



## Immediate Release

### Vista Maria receives grant from the Margaret Dunning Foundation

*Furthering education to empower youth to develop a broader vocabulary, increased general knowledge and a better understanding of other cultures.*

(Dearborn Heights, MI) - Vista Maria has received a grant of \$11,000 from the Margaret Dunning Foundation to support the Vista Maria Reads (VM Reads) program. Established by a group of volunteers who believe that reading has the power to change lives, VM Reads was developed in 2013 to address the need for at-risk youth to have access to relevant, engaging books and literature. Since its development, VM Reads has distributed over 21,000 books to the youth in Vista Maria's care.

Reading expands a youth's vocabulary, improves writing skills and with more serious literature they are able to develop skills in handling complex ideas. The more a youth reads, the more information they pick up. This leads to a solid core of knowledge that is useful in life to help them expand their horizons as they learn about more people around the world. Reading also allows youth to understand that everyone has problems in their life.

Mary Brown, VM Reads Volunteer Leader, says, "To me, Vista Maria READS is about empowerment and joy. Books can change lives, and teens who read have a powerful tool at their disposal as they prepare to enter adulthood. And books can bring deep pleasure. I can still picture one of the youth, looking at the books spread out on the table, smiling at me and saying 'Before I came to Vista Maria, reading was like a punishment to me. Now, I love it.'"

Through VM Reads, the youth living in Vista Maria's residential housing are able to choose two books each month which they are able to keep. VM Reads volunteers visit each of Vista Maria's residential halls and distribute books to up to 100 youth across campus. VM Reads offers an array of different genres and allow youth to explore different themes including fiction, non-fiction, memoirs and more. VM Reads volunteers furthermore culminate an activity that will encourage the kids to explore their interests and make personal connections with each genre. All of the books provided through VM Reads are appropriate for the age group at Vista Maria and reflect youths' reading levels, thought patterns and interests.

Moreover, VM Reads is able to fulfill specific book requests from youth, which further integrates an element of choice and instills the idea that reading for pleasure and developing a true love of reading is a very personal and individualized experience.

The \$11,000 grant from the Margaret Dunning Foundation will fund the purchase of books for the youth in Vista Maria's care and help them realize a life beyond trauma and ignite a life of possibilities.





***About the Margaret Dunning Foundation:***

The Margaret Dunning Foundation was founded by Ms. Dunning in 1997. She was born in 1910 in Redford Township, Michigan, and moved with her mother to Plymouth, Michigan in the 1920s. During her lifetime, Ms. Dunning was a successful businesswoman, philanthropist, and civic booster. She was a major supporter of many Plymouth nonprofits, including the Plymouth District library and the Plymouth Historical Society. In addition to her personal philanthropy, Ms. Dunning was a classic car enthusiast and was a regular participant in the Woodward Dream Cruise with her 1930 Packard 740 Roadster.

Ms. Dunning died in 2015 at the age of 104. Her estate provided additional funding for the Margaret Dunning Foundation, which continues to support her charitable interests and legacy. For more information: [www.margaretdunningfdn.org](http://www.margaretdunningfdn.org).

***About Vista Maria:***

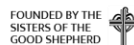
Our Mission: We foster restorative relationships and deliver innovative care, treatment, and education so that vulnerable youth and families believe in their worth, heal and build the skills for success.

Our Vision: All children, families and communities achieve success through continuous learning and relationships that promote personal, professional and family well-being.

Visit [www.vistamaria.org](http://www.vistamaria.org) for additional information.

**For more information or to schedule an interview with Vista Maria's President and CEO contact: Jennifer M. Golabek, Marketing Manager at (248) 914-0742 or [jgolabek@vistamaria.org](mailto:jgolabek@vistamaria.org).**

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# VISTA MARIA

