

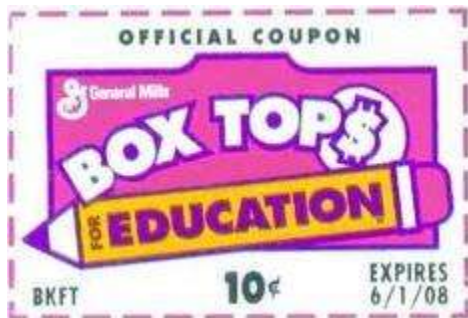
Seventh Grader, Colin Rowe, Leads Operation Welcome Home



Hundreds of our Sailors, Airmen, Soldiers and Marines return from the War on Terror every week through the gates of the Baltimore/ Washington International Thurgood Marshall Airport. Since March 2007, Operation Welcome Home volunteers have greeted over 250 flights and more than 60,000 Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen and Marines. Sponsored by Seventh Grader Colin Rowe, St. Mary's Middle School students helped to create "thank you" cards during Advisory to go into goodie bags the troops receive when they return home. Many have been on planes for days making connections to get back to the United States and most have other connections to make to get to their home towns. The greeting they receive by Operation Welcome Home is the first on American soil after many months to years stationed abroad.

Colin will be personally delivering our letters to the soldiers while he is in Baltimore visiting family for the holidays. Thank you for your generous help and support.

"Box Tops for Education" to Benefit St. Mary's Library



Sixth Grade student, Max Rist has launched a drive to collect Box Tops for Education to earn money for the St Mary's Library. Max has placed a collection jar in each classroom and sent fliers home to parents to kick off this box top drive. Each box top is worth \$.10 to the school. The money will be used to buy books and other media for our wonderful library.

Most of you are familiar with these box tops, but you can find out complete information by visiting boxtopforeducation.com. This website also has a complete list of products that display the box tops, as well as coupons and several other ways to earn cash for our school.

To generate excitement, the K-5 class that collects the most box tops by March 11th (end of trimester) will win a pizza party for the whole class.

Thanks for your help in making this a worthwhile effort for our school!

Letters to Santa Help Support Make-A-Wish Foundation



Kindergarten, First and Second Grade students have helped the Make-A-Wish Foundation, in conjunction with Macy's, by writing letters to Santa in class. In recognition of National Believe Day on December 10, 2010, Macy's will generously donate \$2 to the Make-A-Wish Foundation for each "Letter to Santa" received on the 10th. National Believe Day is dedicated to recognizing the generosity and spirit of the holiday season. To learn more, visit macys.com/believe.

Stamped envelopes containing the students' letter addressed to "Santa at the North Pole" were delivered to Santa's Mailbox at Macy's after collecting them from the classes on Friday afternoon. Thank you for your support in helping to bring joy to another child's Christmas.

Help Give Homeless Children a Christmas



Sixth grade student, Alyssa McConkey would like your generous help in supporting her service project to benefit homeless children this Christmas. Alyssa, representing her Girl Scout Troop 1624, will be collecting Build-a-Bears and other gently used stuffed animals in green bins in the Middle School hallway by the globe. Alyssa hopes, "You can make a child who has nothing happier for what you gave them." Please help support by bringing in your stuffed animals by Friday, December 10th, 2010.

7th Grade Supports Family Night at the Book Fair



As a service to the library and all the teachers, the 7th grade organized the sale of pizza and drinks during Family Night at the Book Fair. The project profited \$559 to be used to purchase books from teachers' wish lists. The goal of the project was to buy a book for every teacher and classrooms which were wrapped and delivered throughout the days following the Book Fair. Most of all, 7th Grade hopes you enjoy your books!

Cooking Class to Benefit Pacific Marine Mammal Center



Do you enjoy baking cookies? If so, plan on attending Mrs. Bratcher's cooking class next Thursday, December 9th. The class will be held from 3:15 to 4 in the St. Mary's kitchen. All class participants must pay \$10, but all proceeds raised will be donated to the Pacific Marine Mammal Center. The class can only accommodate twenty students, so please let Mrs. Jelic (room 210) know if you are interested in attending. Come join in on the fun!

PTF Sponsors Children's Clothing Drive for Illumination Foundation



The PTF is sponsoring an outreach project for Children's Christmas clothes drive to benefit the Illumination Foundation, serving Orange County's underprivileged children. They will be collecting gently used Christmas clothes starting November 29 through December 14. Look for collection bins by the front office and touch another child's life.

