tomorrow's Leader.

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St. Mary's Academy science department chairwoman, alumna wins statewide teaching award

Portland, Ore. – October 6, 2011 – Maureen Daschel, a St. Mary's Academy alumna and longtime faculty member, has been named Outstanding Classroom Teacher by the Oregon Science Teachers Association. She will accept her award Oct. 14 in Coos Bay, Ore., as part of the Oregon Science Teachers Association's Annual Conference (www.oregonscience.org).

Daschel, a Vancouver, Wash., resident, chairs St. Mary's Academy's science department. In 2010, she won the Excellence in Education Award at the Annual Alumnae Academy Awards. Daschel has taught at St. Mary's since 1984, and founded and continues to lead two of its most innovative science programs: Teaching, Integrating and Exploring Science (TIES) and Science Research Methods (SRM).

"Over 40 percent of our graduates plan to pursue science as their field of study in college. With that high a percentage, our teachers have to be top-notch. I appreciate Ms. Daschel's colleagues for acknowledging her excellent work," said Patricia Barr, St. Mary's Academy Principal.

Daschel focuses both on encouraging more young women to pursue science and technology as careers and on giving her students the fundamental knowledge they need to be more informed citizens.

"I have a twofold obligation. One is an obligation to kids who want to go on in science, that they are familiar with science fundamentals and processes. The other is to kids who aren't going to go on in science but who, in an increasingly science- and technology-focused world, need to know how to think critically and need to have the confidence to question the experts," she said.

Daschel graduated from St. Mary's Academy in 1977. She holds a Bachelor of Science degree in biology from Oregon State University and Master of Arts in Teaching degree from Lewis & Clark College. She credits her sophomore biology teacher at St. Mary's, Rosemary Anne Parker, SNJM, with igniting her passion for science.

"She is the reason I'm a science teacher," Daschel said. "She had extremely high expectations. Sr. Rosemary Anne Parker always said that what you read about in science was old news, and that you had to be constantly looking forward to what would be discovered next. She talked about lots of things in biology that have come to pass since the '70s. We learned about cloning and things that are now realities when they were just vague ideas. She said, 'You always have to know how science is being used.'"

Daschel now offers her students the opportunity to be science teachers themselves through TIES, a mentorship program established in 1996. TIES pairs St. Mary's Academy sophomores, juniors and seniors with fifth-grade girls from local parochial schools. Mentors and mentees meet twice a month for learning activities, field trips and guest speakers.

"It's so good for the fifth-graders to see a wide range of high-school girls who like and are involved with science," Daschel said. "It's a win for everybody. It's a win for the fifth-graders because they get to learn about and enjoy science. It's a win for our girls because they get to take on a leadership role and be role models."

Another popular science offering at St. Mary's Academy is SRM, a class primarily geared toward seniors that offers students experience working in real labs at partnering organizations such as Oregon Health & Science University, Portland State University, the University of Portland and the Oregon Zoo, as well as various local engineering firms.

Daschel herself knows the importance of hands-on research. For two summers, she participated in the Partners in Science Program, which is funded by the M.J. Murdock Charitable Trust and pairs high-school science teachers with scientists to collaborate on cutting-edge research.

"Offering a research lab experience to science teachers gives them the opportunity to 'do science,' hone problem-solving skills, better prepare students for science fields, and gives them the opportunity to be treated like a professional. It also rejuvenates and creates enthusiasm that teachers can't help but take back to the classroom."

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.