



# ST. MARY'S ACADEMY

*Today's Young Woman. Tomorrow's Leader.*

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **St. Mary's Academy Raises Poverty Awareness With Renowned Rower, Katie Spotz**

Portland, Ore. – **April 14, 2010** – Each year Poverty Awareness Week at St. Mary's Academy aims to educate the student body on an aspect of poverty of which they might not be aware. As this year's discussions are focused on how water affects poverty, St. Mary's is pleased to welcome renowned rower, Katie Spotz, as a guest speaker on Wednesday, April 21 at 7 p.m. in the SMA Commons.

Recently featured on "*Anderson Cooper 360*" and "*CBS Evening News with Katie Couric*," Spotz is an activist who recently rowed across the Atlantic Ocean during a span of 70 days and 2,800 miles to bring attention to the Blue Planet Run Foundation, which aids in bringing safe drinking water to communities around the world.

During her presentation to St. Mary's parents, students, faculty and staff on April 21, Spotz, along with Blue Planet Run founder, Jin Zidell, will share issues and information on the world water crisis. Further, Spotz will share her personal story of crossing the Atlantic Ocean.

"Water is a critical global issue and in many parts of our world it is at crisis level," said principal Patricia Barr. "We are fortunate to have a guest speaker of this magnitude who will educate us about how to work toward solutions."

Although morning prayers and displays showing the various ways in which water is used and misused during Poverty Awareness Week (April 19-23), the concentration of the week will be Wednesday, April 21. All 600 students will participate in dialogue sessions to shed light on the issues surrounding how water affects poverty including privatization, conflicts over water rights and access, how the quality of water can lead to diseases, potable drinking water, people's right to accessible clean water and much more.

(more)

Media appearances with Katie Spatz are available during April 21 by contacting Crystal Ghassemi at 503-724-8589. For additional information or questions, please contact Crystal Ghassemi, Director of Marketing and Public Relations, at 503-724-8589 (cell), 503-721-7715 (direct office) or [crystal.ghassemi@stmaryspdx.org](mailto:crystal.ghassemi@stmaryspdx.org).

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*About St. Mary's Academy*

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 one of 716 all-female schools in the country. The student body represents a diverse background of young women from over 30 urban, suburban, and rural communities in Oregon and southwest Washington. St. Mary's Academy is distinguished by its development of the whole person, and is the only school in the state to receive three U.S. Department of Education Blue Ribbon Schools awards. For more information about St. Mary's Academy, please visit: [www.stmaryspdx.org](http://www.stmaryspdx.org).