Fifth Grade "Feast" Benefits Homeless



This year, Fifth Grade celebrated Thanksgiving with a “Feast” where students put together either a sack lunch or a snack bag to be delivered to the Southwest Community Center in Santa Ana. The shelter provides breakfast and lunch, so there is concern about what the homeless people will have to eat later for dinner. They serve at least 100 lunches a day and run out of food always, so sack lunches are also welcome. In addressing the issue of helping the homeless, Fifth Grade was able to incorporate their inquiry question “Why would you leave your home?” for further discussion.

As you may remember, the shelter burned down just before Christmas last year so they are serving lunches out of a temporary location nearby. Our food items should be delivered to Elsa at the Wiley L. Kimrough Masonic Lodge, located at 1401 West 5th St. in Santa Ana.

For more ways to help and support, please visit (swcommunitycenter.org)

“Pink Day” Creates Cancer Awareness



After a season of wearing of pink to create cancer awareness amongst their opponents on the field and the students of St. Mary’s, the Boys Football and Girls Volleyball team were recognized for their efforts with the ASB sponsored “Pink Day” celebration on November 12, 2010. With support from Mr. Dennis and Ms. Hoffman, the “pink season” culminated with a volleyball clinic with all proceeds going to the Susan G. Komen Foundation.

In addition to the clinic, several members of the St. Mary’s community took part in ASB’s “Pink Day” Cancer Awareness Assembly. Students Carissa Adams, Makenna Rieden, Ashlyn Underwood, Smantha Warday, and Mackenzie Ricker and parent, Lisa Traylor, originally volunteered to donate eight inches of their hair to Beautiful Lengths. Inspired by the generosity of the others, Emilie Marcinkowski, Lindsay Brenneman, Frances Gargano joined in the giving spirit by donating their hair as well. Stylists from Shampoo Cocktails cut the volunteers’ hair to be donated to the Beautiful Lengths program to create wigs for children and adults going through chemotherapy treatment. For more information on ways to help and support, visit www.Pantene.com/BeautifulLengths

"Howls for Towels" Returns



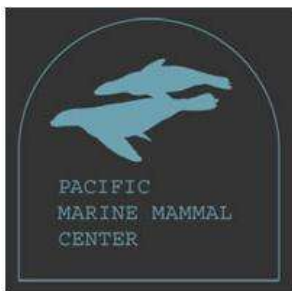
Due to the huge success of last year's "Howls for Towels" service learning project, fifth grade student, Aedan Frazier, will be looking for your much need donations. With the holidays approaching and company coming, now is a good time to clean out your closets in support of the "Howls for Towels" project. This year the project is supporting the Coastal German Shepherd Rescue of Orange County.

This is the organization which recently rescued "Phoenix", a Shepherd who was used as a "bait dog" in the training of fighting dogs. To learn more about Phoenix and the up to 60 other dogs now protected and being rehabilitated at the local centers, visit www.coastalgsr.org.

Coastal German Shepherd Rescue of Orange County is in great need of gently used towels, blankets and crates. The dogs would also love "new" tennis balls to play with and chase. Aedan, will be collecting these items in labeled bins on the second floor on campus between November 29th through December 17th.

If you have any items too large to carry or have any questions, please contact me at frazier.aedan@falcon.smaa.org

Challenge 20/20 and Applied Science Club Tackle Global Issues



The students in the fall elective Challenge 20/20 as well as members of the Applied Science Club confronted the inherently global issues of maritime safety and pollution in a field trip to the Pacific Marine Mammal Center (PMMC). At the center, students experienced an ongoing program that mitigates some of the damage caused by ocean pollution. The Center maintains a wish-list of items useful to their operation. Each student brought at least one of these items along to donate to the rehabilitation center. While there, students met with the center's director of education, Kellie Lewis, in order to discover and discuss the causes of many of the problems in our oceans. In addition, Challenge 20/20 students will address a local pollution problem and then devise and implement a mitigation strategy. Following this exercise, they will document their experiences through a written report with partner students at the International School of Milan. The final report will be sent to the National Association of Independent Schools (NAIS) this December.

Students discovered that marine mammals including seals, sea-lions and whales often ingest plastic items that have washed out to sea through storm drains. The ingested plastic cannot pass through the digestive tracts of these animals and amasses in their stomachs. This inhibits the animals' ability to process food. Accordingly, they begin to starve. As they weaken, they wash ashore where rescue volunteers attempt to treat them. The long-term prognosis is, in general, not good, however.

Kellie Lewis recommended multiple steps to reduce ocean pollution. Step one is to survey students across divisions and count plastic items in their lunch waste. With their awareness raised, students are asked to reduce the amount of waste they create each day at lunch. Working together, students can find items for lunches with minimal plastic packaging. An initial goal is for at least 35% of students to bring reusable lunch containers. Step two is to raise money for the operations and volunteers at the PMMC.

