

Saint Mary's College High School
Peralta Park • 1294 Albina Avenue
Berkeley, California 94706
Since 1863

September 19, 2005

Saint Mary's Administration, Faculty, Staff, Families, Alumni, and Friends,

Thank you for all the wonderful support you've shown for Saint Mary's. We learned at the September 6 Albany City Council meeting that City Hall received 370 letters and numerous emails in support of Saint Mary's request for the retention and use of campus square footage that is in excess of the cap the city imposed in 1994. One of our parents also presented a petition of support during the meeting, signed by 47 Albany residents. We are deeply grateful for the care and commitment to our students and their education shown by so many people.

As required by the City Council on September 6, Saint Mary's closed classroom 516 in Cronin Hall and the athletic field snack bar this past weekend. Beginning today, these facilities will no longer be used until such time as the City permits otherwise. The band pavilion will remain in use.

To make the changes incumbent with the required closures, our class deans' office and meeting room were dismantled and the space converted into a substitute classroom for classroom 516. Ms. Diane Green, Freshman Dean, has moved to School Counselor Mr. Bruce Halverson's office. Ms. Green and the Sophomore, Junior, and Senior Class Deans will share Ms. Green's office as well as work from their respective classrooms. Mr. Halverson has moved into the President's work office, which necessitated Mrs. Kathy McGuire's move to Cronin Hall where she will share office space with Mr. Colbert Davis. Academic files in the deans' office were relocated and furniture was put into storage. The school increased its off-site storage capacity to house the items displaced to accommodate these moves.

Closing the field snack bar involved moving field maintenance, Physical Education, and athletics supplies to other campus locations and also required relocating Parent Boosters' food and supplies to the Parent Association area in the Shea Center and to a storage area near the athletic locker rooms in the gym/auditorium complex.

Despite these changes, Saint Mary's will continue to provide her students the best possible Christian and human education, and the Boosters will continue to provide excellent food and refreshments at our home games. I wish to recognize our maintenance department, parents, administrators, faculty, staff, and students whose efforts helped make these transitions go as smoothly as possible. Their hard work, flexibility, and graciousness are appreciated.

Saint Mary's will be resuming its master planning process this fall. The master plan is a document that describes an overall development concept including both present property uses as well as future development plans for the campus. As many of you will recall, a series of needs assessment workshops internal to the school community were conducted in early 2003. Together, we provided a vision for the master plan. The next step in the process would have involved discussions with the neighborhood community. This was put on hold until now, however, due to ongoing public hearings about the school's square footage. With that issue somewhat decided on September 6, Saint Mary's can now continue the master planning process that has historically involved the neighborhood community since its inception in 1974.

Saint Mary's will conduct professionally-facilitated meetings with school neighbors during the fall and winter months. In October, results of a neighborhood survey taken by the facilitators – Moore Iacofano Goltsman, Inc. (MIG) of Berkeley – will be presented to the neighbors in a community meeting. A follow-up meeting will be held in November. Information developed from these meetings will be used in the preparation of a draft master plan that is responsive to the community. We hope to have a draft to share with our neighbors in January 2006. You will be kept informed of the events and outcomes.

Saint Mary's needs the help of our entire extended family now more than ever to work to mitigate successfully and meaningfully our individual and collective impact on the residential areas around Peralta Park.

Walking by the classroom and snack bar that are no longer open to teachers, students, and parent volunteers will be an ongoing reminder that relations between the school and neighbors need to be improved. This is most important to us. From this point, we wish to continue moving forward with efforts to create a better future for all of us. Saint Mary's asks that our commitment to good neighbor relations – clearly stated in the letters of support so many of us sent to City Hall – be clearly visible to the community. Whenever you are near the campus, weekdays or weekends, day or night, *please* be sure to drive slowly and safely, keep car radios off, avoid double parking, u-turns, and blocking residential driveways; carpooling and use of public transportation are greatly encouraged. Attention to these matters by parents, students, and visitors will go far in letting our neighbors know that Saint Mary's respects the community. Saint Mary's has a very exciting future ahead, one we believe our neighbors will be proud to be part of. Please help Saint Mary's build the stage for all of us to work together for the achievement of our religious and educational mission.

Lastly, I wish to again thank all of you for your extraordinary support of Saint Mary's these past months and recent years. Saint Mary's celebrates her 143rd year of Lasallian Catholic education this year – 78 years at this Peralta Park location, preceded by 38 years in Oakland and 27 in San Francisco. The support for Saint Mary's demonstrated by so many people shows that she continues to be a highly valued and important member of the local community. All of us at Saint Mary's are deeply grateful to all of you.

In Saint John Baptist de La Salle,

Brother Edmond

Brother Edmond Larouche, FSC
President

For Saint Mary's explanation of the history of the square footage cap, please refer to the school website at www.saintmaryschs.org, [Community Relations](#) section.