



St. Mary's School

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Head of Oregon Private Prep School Travels to China: Claims International Performance Excellence Award *Award Moves St. Mary's School into Global Spotlight*

MEDFORD, OR— On December 11th, Frank Phillips, the head of Medford-based St. Mary's School, was in The Great Hall of the People in Beijing, China, to receive an international award. This highly publicized award ceremony was hosted by Hanban (The Office of Chinese Language Council International) and placed the 144-year-old private prep school squarely in the global spotlight.

As a recipient of the Confucius Institute Individual Performance Excellence Award, Phillips and St. Mary's School were recognized for their pioneering role in taking the St. Mary's Confucius Classroom to the next academic, social and cultural level. Phillips is one of just 30 directors chosen to receive the award out of nearly 600 other Confucius Institutes and Classrooms from 88 nations. Only two U.S. educational institutions received the award this year, with the other school being the University of Kansas.

"It has been an exciting opportunity for St. Mary's School to partner with China to bring Chinese language instruction to the school and to infuse cultural elements into our small town in Oregon," Phillips explained. "It's inspiring to receive this important award, but the credit goes to our entire staff and our Board of Directors, our Chinese partner school and our students. We are all united in our commitment to turning this opportunity into the most valuable and sustainable experience possible."

The award in part also acknowledged St. Mary's and Phillips for their efforts to help more than a dozen other U.S. secondary schools in attaining Confucius Classroom status. "Since we were the first Confucius Classroom in the United States, many fellow educators contacted us for help in getting through the application process with China," Phillips noted. "It's been a pleasure to witness the growth of this program in the USA,

especially since it builds understanding and friendship, and because a positive US-Chinese relationship is critical – really for the whole planet – on so many fronts.”

Phillips doubles as Head of School and as Director of the Confucius Classroom at St. Mary’s School. For the past two years, he and his staff have developed and expanded the Mandarin language program to include the public, students from other local schools, and Southern Oregon University in nearby Ashland, Oregon. Phillips also played a major role in receiving a \$600,000, three-year Foreign Language Assistance Program grant from the U.S. Department of Education. Grant funding allows St. Mary’s to broadcast the school’s Mandarin classes via Interactive Video Conferencing (IVC).

Phillips’ efforts were noticed by Hanban officials who award top-performing Confucius Institutes and Classrooms that have the most social and academic impact on the local community. The award also recognizes the person who made the most essential contributions to the communication and friendship between China and other countries. In this case, between China and the U.S.

By 2010, St. Mary’s School will employ three full-time Chinese instructors from Hanban, along with a full-time kung fu instructor, and others from China working part time to assist in teaching the language and culture of their nation. With the award in hand, Phillips said he and St. Mary’s School will continue offering true global education at the highest level possible.

“We’re excited about educating students who can function effectively in a rapidly globalizing world. This means students who can fluently read, write and speak multiple world languages, such as Mandarin,” said Phillips, “as well as students who understand other cultures and have attended school with students from other nations.

“With all that we’ve done, all that we’re doing with the Confucius Classroom, and our progress in constructing a \$5.9 million Fine Arts and Athletic Center, we expect to draw students from around the world.”

Frank Phillips will return to the United States on Thursday, December 17th until then he can be reached via email at fphillips@smschool.us.

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