

Ceramics class teaches charity at Loyola

As Loyola Blakefield, Towson, senior Garrett Winand puts the final touches on a bowl he is making in his ceramics class, the 17-year-old is reminded his craftsmanship is bound for a March 24 fundraising event to feed the hungry of Baltimore.

The Church of the Nativity, Timonium, parishioner said he is pleased representatives from Beans & Bread Outreach Center in Fells Point and Sarah's Hope in Northeast Baltimore County will fill his bowl with food as part of a fundraiser for the St. Vincent de Paul of Baltimore programs.

"It's good to know it'll be used for a worthy cause," he said. "I never imagined that something I made in an art class might help the homeless."

The gesture wasn't lost on Loyola Art Department chairman Jerry Roe, who answered the call for help from St. Vincent de Paul when its directors requested props for its first fundraising event, Empty Bowls - being held at Notre Dame Preparatory High School in Towson between 4-7 p.m. March 24.

"I didn't even think twice about organizing the boys to make these (20) bowls," Mr. Roe said. "We have a close connection with Beans & Bread, and I think they're providing a great service. The boys go down there often to help serve food to the homeless. So, it's only natural that we'd help out with this."

During the \$15-per-ticket event, patrons will be treated to a simple soup and bread meal served in the handcrafted bowls, which they can "take home as a reminder that many people are faced with hunger and homelessness each day," said Teresa Ernst, a spokeswoman for St. Vincent de Paul.

About 50,000 people in Maryland rely on emergency food programs weekly, and Beans & Bread and Sarah's Hope serve more than 10,000 meals combined each month, Ms. Ernst said.

In addition to feeding the hungry, Beans & Bread provides the homeless and poor with phone access, hygiene supplies and employment referrals to nearly 400 people daily.

The 80 homeless clients – half of whom are children – who eat at Sarah’s Hope each day can also shower, do laundry and obtain health care and case management at the county facility.

Empty Bowls will feature live music and a silent auction, and the handcrafted ceramic bowls made by local artists and students will be filled with a selection of soups supplied by area restaurants, Ms. Ernst said.

Before placing his bowl in the kiln, Loyola Blakefield senior John DeSimone sands the lip of the utensil to prevent the edges from getting sharp.

“Hey, Mr. Roe, do we get credit for our community service hours for this project?” the jocular 17-year-old Immaculate Conception, Towson, parishioner asked his teacher, referring to the 40 hours of community service students are required to complete.

“No, little Johnny DeSimone,” the art teacher answered. “This one you’re giving up for the homeless.”

For tickets to Empty Bowls, visit www.vincentbaltimore.org/newsandevents.cfm, or call 410-547-5548. Tickets can also be purchased at the door.