

Mercy High launches global education center, hears from international leader

Thinking globally isn't just a catchphrase at Mercy High School. It's a way of life.

That has never been truer, as the school has started a Center for Global Education.

Religious Sister of Mercy Carol Wheeler, president of Mercy, introduced the program to the 380 students gathered inside the school's Harry and Jeanette Weinberg Auditorium Dec. 12. The school celebrated the Sisters of Mercy Foundation Day, marking the 180th anniversary of the order's founding by Mother Catherine McCauley.

Sister Carol announced the opening of the Center for Global Education, a new program that will integrate global education across the curriculum. The school said it will also promote an exploration of ideas and provide a centralized location for research on projects.

"For over 10 years Mercy Baltimore has made significant efforts to educate students to become the citizens of the world," Sister Carol told students. "This morning, we are taking the next step."

Jessica Robinson, a social studies teacher at the school, will serve as its director. Mercy has taken part in Catholic Relief Service's Global Solidarity Schools Initiative, which provides resources and speakers. The center was the next logical step for Mercy.

"It was something that fit naturally with the Sisters of Mercy," Robinson said. "I think it's amazing. It's really showing their commitment to 21st century needs of students. It's the skills that students will need in this global economy, but keeping that social justice aspect, looking at our local community and our bigger community."

Robinson said that Mercy's culture is built for the program.

"I want global education and global awareness to be in our conversations daily," she said. "I want it to be at the point where it's not an add-on and works seamlessly in everything we do."

Junior Leah Hill said an education at Mercy has opened her eyes to the world around her.

"I think it's great," Hill said. "For me, we need to do more. There are so many people who are suffering. We are able to get resources to be aware and not blind-sided."

In addition to announcing the new education center Dec. 12, the school also welcomed Sister of Mercy Deirdre Mullan, who is involved with the Mercy Reaching Mercy partnership with UNICEF.

During her presentation, Sister Deirdre showed the extensive reach of the Sisters of Mercy in poverty-stricken areas across the globe. She said the order has worked for the freedoms of women everywhere.

"Let us this day, Foundation Day 2011, resolve to turn our attention and keep our minds focused on both global issues while never ignoring the local issues," Sister Deirdre said.

"One hundred years from now, when the history books are being analyzed, it shall be written they 'advocated, they demanded and they realized change.' I believe with Mercy High School as a partner, I know we can and will make a difference."

For audio of Sister Deirdre and interviews with Mercy students, visit CatholicReview.org/palmerblog.