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The Vincentian

Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Conference

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OLMC School Students Donating Hygiene Items

For over 10 years, students from OLMC School have been donating hygiene products to our St. Vincent de Paul Conference. Under the leadership of **Lisa Townsend**, who serves as a liaison between the students and St. Vincent de Paul, the whole school participates in the collection. Every classroom has a box that the students fill with the “item of the month.” The students alternately collect soap and detergent, toothbrushes and toothpaste, as well as shampoo and conditioner. In December last year, in a “Drive for Baby Jesus,” the students collected over 12,000 diapers. Every month, the student council gathers to deliver the collected items to our pantry.



On April 7, 2009, OLMC students delivered hygiene products to the SVdP pantry. Pictured are (back row, left to right) coordinator Lisa Townsend, Gus Flynn, Matthew Tucker, Ryan Bresnahan, Frankie Lister, Samuel Engelbert; (front row, left to right) Brenna MacLean, Alex Neibling, Gina Broglia, and Mia Mazon

According to **Matthew Tucker, President of the Student Council**, the students have a lot of fun during the collection. The lower grades compete with the higher grades, and classes compete against each other. The winner gets an ice-cream party or a dress-down day. Motivating the students to contribute is easy. Ever since they saw a video presentation about the works of St. Vincent de Paul in November, OLMC students from 310 families are even more eager to participate.

The families that call St. Vincent de Paul for help greatly appreciate the hygiene items donated by the generous OLMC students and their parents. These products are expensive and cannot be purchased with food stamps. Thank you, students, for helping fulfill the most basic needs of the poor.

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Spotlight on ... Joe Romano



Since October 2006, **Joe Romano** has been a member of our St. Vincent de Paul conference, donating about 20 hours per week as assistant pantry manager. Coming from a family in which community service and helping others is a tradition, he is following in the footsteps of his parents, Rose and Joe Romano.

Joe grew up in Kenosha, Wisconsin, in the Milwaukee area. He attended the University of Wisconsin in Madison and earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Landscape Architecture. In 1977, he moved to Tempe, where he set up his own business. Supervising 8 employees, he worked with large homebuilders and master-planned communities in the development of landscape architecture design plans.

After selling his business in 2006, he met Don Ong, our pantry manager, who invited him to help out in the pantry. Joe now assists Don in keeping the pantry stocked and organized, and he prepares neatly arranged food boxes for our clients. "Presentation is everything," he says. "Our clients feel more valued if the food boxes show that they are prepared with love and care." Together with his partner, Jack Traynor, he also does home visits once a week or fills in whenever there is need for a substitute. Joe is a people

person, and he enjoys interacting with different personalities. The home visits have also opened his eyes to the tremendous need for help in our community.

Volunteering at St. Vincent de Paul allows Joe to spend a lot of time with his teenage daughter, Julia, and his wife of 18 years, Jean-Marie. In his spare time, he tends to his yard and pool. He also enjoys playing golf, swimming, exercising in the gym as well as collecting coins and Beatles memorabilia.

Joe's contribution to our conference is immeasurable. We very much appreciate his generosity and his friendly smile.

February Food Drive at OLMC

A heart-felt thank you to all of you who contributed to our food drive in February. We are grateful for the generous food donations, which resulted in 122 banana boxes of food items.

For many years, **Alice Allen and her family** has faithfully assisted in collecting, sorting, and moving the food to the pantry. The photo below shows **three generations of volunteers from the Allen family**. From left to right: Ryan Kral, Alice Allen, Brandon Kral, Julie Kral, Barbara Garvey, Jim Garvey, and Wendy Garvey.



“He is Risen!”

(by an OLMC Vincentian)



“Whatever you do to the least of these, you have done it to me” (Matthew 25:40). In our St. Vincent de Paul meetings, we have often meditated on this verse. I love this verse because it says

that we encounter Jesus in the poor we serve and that we can experience His presence through those who seek our help.

On Holy Saturday, as I was walking to my car in a supermarket parking lot, I was approached by a man asking me for gas money. He and his 4-year-old daughter, who was wearing a well-worn but festive Easter dress, were on their way back to Window Rock. The man was visibly embarrassed as he accepted money from me. I chatted with the little girl, complimenting her on her dress. She was looking forward to an Easter egg hunt with her family the next morning.

