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The Vincentian

Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Conference

June 2008

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OLMC Summer Food Drive: June 28, 29

Due to the economic downturn and rising food prices, more and more families are calling our St. Vincent de Paul Conference for food boxes. Especially in the summer, when children are home over the break and cannot benefit from school lunches, families incur increased expenses for groceries.

We ask that you be generous during our Summer Food Drive. The weekend of June 21 and 22, our volunteers will be passing out bags after all the masses at Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Church. The food collection will take place the following weekend, June 28 and 29, in front of McCready Hall. Please refer to the following list for items that are always greatly appreciated by the families we visit:

- Pasta and sauces, dry beans, rice, canned vegetables and meats
- Personal hygiene items (toothpaste, deodorant, shampoo, conditioner, personal items for women)



At our February Food Drive, several of our young parishioners helped with the collection and sorting of food donations. Assisting President Barbara Pawlak are (from left to right) Brandon Krell, Michael Garvey, and Ryan Krell.

Poverty: Loss of Dignity?

(by Adelheid Thieme)

Jenny is a highly qualified professional who has been working for a consulting architect in Phoenix for many years. Due to the recent decline in the housing and construction industry, she has lost her job.

As she welcomes Ela and me into her elegantly furnished and tastefully decorated apartment, we are struck by her buoyant mood and her cheerful demeanor. With a gracious smile, she invites us to sit on the black leather couch, from where we can admire some delicate beadwork from her native country, Brazil.

(see **Dignity** page 4)

Meet our Volunteers



As members of the St. Vincent de Paul Society at Our Lady of Mt. Carmel, **Paul and Mary Kelley** have rendered invaluable services to the needy in our community. In 1993, Mary, who had been doing home visits for three years, recruited her husband to help with the Thanksgiving Food Drive. When Paul witnessed the abject poverty of the families they visited, he got “hooked” and decided to become involved on a regular basis.

In 1994, Paul and Mary felt God’s distinct calling to serve as co-presidents of our conference. As a couple, they were indefatigable in tending to the needs of the poor. Paul focused on public relations, representing the conference in our parish, raising funds, and writing a quarterly newsletter. His newsletter was instrumental in encouraging many parishioners to become involved in this ministry by donating their time, talents, and funds. Mary oversaw the day-to-day operation of our ministry, accepting calls from needy clients, contacting apartment managers and utility companies about financial assistance, arranging for the distribution of food boxes, and networking with local helping agencies.

During their presidency, our conference grew tremendously. The Kelleys supervised a group of about 30 volunteers, together dedicating about 60 hours per week to this service.

One of the major achievements that would not have been possible without Paul’s enormous

commitment and persistence is the opening of our food pantry. As our client base was growing, a tiny room adjacent to McCready Hall was no longer sufficient to serve the needs of the many callers. Paul was relentless in his pursuit to obtain the space and the resources for one of the largest St. Vincent de Paul pantries in our diocese. Paul’s initiative laid the basis for the growth of our conference’s operations. In the year 2007, 3,084 food boxes were packed in our pantry, serving approximately 6,200 people in our community who would otherwise have gone hungry.

In 2001, at the end of their terms as co-presidents, Paul decided to give up a 34-year career with U-Haul as an executive and lobbyist and chose, together with Mary, to work full-time for Vincentian Support Services in Phoenix. While Mary performed telephone scheduling of pick-ups, Paul became involved with the training and formation of new and current Vincentians. For five years, he traveled to dioceses all over the Western Region, informing bishops, pastors, and parishioners about the spirituality, rules, and charitable works of the St. Vincent de Paul Society. Due to health problems, he is no longer able to travel. He currently devotes 20 hours a week to writing the monthly newsletter for all active Vincentians in the Phoenix diocese and the bi-monthly “Up-To-Date” for conference presidents. Paul’s teaching is a combination of his extensive knowledge, his sincere concern for the poor, and his deep faith.

Paul and Mary Kelley are an inspiration to all who have the privilege of working with them. Answering the call to serve has allowed them to grow as a couple, learn more about social services, and enrich their lives. Their service to the poor will, without a doubt, earn them their way into heaven.

