

Foundation continues Pacione's spirit

Peer ministers at Cristo Rey Jesuit High School begin each school year with a fall retreat to introduce the newest members, usually sophomores, so they can bond, become friends and learn to work together, according to Christine Gallagher, director of campus ministry.

Last fall, that retreat took place during an overnight lock-in at the Fells Point school. The next one, however, will take place offsite, thanks to a \$2,000 grant from the Mark D. Pacione Foundation awarded in December.

"Getting students outside of the city to really retreat from the school environment and the busyness of the city is the ideal thing for them," Gallagher said.

The Pacione Foundation carries on the legacy of Mark Pacione, an innovator in ministering to young members of the Catholic Church who headed the Archdiocese of Baltimore's Division of Youth and Young Adult ministry from the mid-1980s until 2009, when he was appointed associate director of schools planning. He was also instrumental in the planning of World Youth Day in Denver in 1993 and the visit of Pope John Paul II to Oriole Park at Camden Yards in 1995.

Pacione was 60 when he **died unexpectedly** Dec. 29, 2014.

"Mark always looked at the youth ministers in the field, the catechists, the DREs, the principals, the teachers, the volunteers as truly the ministers," said Carole Pacione, his wife and Pacione Foundation president. "He might have had the title as director of youth and young adult ministry but the people in the field - the people running small groups and taking people on ski trips - they were the adults he saw as the ministers and the people who had the most impact on the lives of young people in bringing them closer to Christ."

The foundation also provides grants for youth and youth ministers to attend national conferences and World Youth Day and two annual scholarships for young people attending the Pinkard Scholars Youth Theological Studies program at St. Mary's

Seminary and University in Roland Park.

"From its inception, there was this drive to have some impact on the faith development and the leadership development of young people and the adults who work with them," Pacione said of the foundation.

Cristo Rey Jesuit is one of three recipients of the first "Shine On" grants from the Pacione Foundation. The others are St. Gabriel Parish in Louisville, Ky., and the Coordinator of Intercultural Ministries for the Diocese of Toledo, Ohio. The foundation expects to award \$15,000 in Shine On grants annually.

"We thought the mission of the foundation was really well aligned with the work that we are trying to do with our students in terms of establishing leadership, faith-based leadership," said Cristo Rey Jesuit's Gallagher.

Peer ministers at the school, which opened in 2007 with a curriculum that has students in off-campus internships, take a turn in freshman theology classes, lead small-group discussions during the freshman spring retreat and serve as lectors and altar servers. They also take on service projects and reach out to fellow students, talking about issues as varied as studies and peer pressure.

The retreat is an important first step every year, according to Aaron Seivers, a senior.

"You don't know anybody, but by the end of the first night you know everybody and know something about them," he said. "After those three days or two days, you automatically feel connected."

Chloe LaRue, a sophomore and one of the newest peer ministers, said her friends come to her to talk about their problems.

"I share the word of the Lord with them," she said. "And tell them that there is someone who loves them when they are in a hard place."

The peer ministry program's impact on the whole Cristo Rey Jesuit community was one of the reasons for the grant, according to Pacione.

“That was the attraction from the application at Cristo Rey,” she said.

For more information, visit pacionefoundation.com.