



STAFF FRIDAY PROFILE

EMILY NIEDERMAYER BECKER '86

DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT

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Emily Becker may be new to working at St. Mary's Academy, but she is familiar with the SMA community and the school itself through her own educational background, and that of her family and friends.

"I come from a huge old Portland family, and being rooted in this community is important to me. I feel a sense of responsibility and commitment to make it a better place. My sisters and I all graduated from St. Mary's. In fact, my two sisters-in-law are St. Mary's alumnae, as well as countless cousins," said Becker, who came on board as Director of Development at St. Mary's in July.

After graduating from St. Mary's in 1986, she attended Whitman College, where she studied politics. She began her fundraising career at Whitman, before moving on to Reed College and later Pacific University.

She devoted 12 years to the higher education sector, then spent eight years as the Director of Development at Catlin Gabel School. Most recently, she served as the Vice President for Advancement at "I Have a Dream" Foundation – Oregon, a nonprofit focused on ensuring that all children have access to college, as well as career and economic independence.

"I've spent my entire career in education, and I couldn't be more delighted to be back home at St. Mary's," Becker said.

She and her husband Trevor have two wonderful children — daughter Renate, who is entering first grade this fall, and son Jack, who is 2½. The family travels as much as they can to see relatives throughout the country and to expose their kids to the world.

As the mother of young girl, Becker feels personally invested in helping to ensure that future generations of women can reap the same benefits of a St. Mary's education that she enjoyed.

"When the opportunity came up to return to my alma mater, lead the school's development efforts and be a part of inspiring the next generation of women leaders, it was an opportunity I couldn't refuse. Teaching young women to become all they are intended to be is something I feel very passionately about, and I believe St. Mary's does that second to none," Becker said.



Q&A with Emily Becker

Q: Why did you choose SMA?

A: In many ways, SMA chose me! I am an extremely grateful and fortunate alumna. So much of who I am was developed and inspired while I was a student at St. Mary's. When I saw the opportunity to come back and lead the development efforts, it was something I couldn't refuse. I specifically wanted to come to SMA now because I am excited about the ambitious vision the school has for its future.

Q: What are you most looking forward to experiencing in your new position?

A: I am excited to be a part of the community. To get to know the students, parents, faculty and staff and to support their dreams and aspirations through our fundraising efforts. I am also looking forward to engaging more alumnae in the life of the school.

Q: What is your favorite academic subject?

A: I loved math because it integrated logic with storytelling, much like fundraising.

Q: What is your favorite hobby/sport?

A: I love to ski. I was put on skis by my brothers when I learned to walk, and it's a passion I've now passed on to my children. I also love to play tennis, something else that I hope we'll do as a family. I have two young children, so most of my hobbies revolve around them!

Q: What volunteer work do you do?

A: I serve on the advisory board for Levé, a nonprofit focusing on lifting philanthropy in the community. Our goal is to pass the philanthropic torch to the next generation by inspiring younger adults to give back through their time and resources. In addition, I am involved at both my children's schools as a volunteer (Cathedral and Fruit and Flower). I'm also passionate about "I Have a Dream" Foundation – Oregon. I have been giving back since I was a child. My parents expected us to pay it forward, and it's something that was reinforced at St. Mary's. It's a value I hold dear.

Q: What three adjectives best describe you and why?

A: Resilient, spirited and direct. I always see what's possible, I like to play, and I speak my mind. I often joke that I was raised by a pack of wolves — I'm one of eight children and have five brothers. I learned at a young age that there is no constant other than change. I tend to embrace change and enjoy the possibilities it brings.

Q: What book changed your life and why?

A: In the last five years, I have read mostly children's books. In fact, I read "Paddington Bear" every night, and in a strange way, it has changed my life. It reminds me every day to be adventurous, to follow my passions, to believe in limitless possibility, to rely on others, and to face my fears. Paddington set off to see the world, something that I aspire to do, whether that means within my own community or the world at large.

Q: What inspires you?

A: My kids inspire me. I love the direct, honest and carefree way they see the world. I love how they live in the moment. They are authentic, real and awesome. One of my favorite quotes is "Be truthful, gentle and fearless." — Gandhi