

## NEWS RELEASE

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# University of Saint Mary Raises Thousands for Student Scholarships at Annual SpireFest Gala

## *Leavenworth Native Larkin Reilly Wins Talent Competition*

(Leavenworth, Kan.)—Thanks to the generosity of friends and supporters, the University of Saint Mary raised tens of thousands of dollars toward student scholarships at USM’s SpireFest fundraising gala Saturday, April 24. The 2010 edition of the annual event, dubbed “Saint Mary Has Talent,” also featured a stage showdown between some of the local area’s best performers, won by Leavenworth native and Xavier Elementary fifth-grader Larkin Reilly.



Other local acts who had strong showings at the USM event included Leavenworth’s own Motown singing sensation Bill Robinson; Falcon Punch, a pop/rock quintet of Lansing, Kan. high schoolers; Leavenworth native and Saint Mary sophomore Jillian Warman on the violin; Kansas City, Mo., baton-twirling champ Savannah Miller; and local singer, songwriter, and storyteller Tom Jacobs. Several Sisters of Charity also lent their talents to the event, including Sister Anita Sullivan, Sister Anne Callahan, Sister Peg Johnson, and Sister Gloria Solomon.

Area news anchors Elizabeth Alex of NBC Action News KSHB-TV and WDAF-TV Fox 4’s Kathy Quinn composed the competition’s all-star panel of judges.

Sister Diane Steele, USM president, noted that SpireFest is a key event for the university as it gives USM backers a chance to “join us in our noblest work: supporting young men and women in financial need who are working toward attaining their dreams of a quality education.”

This year’s event represented several changes for SpireFest. The gala is traditionally presented in a charity auction format, and the 2010 edition—held at USM’s McGilley Field House—marked SpireFest’s return to Leavenworth.

Mike Alex, the university’s vice president for development, expressed gratitude to the donors who gave so generously at the event as well as to the talent that made the contest possible.

“This truly was one of the university’s most memorable SpireFests,” Alex said. “The generosity of donors was on the same level as previous years, and we’re very happy we did so well even with transitioning the event to a new format.”

Alex said the university plans to keep SpireFest in Leavenworth for the foreseeable future.

*The University of Saint Mary is a Catholic co-educational applied liberal arts university founded and sponsored by the Sisters of Charity of Leavenworth. The University of Saint Mary is located at 4100 South 4th Street, Leavenworth, Kan., with additional locations in Overland Park, Shawnee, and Kansas City, Kan. Visit [www.stmary.edu](http://www.stmary.edu) for more information.*