

CORPORATE PHILOSOPHY OF THE SISTERS OF MERCY

We, the Sisters of Mercy, because of our commitment to participate in the teaching mission of the Church, sponsor secondary education facilities. We believe that the message of Jesus can be taught only when deed matches word. Therefore, our goal in education is not simply academics, but an overall service of compassion, respect and justice.

THE SISTERS OF MERCY

The Order of the Sisters of Mercy was founded by Catherine McAuley, a remarkable woman who once walked through the poorest sections of Dublin City, Ireland, and was stunned by what she found there - ignorance, neglect, and disease. Catherine was appalled by the all too visible helpless hunger and hopeless prejudice. The Irish poor had no way out, caught as they were in a bitter struggle of political-religious ideas and ideals that denied them food, freedom, property, and education. Catherine knew there was something she had to do, and so she started an institute of women religious who could bring to those in need the incomparable quality of God's mercy.

Catherine was a woman of compassion and prayer - socialite turned social worker, lady of fashion who lived among the poor, woman of wealth who had no money, activist who early learned the discipline of sanctity. Her institute is the religious Sisters of Mercy, started in 1831 with only seven co-workers. As a founder of an Irish religious order, Catherine was thought unlikely to succeed, largely because a religious institute was never really her intent at all. She was approximately 50 years old when the Institute of the Sisters of Mercy was established; she lived only 10 years after that uncertain beginning; and she found out very quickly that what she had thought a vast amount of inherited wealth -close to one million dollars in twentieth century currency-was pitifully inadequate for the needs of those who cried out for help. Ireland was in turmoil - bitter, deep, and divided. Dublin was split into religious, economic and socio-political categories unalterably opposed to each other: Catholic-Protestant, poor-rich, underprivileged-influential.

Catherine began to launch the projects she had long envisioned: first to educate and care for the poor, and second, to provide a residence for herself and others who might choose to work with her. She arranged to buy property on Baggot Street in Dublin. There she built, not a small house, but one large enough to carry out her plans. It was to be called the House of Mercy. Those who came to join Catherine lived austere: praying, teaching, and caring for the needy. Visitation of the sick in their homes began in 1828. Perhaps the idea of the first Mercy hospital sprang into existence when Catherine came home carrying a sick and abandoned child.

Sisters of Mercy today still teach, still care for the sick, and still use their freedom to respond to new needs in the marketplaces of the twenty-first century. They influence politics and economics, ethics and moral theology. They counsel the doubtful, comfort the sorrowful. They speak out for justice. They support, influence, and take responsibility for difficult projects and controversial causes. The first Sisters of Mercy in Belize arrived in the country on the morning of January 20, 1883 aboard the ship "City of Dallas". Earlier, in December 1879, two Jesuit priests had visited the Motherhouse of the Sisters of Mercy in New Orleans, USA imploring the Sisters to teach the children in Belize. Obstacles which proved insurmountable at the time prevented the Sisters from committing themselves to the request, although the Sisters were deeply touched by the dire need for formal education in the British colony. In June 1882, however, the Sisters were able to make a more promising response, and on January 14, 1883, seven Sisters of Mercy set sail for Belize to establish the first convent of their institute within the Tropics and to establish schools at Holy Redeemer and St. Catherine's.

The Sisters of Mercy in Belize have given much to this country, even outside the realms of education. In addition to sponsoring St. Catherine's Academy in Belize City and Muffles College in Orange Walk Town, the Sisters also sponsor Mercy Kitchen, Mercy Clinic, and the House of Mercy, Big Falls, Toledo; they administer the Guadalupe Spiritual Life Center. The Sr. Cecilia's Home for the elderly is named for Sr. Mary Cecilia Esquivel in recognition of her untiring efforts among the elderly poor.

Source: Remember me affectionately to all, M.C. McAuley by Regina Kelly, R.S.M and Sisters of Mercy in Belize by Yvonne Hunter, R.S.M.



THE VALUES OF MERCY SECONDARY EDUCATION ASSOCIATION

- Collaboration
- Compassion and Service
- Educational Excellence
- Concern for Women and Women's Issues
- World Vision and Responsibility
- Spiritual Growth and Development
- Mission Education

MISSION STATEMENT

Muffles College, a Roman Catholic Institution under the auspices of the Sisters of Mercy, commits itself to quality education that is relevant to the needs of a Belizean society. It strives to develop the total person - spiritually, morally, psychologically, intellectually, emotionally, physically and socially - in keeping with the teachings of Jesus and in the Mercy tradition. It also seeks to create, through active participation of all concerned, an environment of harmony, tolerance and respect for individual differences.

BRIEF HISTORY OF MUFFLES COLLEGE

The Jesuit community founded Muffles College in 1953. The school was named for Fr. Joseph Mueffels, a Jesuit resident in Orange Walk at the turn of the 1900. He is noted for having overseen the completion of La Inmaculada Church.