On my way home, I remembered an encounter with a needy person that had filled me with great joy. A few months ago, I had been urgently praying for a serious concern that was beyond my control so that I depended entirely on the Lord. One day, as I was praying, I suddenly had the unmistakable feeling that, as a sign of His presence, the Lord would appear to me the next day in the form of a beggar asking me for help. Lo and behold, the next day a poor man did ask me for money, and a short while later my prayer was answered.

Later in the day, I spent some time reading the selection for Holy Saturday from *The Magnificat Lenten Companion*. The writer rightly observes that the modern world is prone to disbelieve in miracles. We are amazed by the message of the empty tomb and hardly dare to accept it as truth. A person rising from the dead goes counter to the experience with death that we

have made in this world. How can I be certain that Jesus really rose from the dead and that my faith is not in vain?

Then, remembering the two episodes with the beggars, I told the Lord that I was not asking for a sign. However, if I encountered a person asking me for money the next day, I would interpret it as a sign from Him that He was truly risen.

On Easter morning, I attended the Easter mass in McCready Hall. It was a beautiful celebration. After the service, as I was walking down the breezeway, a man suddenly stopped me and asked me if I could give him some money so that he would be able to ride a bus. I was flustered. In all my years of attending Mount Carmel church, I have never been approached by a beggar. I trembled as I reached for my purse. After accepting the money, the man smiled at me, shook my hand and said, “I wish you a very happy and blessed Easter.”

The verse in *The Magnificat Lenten Companion* for Easter Sunday read, “Lord, give me the grace to recognize the victory of the resurrection in my life, that I may say with certainty, ‘He is risen!’”

January – March 2009 Financial Report



Food purchased:	\$2,338.66
Rental Assistance:	\$6,578.12
Utility Assistance:	\$3,228.04
Clothes/Transportation/Furniture	\$ 726.62
Total:	\$12,871.44

From the President's Pen



Who are the volunteers of St. Vincent de Paul? SVdP workers come in all ages, from high school students to seniors who have passed their 80th birthday and are still going strong. We have families who sacrifice an hour or two in their busy lives to pack food boxes, battle the weekend traffic, and struggle up three flights of narrow stairways to greet our needy brothers and sisters. Several are young men, rather recent college graduates, one of whom responded to a ministry fair and brought along one of his friends. They have hardly missed a week.

We are dependent on bi-lingual volunteers, especially the in-take specialists. Their language skills ease our communication needs so that we are able to quickly update our records and learn details of complicated crisis situations.

Several ladies come before or after work to stock pantry shelves so that delivery teams have a wide array of non-perishables ready to pack. Two or three of these ladies make alternate weekly trips to pick up unsold bagels, muffins and sweet rolls – a special treat not affordable by our clients.

About half of our delivery and home visit teams are husband and wife combinations. Their sharing sacrifice takes “togetherness” to a new level. We have a young brother and sister team – he answered her request for a partner without a moment’s hesitation. By the way, we always work in teams, which is both a diocesan and SVdP requirement.

Four high school seniors have developed a school service project with their SVdP work and have given us delightful moments with their back and forth banter while packing the banana boxes. Another team member is herself searching for meaningful employment. She certainly can sympathize when she encounters others facing the same situation.

One volunteer worked with us throughout his college years, left for employment in another state, and has now been transferred back to Tempe. One of his first acts after relocating was to come back to SVdP. Another great lady, a pantry stocker, showed up with her entire staff to provide extra hands for the Thanksgiving food delivery.

They are just a small sampling of the fantastic people who have responded to God’s call with the words: “Here I am, Lord.”

Barbara Pawlak



Our youngest volunteer, **Wendy Garvey**, assisting **Rita Malafrente** during the February Food Drive at OLMC

"Charity begins today. Today somebody is suffering. Today someone is in the street. Today somebody is hungry. Our work is for today; yesterday has gone and tomorrow has not yet come. Today, we have only today to make Jesus known, loved, served, fed, clothed, and sheltered. Do not wait for tomorrow. Tomorrow might not come. Tomorrow we will not have them if we do not feed them today." (Mother Teresa)