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University Relations

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**Student Engaged in St. Mary's Archival Project**

*Summary: The Center for Small Towns and student Jenny Morris have worked to archive the rich history of a local school.*

(October 23, 2012)-St. Mary's Catholic School in Morris is full of stories, history, and past memories, but faculty at the school discovered that hundreds of these memories remained largely unexplored, locked away in boxes, bins, and envelopes. Hoping to share the photos with the larger community, the school recently partnered with the University of Minnesota, Morris Center for Small Towns to organize its photographic history. Funding for the project was provided by a grant from the Otto Bremer Foundation.

Jenny Morris '14, Ashland, Wisconsin—a communications, media, and rhetoric major with a minor in political science—took on the job of organizing the photos. Despite the slightly overwhelming nature of the task, her research and archiving experience enabled her to succeed in completing the project.

Working with both the Center for Small Towns and principal Jennifer Grammond over the course of five months, Morris processed the collection of pictures, sorting the photos by hand into different time periods. After Morris had created a basic timeline of physical pictures, she scanned them, amassing a digital image archive. Once the photos had been stored digitally, they were distributed to a graphic designer who would help compile them into a publication showcasing the school's rich history. Both the hard and digital copies of the archive can currently be accessed at the school.

Helping St. Mary's served to illuminate and expand Morris's understanding of the University's past. By interacting so closely with local history, Morris said that she came to "appreciate, rather than criticize, the unique location and history of Morris." When asked about the benefits of the project, Morris explained how the final project would serve not only as a memoir, but also as an important historical document for the school and larger community.

The Center for Small Towns is a community outreach program housed at the University of Minnesota, Morris and serves as a point-of-entry to the resources of the University of Minnesota. Small towns, local units of government, k-12 schools, nonprofit organizations, and other University units are able to utilize the Center's resources as they work on rural issues or make contributions to rural society. Their mission is to focus the University's attention and marshal its resources toward assisting Minnesota's small towns with locally identified issues by creating applied learning opportunities for faculty and students.

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