
✠ Society of St. Vincent de Paul ✠

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Vancouver Conference

May 2005

The President's Corner

Although it is not widely proclaimed, April is National Volunteer Month which caused me to reflect on our dozens of wonderful volunteers, without whom we wouldn't be able to carry out our ministry. My thoughts turned to the question of what motivates a Vincentian volunteer or, indeed, a volunteer for any humanitarian service organization. Clearly, mostly are just good hearted people who see a need and want to help out in any way they can.

But, then, speaking strictly for myself, I wonder if guilt plays a role. (Catholics are famous for having a guilt complex.) Most of us who live in this wonderful country have an overabundance of everything compared to the multitudes living in the poorer parts of the world. What did we do to deserve what we have and what, if anything does God expect from us in return? Jesus, God among us, proclaimed Himself a servant rather than a master and clearly wanted His disciples to be motivated in like spirit.

Writing about a different type of guilt, Father Henri Nouwen contrasted the guilt of Judas with that of St. Peter in the last hours before the crucifixion of Christ. Judas' was the more grievous transgression; he was filled with remorse, saw no escape and ended his life. For his betrayal, Peter was riddled with guilt and wept bitterly according to scripture. Perhaps he felt as guilty as Judas, but he reacted much differently. He sought and was granted forgiveness and dedicated himself more fervently in service to the Lord. If handled positively, being motivated by guilt may not be such a bad experience.

If guilt plays a part, a much greater incentive is love. Whenever I have the privilege of observing a Vincentian volunteer assisting a friend in need, there is typically a warm greeting, a big smile, and a sincere desire to ease a burden.

A final thought about volunteering. Some people have the notion that they have too little to offer in terms of time or talent. Drawing again on the wisdom of Father Nouwen, he cites the example of the Gospel story of loaves and fishes. There was the insignificant boy with his five loaves and two fish, not nearly enough to feed the multitudes. But God is the great "Multiplier" of our humble gifts. When deciding whether or not to offer your services, please remember that other welfare and social service workers can provide assistance but only volunteers such as ours can bring Christ's love. That is your greatest contribution. Thank you, volunteers!

Ron Pastor

"Anyone who takes care of a little child like this is caring for me! And whoever cares for me is caring for God who sent me. Your care for others is the measure of your greatness." Luke 9:48

St. Vincent de Paul Web Site

In our last newsletter we mentioned our desire to develop a web site. A parishioner at St. Joseph Church put us in contact with Kristl Honda at Clark College. Kristl is a professor of Web Design in the Graphic Communications Department. Her students at Clark College become involved with service learning projects for the community as part of their coursework. They have designed websites, logos, business cards, brochures and newsletters for non-profit groups and small businesses. As a course assignment, Gail Maw designed a web site for St. Vincent de Paul. She is a student at Clark College but is also a webmaster who provides design, development and web hosting services. Gail did a fantastic job designing our web site and we give a big thank you to her!

Please visit our website at www.svdpvancouverusa.com.

New Freezers

Thanks to the generosity of an anonymous donor we have four new freezers. For many years we'd been getting along with old chest freezers that were used when they were donated to us years ago. The old freezers were inefficient and starting to breakdown. The donor became aware of

our need and purchased new upright and chest freezers for use in our food room.

Our food bank is receiving a lot of frozen meat products which are donated by local grocery stores and these new freezers enable us to handle the increased amount of frozen food items. We are truly grateful for the generosity of the donor.

Grab Your Shoes and Walk With Us!

St. Vincent de Paul - Vancouver Conference will be walking in the MORNING RIVER WALK on SATURDAY, JUNE 25, 2005. This is a fun way to get some exercise while supporting St. Vincent de Paul. Tickets to the walk are only \$10 and are tax deductible. You can also choose to sponsor someone else to walk for you! Tickets need to be bought before the day of the event and are available through the St. Vincent de Paul office, by calling Dick or Sylvia at 694-5388. One hundred percent of the donations go directly to St. Vincent de Paul! The 5K walk begins at 8AM IN ESTHER SHORT PARK and is stroller, wagon, wheelchair and dog friendly. For more information on this exciting walk you can visit www.Columbian.com. Hope to see you there!!



