



The Vincentian

Newsletter for supporters of the
Society of St. Vincent de Paul,
Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Conference

Winter 2005

From the President's Pen



I would like to take the time to recognize and thank everyone who supports our St. Vincent de Paul Conference at Our Lady of Mt. Carmel. Through your generous monetary donations, our conference has been able to consistently provide the needy with food and rental assistance in our community in times of crisis.

Through volunteer efforts we have been able to pick up food from our various sources, stock the pantry and provide food boxes to more than a thousand families this year. Our volunteers assist people on the phone, and our home visit teams encounter the people face to face who are in great need of our attention and spirituality. Through your prayers God is always with us, inspiring and motivating our conference to reach out and do everything we can for His children in their time of need.

As president of our conference, I also would like to assure the community of our love and our dedication to our stewardship. We embrace the responsibility of our role, and we will continue to serve as long as we are called.

We all appreciate and are grateful for all the past, present, and future support this community has given to our SVdP conference.

Thank you and God Bless,

Stephen Petruzzella

Adopt-A-Family Christmas 2005



The St. Vincent de Paul Christmas program under the direction of **Mike Murphy** is well underway. Every year, approximately 100 needy families are matched with sponsors who provide Christmas presents for each family member as well as a complete holiday dinner. Please consider if you can make a commitment to adopt a needy family. The families range from a single parent with two children to couples with six or more children. For further details, please pick up one of the pink Adopt-A-Family brochures placed by the posts at the back of the church.

Mike Murphy has chaired this program for the past four years. This year, Mike received the Central Arizona Project President's Award for Community Service. Michael generously donated the check of \$100 carried by the award to our conference.

Annual Report

Food Boxes delivered:	3,570
Number of persons served:	9,291
Value of food boxes:	\$ 142,800
Financial aid to clients:	\$ 51,454,26

Meet our Volunteers ...

(by Adelheid Thieme)



Jack Traynor and his wife, **Helen Traynor**, have been faithful members of our conference for more than 10 years. While Helen mainly helps with the Thanksgiving food drive, Jack is one of our “regulars,” doing home visits every Wednesday morning. He has also served as our “turkey hauler,” using his truck on Turkey Tuesday (the Tuesday before Thanksgiving) to transport approximately 200 turkeys from Basha’s to our pantry.

Jack and Helen both hail from the San Francisco Bay Area, where Jack caught Helen’s attention by his skills as a downhill ski racer in the Sierra Nevada Mountains. Helen attended San Francisco State University and later taught elementary school for 15 years. Jack earned a Business degree from Golden State College and subsequently worked as a Financial Manager for Litton Industries, a manufacturer of night vision goggles. After transferring to Arizona, Jack worked for Motorola as a Financial Manager, while Helen became an Executive Sales Associate with Coldwell Banker Residential Brokerage. When Helen was in need of a reliable business partner with a strong financial background, Jack decided to join Helen in her increasingly successful real estate work.

Married for 52 years, Helen and Jack complement each other and truly enjoy working together. “We hardly ever fight,” says Helen. “We are best friends and have had a wonderful relationship all these years.” Together they have raised three successful sons. They also share many athletic interests. Even though their days of skiing and playing tennis are over, they enjoy a round of golf

or a long hike. Helen, who is very outgoing and energetic, plays Bridge and is a member of various clubs: the Zonta International Club which supports the Tempe Sister Cities and advocates women’s rights, the Tempe Women’s Club, and the Sodality at OLMC. She served as a sacristian at OLMC for three years. Jack’s hobbies include fishing, gardening and spending time in his cabin in Pine. Both cherish the visits of their four grandchildren.

Despite leading a very busy life, Jack makes it a point to keep volunteering for the St. Vincent de Paul Society and being sympathetic to the needs of the less fortunate in our community. “It is a way of giving people hope and being an evangelist,” he says. “For many people who see us, we are the representatives of the church. At the end of our visit, they often ask us to which church we belong and wish to join us.” It is no wonder that Jack’s warm, loving smile and his gentle demeanor make our clients comfortable and curious about the faith that lies at the core of his personality.

A Visit from the Brownies

(by Trisha Brandt-Fox)



The other day, eleven little Brownies from Mt. Carmel School came to visit our food pantry. They came clutching some canned goods to put on our shelves. They were surprised

that not everyone has three meals a day, with an afternoon snack. When I asked them what we should always include in a food box, they said, “Candy, pineapple chunks, and canned soup.”