A holiday cooking class has been proposed as a possible fund-raiser. Another suggestion is to host a donation drive for items on the PMMC wish-list. Step three is to reduce carbon dioxide levels through increased flora in classrooms and on campus.

In November Challenge 20/20 students will accompany visiting students from the International School of Milan on an after school field trip to the Scripps Institute of Oceanography in order to see the Feeling the Heat exhibit.

Trick or Treat For UNICEF



During the week of October 25th to October 29th, 8th Grader, Joe Vinci will be creating an awareness of UNICEF and how our students can get involved to help others around the world. UNICEF is a program which aids and supports impoverished children all around the world. To celebrate the 60th Anniversary of "Trick or Treat for UNICEF", Joe will be providing special boxes this week before and after school in the courtyard. Our students are encouraged to take the boxes trick or treating with them to collect money for UNICEF. All donations will go towards health, education, food, water, and supplies to children in poverty. Thank you for your help!

St. Mary's Boy Scout Troop Helps Support Operation Christmas Child



St. Mary's own Cub Scout Pack 751 will be lending their support to the Operation Christmas Child program in several ways this year. Cub Scout families have collected over 400 donated plastic shoe boxes to jump start the Operation Christmas Child box drive. These boxes and materials for decoration will be available after school in the courtyard on November 1, 2, and 3 from 3:00 pm to 3:45 pm. Students are invited to begin their Operation Christmas Child project by stopping by the Cub Scout decorating tables to decorate a donated box or a box from home. The decorated box can then be taken home and filled with items for a needy child. Information on suggested items can be found at the www.samaritanspurse.org/occ. Boxes should be returned to the student's classroom by November 19th. On Silver Angel's Day, the Cub Scouts will transport the filled boxes from each classroom to the gym. Please help support this worthy cause.

PTF Sponsors Food Drive For South County Outreach



St. Mary's has been asked to lend their support and donate canned food items to the South County Outreach in Lake Forest. The center needs our help to feed up to 1000 local families a month. The food drive takes place from September 21st to October 8th. Please make sure to drop off your much needed donation in one of the large blue bins located on campus.

For information on what is needed by South County Outreach,

<http://www.sco-oc.org>

For ways to further assist South County Outreach, contact

South County Outreach
26776 Vista Terrace
Lake Forest, CA 92630
949 380-8144

There is a complete list of volunteer opportunities on the website. Some great volunteer opportunities for students are listed below.

Food donations are highest during November and December and SCO needs volunteers to sort and shelve food items. Saturday shifts are available and students are welcome volunteers (age under 14 needs to be accompanied by an adult.)

The Adopt-a-family program provides gifts and food for needy families at Thanksgiving and Christmas. Donors are always needed.

[Summer Resort and Herrington Bears Support CHOC](#)



Students in St. Mary's Summer Resort were able to have the opportunity to bring some fun to the children staying in Children's Hospital of Orange County in Mission Viejo. Through a special partnership with Herrington Bears, Summer Resort students received a tour of the Herrington Bear factory from 5th Grader, Nikki Herrington, and were able to dress the bears they were donating to CHOC. Students received special accommodations from CHOC as they were allowed to visit the Children's Floor to make their teddy bear donation.

[Summer Resort Cleans Doheny Beach](#)



Summer Resort students took advantage of some beautiful weather to help the environment by cleaning Doheny State Beach. Breaking into teams, students were able to collect several bags of trash from the beach after a long and busy weekend. To celebrate our accomplishment, students had a picnic with food and fun games.

Second Grade Helps Feed The Children



During 2nd Grade's "The Circle of Life" Unit of Inquiry, students incubated and raised chickens and ducks. The students wanted to give everyone a chance to hold the animals, but they also wanted to raise some money for Feed the Children, a Christian organization which supplies underprivileged children around the world with food. Students decided to set up a photo shoot with the chicks and ducklings after school last Friday. Parents were invited to bring their own cameras and take pictures of their children with the birds. We accepted donations and were able to raise \$215.00 in half an hour. With some matching gifts, Second Grade was able to donate a total of \$270.00 to Feed the Children.

Jr ASB Celebrates Earth Day

Jr. ASB continued its annual Earth Day Celebration by sprucing up the Reflection Garden in the courtyard. Jr. ASB members brought their gloves, shovels, and rakes to spend the day weeding and planting new plants. Members of Jr. ASB enjoyed their day of hard work by eating lunch and relaxing in the courtyard. In addition to working in the garden, Jr. ASB also built a small composter donated by Donna Sears. Jr. ASB member have been collecting "green scraps" from

lunches to add to the composter. Their goal is to have some compost ready by next year's Earth Day.

