



ST. MARY'S ACADEMY

Today's Young Woman. Tomorrow's Leader.

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MEDIA CONTACT:

Mary Ann Albright
St. Mary's Academy
1615 S.W. Fifth Ave.
Portland, OR 97201
www.stmaryspdx.org

Direct: 503.721.7715
Cell: 503.984.2777
Fax: 503.223.0995
maryann.albright@stmaryspdx.org
@stmaryspdx on Twitter

St. Mary's Academy's Food for Thought Luncheon raises more than \$365,000 for tuition assistance

Portland, Ore. – Nov. 15, 2011 – Food for Thought's keynote speaker, Christine Carter, Ph.D., focused her talk at the luncheon on the correlation among gratitude, giving and happiness. Based on the generosity exhibited by event patrons and the gratitude expressed by St. Mary's Academy, we should all be feeling very happy.

The 18th Annual Food for Thought Tuition Assistance Luncheon took place on Nov. 10 at the Hilton Portland & Executive Tower and raised more than \$365,000 toward a \$1.1 million commitment to financial aid for the 2011-2012 school year.

Forty percent of St. Mary's students receive some form of tuition assistance, and this year the average financial aid package is \$4,450. This would not be possible without St. Mary's Academy's annual Food for Thought Luncheon.

"At the core of our school's mission is a desire to assure access to a St. Mary's Academy education for all young women, regardless of their families' financial means. This event helps us fulfill that commitment," said St. Mary's Academy President Christina Friedhoff. "We are extremely grateful to the hundreds of people who joined us for this cause."

About 700 people attended this year's event, organized by a dedicated committee of volunteers chaired by Kimberly Cooper, St. Mary's Academy Board Member and parent of a junior.

Carter, a sociologist with the Greater Good Science Center at the University of California, Berkeley, and author of "Raising Happiness: 10 Simple Steps for Raising More Joyful Kids and Happier Parents," captivated event attendees with a presentation on the science of happiness.

Student speaker Polina Guzenko, a St. Mary's senior and tuition assistance recipient, expressed her gratitude to Food for Thought patrons for making it possible for her to attend Oregon's premier college-preparatory high school for young women.

“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 all of these wonderful people, I wouldn’t be here,” she said. “I can’t imagine not being part of this school, part of this community.”

Guzenko’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.

Guzenko and one of her younger sisters, Katerina, both attend St. Mary’s Academy with help from the school’s tuition assistance program.

High school has been an enriching experience, according to Guzenko.

“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.

Maggie Gardner, a member of St. Mary’s Academy’s class of 1998 and student speaker at this event in 1997, offers current students such as Guzenko a shining example. Gardner received tuition assistance while at St. Mary’s. She spoke at the luncheon about how St. Mary’s helped set the course for her future.

After graduating from St. Mary’s, Gardner attended Harvard University and later Harvard Law School, where she graduated magna cum laude and as an editor of the Harvard Law Review.

Gardner clerked for the Honorable Sandra Lynch on the First Circuit Court of Appeals and worked at the law firm of WilmerHale and for the judges of the Special Tribunal for Lebanon before recently returning to Portland to clerk for the Honorable Michael H. Simon of the U.S. District Court.

“St. Mary’s prepared me for academic success, but it also gave me something even more valuable: the confidence and clarity to follow my own path and to build a happy and fulfilling life on my own terms,” Gardner said.

St. Mary’s Academy would like to thank everyone who participated in this year’s Food for Thought Tuition Assistance Luncheon, including our major event sponsors: the Clark Foundation; Mike and Tracey Clark; Kimberly Cooper and Jon Jaqua; Margaret A. Thompson ’34; Mary Mathews Stevens ’80; Tom and Marilyn Fink; Bob and Sue Harold; Vikki Mee; the B.P., Lester & Regina John Foundation; the Maybelle Clark Macdonald Fund and the Wheeler Foundation.

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.