Their eyes were so filled with **JOY** as they talked about what we needed to do to feed the hungry. They helped me remember one of the Brownie principles: **JOY=Jesus first, Others second, Yourself last.**

Help for Katrina Refugees

(by Barbara Pawlak)

After the devastation wrought by hurricane Katrina in Louisiana, 10-12 families relocated to our parish, where our conference is helping them to rebuild their lives. My home visit partner, John, and I have been assisting a young couple with two darling daughters, one five years, the other nine months old.

The young family evacuated in time to leave Gulfport, where the father was employed as an accountant and the mother was working in one of the casinos while studying to be a nurse. In Gulfport, the couple had already made an appointment to sign the final papers on the purchase of their first home. That home has been destroyed.

At our first visit, we brought the customary food box and asked them about their most pressing needs. With the assistance of another team, we helped them pick out the major items for their new apartment, located just a few blocks from Mt. Carmel. They declined offers of clothing since so many things had been given to them at the Coliseum. We also sat with them to explain the various resources available: Maximus, DES, free computer use at the Tempe Library, AHCCCS health care when their current coverage expires, and tips for finding employment.

Their caseworker at Maximus later expressed delight at discovering their eagerness to find employment. Maximus offered computer time and the use of their office for employer calls. Within a week, both had jobs. The five-year-old had begun classes in her new school, and child care had been found for the baby. The parents are talking about finding a home to rent when the FEMA-arranged lease expires.

At each visit, the family joined us in prayer and expressed their gratitude for the material help and the advice which led to their employment.

Without a doubt, this natural disaster was a devastating event for the family. But they are looking at this horrendous ordeal as an opportunity to begin a new life in Arizona, just a day's drive from both grandmothers who reside in California. For John and me, it was also a blessing of sorts because it enabled us to bring St. Vincent de Paul to a wonderful family, now our friends.

Successful Thanksgiving Food Drive

On Turkey Tuesday, the Tuesday before Thanksgiving, our conference collected about **2,000 turkeys** donated by our parishioners and shoppers at Basha's at the corner of Southern and McClintock. Members of our conference volunteered from 6 am to 7 pm to accept turkeys and write receipts to our generous donors.



Frances Garcia, Shirley Ouellette (l. to r.) and Mary Vrizuela (standing) took care of the 4-6 pm shift.

That same Tuesday morning, several parishioners helped us deliver food boxes, complete with turkeys, to 141 families.



Preparing to deliver food are (l. to r. front row) John Schiffer, Don Ong, Linda Reichert; (l. to r. back row) Bob McKay, Bob Erickson, Albert Marquez, Kathleen Large, Rick Large, John Reigelsberger, and David Reichert.

Thank you, Joe

(by Trisha Brandt-Fox)



Many years ago, my husband, Bill, lost his job. After a short time, all of our savings were gone. I didn't know what to do, so I went to Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Church to pray. As I was leaving, I saw a little sign on the wall: "If you need food, come to McCready Hall at 7pm, Wednesdays."

So I came. I was told to write my name on a piece of paper and wait. I sat down, but I didn't wait. Instead, I went out into the parking lot to cry. I was humiliated and embarrassed to be there. How had I sunk so low?

The next day, I heard a car tearing around the corner. An elderly man jumped out and said, "Hi, my name is Joe, and I brought you some yogurt. Since I am here, we might as well pray." So there I was with Joe and the pineapple yogurt saying the Lord's Prayer.

About a week passed. Joe returned, carrying more pineapple yogurt, and again he said, "Since I am here, we might as well pray." That was the last time I saw Joe.

I moved into Public Housing in Phoenix, but something in me had changed. I wanted to be like Joe, praying for people I didn't know. So I went over to St. Theresa Catholic Church, and by the next Easter I became a Catholic, too.

When we moved from Phoenix, I was determined to join the St. Vincent de Paul Society at Our Lady of Mt. Carmel and thank Joe. I enlisted the help of Gerry Green, who had been with the conference for the longest time. He said, "I'll find him." Months passed: nothing.

Then, one day, Gerry came into the pantry and sat down. I asked him, "Did you find Joe?" "Sort of", he replied. "What? Is he dead? Did he move?" I inquired. "No," Gerry responded, "He never was Trisha, he was an angel sent by God to save your life."

I think Gerry was right. Thank you, Joe, wherever you are. I love you.

Lord, send me someone to love!



Lord, when I am hungry,
give me someone who stretches out his hand to me;

When I am thirsty, give me
someone who needs a drink;

When I am cold, give me
someone who is numb with cold;

When I am troubled, give me
someone to console;

When my cross becomes heavy,
give me someone to help.

When I feel abandoned, give me
someone to love. Amen.

(Blessed Mother Teresa
of Calcutta)

Comments? Questions? Article Submissions?
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