

Funds from Annual Appeal benefit REACH of Washington County

Pastors and parishioners from Washington County recently presented REACH of Washington County with a \$5,000 check in support of its outreach to the homeless.

REACH (Religious Effort to Assist and Care for the Homeless) of Washington County partners with local faith communities to operate a year-round day resource center where county residents facing housing crises or other urgent needs can come for resources, referrals and a listening ear.

With the help of local faith groups and more than 1,600 volunteers, REACH operates a cold weather shelter for homeless adults, complete with case management to help clients move from homelessness to self-sufficiency. REACH also offers a 24-hour crisis program to address urgent housing needs that arise after normal office hours.

“Pope Francis has famously described his vision of the church as a ‘field hospital’ that cares for the needs of the human family,” said Monsignor J. Bruce Jarboe, pastor of St. Ann, Hagerstown. “We are truly blessed that REACH is one such ‘field hospital’ that really makes a tremendous difference right here in Washington County.”

Monsignor Jarboe added that parishioners, both adults and youth, who serve in REACH programs always find it meaningful, often describing it as a “transformative moment” in their lives.

“Our parishioner volunteers experience in a direct and personal way how compassionate Christian love, care and service brings real hope and light to those who are struggling,” he said. “Being a part of the Gospel at work really inspires and encourages them.”

One parishioner noted that the homeless feel loved and listened to, which helps to restore their self-esteem.

Leaders in the office of the Archbishop's Annual Appeal said it was gratifying to see a parish dedicate its time "in such a selfless way."

"We are grateful for the opportunity to share the good news of this gift," they said. "It shows the good that can be achieved when parishioners come together to share their blessings in support of the appeal."

Crucial to the continued survival of the Archdiocese of Baltimore, the Archbishop's Annual Appeal provides substantial support for archdiocesan parishes and a wide array of initiatives including tuition assistance, Catholic Charities and a host of evangelizing ministries.

For more information about the 2017 Archbishop's Annual Appeal, call 410-547-5356.