Volunteers getting ready to check in clients for our Thanksgiving food basket distribution.

**THANK YOU!
THANK YOU!**

We are always amazed at the amount of donations around Thanksgiving and Christmas! Thank you for being so supportive of St. Vincent de Paul and our ministry that is truly about love for families. Because of such generous donations and volunteer time, 325 Thanksgiving baskets were given out and 512 Christmas baskets, along with 968 Christmas gifts for children!

WOW!



Volunteers loading Thanksgiving food baskets into awaiting cars.

What you have done unto the least of my brethren, you have done it unto Me. Matthew 25:40

Report on the Western Regional Meeting

With a theme of “With Love, All Things are Possible”, the Society of St. Vincent de Paul in the western United States held its annual meeting in Eugene, Oregon last summer.

These regional meetings allow participants a chance to share not only in Vincentian spirituality but also in ideas and programs used by the various conferences and councils to aid the poor.

The host council in Eugene is a treasure trove of programs. My guess is that they number among the most active and resourceful SVDP enterprises in the country, operating stores, and recycling, manufacturing, housing, and human service programs.

We were particularly impressed with their day center for homeless families with children. These families receive food, clothing, laundry, showers, counseling, job and housing referrals, after-school homework clubs, activities for older children and phone/mail messages. Perhaps most importantly, it is a place for other members of a family to gather while dad or mom is out looking for work or a place to live.

While the day center is not a residence, the Eugene Council runs other programs to alleviate homelessness such

as an Interfaith Emergency Shelter System in which a host of Eugene churches allow church facilities to be used as temporary overnight family shelters. Cots and feeding facilities are brought in by vans. It’s a beautiful ecumenical program. Another creative effort makes available various parking lots to people who use cars, campers, and trailers for overnight sleeping. Garbage services and portable restrooms are provided. The Eugene Council also provides more permanent housing options through a number of low-cost apartment complexes that it owns and operates and a program similar to Habitat for Humanity.

These programs in Eugene certainly provide food for thought and show what can be accomplished if enough people heed our Lord’s command. Truly, with love all things are possible. There is a saying in St. Vincent de Paul that no work of charity is foreign to the Society. We encourage anyone with new ideas and the desire and enthusiasm to help the poor to join in our effort.

By Ron Pastor

WISH LIST

- Plastic and paper bags
- Toilet paper
- Nonperishable foods
- Hygiene items
- More volunteers to help with the home visits

UPCOMING VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES:

Back to School Clothing and Supplies Program:

I remember my first day of school every year as an exciting one with new clothes and shoes, a new haircut, new school supplies, my mom taking a picture of me by the same bushes in front of our house year after year after year, and the feeling of nervousness of the unknown day ahead. In July and August, St. Vincent de Paul begins to gather, sort and buy school clothing and supplies to help out our youngest clients start a great school year. I hope these kids have the same feelings of excitement, and yes, a little nervousness, as I did – it makes for great memories (with or without the picture!) If you can help, please contact the St. Vincent de Paul office, or place donations in the church bins.

YES, I WANT TO HELP!

___ CASH DONATION

___ DONATION OF NON-PERISHABLE FOOD

___ DONATION OF HOUSEHOLD ITEMS

___ BECOME A MEMBER OF THE SOCIETY
OF ST. VINCENT DE PAUL

NAME _____ PHONE # _____

ADDRESS _____

Society of St. Vincent de Paul

Aid & Referral Office
2456 NE Stapleton Road
Vancouver, WA 98661
360-694-5388
e-mail: svdp@svdpvancouverusa.com
website: www.svdpvancouverusa.com

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