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CONTACT

St. Vincent de
Paul Society
2121 S. Rural
Road
Tempe, AZ 85282

Phone:
480-966-1974

Email:
adelthieme@aol.
com



The

Vincentian

Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Conference

June 2011

Five Long-Time Vincentians Honored as Jubilarians



Our Jubilarians : Barbara Pawlak (front row), (back row, left to right) Paul Kelley, Mary Kelley, Mary Banegas, Ben Picone, Fr. Craig Friedley.

At a recent meeting, five members were recognized for their many years of work in St. Vincent de Paul with a Jubilarian Ceremony. The members are **Mary Banegas , Mary and Paul Kelley, Barbara Pawlak , and Ben Picone .** The Jubilarian Ceremony was originally set up to recognize Vincentians who retire after a long period of service in St. Vincent de Paul. But our members don't seem to retire! They just continue to dedicate themselves to work for the needy in our parish.

Mary Banegas has served many years in several areas where she put her talents to good use, including home visits and Adopt- A-Family. In our annual Christmas program, her ability to easily converse with our Spanish-speaking clients is extremely valuable. She also volunteered many years in the SVdP Thrift Store.

Mary and Paul Kelley have served our OLMC Conference as past co-presidents. Mary has been involved with home visits, food delivery, Adopt- A-Family and whatever work needed to be done. Paul dedicated himself to raising funds for a significantly enlarged pantry in our parish. He also worked several years for St. Vincent de Paul Support Services in Phoenix, where he was instrumental in the formation and training of new conferences in the diocese.

Ben Picone served as conference president using his management experience in engineering and business to streamline methods of serving our clients and to implement a computerized system. During his presidency, the newsletter was revived and the potluck dinners, the Adopt-A-Family Program,

and the Gerry Green Award were started. Ben also served on the Diocesan Governing Board and was the founding president of District 12 (consisting of 6 conferences), which he named the **Fr. Daniel McCready** District, ensuring that **Msgr. McCready's** name will live on in the annals of SVdP. Ben now delivers food, picks up food from our downtown facility, and serves as co-editor of this newsletter.

Barbara Pawlak has been the quintessential Vincentian. Besides being a past president, she has served our conference in a variety of needs. She set up a system to coordinate our services with those of other agencies such as the Salvation Army and Tempe Community Action Program so that our clients have easier and coordinated access to all available resources. She has always been an advocate of praying with the families that she visited; on occasion, she has not hesitated to deliver some loving but firm words to encourage our clients to become self-sufficient. She has also served as a volunteer at the downtown St. Vincent de Paul warehouse, sorting and packaging donated food.



The Jubilarian ceremony was conducted by **Fr. Craig Friedley, OLMC Parochial Vicar**, and was attended by over 35 members of our conference. Fr. Craig presented each person with a Jubilarian Crucifix and a certificate and led us in a blessing and prayer of thanksgiving.

After the ceremony we celebrated with a cake and refreshments.
(Submitted by Albert and Susana Marquez)

Going the Extra Mile -- Literally

(by Adelheid Thieme)

Have you had the feeling that you were meant to be at a certain place at a certain time, even though getting there was fraught with difficulties? This is what happened a few weeks ago when we were trying to visit Wendy, a disabled grandmother who was living together with two of her daughters and a newborn grand-daughter. She had called the SVdP office for a food box, diapers, and help with her electric bill.

Before leaving the office, I phoned her to make sure she would be home that afternoon. "I am most certainly not going anywhere, honey," she said. "I will be waiting for you." Finding the address indicated on the request sheet was not easy. Wendy's apartment was in a huge apartment complex. After driving around for about ten minutes, we finally located her place. However, when we rang the doorbell to confirm she was at home, nobody answered. We could only hear the excited barking and snorting of a presumably large dog. We returned to the car and gave Wendy another call. She was surprised that she had not heard us knocking at the door. Before hanging up, we verified the address; it seemed that we had knocked on the right door.

This time, we returned with a food box and diapers. After having secured the dog, a lady, probably in her late 40s, opened the door. She was greatly astonished that we wanted to bring her a food box and told us that her name was not Wendy. Looking at the diapers, she exclaimed, "Diapers? Are you kidding? I would think that I am done having children. Or is this a bad omen?"

