

# Senior without sight finds joy in faith, volunteering

Much like St. Francis of Assisi, who is close to her heart, Oak Crest retirement community resident Chris Baugh portrays peacefulness, humility and an unwavering faith.

Baugh, a member of the Secular Franciscans at St. Michael the Archangel in Overlea, says faith has been a part of her life from the time she and her brother and sister grew up in the former All Saints parish in Baltimore.

"All the time, all the way through, our church has been important to us," she said. "When we were younger, we used to be upset when we had to miss Mass."

Accompanying her strong faith is Baugh's desire to give back to the community and to those who have helped her.

Baugh and her brother Duke, both Oak Crest residents, are active members of the Oak Crest Village Lion's Club. The Baugh siblings, who have congenital glaucoma and have been blind since birth, very much enjoy their time volunteering with the organization.

"We had contact with the Lion's club early in our lives because the Overlea Lion's Club participated in various projects for the Maryland School for the Blind," Baugh said. "We were recipients of their service, graciousness and goodness."

Baugh, a past president of the Oak Crest chapter, helps with two annual food drives and an Easter Candy Sale. She was recently presented with the Melvin Jones Fellow award for dedicated humanitarian services.

"It's nice to be able to pay back, to do service for others," said Baugh.

Her humility shines through though as she makes sure to emphasize, "I really love the Lion's Club, but we never would have been able to be as busy as we are if it weren't for everybody."

"I say I'm blessed to have received the award, but I never would have received it without everybody else."

Baugh's service to church and community doesn't stop with the Lion's Club. She lectures and her brother cantors at St. Michael, and she is an extraordinary minister of Holy Communion for the independent apartments at Oak Crest. She said she loves distributing Communion to those who are unable to make it to Mass.

"I'm very excited about that because I didn't think I would ever be a eucharistic minister," said Baugh, who also volunteers one day a week at the Maryland School for the Blind. "I think it's wonderful to be able to take the Lord to other people. It's a wonderful blessing and I love doing it."

Baugh said she receives the Sunday readings from the Xavier Society for the Blind in New York, but if she has to do a weekly reading, someone will recite it to her and she will put it into braille with her braille writer.

"I love reading the word of the Lord," she said.

A teacher for 41 years, at Maryland School for the Blind, Arkansas School for the Blind in Little Rock and with the Baltimore City Schools Vision Program, Baugh said she hopes she never stops experiencing new things.

"You never stop seeking to fulfill your life more," said the sprightly 76-year-old, who walks through five buildings to visit the Oak Crest fitness center several times each week. "It has been and is exciting for me and interesting for me and sometimes sad. I hope I never stop reaching for more or serving the Lord."

As far as the importance of volunteering, Baugh said "It is good to help and serve others and help where help is really needed, but it's also a wonderful feeling that you can do that and that you did do that. It's a blessing to be able to do it."