5th Grade Supports Haiti Relief

The news of the tragic Haiti earthquake on January 12, 2010, created enriching conversations in the fifth grade classrooms. The students showed great concern and wanted to help in one way or another. Independently and intrinsically, the students researched safe relief organizations and decided on Samaritan's Purse. The Fifth Graders sold 100% fruit juice popsicle bars at the snack shack for two weeks with all of the proceeds going to a Haitian relief fund. Their goal still is to raise \$1000, which provides a Haitian family of ten a basic but sturdy shelter designed to last for two years. It includes a sloping tin roof, gutters and a 65-gallon cistern, and bunk beds. Any additional money goes towards mosquito nets and warm blankets. It takes one person to make a difference, and a community to make an even greater difference. Please continue to pray for the families in Haiti. Thank you and God Bless.

PTF Clothing Drive to Benefit Illumination Foundation

Our clothing drive benefiting Illumination Foundation is underway. We are looking for working clothes (Men - slacks, jackets (suit or sport), ties, shirts (dress and button down), belts; Women - dresses, skirts, slacks, blouses, nice tops, belts, accessories, purses) and casual adult clothes. The clothes drive will continue through the middle of April, so make sure and do some spring cleaning during Easter break. Look for collection bins by the front office and middle school gate.

Book Drive to Help Girls Incorporated



Cassiani Kateyiannis, Junior Girl Scout and 5th Grade Jr. ASB co-chaplain, has started a new book collection program at school. All books will be donated to Girls Incorporated in Costa Mesa to promote reading and increase literacy.

Girls Inc. provides tutoring, mentoring and life-skills training to underprivileged girls, from Pre-School through High School. There are over 150 girls who are served by the Girls Inc. Costa Mesa location. The girls don't have money to buy books, and there is no library within walking-distance from their homes.

Collection boxes are labelled "Books for Bright Futures" and will be available now through the end of the school year in these locations on campus:

- Middle-school Language Art teacher classrooms (Berryman, Galloway, Sexton)
- 5th grade classroom (Simoes)

If you are doing any spring cleaning over the break...please set aside any used or unwanted

books and bring them to St. Mary's.
Thank you for promoting literacy in Orange County.

ASB Buys More New Bicycles for Preschool



Last year ASB replaced all of the old bikes in Preschool with brand new red ones. However with the addition of our newest 2 year old students, these bicycles were too big. ASB was recently able to purchase new bikes especially designed for the 2 year olds which allow them to learn how to ride a bike on a smaller version without pedals. We hope they enjoy many years of enjoyment from your new bikes.

Valentine Social Benefits Boys and Girls Club

Middle School students who went to the most recent social on February 12th, were able to use and play an awesome Wii "Band Hero" video game as part of the fun event. At St. Mary's we are blessed with so many amazing things, and we have the unique opportunity to give back to those who are not as fortunate as we are. To go along with this idea of giving to the community, we are going to give our new "Band Hero" game to the kids at the Boys and Girls Club. The boys and girls are so thankful for our generous contribution to their programs as the game will provide hours of fun for some very excited children.

Shelby Dewberry
ASB Philanthropy Commissioner

Students Collect Electronic Games for Donategames.org

During the week of March 1-4, St. Mary's students will be participating in an electronic game drive in support of donategames.org, a charity foundation benefiting children with rare diseases. Student volunteers will be collecting the games in the mornings all this week. It's easy to participate. Please have your children clean out their electronic games and bring them to school next week. For more information about donate games please go to www.donategames.org.

Help Support Women with Breast Cancer Through “Chrysalis to Wings”



My Mom was diagnosed with breast cancer when I was 3 years old. She went through every treatment available and was cured. When I was 6 years old, my Mom's best friend and my "Aunt" Julie died of breast cancer. At the age of 8, my Mom's cancer came back and she has been on treatment since then. She was pretty depressed when the cancer came back and then she went to a retreat hosted by Chrysalis to Wings. She came back happy and full of energy. Since then, she has gotten more involved in the breast cancer community and seems to volunteer for everything. She is now on the Board of Chrysalis to Wings and she was telling me that they lost their grant from Susan G. Komen and need to raise all of the money for the annual retreat. They are doing this by having a big fundraiser on Valentine's Day in Mission Viejo. They will be hosting a play called "Till Death Do Us part", which is part of a series by Late Nite Catechism. This is a hilarious interactive comedy.