Fr. John Knopp, Superior of the then British Honduras Catholic Mission, was instrumental in the establishment of Muffles. Orange Walk was chosen as the first site for a Jesuit College outside Belize City because the majority of the young men from the districts sitting the entrance examinations for St. John's College were from Orange Walk.

Assigned to establish the College, Fr. Francis Ring together with Mr Eugene Hernandez, a St. John's graduate originally from Stann Creek and the first Teacher-in-Charge, welcomed twenty-one young men to the new school that first June day. By the next year, increased enrolment necessitated the addition of a new staff member, Orange Walk's own new SJC graduate Uvaldemir Torres, Sr., who was to succeed Mr. Hernandez as administrator in July 1955.

Initially, classes were held in the bottom floor of the presbytery located on Church Street at the time, a few weeks later, however, the students were moved to a fairly large house across the street, rented

from Mrs Balbina Gonzalez. The College remained in this location until 1958 when it was relocated across the street from the Parish Church. The street later took the name Muffles Street as a result of this.

In 1957, Muffles College which had begun as a two year institution for young men, went co-ed. Eight young women joined the fourteen young men who now constituted first and second forms. In 1960, Muffles expanded its curriculum to include all four high school years. No longer did the students have to complete their course of studies in Belize City.

When Mr. Belizario Carballo, Sr., one of Muffles' original students, succeeded Mr Torres as administrator in May 1964, the school population had grown to include twenty-four young women and sixty young men.

In 1967, the Sisters of Mercy assumed sponsorship of Muffles College. The first Mercy Principal, Sister Mary Lois Harten, began the development of the current campus, erecting the original three buildings and supervising the move from Muffles Street to Otro Benque in October of that first year. Sister Mary Lois was succeeded by Sister Leona Marie Panton in 1970 who served in this capacity until 1977 when the position was again held by Mr Carballo. He was succeeded by Mr. Frank Garbutt who served until 2004. Mr. Bernaldino Pech served from 2004-2008. The current principal and since 2008 is Mrs. Maria Johnston; she holds a Master's Degree in Educational Leadership and has served Muffles for the past eighteen years.

In 1992 Muffles College again expanded its services – this time to include a Junior College division. Originally the first Assistant Dean, Mr. Adrian Leiva presently holds the position of Dean of the Junior College.

The College operates under a Board of Governors, which is responsible for the management of its business and academic affairs in accordance with the mission of the Sisters of Mercy.

CODE OF CHRISTIAN CONDUCT COVERING STUDENTS AND PARENTS/GUARDIANS

The students' interests in receiving a quality, morally-based education can be served if students, parents and school officials work together. Normally, differences between these individuals can be resolved. In some rare instances, however, the school may find it necessary, in its discretion, to require parents/guardians to withdraw their child.

It shall be an express condition of enrolment that the parents/guardians of a student shall also act in accordance with the standards of conduct that are consistent with the Christian principles of the school, as determined by the school in its discretion. These principles include, but are not limited to any policies, principles or procedures set forth in any parent/guardian/student handbook of the school.

These Christian principles further include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Parents/guardians are expected to work courteously and co-operatively with the school to assist the student in meeting the academic, moral and behavioural expectations of the school.

2. Students and parents/guardians may respectfully express their concerns about the school's operation and its personnel. However, they may not do so in a manner that is discourteous, scandalous, rumour driven, disruptive, threatening, hostile, or divisive.
3. These expectations for students and parents/guardians include, but are not limited to, all school-sponsored programs and events (e.g., extended care, athletics, field trips, etc.).

The school reserves the right to determine, in its discretion, which actions fall short of meeting the Christian principles of the school. Failure to follow these principles will normally result in a verbal or written warning to the student and/or parent/guardian and normally will first result in disciplinary action short of a requirement to withdraw from the school (e.g., suspension of student or suspension of parent's/guardian's privilege to come on the campus grounds and/or participate in school activities, volunteer work, etc.).

The school reserves the right to determine, in its discretion, when conduct is of such a severe nature as to warrant immediate action without a warning and/or without an intermediate step short of withdrawal.

MUFFLES COLLEGE SONG

In the horizon a new sun rises. A new generation is blooming under the countenance of God. The world is set in our hands to build or let it fall apart. We'll keep it spinning and make it worthwhile in very single way.

Chorus

We pledge allegiance as is due to our country, our flag, and our school. We're proud and determined to make a change to honour our country and respect our school. It is now time to make a change so come on brothers. Lift your amour, gather your strength. Let's make a better world for ourselves and those to come. To our children this will be home sweet home.

Oh eternal, everlasting God, shine your light on our country and our school. Point out the path that leads to good. In our new lives Muffles will remain as our foundation based on knowledge, discipline and love, and God will give us his patronage if we deserve it.

Chorus

Lyrics: Martha Carrillo
Music: Luis Pook