



St. Mary's Medical Center

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## NEWS RELEASE

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CONTACT: Christina Chandler  
Public Relations Specialist  
415-750-5787

[Christina.hayeschandler@chw.edu](mailto:Christina.hayeschandler@chw.edu)

### Mercy High School Students Graduate from Women in Medicine Program

*St. Mary's Medical Center and Mercy High School Partner for Students*

**SAN FRANCISCO, Calif.** – St. Mary's Medical Center is proud to congratulate the first class of graduates from the Women in Medicine program at Mercy High School. These 13 female students from Mercy High School will graduate on May 29, 2010 with a new accessory on their graduation robes – a plum colored stole. The stole recognizes that each of these students participated in the Women in Medicine program during their high school career.

Women in Medicine was established as a partnership between Mercy High School and St. Mary's Medical Center. The program was designed to give female students who are interested in a medical career exposure to medical professionals and a hospital setting prior to college. Mercy High School Principal Dorothy McCrea and Sister Mary Kilgariff of St. Mary's Medical Center together created the program in 2006 and the 2010 seniors are the first to graduate.

"The program has been a wonderful addition to Mercy High School. It has provided Mercy students with an advanced academic curriculum and exposed them to various aspects of the health care profession which will be a great foundation as they enter higher education. These students have enriched our campus and the San Francisco community with their various special projects and service hours. They are fabulous young women!" said Principal McCrea. "I want to thank Sister Mary Kilgariff, Catholic Healthcare West and St. Mary's Medical Center for their support. We could not have launched this without them."

Twice a month St. Mary's physicians and staff give presentations to the students on various medical professions. Students also have the opportunity to take hospital tours and be exposed to new medical technology. According to Sister Mary, St. Mary's has always been a teaching hospital and has a strong history with women. Both Mercy High School and St. Mary's Medical Center were founded by the Sisters of Mercy so having this relationship with Mercy High School made perfect sense.

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450 Stanyan Street  
San Francisco, CA 94117  
415-668-1000 *main*  
415-668-4531 *fax*

[stmarysmedicalcenter.org](http://stmarysmedicalcenter.org)

Two seniors from the Women in Medicine program are excited about their college plans and credit the program. Rachele Hidalgo initially thought she wanted to be a pediatrician, but now this fall she plans to attend the University of San Francisco and become a nurse. Monica Tabora has been accepted to the University of Hawaii and plans on double majoring in psychiatry and Hawaiian studies. Through the program Rachele volunteered in the radiology department at St. Mary's Medical Center and Monica was able to meet and interview a clinical psychiatrist in a private practice. Both students said their experiences with Women in Medicine helped guide their decision.

Other students graduating from the program have been accepted to the University of California Davis, Berkeley and Los Angeles as well as Seattle University, the University of Nevada, Reno and San Francisco State. Many of the seniors plan to major in medicine related fields. One senior, Yvette Borja, even received a full scholarship to Yale University.

Mercy High School's Admissions Department decides which freshman will be accepted into the Women in Medicine program. Criteria are based on an interest in medicine or health care, excellent test scores and excellent grades in grammar school. Once enrolled in the Women in Medicine program, students are placed in an accelerated curriculum that includes honors biology and honors algebra classes.

"We encourage our students to take these classes and maintain a certain GPA because it prepares them for the college course load if they plan to pursue a medical or nursing degree." said the program's moderator, Dori Ryken.

When asked what they learned most from the program, Rachele and Monica agree, "We learned the reality of medicine. The speakers were blunt and told us what it really is like to be a doctor or nurse. We learned what it takes and now we know what to expect when it comes to classes, hours and work. It is not easy." Both girls feel that they are prepared for college and the fields they have chosen.

According to Principal McCrea, the program has even been modeled across the country. The Mercy School in Baltimore, M.D. has created an identical program on their campus and is collaborating with the Mercy Hospital in their city as well. "We believe we are pioneers with this program for young women and are extremely proud of our first graduating class," said Principal McCrea.

**Attachment:** Photo of 2010 Women in Medicine graduates

**Group Photo Caption:** Front row, L to R: Chika Chuku, Tiffany Hang, Jacqueline Loo  
2<sup>nd</sup> Row: Rachele Hidalgo, Rachele Ramirez, Jennifer Montoya  
3<sup>rd</sup> Row: Jasmine Sims, Monica Tabora, Claire Lim, Aisha Hameed, Samira Nuru  
Not pictured: Yvette Borja, Maria Sarkisian

**NOTE:** Both Mercy High School and St. Mary's Medical Center were founded by the Sisters of Mercy. The Sisters of Mercy are an international community of Roman Catholic women religious vowed to serve people who suffer from poverty, sickness and lack of education with a special concern for women and children.

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### **ABOUT MERCY HIGH SCHOOL**

Mercy High School is a Catholic college preparatory school for women in San Francisco. Sponsored by the Sisters of Mercy, Mercy High School has been teaching women since 1952. The mission of Mercy is to educate young women for their expanding roles in society. This education must be formative, not only imparting fundamental skills and knowledge, but also encouraging the development of values that will guide them in all their lives. <http://www.mercyhs.org/admissions/womeninmedicine.htm>

### **ABOUT ST. MARY'S MEDICAL CENTER:**

St. Mary's Medical Center (SMMC), a member of Catholic Healthcare West, has cared for the people of the San Francisco Bay Area since 1857. Today, it is one of the largest not-for-profit, community-based health care providers in Northern California. Home to the nation's first digital cardiac catheterization laboratory, pioneering spine and total joint surgery center and a full-range of inpatient and outpatient medical services, SMMC physicians are considered experts in their field. With more than 550 physicians, 1,100 employees and 400 patient beds, St. Mary's is committed to furthering the healing ministry of Jesus, and to providing high-quality, affordable healthcare to the community we serve. For more information, please call 415-668-1000 or visit [www.stmarysmedicalcenter.org](http://www.stmarysmedicalcenter.org)

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