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# The Vincentian

Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Conference

June 2012

## Three Generations of Volunteers in Food Drive



The Allen/Garvey/Kral family helping with SVDP food drive: From left to right: Ryan Kral, Dave Kral, Jim Garvey, Mike Garvey, Julie Kral, Brandon Kral, and Alice Allen.

Since 2002, **Alice Allen** and her family have actively participated in our food drives at Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Church. Alice, a long-time volunteer who answers the phones on Thursday mornings, has instilled in her children and grandchildren a spirit of service.

At the masses when food is collected, her grandsons, Ryan and Brandon Kral as well as Jim and Mike Garvey, arrive early to help parishioners carry donated food into McCready Hall, sort it, load it into trucks, transport it to the pantry, and place it on shelves. Sometimes, Alice's youngest granddaughter, who is now five years old, joins the family, eager to keep up the family tradition. Thank you to the Allen/Garvey/Kral families for their exemplary commitment.

### "Ask and ...you will receive"

(by Adelheid Thieme)

How many of us pray at night that we may take a shower and have breakfast the next morning? Most of us take it for granted that water and food will be available and forget to be thankful for these blessings.

Alicia has contacted the St. Vincent de Paul office to receive a food box as well as assistance with her water bill. She was doing fine supporting herself and her three sons until she developed serious back problems several months ago and

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## A New Perspective

(by Bill and Janet Richwine)

We recently had a visit from two high school classmates from Pennsylvania. Our conversations included a discussion of our involvement with St. Vincent de Paul. Our friends found it hard to believe when we told them about the needs of some of our clients. Not in the beautiful City of Tempe, they thought. The best way to show them was to invite them to accompany us on some visitations. (Both are Catholics and are familiar with St. Vincent de Paul.)

Our first visit was to **a single man in a one-bedroom unfurnished apartment**; the only furniture was a mattress on the floor and a chair. He was so thankful for the food we brought. He told us that his two children were coming for a visit that weekend and that he would now have some food to feed them.

We then went to **a couple living in a trailer park**. We had called them before we left the pantry, and they were outside awaiting our arrival. They said they were completely out of food and were very happy to see us. The gentleman tried to get some free medical advice from our friend, who is a retired doctor.

Our final visit was to **a single mom** with three children living in a sparsely furnished two-bedroom apartment on the third floor. They were also happy to receive the food, especially the children. When there are children in the home, we always put candy or snacks on the top of the food box so we can hand them to the children when we arrive. To see their eyes light up and the smiles on their faces makes the deliveries of food even more meaningful to us. At this particular delivery, the mother was more excited about receiving a phone call, just before our arrival, for a job interview the next day. We wished her a successful job interview before we left.

To complete our tour, we took our friends to the main Phoenix warehouse where they could see the extent of the food and clothing collections, medical services, and the huge number of volunteers. They were impressed with the whole operation. A few days later, we received the following thank-you note:

Dear Janet & Bill:

Thank you for the many courtesies given to me last week during my most enlightening and emotional visit. I had my eyes opened very much and I greatly admire the work both of you do for the benefit of others -- very admirable. You both serve as good examples to all of us in terms of what is really important in the world.

Congratulations and much thanks. Dr. Bob

## "Ask and ..." (continued from p. 1)

lost her job. After defaulting on her mortgage payments, she lost her house and had to move into an apartment. While she is recovering from recent back surgery, the family relies on the income of her 21-year-old son, who considers himself lucky to have a part-time job with UPS. Alicia is grateful that we will be able to pay her water bill so that her service will not be disconnected.

She apologizes that she is unable to help us carry the food boxes. "I wish my oldest son were here to help, but he is at work. My 17-year-old son is not home from school yet, and my 8-year-old is playing outside. I can hardly climb the stairs up to the third floor after my back surgery, and I certainly cannot help you carry the boxes."



Just as Ela and I have placed the food boxes on her kitchen table, her youngest son enters. "Wow," he exclaims with a bright smile. "That is a lot of food!" His mother says, "Remember, Daniel, we prayed for food last night. Look at what these ladies brought us. What does it say in the Bible? "Ask and ..." "... you will receive," Daniel completes her sentence. Without being prompted by his mother, he extends his hand to us and thanks us.

As we take our leave, Alicia asks us if we like tamales. Of course, we do. She hands each of us a bag with tamales to take home. "You will enjoy them so much more than my boys whom I have been feeding tamales for the past two weeks. Thank you for all that you do at St. Vincent de Paul."

## St. Vincent de Paul Volunteer: Elizabeth Clements

(by Adelheid Thieme)



**A: Elizabeth, you have been a long-time member of the St. Vincent de Paul conference at OLMC. How did you find out about our group?**

E: I have been familiar with the work of the St. Vincent de Paul Society at OLMC since the 1970's when I started attending mass together with my grandmother. When she passed away, I felt called to become active in this ministry, and I signed up during one of the People Raisers. For the past five years, I have been answering the phones in the St. Vincent de Paul office on Saturday mornings from 9 to 11.

**A: Taking time out of your weekend is a great sacrifice. What motivates you to spend this time in the St. Vincent de Paul office every week?**

E: I feel for the people who turn to St. Vincent de Paul for help. Most of them are working and trying hard to raise their families on a small income. However, a medical issue, a car repair, or the loss of a job often sets off a domino effect that makes them unable to pay their utility bills or buy groceries. Every Saturday there is at least one person who

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## Interview with Volunteer Elizabeth Clements *(continued from p. 3)*

touches my heart. I feel blessed that I am capable of helping them with their needs and occasionally counseling them.

**A: Does your professional background help you in rendering these services to our clients?**

E: I think so. I have a Bachelor's Degree in Psychology and a Master's Degree in Professional Counseling from Ottawa University. I now work as a Domestic Violence Victim Court Advocate at New Leaf in Mesa, where I help the victims obtain orders of protection, advise them on family law matters, inform them about resources for emergency situations, and counsel them on safety plans. In addition, I have an Associate's Degree in Paralegal Studies and am a Licensed Legal Document Preparer.

**A: You have a lot of work responsibilities. Do you find time for hobbies?**

E: I enjoy spending time with my three grown children and my 4-year-old grandson. And I love my four dogs, which I picked up as strays: a Rottweiler, a Pit Bull, a Labrador, and a Chihuahua. Every now and then, I go to the movies, but usually my family and my pets keep me busy.

**A: Thank you for everything you do in the St. Vincent de Paul Society. The poor have a compassionate friend and advocate in you.**



### In Memory of Mary Ziegman

Together with her family and friends, we mourn the passing of **Mary Ziegman** on Saturday, May 12, 2012.

Mary actively joined the St. Vincent de Paul Society after her husband Dick, a much appreciated and beloved member of our conference for many years, passed away in 2002. To continue his work, she decided to team up with a friend and deliver food to needy families. Blessed with excellent health even in her eighties, she did not mind carrying food up to the third floor of apartment complexes. With her positive outlook on life and her boundless energy, she was a blessing to the families she served.

When her health did not permit her any longer to deliver food boxes, she would still attend our St. Vincent de Paul meetings and bring one of her favorite dishes, a spinach salad, to our potlucks. She kept supporting our ministry in any way she could. Mary was a true inspiration to our conference members, a beautiful person, inside and outside.