
Club Events and Programming

A major part of a club leader's job is to plan events. You will find lots of helpful information in this section—event ideas, tips for planning events, and detailed descriptions of some of the more popular activities. Because there are numerous ideas offered in this section, it is easy to get overwhelmed. DON'T! Keep in mind two important points. *The minimum expectation of alumnae clubs is to have at least one event per year. The second one is to not measure an event's success on the amount of people who attend.* If a group of alumnae (no matter how small or large) gather and reconnect, then you have done a great job. As always, if you have questions or need assistance with planning an event, contact the Alumnae Relations Office. Below is a listing of popular activities to help get your planning juices flowing!

Winning Programs and Activities

Founders' Day - Liturgy in a church or home, brunch, luncheon, catered meal, potluck, tea, dessert, speaker, tour, Founders' Day award presentation. Historical observance is October 13, feast day of Father Sorin, but an event may be celebrated by clubs any time from early September to late November.

Continuing Education - Book discussion, art exhibit, one day seminar, panel discussion, craft workshop, one day trip to nearby historic sight, guest speaker - local alumna, Saint Mary's faculty member.

Guests from the College - Keep club members up-to-date about happenings at Saint Mary's. Clubs in close proximity to campus might consider a trip back to campus for a performing arts event or special speaker. Or, contact the Alumnae Relations Office to inquire about someone from the College speaking to the club.

Often faculty and administrators travel for conferences and can make time to visit your club. **EXPENSES DEPEND ON THE ALREADY DETERMINED TRAVEL SCHEDULE OF THE GUEST.** Guests from the College are a wonderful way to keep alumnae informed and connected to Saint Mary's.

Spiritual - Celebration of Mass or a prayer service, afternoon or evening of reflection, Communion breakfast, special advent or lent activity.

Networking - "Happy hour" after work in a convenient location, regularly scheduled luncheons/dinners, speakers, fashion show, "newcomers night"any opportunity that will enable alumnae to share information about careers, and discuss professional and volunteer-related experiences and interests. An alumnae club membership directory with position information is another way to facilitate networking among area alumnae. Plan a career exploration forum for alumnae and current students home on break.

Alumnae/Student - Student send-off, student "care packages" at exam time (club members gather to pack items), hosting visiting Saint Mary's choir and sports team members, student recruitment activities (coordinated with Saint Mary's Admission Office), invite current students to events, include them on your newsletter mailing list.

Local Alumnae – Utilize the talents of your local alumnae as guest speakers for event, or host a meeting/event at an alumna's workplace/boutique/shop. Offer incentives like "attend and receive a 20% discount."

Young Alumnae - “Happy hours”, events geared specifically to younger members i.e. babysitting coop, family events, networking events.

Social - Holiday events, dinners, luncheons, brunches, winter fun events, cocktail receptions, family activities (summer picnic, "day at the zoo"), “SMC Chick Flicks” movie nights, shopping expeditions, fashion shows, musical events....

Community Service –Adopt a needy family at Christmas, Habitat for Humanity, donate food and/or clothing to local charity, collaborate with other alumnae/i clubs or community groups in support of a local need, have a "baby shower" to collect items for unwed mothers and their children, run/walk in Race for a Cure, adopt an inner city Catholic school, get involved in a local literacy program, work in a soup kitchen one day a month....

Spring Event – brunch/luncheon/dinner with optional features such as a guest speaker from the College or a tour at a local attraction.

Christmas – prepare exam “goody bags” for area students, do a community service project, Christmas cocktail party, organize an ornament auction as a fundraiser.

Fundraising - silent and/or live auction (items donated by club members or from local community merchants), raffle for a Saint Mary’s collectible or a desirable item from your local community, special social event (like a fashion show) - tack on a few extra dollars to the price of the event and let members know proceeds will benefit a designated need, or combine with club dues and let members know that part of dues money will help to fund club scholarship or other designated need.

Joint Saint Mary’s/ND events – game-watch parties, community service, continuing education

Book Clubs – hosted by alumnae in their homes monthly or bi-monthly. Choose a variety of books to entice alumnae of varying ages and interests. The title of the book(s) should be announced well in advance of each session.

Many more! - Brainstorm with fellow officers and club members. What is unique to your area? Particular interests? Alumnae with special areas of expertise? Festivities? Academic possibilities?

