

LEGACY FOR OUR MISSION: *For Our Children and the Future*

WRAPPING STUDENTS IN GOSPEL VALUES BUILDS INNER-CITY COMMUNITY

FOR MANY PEOPLE, THE PHRASE “INNER-CITY SCHOOL” BRINGS TO MIND NEGATIVE, HOLLYWOOD-PROJECTED IMAGES OF GANGS, VIOLENCE AND SUBSTANDARD EDUCATION. St. Mary Catholic School in New Albany, however, is combating that stereotype with a dedication to superb academic programs, strong moral values and community service. And it's working.

In 2004, St. Mary was named a Blue Ribbon School of Excellence of the federal No Child Left Behind program. Students at the school earned higher ISTEP scores for the sixth year in a row, and enrollment has grown to 171 children in kindergarten through eighth grade.

With funding support from the *Legacy for Our Mission* campaign, St. Mary developed and introduced New Albany's very first Catholic preschool—Cougar Academy.

“St. Mary's exists to wrap children in Gospel values and to call them to bring those values and talents to active participation in the church and into all facets of their adult lives,” Principal Kim Hartlage said.



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The Catholic school is at the heart of the Church's mission, and the messages of unconditional love are integrated throughout St. Mary. Hartlage believes the school provides more than an education – it creates a family. Using academic programs to develop and enhance students' natural abilities, the school builds a community among students and parents both in and out of the school.

“As an extension of the family, St. Mary's seeks to strengthen the total person by instilling feelings of self-worth and confidence in our students,” Hartlage said. “We challenge a diverse population of students to meet their full potential, by emphasizing academic excellence, strong moral values and a dedication to community service.” St. Mary also utilizes a schedule that allows for smaller teacher-student ratios and the teachers collaborate to best meet the needs of all students, Hartlage said. This year, the curriculum has set an emphasis on writing as part of the school's improvement plan.

Each Friday, the student assembly gathers for “Word of Prayer,” a skit, song or presentation by a classroom, which is followed by an all-school prayer, recitation of the Kindness Pledge, and the Pledge of Allegiance. Parents are invited to and often attend the afternoon assembly with students.

Funding is a challenge for St. Mary, just as it is for most small, inner city schools. With support from the parish, the school

community and the New Albany community at large, St. Mary continues to provide services for future generations.

The Saint Francis Xavier Home Mission Fund provided a grant to St. Mary tuition assistance fund, which makes it possible for needy families who wish to send their children to a Catholic School.

“To mold the hearts, minds, and hands of children is paramount in our philosophy of education,” Hartlage said. “We believe in Catholic education and faith for life.”

Legacy for Our Mission, the archdiocese's upcoming capital campaign, is guided by the principles of Christian stewardship and addresses the needs of archdiocesan ministries such as Home Missions. By contributing to Legacy for Our Mission through your local parish, a portion of your gift will be allocated to Catholic education programs and distributed to organizations such as the St. Mary School in New Albany.