I see my Mom go through chemo every week and still help others. I know that this retreat is important to my Mom because she wants other women to be able to go to the retreat and have a positive experience too.

I would like to help sell tickets to the play to the families at St. Mary's. Chrysalis to Wings needs to sell about 400 tickets to the play, so that this retreat can happen in September.

How to get tickets

You can go to the website to purchase tickets at

http://www.francinezorehkeymft.com/main/page_giftsdonationtickets_st_marys_group_order.html

For every 10 tickets I sell, I get one free. I would like to donate the free tickets that I earn to the teachers at St. Mary's, so that they can attend the play.

Thank you for the support,

Chistopher Chionis

6th Grade Student

Posted on Thursday, January 21, 2010. Posted by Jim Cox

Third Grade Supports "Project Isabella"



Project Isabella is a Third Grade service learning project named in honor of Isabella Carle, a 3rd grader in Mrs. Burchill's class, and supports the current Third Grade unit of study "Got Water". Project Isabella's purpose is to make a difference in the world by providing safe water to people in need. Students are collecting and recycling water bottles to raise money for Project Isabella. Bottles can be taken to any Third Grade class and will be collected on Fridays for recycling. ITT Watermark will match all donations up to \$5,000 raised by St. Mary's. If you would like to contribute please bring your empty water bottles to any Third Grade class to be recycled and donated to Project Isabella.

Posted on Wednesday, January 20, 2010. Posted by Jim Cox

[PTF Shoe Drive for Illumination Foundation](#)



PTF is very excited to announce the next outreach will be a shoe drive to benefit Illumination Foundation which serves Orange County's homeless. We will be collecting gently used children's and adult shoes through Friday, February 5. Look for collection bins by the front office and the Middle School drop-off gate. For information on volunteering or donations visit <http://www.ifhomeless.org/#page=VolunteerOpportunity>.

Posted on Wednesday, January 20, 2010. Posted by Jim Cox

[ASB To Host Red Cross Blood Drive](#)



St. Mary's ASB and The Red Cross have partnered together to host a blood drive in our gym on February 11, 2010 from 7:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. The attached flyer will explain how to register for an appointment on line or at the front desk. Donors must be 16 years old with a parent or 17 years and older. ASB is holding a competition for a FREE DRESS DAY for the division that collects the most units of blood. Make sure to designate your donation at the blood drive to Preschool, Lower, or Middle School. Please register early to help with staffing from the Red Cross. For more information, go to www.givelife.org [st mary and all angels flyer.doc](#)

Posted on Wednesday, January 20, 2010. Posted by Jim Cox

[St. Mary's Artists to Paint Shoes of Hope](#)



St. Mary's Kindergarten through Grade 8 students will be painting *Shoes of Hope* during the week of February 8, 2010. Art Miles Mural Project's *Shoes of Hope* is an interactive initiative that spreads inspiration around the world. Donated shoes painted by community "Peace Paint Ambassadors" (children and adults from around the world) are shipped internationally to children in need. This effort combines the practicality of shoes with emotional and passionate messages inserted into the shoes to change lives and spread hope!

Through the great kindness of UNDER ARMOUR, INC, students will use acrylic and fabric paints to design about one hundred fifty pairs of shoes in a wide variety of sizes! Painting will take place in the art classes of Ms. Roxanne Scruggs and Mrs. Lisa Dennis and will then be presented to representatives for *Shoes of Hope* who will ship them to those in need.

Posted on Wednesday, January 13, 2010. Posted by Jim Cox

St. Mary's Rallies For The South West Community Center



This week the South West Community Center in Santa Ana was destroyed by fire. This is a huge disaster for this community so close to us. The center used its kitchen to serve over 10,000 meals a month to homeless and needy families in the area. The center was also about to have their annual Christmas party (this Saturday!) and hand out toys, blankets, jackets, and food to children in the area who are in need. Many churches and families had already dropped off their donations to the center to get ready for this weekend's party. Nothing remains as the contents of the center were completely destroyed by the fire.

They are most in need of food, but would also appreciate donations of new (or gently used) blankets, jackets, books, and toys.

Anything we can do will make a difference to children and their families. There will be bins at the entrance to the school or you could send something with your students. We will gather our offerings all together for Lessons and Carols on Friday at noon and pray a prayer of blessing before we send it off to the South West Community Center in Santa Ana.