Important considerations in program planning

Age diversity
Professional variety
Time constraints
Accessibility of location
Cost to members and club
Environment
Member interest
Purpose
Publicity
Telephone follow-up
Mailing logistics - labels, lists, bulk, first class

In alumnae programming, you must be willing to

**INITIATE...ORGANIZE...MOTIVATE...
DELEGATE...FOLLOW-UP...LISTEN...THANK**

GUIDELINES FOR PUBLICITY

Publicity for an alumnae club is, by extension, publicity for the College as a whole. It's important that the messages sent by club members to the media are consistent with the messages the College is working to convey.

What is newsworthy?

It's important to think of your audience when determining how or whether to pursue media attention. If your club is organizing a big event to raise money for a local hospital, school or public park, that would be pertinent to a general audience and a daily or diocesan newspaper would consider printing an announcement and possibly writing a story. If you are hosting an event solely for club members – no matter how exciting the speaker or compelling the program -- then general audiences have no vested interest, making it of little or no value to a reporter.

Yes, it's newsworthy! Now what do I do?

If the event is on the scale of a national event you can contact the assistant director of Alumnae Relations for guidance. If it is a regional event you or a committee/board member should submit a news release to your local media outlets.

Public Service Announcements (PSAs)

This is another good way to “get the word out” about an event or activity sponsored by an alumnae club. Television and radio stations must provide time for such announcements by not-for-profit organizations. It is essentially a brief (:20) advertisement at no cost. For-profits would be required to pay for such programming.

What else can I do to keep Saint Mary's in the news?

You can be the eyes and ears for media opportunities for Saint Mary's in your local community. Let us know about an upcoming series on women and philanthropy in your newspaper. Tell us if you see education or women's issues gaining a great deal of media attention. If you have personal ties with reporters or editors, share that information with alumnae relations so that, together, we can determine how to best position Saint Mary's in the news.

PHOTOGRAPHING YOUR EVENT

It is always a good idea to take pictures at your club events. The photos can be used in future newsletters, are good additions to club files, plus they can be submitted for publication in *Courier*—a great way to advertise your club! Appoint someone as the photographer for the event. That way, you are assured that pictures will be taken.

For photos to be published in *Courier*, there are certain basic guidelines that must be followed. Also keep in mind that space limitations may prevent your photo from being published.

All published photography will meet the standards of high quality established by the editorial team. Unsolicited photography may be published at the discretion of the Courier editor, if there is space, and if it meets such standards.

Guidelines

1. Photographs may be submitted in black and white or color. Negatives should be submitted with photographs, if possible. Photographs and negatives will be returned upon request.
2. Photographs should be taken of **groups of five or fewer**. Photographs of large groups do not reproduce well when the average size of photographs is 4" x 3".
3. Since it is often difficult for amateur photographers to take quality pictures while the action is occurring, we suggest that **the purpose or highlight of the event should be recreated for the photograph**. For example, if a College representative speaks at a club event, pose a photograph of that person engaged in conversation with one or two club members. **Do not pose a line-up shot** of the representative with the club's three officers and the alumnae who planned the event. **Those people's names and any other relevant information can always be mentioned in the cutline.**

4. If taking an indoor pose, **use as plain a backdrop as possible**. Wallpaper patterns or plants tend to look as if they are growing out of the subject's hair.
5. If taking an outdoor shot, **never shoot the sun as a backdrop**.

Digital Photography Guidelines

1. Photography resolution requirements:
Web = 72 dpi (dots per inch)
Print = 300 dpi or ppi (pixels per inch)
2. If possible, save photography and images as high-res JPEG or TIF files

POPULAR CLUB EVENTS

By far, the most popular events alumnae clubs host are: a Founders' Day celebration, a Presidential visit to a club, the student send-off, participation in a service project, social networking events, and book clubs. What follows is greater descriptions of each of these. As with any event, if you need assistance with event planning, invitation help, mailing assistance, etc., don't hesitate to contact the Alumnae Relations Office.

Founders' Day OCTOBER 13

Saint Mary's history began in Le Mans, France, in 1841, in the foundation of a religious congregation of women known as the Marianites de Sainte Croix. Their founder was a holy and learned priest, Basil Anthony Mary Moreau, prominent in the work of restoring Christian worship and education in post-Revolution France. Father Moreau had under his direction a society of priests and brothers known as the Congregation of Sainte Croix, of which the Sisters were to form the third branch.