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Spotlight on Myrna Morgan

(by Adelheid Thieme)



Q: Myrna, for the past six years, you have served in our SVdP conference as a phone in-take person. What do you like about this work?

Myrna: Listening to our clients' concerns, taking their requests, and referring them to additional sources of assistance gives me a lot of satisfaction. Their needs are so great, and I feel that I can make their lives a little bit less stressful. Meeting all the wonderful volunteers at SVdP was also a pleasure. I have made several new friends.

Q: As a phone in-take person, do you draw on skills that you developed on your previous job?

Myrna: I certainly do. I worked as an Executive Assistant in the English Department at ASU from 1988 to 2003. My job involved conducting staff meetings, communicating with the Dean's office, scheduling 250 classes per semester, hiring faculty associates, mailing out packets for promotion and tenure to outside reviewers, and handling payroll for up to 200 faculty members in the amount of approximately 5 million dollars per month.

Q: Do you do any other volunteer work?

Myrna: Yes, for four hours a week, I tutor first and second graders at Scales Technology Academy in Tempe. I am a member of the Experience Corps program, which is very successful in allowing students from diverse ethnic backgrounds who read and write just below grade level to make significant progress.

Q: What are your hobbies?

Myrna: I enjoy reading, watching movies, meeting with friends over dinner, and, of course, spending time with my daughters as much as possible. My oldest daughter works in Munich (Germany) as a marketing research consultant, and my youngest is a neurologist in San Antonio, Texas.

We are fortunate to have skilled and dedicated volunteers like Myrna. The poor are fortunate to have volunteers like her.

Phone Experiences: Connecting People with Resources

(by Ramona Verdugo)

As phone in-take persons, we are the first point of contact for those who call St. Vincent de Paul for help. We take requests for food boxes and rent and utility assistance. Once in a while, when we cannot deliver food right away, our callers get upset. I tell them to go to the Tempe Community Center that provides a free food box once a month. I remind clients to take their ID and explain to them how they can get there using the Orbit bus.

I also direct them to additional resources for rent and utilities offered through Tempe Community Action Agency and the Tempe Salvation Army. If a woman is pregnant, I refer her to the Aid to Women Center and the Escalante Center. If persons need medical services, I inform them about the Medical Clinic at Escalante. Our clients are very grateful for any phone numbers I can give them so that their needs can be met.

Going the Extra Mile -- Literally *(cont. from p. 2)*

The lady then explained to us that there was another apartment complex on the other side of the street which shared an office with the complex in which she lived. In all likelihood, Wendy had given us her postal address, which was different from her actual address.

We called Wendy one more time to inquire about her real address, but nobody picked up the phone. We were frustrated. At this time, we had spent more than 20 minutes trying to find her. Fortunately, it was a cool day so that the chicken in the food box would not already be roasted by the time we found our client. Should we give it another try?

We decided to search for her in the apartment complex on the other side of the street. Again, the complex was enormous, and if there was logic to the numbering system, it certainly escaped us. After searching for another 5 to 10 minutes, we finally arrived at the place where we suspected Wendy might live. As we were pulling up to the building, my phone rang, and I noticed a young woman, probably Wendy's daughter, calling on the phone and motioning us to park our car.

She led us into her mother's bedroom. Wendy was lying on her bed. She had suffered from excruciating back pain for several weeks and, as a result, had lost her job. She was scheduled for back surgery the next day. Her family had run out of food, and the utility company had sent her a shut-off notice. When she saw the food boxes and heard that we would pay her electric bill, she sank back into her pillows and said with tears in her eyes, "Blessed be God who sent you here today. Now I have peace of mind."

Back in the car, we understood why we had continued our odyssey until we found Wendy. Was it the Spirit who moved us?

Thank you!

In our March 2011 newsletter, we asked for a donation of a used refrigerator for our pantry. We received not a used, but a **NEW REFRIGERATOR**, donated by **Beverly Dodd**. Thank you, Beverly, for being so generous!

January to March 2011 Financial Report

Thank you, donors, for generously supporting our St. Vincent de Paul conference in 2010. Our **total income** \$14,322.55. We provided assistance in the amount of \$17,674.35 (see chart below).