For more information or other ways to volunteer and donate, please visit the following:

<http://swcommunitycenter.org/>

<http://swcommunitycenter.org/PDFs/September08.pdf>

<http://www.ocreger.com/news/fire-224196-caswell-gifts.html>

Posted on Wednesday, December 16, 2009. Posted by Jim Cox

Local Marines Benefit From 7th Grader Christian Fronczek's Birthday



By LINDSEY BAGUIO

THE ORANGE COUNTY REGISTER

ALISO VIEJO — Other than a birthday full of video games and friends, Christian Fronczek says he didn't need anything else.

That's why he's donating the presents, enough to fill a heavy-duty trash bag, that he received for his 13th birthday on Thursday night.

Fronczek, of Aliso Viejo, is donating them to San Clemente Military Family Outreach, a nonprofit group that will distribute the gifts to families at Camp Pendleton for Christmas. It's the second year he has made the donation.

"They really do a lot for our country and don't get to see their families much," Fronczek said. "I want to give their families hope. I feel fortunate that we have money to have a house and dinner at night. I don't need presents."

Fronczek, a student at St. Mary & All Angels in Aliso Viejo, invited dozens of his friends to Howie's Game Shack in Mission Viejo on Thursday night for a few hours of video games, pizza and cake. Howie's donated the game playing time after hearing of Fronczek's efforts

After the party, Fronczek and his mother, April, delivered the bag filled with 25 presents to a representative of San Clemente Military Family Outreach.

Posted on Wednesday, December 16, 2009. Posted by Jim Cox

["Spark Of Love" Toy Drive](#)



8th Grade student, Michael Lukan, is recruiting his fellow classmates to help him with getting involved in the "Spark of Love" toy drive on Friday, December 18th at 4:00 p.m. For 17 years, ABC7 and firefighters from Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino and Ventura counties, along with the Los Angeles City Fire Department, have joined forces to run the "Spark of Love" toy drive. This campaign collects new, unwrapped toys and sports equipment for the under served children in our communities. Toys collected in the respective counties are distributed locally. Last year alone, "Spark of Love" collected over 600,000 toys within all five counties, and we want to top that total this year. So please help Michael and the firefighter's ignite a spark of love in a child's heart.

Michael would love to see his classmates join him at the Honda Center on Friday to help "stuff the bus" with ABC7's weatherman Garth Kemp. Those students unable to make the event can give their unwrapped gifts to Michael who will deliver them.

For ways to get involved, contact michael.lukan@falcon.smaa.org.

Posted on Wednesday, December 16, 2009. Posted by Jim Cox

[A "Navy SEAL" Christmas](#)



The Fourth Grade students in Mrs. Kucich's class have taken it upon themselves to make a brighter Christmas for some Navy SEALs serving in Afghanistan. They have been making cards and letters to send to a family friend of one of the students in class. These Christmas wishes will be sent to Navy SEAL Trevor, the others in his troop, and their bomb-sniffing dog, Chopper. This will mark Trevor's second Christmas in a row serving in Afghanistan. Mrs. Kucich's class has discussed and learned about the sacrifices and

commitments of the men and women who are currently serving our country around the world. We are honored to share our Christmas wishes with these outstanding Americans.

Posted on Tuesday, December 15, 2009. Posted by Jim Cox

[St. Mary's Participates in "Mix It Up Lunch"](#)



“I didn’t think I’d like sitting with people I didn’t know, but I did,” said seven-year-old Alanna Fernandez. “It was cool to meet someone from India and see what they take for lunch.” These and similar comments echoed through St. Mary’s School last week, as Preschool through Eighth Grade students participated in a Mix it Up Lunch Program designed to teach social and racial tolerance. Earlier that week, under the direction of Jim Cox, St. Mary’s Dean of Students, teachers randomly distributed colored arm bands and instructed students to dress in the same color on November 12, Mix It Up day. “St. Mary’s has always embraced an international perspective,” Cox said. “Teaching tolerance is integral to our mission, and the Mix It Up program is a fun way to do that.”

During lunch, students sat with others wearing the same color and participated in a few ice-breaking activities. The idea was to get to know someone you wouldn’t ordinarily sit with, who might be outside your ethnicity, religion, and culture. “People naturally gravitate toward what’s familiar, and in doing so, they can miss opportunities to learn about the positive aspects of diversity,” Cox observed, adding that lunchtime is typically the largest block of free time for the students. “It’s a perfect environment for cultural exchange.”

Indeed, student surveys show that the cafeteria is where the lines of division are most clearly drawn, and where the dreaded “cliques” are most obvious. Mix It Up aims to tear down those lines and teach students to appreciate differences and connect through similarities. “I found out that Austin has a dog. I have a dog, too, so we started talking about our dogs,” one student remarked. “He was easy to talk to.”

