Children involved in Works of Love

Rob Cullivan/Catholic Courier

From harvesting potatoes to making posters, children and teenagers throughout the Diocese of Rochester played a major role in promoting Works of Love this fall.

An initiative of diocesan Catholic Charities, Works of Love advances the social mission of the church through service projects and reinforcement of church teachings. Although the diocese primarily promotes the program in October, it has evolved into a year-round effort and will be highlighted again around Valentine's Day and during Lent next year, according to Ruth Putnam, the program's coordinator.

In October, diocesan children, with the help of parish leaders, school teachers and their parents, participated in numerous Works of Love projects. Among the projects on which the children worked were

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· Students at St. Joseph's School, Wayland, collected pennies for a Catholic Charities emergency-assistance program, and collected surplus potatoes at an area farm for distribution through food pantries.

 Students at St. Jerome's School in East Rochester did yard work for elderly residents.

• Notre Dame High School students in Elmira twice prepared and served meals at the Elmira Community Kitchen.

In Corning, children at All Saints Academy, as well as All Saints Stay and Play after-school child-care program, made posters about "Being Beatitude People," this year's Works of Love theme. Children at other Steuben County parishes made similarly themed posters as well, which were displayed at their churches, according to Putnam.

At All Saints, the poster project

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This is one of several posters created this fall by children at Corning's All Saints Academy and All Saints Stay and Play.

went over well with the children, according to Cathy Ruocco, Stay and Play's coordinator.

"I think it had a real good effect on the kids," she said.

Stay and Play staff member Ellen LaFortune said that her father,



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David, who is studying for the diaconate, promoted the Works of Love campaign in a talk he gave All Saints' parishioners at weekend Masses in late September. David LaFortune also noted that he had worked with Steuben County Catholic Charities last summer as part of his diaconal formation.

The kids themselves said they liked the poster project. Cedric Hairston, 9, said he worked on a poster based on the Gospel of Matthew's call to feed the hungry. He added that he and his classmates had collected cans of food on behalf. of the hungry. Meanwhile, Larry Baker, father of Lauren, 11, a fifthgrader at All Saints Academy in Corning, noticed a change in his daughter after she worked on a poster about clothing the poor.

"She has been talking a lot more about charitable things," he said. Kimmy Paulin, 10, said she worked

on a poster about faith. "It had Jesus on it," she said, and "Mary crying."

All the children benefited from the attention their efforts garnered, Ellen LaFortune said.

"They got really excited because it was something they could do, and they knew it would be in the church," she said. "They were really excited because they had done something, and they knew what they had done.'

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