



ST. MARY'S
ACADEMY

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**St. Mary's Academy Celebrates Record-Breaking Food for Thought Tuition Assistance
Fundraising Luncheon**

Portland, Ore. – More than 800 people filled the Portland Hilton Grand Ballroom earlier this month to demonstrate their support of future women leaders of St. Mary's Academy, raising a record-breaking \$510,000. The 24th annual Food for Thought luncheon supports tuition assistance, enabling girls across the Portland and SW Washington metro area to benefit from the all-girl, Catholic, college-prep experience that only St. Mary's can provide, no matter their financial circumstances.

"We are so grateful for the incredible support, generosity and commitment shown by our donors in support of our tuition assistance program which led to the most successful fundraising result yet," said Emily Niedermeyer Becker '86, Vice President for Development. This year, St. Mary's Academy has committed close to \$1.9 million in tuition assistance to 40% of student families.

Luncheon keynote speaker, human behavior researcher and bestselling author, Vanessa Van Edwards, inspired attendees with research proving that leaders can be made through intentional experiences and by developing a leadership mindset. As a graduate of an all-girl school, Vanessa says "We must equip our young women with the skills to have a positive impact in the world. The power is with us."

Their deep passion for developing girls into leaders drove Food for Thought co-chairs, Deborah Burton, Senior Vice President | Chief Nursing Officer, Providence St. Joseph Health and Rachel Leiber '00, Business Development Director, Xealth, to lead this effort. Deborah says, "Never has there been a more important time to empower young women to lead with confidence and grace." As a St. Mary's Academy alumna, Rachel feels strongly about the role alumnae play, sharing that "investing financially in St. Mary's girls is the most important way we can open doors for future women leaders."

A moving speech by St. Mary's Academy senior Karen Reyes demonstrated the significant impact of financial aid. Karen is an active student leader in many campus organizations including Women of Color in Action, the Latino Student Union and the Spirit Walk student fundraising committee, and serves as a

Student Ambassador. She credits St. Mary's Academy for having "provided the space, support and encouragement to find and develop my voice and leadership skills."

Bringing the audience to tears, she shared, "That nervous freshman who wondered if she could make it here, is now applying to college with dreams of becoming a neonatal nurse. I guarantee you that with an education from St. Mary's, young women like me will not only succeed as students, but as women in this world." Karen deeply appreciates the financial support that has allowed her the gift of this all-girl experience, saying, "I wouldn't be here today, with all of these doors open to me, without the support of my mom, and every generous donor giving to tuition assistance."

St. Mary's Academy principal, Nicole Foran, has watched Karen and thousands of other young women graduate and become impactful and trusted leaders in their communities. "We witness how powerful and transformative a St. Mary's education is. Our passionate community and pioneering culture foster an environment where girls collaborate, lead, mentor and learn from one another as adventurous, engaged learners. With the support of our generous donors, we will continue to develop strong leaders of tomorrow."

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At St. Mary's Academy, We Believe.

Located in the heart of downtown Portland, Oregon, St. Mary's Academy is the state's oldest continually-operating school and its only all-girls secondary school. Founded in 1859 by the Sisters of the Holy Names of Jesus and Mary, St. Mary's Academy serves more than 700 young women in grades 9-12 that graduate with a 100% college acceptance rate. St. Mary's Academy Students achieve, excel and are recognized locally, regionally and nationally in academic fields, the arts, athletics, community services and extra- and co-curricular activities. www.stmaryspdx.org