In 1843, Father Moreau sent four Sisters to Indiana to assist in the work of Notre Dame du Lac, established a year earlier by his priests and brothers under the direction of Father Edward Sorin. The upper story of the log chapel at Notre Dame was the Sisters' first home in the new world.

The origin of the school that became Saint Mary's College goes back to 1844 when the Sisters opened their first school for girls at Bertrand, Michigan, four miles north of Notre Dame and the most flourishing town in the area at that time. The first Saint Mary's attracted pupils from several states and Canada and was chartered by the State of Michigan in 1851. It soon became one of the promising boarding schools of the Midwest.

Mother Angela's Legacy

The academy in Bertrand had been in operation approximately ten years when Eliza Gillespie, later to be known as Mother Angela, became directress. She was an American woman of marked intellectual and administrative ability, relative by birth and family marriages of the Blaines, Shermans and other families prominent in American life from colonial times. The story of her arrival at Saint Mary's is retold in *A Panorama: 1844-1977*:

"When Eliza made up her mind to enter a convent, her choice was the Sisters of Mercy in Chicago. She and her mother planned to stop at Notre Dame on their way there to pay a farewell visit to her brother Neal....

The story is well known of how Father Sorin, by accident, met Mrs. Phelan and Eliza....He turned to Eliza, and after an introduction said to her without further pomp, "You're the one I've been praying for." Eliza responded as coldly as good breeding would permit by simply keeping silence. Then she told him with no uncertainty that she wished to be a Sister of Mercy, that they were expecting her, and that she was stopping briefly at Notre Dame only to say goodbye to her brother."

Father Sorin convinced Eliza to stay a few days at the Sisters' convent in Bertrand, Michigan, to pray and reflect further upon her decision to enter the Sisters of Mercy. The morning after making the retreat, as Eliza and her mother were making their farewells, she suddenly turned to Father Sorin and asked permission to be a Sister of the Holy Cross. On April 17, 1853, Eliza Gillespie received the religious habit and the name Sister Mary of Saint

Angela. After a brief novitiate in France, Sister Angela was made directress of Saint Mary's Academy in Bertrand, with the title "Mother".

Mother Angela and Father Sorin soon agreed that continued operation of the academy in Bertrand was not a good idea. The village was not growing as had been hoped for and the distance from Notre Dame was too far for continued cooperation between the two schools. In April, 1855, Father Sorin successfully negotiated with a local land owner for 185 acres of a wooded elevation above the St. Joseph River, two miles north of South Bend, and across the road from Notre Dame. Eventually, that acreage was expanded to the present 275 acres which now comprise Saint Mary's College campus.

Before the end of 1855, a building for sixty resident students and thirty Sisters had been constructed, along with a house for young women seeking application for Sisterhood. The great event of 1855, however, was the drafting of articles of incorporation and the granting of a charter by the state of Indiana which recognized Saint Mary's as a degree-granting school. These documents define Saint Mary's as Mother Angela first conceived it and as it remains today. The second article reads:

The purpose of the Association is to establish an academy of learning...for the education of female students in the various branches of arts and sciences usually taught in female academics of the highest standing and to confer such degrees upon scholars as are usual in such institutions.

The terms of the charter made Saint Mary's one of the earliest Catholic colleges for women in the United States.

The first formal commencement exercises were held in 1848. Diplomas and graduating medals were awarded for the first time in 1860. Work at college level had been offered from the earliest years with courses specifically termed post-graduate for students who had completed the academic program in operation as early as 1870. Graduates of Saint

Mary's Academy were admitted to advanced standing in major colleges and universities and were granted the bachelor degree with the addition of minimal work beyond the Saint Mary's diploma. Under Mother Pauline's administration the school began to prepare its students for Saint Mary's own degrees. The first degree was conferred on Agnes Ewing Brown in 1898.

Founders' Day Activities

Each October, the Saint Mary's family celebrates the anniversary of the founding of the College — a celebration which calls to mind the deep-rooted traditions of Saint Mary's and its founders: Father Edward Sorin and Mother Angela Gillespie. Abbe Moreau, Fr. Sorin's superior in France, is often credited with a founding role as well. (Founders' Day is written with an apostrophe after the "s" to indicate these co-founders.)

