

Catholic schools - where giving back is a part of life

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Pope Francis (@Pontifex) has tweeted, "To live charitably means not looking out for our own interests, but carrying the burdens of the weakest and poorest among us."

One place where living charitably is carried out is the Catholic schools of the Archdiocese of Baltimore.

Community service (from small projects to those with a global impact) is encouraged and embraced in Catholic schools, making a difference both in the lives of the students and those they help.

Here is a sampling of outreach projects performed by Catholic school students in 2014-15 school year.

Loyola Blakefield

Projects at Loyola Blakefield in Towson have run the gamut from caring for those who serve our country to clothing individuals during the winter months. Student Connor Barnes organized a coat drive for Catholic Charities of Baltimore's Anna's House this winter, which yielded 170 coats.

When Brian McShalley, '16, and his friends started the Loyola Patriots Club to support the troops, they set a modest goal of obtaining sponsorships for 100 wreaths that would be placed on soldiers' graves this Christmas. The teens were able to secure 280 sponsorships for the Wreaths Across America (www.wreathsacrossamerica.org) campaign.

On Dec. 13, the club participated in National Wreaths Across America Day, placing one of the seven ceremonial wreaths at Baltimore National Cemetery in Catonsville before helping to lay more than 900 additional wreaths.

The group has welcomed home troops and is now in the midst of a cell phone drive where each old phone collected is recycled for a phone card for a soldier to call home.

The Loyola swim team also pitched in to support the troops, collecting some \$4,500 for the Wounded Warrior Project during their annual 100-mile swim Dec. 19.

Maryvale Preparatory School

In addition to their Social Justice Coalition (SoJuCo), students from Maryvale Preparatory School in Lutherville are also committed to service globally.

In 2008, Maryvale science teacher Emily Vitrano Waugh '03 and her husband began VISEDAL Partnership (www.visedal.org), a nonprofit organization whose mission is to empower children and young adults in Managua, Nicaragua, to become leaders in their families and communities.

From Dec. 27-31, six Maryvale students and two faculty members traveled to Nicaragua to spend time with the VISEDAL scholars, children who used to beg for food on the streets and now attend school. They did fun activities with the youths and threw a graduation party honoring their accomplishments.



(Photo courtesy Emily Vitrano Waugh)

Calvert Hall College High School

Throughout the past year a dedicated group of volunteers and faculty members made more than 130 sock monkeys for the Towson school's Adopt-A-Family program. Calvert Hall adopted 60 families, and each child age 11 and younger received his or her own sock monkey.



(photo via Calvert Hall FB page)

In January a group of students will travel to Browning, Montana, for an immersion project, where Calvert Hall students will tutor and mentor students from the De La Salle Blackfeet School, a middle school at the heart of the Blackfeet Reservation.

Sacred Heart School

Sacred Heart School and Parish in Glyndon families came together to collect hats, gloves, presents and toiletries for their Adopt-A-Family project. Parent volunteers gathered to sort, wrap and deliver Christmas presents to families in need at their sister parish, St. Ann, in Baltimore City. Students, families, parent volunteers, wrappers, drivers and organizers all played a part in the annual event.



(Photo via Sacred Heart School Facebook page)

Our Lady of Hope/St. Luke School

The school theme at Our Lady of Hope/St. Luke School in Dundalk is “Do Something.”

As part of a Christmas service project, students took the time to make snack bags for a church soup kitchen, while a handful of students also served those in need.



(Photo via Our Lady of Hope/St. Luke Facebook page)

In October 2014, the students raised money to support the Baltimore Animal Rescue and Care Shelter (BARCS), in honor of the Baltimore Orioles. The teacher who raised the most money got pied with a Dangerously Delicious Pie. In this case, that lucky winner was Father T. Austin Murphy, pastor of Our Lady of Hope in Dundalk and St. Luke in Edgemere.



(Photo via Our Lady of Hope/St. Luke Facebook page)

Also see:

St. Margaret School cheerleaders win bid to compete at national level

Beyond the Bell: Loyola Blakefield forensics dominates Baltimore league