

First-graders purchase Pasta-A-Plenty for those in need

KENMORE — First-graders at St. John the Baptist School recently participated in a service project to help them understand the Lenten goal of giving alms. Organized by their teachers Jill Parrino and Melissa Richey, the students were asked to do chores and other odd jobs around their homes to earn some extra money. With this money, the classes went on a walking field trip to Dash's Market on Colvin Boulevard, a local supermarket just a block away from school, to purchase boxes of pasta for those in need. These boxes, along with many more brought in by other St. John's students, were donated to the Response to Love Center. St. John's Junior High Student Council holds an annual pasta drive for the Response to Love Center in Buffalo's East Side.

Parrino, first came up with this idea for the students to engage in service and sacrifice as a way to journey through good practices this Lent. Along with Richey the

two worked together to create the project for their students. Each class spent time discussing the value and importance of sacrificing their time in order to serve others. The students were each asked to take on some extra jobs at home to earn some money.

The teachers incorporated skills that the students are working on in other classes into the project as well. Students practiced writing skills by responding to reflection questions both before and after the project and worked on math skills, adding up the time it took them to complete each chore. Additionally, the students learned about the importance of community helpers, such as the police officer who helped them to cross the busy road and the store clerk who scanned each order at Dash's. Finally, the project was put into context with a religion lesson about sacrifice and service during Lent. The classes read and reflected on the Bible passage from Luke 9: 23, "And He said to all, 'If anyone would come after me, let

him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me.'"

"This really allowed my students to take ownership over their Lenten sacrifice," said Parrino. "They had a hand in each step. From finding the chores to do at home, to doing the work, all the way to picking out the pasta and using the money they earned to buy it themselves."

As a culminating activity, Parrino asked her students to reflect on how the work made them feel – happy, grumpy, or excited. Many of the first-graders were happy to do this extra work at home because it meant

that others wouldn't go hungry. Altogether, the first-grade classes collected 150 pounds of pasta for the Response to Love Center.

St. John the Baptist School is a Diocese of Buffalo STREAM School, with a commitment to enhancing its commitment through connections with community partners. Service projects for local organizations such as Response to Love Center and field trips to local businesses like Dash's give students the chance to make real-world connections and understand the value of what they are learning in the classroom every day.



COURTESY OF ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST SCHOOL

First-grader Sophia Privitera shops for pasta for the Response to Love Center at Dash's Market on Colvin Boulevard.