

# Fun with science: Cathedral School holds science day for students

**By Elizabeth Lowe**

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Fact or fiction: Addiction is a brain disease.

Fact.

This was one of about a dozen questions Marija Vasiljevic and Ayobami Ward, neuroscience students at The Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore who donned white lab coats, posed Jan. 30 to students in fifth through eighth grade at School of the Cathedral of Mary Our Queen.

Their presentation, "Making Neuroscience Fun," was one of several that were part of the Homeland school's first Day of Discovery.

The event, which took place during Catholic Schools Week, was meant to engage, inspire and expose students to a variety of scientific disciplines, said Mia White, the school's marketing and enrollment manager.

Fifth-grader Henry Doud, who wants to be an inventor, learned about the dangers of drug use and addiction from Vasiljevic and Ward's presentation.

"I didn't know that addiction was a brain disease," said Henry, 11, and a Cathedral parishioner. "I thought it was something that just happened all around (the body)."

Jill Emerson, who teaches fourth grade math and science, said the Day of Discovery has practical applications for students.

"They're able to take what we're teaching them in the classroom and make the application," Emerson said. "It gets them excited beyond what we can teach them in the classroom. If you make it fun, they're more willing to stay interested."

Dr. Rolf Barth, associate professor of surgery and director of liver transplantation and hepatobiliary surgery at the University of Maryland School of Medicine in Baltimore, told fourth-graders about his life as a transplant surgeon, which includes responding to phone calls and pages in the middle of the night, and sometimes hopping on a helicopter, to perform surgeries.

Barth, the father of two Cathedral School students and a Cathedral parishioner, said a particular liver transplant he performed lasted 18 hours.

"Do I take a lunch break or recess (during surgeries)?" Barth asked the students. "I have to stand in the same place for hours."

In an interview with the Catholic Review, Barth said "I want to let them know some of the things that are fun and exciting about my job."

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