

# Mount St. Mary's partners with Frederick Catholic school

Aspiring teachers from Mount St. Mary's University in Emmitsburg are getting first-hand experience teaching in the Catholic school system thanks to a new partnership between their college and St. John Regional Catholic School in Frederick.

Working with teacher mentors at St. John, education students from the Mount teach a variety of subjects at the inter-parish school. They also complete classroom observations as part of their preparation to become certified teachers.

The program began last year and was formalized when Dr. Thomas H. Powell, Mount St. Mary's president, signed an Aug. 30 memo of understanding with Dr. Ronald J. Valenti, superintendent of Catholic schools, and other area education leaders.

St. John joins a previously existing professional development school network in Frederick County consisting of public elementary, middle and high schools.

"Since its inception in 1996 when four schools were involved, the network has grown to a point where now all teacher candidates complete an extensive internship in a professional development school," said Dr. Powell, noting that area schools host more than 200 Mount students each year.

Paul Fer, St. John's assistant principal and site coordinator for the St. John-Mount partnership, said the program benefits teacher candidates, current teachers and students. Teacher candidates learn from the experience of longtime professionals and teaching veterans are exposed to new approaches to education from the aspiring teachers, he said.

"It's a great experience for both of them," he said.

Bridget Karwacki, a 21-year-old Mount St. Mary's senior from Allentown, Penn., said her teaching mentor has given great advice - helping her develop her lesson plans to meet the needs of the students.

"Every day I'm in the classroom, I know this is the place for me," said Ms. Karwacki, who also taught in public schools in partnership with the Mount.

"It doesn't take two pots of coffee to get me motivated," she said. "The kids are just great. I feed off their energy."