Programs like Mix It Up aim to undo the damage of racial, cultural, and religious stereotyping that kids often see in television and movies. By meeting and talking with individuals from

different backgrounds, kids can see that such stereotyping is hurtful and unfair, and they can begin to change any biases or prejudgments.

Teaching tolerance and respect for differences can reduce—and sometimes even eliminate bullying and teasing. It promotes positive social skills and a safe supportive learning environment, which studies have linked to high academic achievement. “Our aim is to have kids appreciate, not fear, differences,” said Cox. Our classes are already culturally diverse. The next step is to teach kids to comfortably interact and grow through that exchange.

Posted on Monday, November 30, 2009. Posted by Jim Cox

St. Mary's To Perform At Atria Woodbridge Nursing Home

On Sunday, December 6th at 5:10 p.m., a group of St. Mary’s music students will be performing a Christmas Concert at the Atria Woodbridge Nursing Home for the senior citizens. They will perform traditional Christmas carols on their instruments while St. John Neumann’s young adult choir leads the senior citizens in a sing-along. Hunter McNenny, Myles Angel, and Elyse Angel are signed up to perform with several other St. Mary's students still to be added. For more information, please contact cheryl.spudville@smaa.org.

Posted on Friday, November 20, 2009. Posted by Jim Cox

7th Grade "Winterizes" Crow Canyon



While on their field study to Crow Canyon Archeological Center in Cortez, Colorado, St. Mary's 7th Graders helped to prepare the national park's trails for winter. 7th Graders were responsible for raking trails and laying down a "trail mix" which consisted of soil, rocks and other small particulates to help keep the trail from washing away. Students used wheelbarrows, rakes, buckets to move the mix and mark the trails. They then had to wipe away any traces they had been there by using a rake to cover foot tracks and wheel marks. Crow Canyon staff was excited to have the extra help, especially in light of the early winter they were experiencing.

Posted on Thursday, November 19, 2009. Posted by Jim Cox

[7th Grade Hosts "Family Pizza Night" at Book Fair](#)



7th Grade students will host a "Family Pizza Night" at the Book Fair on Wednesday, December 2, 2009 from 3:15 pm to 6:30 pm. Students will be responsible to organize all pizza pre-orders and serve families the night of the event. All proceeds from the pizza sales will be used to purchase book from the teachers' wish list to supplement the classroom libraries. For more information, please contact Jenafer Ricker at jenafer.ricker@smaa.org.

Posted on Thursday, November 19, 2009. Posted by Jim Cox

[Operation Christmas Child](#)



Through Operation Christmas Child, the world's largest Christmas project, St. Mary's community is being asked to help pack shoeboxes with gifts for children in more than 100 countries suffering from natural disaster, war, terrorism, disease, famine and poverty. This year our Cub Scouts will be collecting shoe boxes from local stores and decorating them for our families to use. Pack #751 will be distributing the boxes on November

9th after school by the MPR room and by the middle school drop-off gate. You may also use your own shoe box or similar sized plastic container. All boxes are due the week of November 16th - November 20th. Help us reach our goal of 100% student participation and bless needy children of the world. For more information on this school-wide project service project contact <http://www.samaritanspurse.org/>

Posted on Friday, November 06, 2009. Posted by Jim Cox

Track Club Collects Athletic Equipment For Sports Gift

What is the Program? Your old sports equipment can make a difference in a child's life. We take your old equipment, refurbish it and donate it to underprivileged children all over the world. Our donation reach is as close as Southern California and as far as Mexico, Central and South America, Africa, Indonesia, the South Pacific and the Middle East. This program costs you nothing; we only ask you to consider donating sports equipment that you no longer use.

What Equipment Can I Donate? As a track club, we are focusing on lightly worn running shoes. We will also accept the following gently used and new items:

- œ Soccer balls, soccer uniforms, cleats, shin guards, goalie supplies
- œ Baseballs, softballs, mitts, bats, cleats, batting helmets, catcher • fs gear
- œ Basketballs, volleyballs, footballs, playground balls
- œ Frisbees, jump ropes, hacky sacks
- œ Tennis racquets, tennis balls
- œ Air pumps for balls and needles
- œ Warm Up suits
- œ Ball and equipment bags, backpacks

For more information on volunteering or donating contact 8th Graders Alex Gonzales and Erin Herdon or <http://www.sportsgift.org/>

Posted on Wednesday, October 28, 2009. Posted by Jim Cox

PTF Halloween Costume Drive

The PTF's next outreach project will be a Halloween costume drive to benefit Orange County's homeless children through the Illumination Foundation. Please bring in your gently used costumes for a needy child to enjoy. Collection bins will be by the front office and will continue through October 27th. For information on volunteering or donations visit <http://www.ifhomeless.org/#page=VolunteerOpportunity>.

