



## Press Release

For more information contact  
Barbara Esteves-Moore  
292-5134, ext. 272 or  
[estevesmooreb@dominicancampus.org](mailto:estevesmooreb@dominicancampus.org)

### St. Cecilia Academy awards Principal's Scholarships for 2010-2011

St. Cecilia Academy has announced the recipients of the Principal's Scholarship for the freshman class entering in Fall 2010. Bethany Higgins, from Fairview Middle School, and Megan Vanderkooi, from Christ the King School, will be attending St. Cecilia Academy as Principal's Scholars.

Each year, St. Cecilia Academy offers the Principal's Scholarship, which started in 2006-2007, to two incoming freshmen with great academic potential whose families have a strong financial need.

Potential recipients must, like all applicants, apply to SCA by the deadline and take the Independent School Entrance Examination (ISEE). However, families also need to submit tax returns and send a tuition assistance application to an independent organization, School and Student Services (SSS). As a final step, the students must write a three page essay. The scholarship assists with tuition for all four years based on the family's need as identified by the SSS.

Bethany and Megan both were ecstatic when they received the news. Bethany, when asked what she thinks about receiving the scholarship, says it is "jaw dropping...and totally awesome."

Her mother, Billy Higgins, says, "We are still in awe. Just thinking about it makes me cry. Bethany worked on the [essay] for about two months. She wanted it badly...and she felt this would change her life." Billy adds, "But we were worried about how we would afford it. This scholarship will affect our family forever. God truly answers prayers."

Although the Higgins were aware of SCA for years, a friend whose daughter attended the school encouraged them to learn more, so Bethany visited last fall. Billy says, "Bethany could not stop gushing about how cool it was...she fell in love with the idea that she could be part of that SCA family."

Megan Vanderkooi, according to her mother Stephanie Burke, "is just feeling so blessed and thankful." Stephanie adds, "I am incredibly proud of her...I never thought that St. Cecilia would be a possibility for us financially. It is a gift [for which] both of us will be forever thankful."

Megan has been considering SCA for several years. “Megan’s initial interest began [in seventh grade] at the special overnight event that is held for seventh and eighth grade students,” Stephanie says. “St. Cecilia was always on the top of her list. She felt a strong connection from the beginning.”

As a parent considering SCA, Stephanie notes, “First, it is an excellent school academically. Second, St. Cecilia has so much to offer in areas of leadership and personal growth. The opportunities here are unique and aid in the development of each girl as a whole person. That is exactly the environment I have always hoped for my daughter.”

According to Betty Bader, SCA Director of Admissions, the administration feels strongly that any girl in the mid-state area who has the ability and the desire to attend SCA should have the chance to do so. Fundraising efforts to support this goal are ongoing.

The school offers a number of scholarship and tuition assistance opportunities along with the Principal’s Scholarship. Currently, over 30% of the incoming freshman class is receiving some form of assistance.

Billy Higgins is excited for her daughter’s future. “We believe it will create opportunities for Bethany that she never would have had before.” Stephanie Burke sees these opportunities enriching Megan’s life as well and creating long lasting effects. “I have absolutely no doubt that some day Megan will be back around to share the benefits of this gift with other young women.”

St. Cecilia Academy is Nashville’s oldest private high school, founded in 1860 by the Dominican Sisters of the St. Cecilia Congregation. The Academy has been named to the Top 50 best Catholic high schools in the U.S. list four times since 2004. Seventy-eight percent of the Class of 2009 earned college scholarships totaling \$4.6 million. Five St. Cecilia Academy students—9% of the senior class—have been recognized by the National Merit Scholarship Program for high scores on the PSAT for 2009.