

Northeast Baltimore schools collaborate in service

Five schools in Northeast Baltimore collaborated to collect canned goods for local food pantries, allowing the students a fun way to compete and serve others at the same time. In the 2018-19 competition, more than 10,000 cans were collected.

The participants included St. Michael-St. Clement School in Overlea, Immaculate Heart of Mary School in Baynesville, St. Ursula School in Parkville, St. Stephen School in Bradshaw and St. Joseph School in Fullerton – the winner of the 2018-19 trophy. St. Joseph also won the 2016-17 trophy, and St. Stephen School won the 2017-18 trophy.

The pre-Thanksgiving drive came with an extra incentive for the students of St. Joseph, whose canned goods supported the food pantry at St. Clement in Rosedale. Their principal, Ken Pipkin, made a deal with the students: if they collected 5,000 canned goods, he would don a turkey costume – a promise he fulfilled Nov. 21, after the students collected more than 6,000 items.

St. Ursula School has been sponsoring canned food drives for much longer than the three-year-old competition, but Debbie Glinowiecki, principal, said it's a welcome addition.

"This just gave a little competition," Glinowiecki said. "It upped the ante."

Supporting a local food bank, she said, helps the students understand the impact their donations make.

"Faith in action – it's part of our mission," Glinowiecki said of the school's mission statement. "That's why we do these things."

The northeast schools will continue service activities during Catholic Schools Week, Jan. 27-Feb. 2. Prayer partners at Immaculate Heart of Mary School will create "blessing bags"; St. Stephen School is hosting an out-of-uniform day benefitting Vet Dogs; and each grade at St. Joseph School will provide a thank-you gift for

community helpers, which might include police, mail carriers or maintenance crews.