

In Charles Village, parish food pantry puts fresh foods in focus

By Maria Wiering

mwiering@CatholicReview

Twitter: @ReviewWiering

This spring, parishioners planted five raised-bed plots with produce ranging from lettuce and summer squash to tomatoes beets.

The garden, which is grown with organic practices, was made possible through a grant from The Johns Hopkins' Center for a Livable Future's Baltimore Food and Faith Project.

Ss. Philip and James is the only Catholic parish participating in the program. Catholic schools - including St. Augustine in ElkrIDGE, Cardinal Shehan in Baltimore, St. Louis in Clarksville and St. Philip Neri in Linthicum - have received grants from the program in the past.

The food grown at Ss. Philip and James will serve the 30 to 40 clients who use its food shelf monthly. Deacon Mark Soloski, who directs Ss. Philip and James' project, said the clients may be involved in harvesting the produce as well.

"This is just another way in which we want our parish to become a beacon of hope," he said.

The Food and Faith Project and the Johns Hopkins Center for a Livable Future seek to involve more faith communities in food justice issues with another initiative, the Good Food Challenge 2013.

The program invites congregations in the greater Baltimore area to evaluate their food policies and practices with an eye to sustainability and justice with resources provided by the Center for a Livable Future. Congregations' completed materials are eligible for a monetary prize up to \$3,000 for implementing their action plans.

The program was created under the belief that eating is "an environmental and moral act," making food production and consumption a justice issue, according to the center's website.

"Whether we live in big cities or rural towns, on a farm or in an apartment, our most profound and intimate connection to the earth - and frequently to each other - is through the food we eat," the website states. "We don't often think of our meals in environmental terms or as having much to do with peace and justice, but every time we put food into our mouths, we connect ourselves to other people and other species, and most importantly, to the creator."

The program views “good food” as healthy, affordable and raised with sustainable and humane practices by people who receive fair wages.

Entries are due June 28.

To learn more about the Good Food Challenge 2013, [click here](#).

Also see:

Increasing Baltimore’s fresh-food availability, one initiative at a time

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