Traditionally, the celebration of Founders' Day occurs on October 13, the feast day of Father Sorin. Clubs often celebrate this special anniversary anytime between late September and mid-November. Local club events range from luncheons or dinners at a restaurant to more informal potluck dinners or dessert receptions in a home. Celebration of the liturgy is often an integral part of the event and may take place in a local parish prior to the event or at the location of the event.

Founders' Day Award

The Founders' Day award honors the many women who have given so generously to Saint Mary's and their local alumnae club. Originally conceived by the Georgia Club, this award was officially established on the national level at the 1981 Club Presidents' Conference. Selection of the recipient is left to the discretion of each individual club. Suggested criteria for selection are notable personal qualities and exceptional service to the local alumnae club, Saint Mary's and the local community.

Presidential Visits to Alumnae Clubs

A visit to your alumnae club by the College president is generally the largest event the club will have in any given year. It is an excellent opportunity to boost attendance, attract new members to the club, and involve other friends of the College such as trustees and past and current parents. It also provides a forum for the president and other members of the College administration (who often accompany the president to club visits) to interact with key alumnae, local leaders and prospective students during a visit to the club area.

Clubs should make requests for a presidential visit at least 6 months in advance by contacting the assistant director of Alumnae Relations. The Alumnae office will do its best to accommodate your club's request but makes no guarantees (based on the president's busy schedule.)

A presidential visit may garner publicity for the College and, likewise, for the local club. Because these events have a strategic impact on the College, the president and our clubs, there is a much higher level of involvement and coordination by the Alumnae Office in these events. This increased support from the College is intended to be helpful to the alumnae club, whose major support makes the College's goal of alumnae outreach possible.

Procedures for Planning a Presidential Visit

1. Contact the assistant director of Alumnae Relations at least 6 months in advance of the date you are requesting. **Please do not contact the President's Office.** If the club has specific dates in mind, please offer as many possible dates for consideration. Flexibility guarantees you the greatest chance of having your event scheduled. The club can simply provide general parameters such as "any day of the week in the fall" or "any Sunday in the spring." The Alumnae Office will coordinate the request with the President's Office and confirm the date with the club.

2. The College has a list of potential hosts for presidential visits. Therefore, please do not approach anyone to serve as host before checking with the Alumnae Office. If there is a potential host in your club, the Alumnae Office will make the contact, confirm a date that works for all parties involved, and confirm those details with the club.

3. Three months prior to the event, the details for the invitation (time, format, location, RSVP, map/directions, etc.) need to be confirmed with the host. The Alumnae Office has special invitations that are used for presidential visits. The Office will produce and mail the invitations and the club will be charged only for postage.

4. It is recommended that the club set up a "phone tree" and begin calling after the invitations have arrived in local homes. Experience has shown that this improves attendance!

5. The Alumnae Office will provide a sample time line for event chair and the host to insure the event stays on schedule and all details are covered. Resource materials for the introduction of the president and other College guests will be provided by the Alumnae Office.

An important part of the program to include in the time line is the "club commercial." Be sure to prepare announcements that relate to your club. Take advantage of the opportunity to get the club message out to potential new members and increase attendance at future events!

6. Seven days prior to the event, fax or email the Alumnae Office (574) 284-4749 a list of attendees so the office can produce name tags, as well as a guest list for the president to review. Also, please e-mail a copy of the final time line, table seating (if applicable), names of club members providing hospitality such as airport transportation, and any other important details for the visit.

At this time, request any additional materials you would like (i.e. College napkins, bookstore items, etc.) The College will provide fact sheets, Admission materials and other timely literature.

7. Refer to the Program Planning Checklist in this section for more event planning details.

The Student Send-Off Tips for the Event Chair

Student send-off is traditionally one of the two most frequently held club events. It allows incoming students and their parents to meet current students and alumnae and learn more about life at Saint Mary's.

Setting a Date: It is recommended that you schedule the date no earlier than the last week in July and no later than the third week in August. A three-day welcome weekend precedes the start of classes, which is generally scheduled the last week of August.