From the President's Pen



John and I visited a young mother with three children who needed help with her rent. A serious infection, resulting from an earlier operation, had forced the mother from her job, and her doctor would not release her to return to work. The infection was spreading to the other side

of her head, so her days from work would be extended.

To complicate matters further, her husband was incarcerated for an alcohol-related offense. Additionally, her two-year-old boy was showing signs of a heart condition, a health problem that runs in the family.

Despite all these troubles, she was upbeat and anxious for her family's lives to return to normal. We helped her with part of her rent, referred her to other resources for financial assistance, and invited her to call us again if she needed more help.

Before we left, we prayed with her and her children. We asked God to send his healing powers upon her and her family, give her strength and wisdom, and help her husband overcome his addiction.

Please remember this young family, and all our families, in your prayers.

God's blessings on you and yours,

Barbara Pawlak

Donating Clothes?

If you want to donate clothing to St. Vincent de Paul, please **drop off** your donation at the **closest St. Vincent de Paul Thrift Store**, located on Main Street (Apache), just east of Price on the northeast corner (2352 W. Main St, Mesa - (480) 644-0887). Do not drop off clothes in the food collection boxes in the church. Thank you for your generosity.

Beware which wolf you feed



As the legend goes, one evening an old Cherokee told his grandson about a battle that does on inside people. He said:

“My son, the battle is between two ‘wolves’ inside us all. One is Evil. It is anger, envy, jealousy, sorrow, regret, greed, arrogance, self-pity, guilt, resentment, inferiority, lies, false pride, superiority and ego.

“The other is Good. It is joy, peace, love, hope, serenity, humility, kindness, benevolence, empathy, generosity, truth, compassion, and faith.”

The grandson thought for a moment and then asked his grandfather, “Which wolf wins?”

The old Cherokee replied simply, “The one you feed.”

Poverty: Loss of Dignity?

Continued from page 1

In response to our question about her situation, she explains, “I never thought that I would ever need to call any of the helping agencies, but here I am – without a job, without food, and unable to pay my rent. I have already sent out 450 job applications, but, at the age of 47, despite two Bachelor’s degrees, I have been unsuccessful for five full weeks. Yet I refuse to let that depress me too much. I have survived one bout of breast cancer, one bout of ovarian cancer, and a hysterectomy. I thank the Lord every morning for giving me another day, and I know He will help me through this challenge too.”

Despite the good salary she used to earn, Jenny has been unable to save money due to her enormous hospital bills and the co-payments for the drugs that she needs to keep her cancer at bay. Therefore, she has applied for unemployment benefits and food stamps. “Being out of work and on the verge of losing your home is

bad enough,” she says, “but the hardest part of being poor is that you lose your dignity as a human being. Most of the employees at the government agencies treat you like dirt.”

She recalls entering a crowded room of visibly downtrodden people applying for benefits, walking up to the information desk to ask for directions, and being yelled at: “Look at the sign on the wall. Can’t you read?” “Why does the lady behind the desk that think she is above me and entitled to treat me like this?” Jenny asks. “The only difference between her and me is that she has a job and I currently don’t. Does that give her the right to look down on me?”

After our conversation, Jenny helps us carry in the food boxes and gratefully accepts some rental assistance. We also draw up a list of food banks and public dining rooms to tide her over the thirty days that she will need to wait for food stamps. As we leave, she gives us a warm hug and says, “I thank you from the bottom of my heart. Now I know that poverty does not mean losing my dignity.”

January - March 2008 Report



Deliveries to clients:	405
Food boxes:	810
Food purchased:	\$2,804.25
Transportation	250.00
Medical	91.99
Furniture	285.38
Vouchers for Clothes	\$ 689.34
Rental Assistance:	\$ 7,385.36
Utility Assistance:	\$ 4,560.52

Society Nominated for Nobel Prize



The Federation of Charity, Philanthropy, and Religious Institutions of the State of Sao Paulo, Brazil, has **nominated** the International Confederation of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul for the **Nobel Peace Prize in recognition of its 175 years of extraordinary work worldwide.**