Posted on Wednesday, October 21, 2009. Posted by Jim Cox

National Adopt a Shelter Dog Month



Fourth grade student, Aedan Frazier needs the St. Mary's community's help during "National Adopt a Dog Month" which kicked off October 6th. Aedan is collecting towels to be used in local shelters for bedding and bathing by dogs awaiting adoption. To donate your towels, Aedan has placed labeled containers around campus for collections. In addition to collecting towels, Aedan can also be seen walking through the morning and afternoon crowd of students and parents with posters highlighting pictures of dogs available for adoption from our local shelters for those families who would like to help by adopting a shelter dog. To accomplish his goals, Aedan has recruited the help of other St. Mary's students and his boy scout troop. He would love to see these animals have homes by the holidays. For more information contact Aedan Frazier or www.americanhumane.org/protecting.../adopt-a-dog-month/

Posted on Wednesday, October 07, 2009. Posted by Jim Cox

PTF Canned Food Drive for South County Outreach



The St. Mary's community is collecting canned foods through the later part of October to help the South County Outreach program supply the area's homeless and less fortunate with food. The SCO executive director called the PTF to let us know how grateful they are for St. Mary's for participating in this food drive. They are currently serving 1200 families per month (up from 900 families per month in 2008) and they can take no more new families. Please drop off your donation of canned food item in one of the many designated

collection sites on campus. Middle School will be participating by collecting canned food items as a house competition during Movie Night on Oct. 23rd.

For information on what is needed by South County Outreach,
<http://www.sco-oc.org/Students%20Hunger%20Flyer.pdf>

For ways to further assist South County Outreach, contact

South County Outreach
26776 Vista Terrace
Lake Forest, CA 92630
949 380-8144
Don Ruff - Volunteer Coordinator ext. 206
www.sco-oc.org

There is a complete list of volunteer opportunities on the website. Some great volunteer opportunities for students are listed below.

Food donations are highest during November and December and SCO needs volunteers to sort and shelf food items. Saturday shifts are available and students are welcome volunteers (age under 14 needs to be accompanied by an adult.)

The Adopt-a-family program provides gifts and food for needy families at Thanksgiving and Christmas. Donors are always needed.

Posted on Wednesday, September 30, 2009. Posted by Jim Cox

[Juice Pouch Recycling by Cub Scout Pack # 751](#)



St. Mary's own Cub Scout Pack # 751 is adding to our school wide goal to decrease the environmental impact of lunch waste. This group of Tigers, Bears, and Webelos presented their plan to recycle juice pouches on to the

Kindergarten through 8th grade students during lunches. Pack # 751 will be collecting the empty juice pouches to be “upcycled”, a process which turns the pouches into another usable product. Collection bins have been added to the lunch recycling stations which Pack #751 will collect and send in to become bags and backpacks. For more information on the process or products created from St. Mary’s recycling effort, visit www.terracycle.net.

Posted on Wednesday, September 23, 2009. Posted by Jim Cox

Recycling at Lunch

In an effort to reduce our waste at lunch, St. Mary’s has started a program to encourage our students to recycle their lunch trash. Students are able to recycle most of their lunch by separating their brown bags and paper containers from Brown Bag Naturals into small bins and placing their plastic bottles in new recycling containers. While the program was initially started to recycle the new school lunch program, students who bring their lunch from home have been just as enthusiastic to participate.

Posted on Wednesday, September 16, 2009. Posted by Jim Cox

Cardboard Gets New Life



With the inspiration of 7th grade teacher Arturo Valdez and a collection of students ranging from Kindergarten through 8th Grade, St. Mary’s was able to recycle over 260 pounds of cardboard this past week. The students were able to collect much of the cardboard from their supply packs to load into a truck to be taken to a recycling yard in Santa Ana. Congrats to all in this school-wide effort!

Posted on Friday, September 11, 2009. Posted by Jim Cox

Summer Resort Doheny Beach Clean up



Summer Beach Clean Up

Over the summer, St. Mary's Summer Resort camp took a break from their usual trips to amusement parks to take care of the environment. The group was able to collect over 7 full trash bags full of garbage from Doheny State Beach! The students were amazed and upset at the amount of things people would leave on the beach. The activity really taught our students the need to help out the environment. For more information on developing your own beach clean up at Doheny, contact <http://www.dohenystatebeach.org/>

Posted on Thursday, September 03, 2009. Posted by Jim Cox