Type of Event: Low cost or no cost, with no charge to first-year students and their families. Informal, casual atmosphere works well – potluck dinner, dinner provided by club members, family picnic, evening gathering with simple refreshments/snacks. The event is usually held in a home but site will be determined by size of group and type of event.

Invite: Incoming freshmen and parents, current students (and parents), club members. You will receive the following information from the Alumnae Relations Office:

Lists: The Alumnae Office will e-mail the names and addresses of incoming first-year and current students to the club president as soon as the information is finalized by the Admission Office, **usually around mid to late June. DO NOT CONTACT THE ADMISSION OFFICE.** Please use this address list along with your club membership list. This will provide the names of the May graduates and the sophomores, juniors, and seniors for the upcoming academic year.

Labels: Typing or hand-addressing invitations to incoming first-year and current students will eliminate a special order and cut down on waiting time. Mailing labels for

current club members are available using the online request form at the Saint Mary's website.

Invitations: Letter, postcards e-mail, Evite, or more formal format. Follow-up with personal phone calls to first-year students. Allow 6-8 weeks if you have the Alumnae Office print and mail the invitations. Allow extra time if you plan to use Bulk mail (delivery takes from one-to-six weeks).

Name Tags and Napkins: Saint Mary's name tags and napkins are available to clubs at a nominal charge.

Program: Time should be devoted to the introduction of first-year students and their parents. The program could also include a short presentation by the club president or event chair about the Alumnae Association/Club Activities (review Couriers for updates on the news about the College), presentations by current students about what to bring, what to expect at orientation, etc., and/or question and answer time. This is also an opportunity to honor the local club scholarship recipient and welcome recent graduates to the club.

Gifts from the Bookstore: Some clubs present gifts from the bookstore – pens, key chains, mugs, etc. Please use the online request form found at the Saint Mary's website to submit a request. .

Publicity: Personal calls to first-year students.

Photographs: Can be taken in color or black and white if you plan to submit photos to the Alumnae Office. Photography guidelines and specifications may be found earlier in this section.

Report: Send your activity report to the assistant director.

Service Projects

Participating in a service project not only creates community awareness and helps someone in need, but also reflects the ideals in the mission of Saint Mary's College.

Founded by the Sisters of the Holy Cross in 1844, Saint Mary's promotes a life of intellectual vigor, aesthetic appreciation, religious sensibility, and social responsibility.

Past club service projects include:

- Sponsoring a needy family
- Making Christmas/Exam goodie bags for current students
- Volunteering for a morning at a local non-profit agency
- Preparing a local church for the Advent season
- Assisting with Operation Christmas Child
- Donating items to a local food pantry

Consider adding a service component to an existing and planned event. Have members bring canned food, warm hats and mittens, or toys to a planned book club meeting or happy hour. Instead of having your meeting at an office, consider serving dinner at a homeless shelter before the meeting.

Book Clubs

Book clubs are becoming more and more popular with alumnae clubs. A book club is a great way to gather alumnae from different age groups and of varying interests. The gatherings are also fairly low maintenance for the clubs. Meetings can be scheduled as often as members like—once a month, every six weeks, or every other month. They are usually hosted by one of the members in her home. Everyone takes turns hosting an evening. Most clubs decide on the books and locations for the entire year, and then publish the listing in their newsletter. For a book suggestion list, contact your local library or bookstore.

Book Award

Most high schools typically have award nights in the spring which honor outstanding juniors and seniors. Many honor their juniors with “book awards”. The student is awarded with a book that exemplifies that particular college, in an effort to raise awareness about the school and target potential prospective students. Several Saint Mary's alumnae clubs give out Book Awards.

To start a book award program:

1. Contact area high schools about their honor nights. Speak with the school's guidance counselor about the Book Award idea. If you need assistance deciding which high schools to target, contact the Admission Office.
2. Decide the qualifications for the award. (Example: a young woman who is a junior, with at least a B average, who excels in fine arts.) Make sure the school provides the

student's name and address to the Admission Office.

3. Purchase a book that reflects the characteristics of Saint Mary's, or relates to the talents/interests of the student you wish to honor. The Alumnae Relations Office has a list of suggested books.
4. Include an inscription in the book, plus Saint Mary's Admission material.
5. Contact the Admission Office with the student's name and address.

NOTE: The school will decide who is the best candidate for the award. The club is not responsible for choosing a worthy candidate.