



You Matter at the Academy of Holy Angels

People choose Holy Angels over a lot of other institutions. Why do they do that? Well, certainly it's partly because they know kids get an excellent education here, and they'll have the opportunity to be part of a lot of cocurricular activities. But I think there's something much more to it. It's because they feel that they and their kids **matter** when they're part of this community.

When families spend four—or more—years here as their kids grow up at Holy Angels, they become part of the fabric of this place; they learn to count on one another. I know that some families feel a sense of loss when it's all over.

We want people to feel welcome and connected, and I think we do a very good job of that naturally. When we chose **You Matter** as our theme for the 2012-13 school year, we decided to put that commitment into words, to find a way to be intentional about it, and to keep it in front of us all through the year. We also want to examine ways to do it even better.

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Why do students choose to do their learning here and not somewhere else? Why is this school distinct?"

— Heidi Foley, AHA Principal

"As principal, I'm generally focused on the *what* and *how* of learning. *What* do we want kids to learn? *How* do we teach that? *How* do we ensure that our methods are working? **You Matter** is really about the *why* part of Holy Angels. *Why* do students choose to do their learning here and not somewhere else? *Why* is this school distinct?"

What's the AHA Way?

The **AHA Way** is in its fourth year at Holy Angels. It's a philosophy the school community uses for conducting itself. It has four underlying concepts:

■ Be Part of the Solution

When we see a problem, we own that problem and work on solutions

■ Help Others and Ourselves Succeed

We act with integrity and serve as role models for those around us

■ Honor the Absent

We avoid gossip

■ Communicate "You Matter"

We focus on ensuring that our words and actions let others know they are valued



We're doing several specific things to emphasize the **You Matter** theme this year.

- Even before school started this fall, our teachers and staff members spent an entire day of their workshop week concentrating on the theme, what it means to them, and how to promote it in what they do day to day.
- We're going to keep coming back to **You Matter** and what it entails throughout our weekly convocations this year.
- We're instituting a series of **You Matter Moments** during convocations where people from all parts of the Holy Angels community will talk briefly about what the theme means to them and where they see it in action.
- We'll talk about respect, civility, and, yes, even about good manners, and how those skills help others to feel that they matter in the community.
- We'll focus on our founders, the Sisters of St. Joseph, and their mission to love and honor "the dear neighbor" wherever that neighbor may be found.
- We'll remind ourselves and one another that because we're in education, we're really in the business of serving others—and that the people we're serving really matter.
- We hope, in turn, that the parents and students we're serving will understand and demonstrate that we matter, too.

The young people who come to AHA are bright. They leave here well prepared for college and work. And I want more than that for them. I want the students who graduate from Holy Angels to be different, better, better prepared, more compassionate, equipped with an ethical compass, and ready for leadership. Understanding that others matter is a huge part of that.

We're blessed with a superb team of teachers, staff members, parents, and students. We know that we have the tools and facilities to provide those kids with rigorous academics. Because of that, we have the opportunity to do more—we can give them the additional skills they'll need to be change agents in their work, homes, communities, and places of worship. We can prepare our kids to make society a better place.

It's a big order. But it's important because they **matter**, and we know that. ★