



ST. MARY'S ACADEMY

Today's Young Woman. Tomorrow's Leader.

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St. Mary's Academy Students Help in Haiti Relief With Donation Drives and Prayer

Portland, Ore. – **January 21, 2010** – When the news of the Haiti earthquake reached St. Mary's Academy, it was no surprise students quickly worked to help in the relief and recovery efforts. In addition to several prayer services, students started donation drives to benefit Mercy Corps and urged fellow classmates to donate before school, during lunch and after school. In all, students raised more than \$2,000 at the school and immeasurable more by encouraging people to directly donate at Mercy Corps online.

"Your generosity by reaching out to your community gives us the flexibility to respond efficiently and effectively to the current disaster in Haiti," said Minda Seibert, Senior Community Relations Officer for Mercy Corps.

In addition to donation drives, Campus Minister Randy Kollars hosted several prayer sessions in response to a helplessness feeling many have after such a disaster. Emphasizing that St. Mary's is a community of faith and that we are not hopeless, the prayer services included time to reflect on images of Haiti. Participants prayed, sang and reflected on the events. Kollars then invited participants to place a "bead of hope" amidst the rubble to built a visual image of how prayer brings color, life and hope to a grey situation. Students continue to be in awe of the growing beauty and contrast the beads bring amidst all the grey.

"My goal was to convey that we are not helpless, even during the early stages," Kollars says. "Also, we are the ones that provide hope to these people in helpless and hopeless situations. We start with prayer and from prayer comes action like money, help, etc."

For more information on the Haitian relief efforts, please contact Carrie Swetonic or Sister Linda Patrick at St. Mary's Academy at 503-228-8306.

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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.



Students happily collect donations in the front hall of St. Mary's Academy for Mercy Corps in part of the Haiti relief efforts.

Seated left to right: Rebecca Larrabee, Andrea Vandermolen, Kelly Smale
Donating: Caroline Tawney