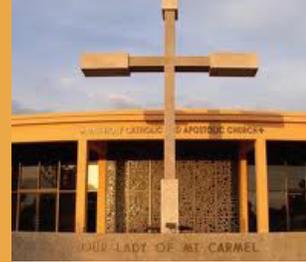




THE Vincentian

Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Conference

June 2015



visit us online at <http://olmcstvincentdepaul.weebly.com>

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Contact us

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The Face of Jesus

(by Adelheid Thieme)

As Vincentians, we try to see the suffering Christ in those whom we visit. There are times, however, when the face of Jesus is not all that easy to discern.

A few weeks ago, a client who had received help from our St. Vincent de Paul conference numerous times called our office for food and rental assistance again. The phone person promised her a food box, but indicated we would

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OLMC Students Collecting Diapers



Every year, the students at OLMC hold a diaper drive to benefit young families served by SVdP. Student council members proudly delivered an impressive amount of diapers to our pantry.

Networking with Other Community Organizations

(by Emanuel Bécquer)

Though the Society of St. Vincent de Paul can normally provide food boxes once a month and monetary aid once a year, many families often require more food and financial assistance than the Our Lady of Mt. Carmel conference can offer. During home visits, Vincentians give each household a copy of a sheet containing addresses and telephone numbers for other local community organizations.

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The Face of Jesus (cont. from p. 1)

probably not provide any more financial assistance. The lady must have tried the phone person's patience as there was a note on the take-in sheet indicating that the client was extremely persistent and would not take "no" for an answer. We decided to schedule a home visit that same day.

When we knocked on the door of her room in a run-down Tempe motel, we were greeted by a lady in her early forties. She must have been a beautiful woman once, but years of toil and distress had hardened her facial features. It was the face of a person who was determined to fight for survival. There was no sign of warmth or friendliness in her eyes any more, just a mixture of hurt, pride and defiance. We experienced a sense of alienation, a feeling that stayed with us even after she had invited us to enter her place. "Come in. This is my 'home'," she said with a cynical, bitter tone.

The tiny room was sparsely furnished: a bed with crumpled linen, a shabby dresser with an old TV, and one small wooden chair. Her belongings were strewn across the tiled floor.

We evaluate each request on a case-by-case basis, so we asked her questions about her financial situation. "You want to know how I make a living?" she said. "I am a 'bag lady'. Every morning I get on my bike and I ride around town for hours sifting through trash cans at bus stops and schools, searching for recyclable aluminum cans and plastics. Once I have filled a bag, I take it to a recycling station where I am paid a few cents per pound. I work hard, but there are days when I run short of recyclables and am unable to pay my weekly rent. That means eviction. If I do not pay the motel manager by five o'clock this evening, I will be homeless again tomorrow."

We could only try to imagine how much she was struggling to survive and how humiliating it must be to dig through other people's trash to make a living. When we told her that we would pay for a week's rent, the cold and bitter expression of her face suddenly gave way to a warm smile. She thanked us and even initiated a hug.

This is when we recognized the face of Jesus.

ASU Student Receives Award for SVdP Internship E-Portfolio



In summer of 2014, **Emanuel Bécquer**, an undergraduate student at ASU majoring in biomedical informatics who is aspiring to become a medical doctor, completed an internship with the St. Vincent de Paul Society at Our Lady of Mt. Carmel.

He constructed an **electronic portfolio** about his intership experience. It contains weekly reflections, a detailed personal reflection, and a video that provides an overview of the work of our conference. His portfolio won an award at the ASU Writing Programs E-Portfolio Showcase on May 1, 2015.

Please click on the link below or paste it in your browser:

<https://asu.digication.com/svdpinternship/>

Networking with Other Community Organizations (cont. from p. 1)

Many of these organizations, such as the **Salvation Army** and the **Tempe Community Action Agency**, are government-funded and allow families to apply for financial assistance through application programs. In addition, organizations like the **Buddhist Tzu Chi Foundation** and **Paz de Cristo** also prepare food boxes for needy families during certain times of the month.



A private non-profit organization, the **United Food Bank** works with the Society of St. Vincent de Paul to help feed hungry families in Arizona on a daily basis. Founded in 1983, the United Food Bank serves the East Valley, as well as four adjacent local counties, with food distribution to partner agencies. Serving more than 42,000 meals daily, the United Food Bank assists hungry families with more than six million meals during a regular calendar year. As astounding as these figures may seem, these numbers are still low compared to the number of families that undergo hunger in Arizona on a daily basis. During a tour of the facility for members of the Our Lady of Mt. Carmel conference, the tour guide stated that even doubling the size of its current operations would be insufficient to feed every hungry family.

A visitor to the United Food Bank in Mesa may be surprised at the extent of the operations found on site. Row upon row of bottled water, canned foods, and other packaged goods are testament to the effort of the United Food Bank to feed the hungry in Arizona every day. During certain days of the week, the food bank hosts the food purchase program "Help Yourself." During this time, many families are able to pay reduced rates for fresh meats, produce, and other essential foods. In addition, during the year, the United Food Bank also provides thousands of students with both healthy meals and snacks and backpacks full of nourishing, non-perishable foods.

In addition to these shipments, the OLMC SVdP conference also receives a portion of its food donations from the central **St. Vincent de Paul facility in downtown Phoenix**. On site, the facility runs a food reclamation center that processes over six million pounds of food per year. From here, food shipments are sent to one of five dining rooms or various food pantries run by local conferences around the valley, which deliver more than 400,000 food boxes to households in northern Arizona every year. Also at the facility in downtown Phoenix is a family dining room that serves more than 3,500 nourishing meals to hungry families every day.

The Society of St. Vincent de Paul partners with these community organizations to offer needy families various resources and services available for their support.



Meet our Volunteers: Dawn Bigelow-Ingram

(by Adelheid Thieme)



Dawn Bigelow-Ingram has been a member of our St. Vincent de Paul conference since 2012, when she first participated in our Thanksgiving Food Drive and became “hooked.” Now that she is retired, she spends her Saturday mornings delivering food boxes together with Vito Valdez.

“Bringing food boxes to needy families gives me much happiness and joy,” Dawn says. “I get much more than I give, and I am a better person because of the friendships that I have developed with my Vincentian family.”

Dawn was born in Oconto Falls, Wisconsin, about 30 miles north of Green Bay. After working as a food server in the Big Apple on Main Street in Mesa for many years, she found her vocation as a massage therapist. For 17 years, she ran her own business, treating 12-15 people per week with deep tissue and trigger point massage therapy.

Now that she is retired, she enjoys traveling. Her favorite place is St. Ignace, Michigan, where she will spend part of the summer. She loves sports, especially lifting weights and marathon running, covering the full distance of 26 miles. She also enjoys gardening, knitting, quilting, and journaling.

The poor have found a friend in Dawn. With her deep faith and her gentle demeanor, she is a comfort to all who are fortunate to be her friend.

Girl Scouts Preparing Food Boxes

Under the guidance of **Ann Colvin-Smith**, the Girl Scouts come to the OLMC pantry on a regular basis to help with the packing of food boxes. The Girl Scouts enjoy the time they spend assisting the community while simultaneously earning their badges.

