



MEDIA RELEASE

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St. Mary Catholic Schools Students Enjoyed Artist-in-Residence

St. Mary Catholic Schools recently welcomed an artist-in-residence through the Confucius Classroom program at St. Mary Catholic High School. Emei Ulannie (Ye, Mei) is the daughter of a music teacher in China, and began learning piano at the age of three and guzheng when she was seven-years old. In Chongqing, China, she was in demand as a professional performer of the guzheng at concerts, ceremonies, events and cruises on the Yangtze River. She came to the United States in 2010, and now teaches guzheng and piano lessons in Madison and enjoys sharing her love of music with others. She performs in a variety of venues throughout the Madison area.

At St. Mary Catholic Schools in Neenah/Menasha, Yi Mei spent three days (October 14-16) sharing her musical talent and love of Chinese culture. She spent time with the middle and high school Mandarin language students and the high school's ESL and band classes. In addition, Yi Mei visited each of the three SMCS elementary schools where she performed on the 21-string guzheng and gave students a chance to try a short song on the instrument. On Thursday evening, Yi Mei and several Chinese students studying at SMCS performed both traditional and current music in the fine arts education center theater, and all enjoyed a reception with Chinese desserts following the show. Yi Mei, who travels with a wardrobe of traditional garb from several Chinese dynasties, offered opportunities throughout her stay for students to view and try on clothing from many historical eras.

According to SMCS Director of Communications Molly Griffin, who is also active in administering the Confucius Classroom program, the artist-in-residence program was very well received. "Yi Mei's visits to the elementary schools, in particular, were exciting experiences for students," Griffin observed. "SMCS's Mandarin language program was extended to fourth and fifth graders this year, and our teacher has also spent some time with the younger grades. It was amazing how many students remembered how to say "hello" and "thank you" to our guest, without coaching from anyone! Yi Mei's beautiful clothing and lyrical music really captured the students' attention, and she took the time to answer many questions following each performance."

This artist-in-residence engagement was presented courtesy of the Confucius Classroom at St. Mary Catholic High School. Through a partnership with Hanban, the high school promotes the teaching of the Mandarin Chinese language and understanding of Chinese culture. The next Confucius Classroom activity will be a one-day cooking class on Sunday, November 15 from 4:00-6:00 p.m. at St. Mary Catholic Middle School.

St. Mary Catholic Schools (SMCS) includes St. Mary Catholic High School and the new St. Mary Catholic Middle School in the Town of Menasha and St. Mary Elementary Schools (St. Margaret Mary and St. Gabriel in Neenah, and St. Mary in Menasha). SMCS is dedicated to the individual development of each student in grades Pre3-12, by providing the highest quality education focused on faith, academics and service in a rapidly changing world.

(Photos attached to email)

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