

# Youths beautify Baltimore

The temperature in Baltimore City was 85 degrees and rising and the humidity was even worse the week of July 24-29. However, 32 youths from St. William of York, Baltimore; St. Mark, Catonsville; and Resurrection of Our Lord, Laurel, braved the heat to participate in BASE Camp, Baltimore-Act-Serve-Evangelize.

The young people donned T-shirts and gloves as they worked to clear weeds away from empty lots in an effort to beautify the streets of Baltimore. According to Sarah Councill, 16, some young people conducted tree surveys, determining if trees were dead, still growing, or if more trees needed to be planted in a certain area.

“One day a man who lived in the neighborhood walked past us as we were finishing up and said he didn’t even recognize his own street it looked so good,” said 15-year-old St. William of York parishioner Grace Cummings.

The group also helped clean St. Peter’s Adult Learning Center, a place for adults who are developmentally disabled. Once the work was completed for the day, the youths spent time with the residents and listened to their choir practice.

BASE camp was started in 2004 by Kate Kleintank, then coordinator of youth ministry at St. Mark, and Wayne Hipley, youth minister at St. William of York, with the help of Sister Katherine Nueslein, R.S.M., who works with Transfiguration Catholic Community, South Baltimore, and the nonprofit Southwest Visions.

When Ms. Kleintank moved to Resurrection of Our Lord to become the pastoral associate, the group added another parish to the mix. Sister Katherine, or “Sister Kitty” as everyone knows her, brings in people to give testimonials to the youths and takes them on a tour of the neighborhood to make them aware of the history of the community as well as the challenges residents face, said Mr. Hipley.

This year, in addition to the three sponsoring parishes, young people from St. Francis of Assisi, Fulton; St. Augustine, Elkridge; Our Lady of Perpetual Help, Ellicott City; St. Joseph’s Passionist Monastery Church, Irvington; and St. Vincent de Paul, Baltimore, joined in the week of service.

“So many people have told us how grateful they are that we are helping them,” said Sarah. While Terrence Battle, a parishioner of Resurrection of Our Lord, said, “I wanted to help make it (the neighborhood) a better environment to live in.”

James Paul, a St. William of York parishioner, said they feel they are good role models for the community because people have been coming out to clean up and pick up the trash on their own streets. He said one man even came out with a weed whacker to make their job easier and faster.

“These kids never cease to amaze me,” said Mr. Hipley, who added that even in the heat the kids didn’t stop working.