

# THE VINCENTIAN

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## Spotlight on ...

We are very thankful for the valuable contributions that **Barbara Pawlak** has made to our conference. Ever since she joined us in June 2000, she has been active answering the phones in our office, doing home visits, reviving our newsletter, working as Vice President, sorting food at our central warehouse in Phoenix, conducting training sessions for our members, and currently serving as **Treasurer**. Our conference appreciates her spirit of service and her willingness to use the many skills that she has developed in her professional career for the benefit of the needy in our parish.

After earning a Bachelor of Arts degree in English and American History from Mt. Mary College in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, Barbara first worked in Gary, Indiana, as a newspaper reporter for the *Gary Post Tribune* and then as a manager for a shopping center in an inner city mall. For six years, she was employed as a Marriage Preparation Coordinator and a Public Information Officer with Catholic Charities, a job that entailed counseling couples and families as well as providing material assistance with rent and utilities.

For Barbara, volunteering is a way of life. Apart from taking care of her responsibilities with St. Vincent de Paul, she is on the Board of Tempe St. Luke's Auxiliary, works in the hospital gift shop, and serves as Secretary for the Sodality. An early morning person, she also serves as a Sacristan, Lector, Extraordinary Minister, and Altar Server at the 6:30 Mass on Sundays at OLMC.

Widowed early on in her marriage, Barbara struggled to raise four children and provide them with a solid education. Even though she is busy with all her volunteer work, she keeps in close

contact with them: Gene, a podiatrist in Indiana; Steve, a construction engineer in Maui; Kathy, a recreation therapist in Indiana; and Kevin, a faux decorator in Phoenix. She is concerned about her daughter, an army reserve, who is awaiting deployment in Iraq as a member of a military intelligence unit.

Barbara appreciates the friends she has made and the many wonderful people she has met through her volunteer work. She lives her faith by helping people in an emergency, lending a compassionate ear to clients in their distress, and showing them that she truly cares.

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## Our Mission

Please join us on **April 1, 2004**, at **7:00 pm** at **Resurrection Church** to learn more about the Vincentian calling. Fr. Pedro, Spiritual Adviser for the Western Region of St. Vincent de Paul, will be speaking about the mission of Vincentians. Fr. Pedro emphasizes that we are called to bring God's love, which we find inside the church, outside to the poor and that we find the face of Christ in those whom we serve.

I strongly encourage you to attend this lecture. You will walk away with a new understanding and commitment.

Ben Picone, Past Conference and District President

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## Financial Report for 2003

Home visits:	2,129
Food boxes:	2,326
Rents paid (304 families):	\$ 40,064.39
Utilities paid (102 families)	\$ 6,753.64
Transportation/bus passes:	\$ 1,012.00
Clothing Vouchers:	\$ 2,073.00
Food	\$ 5,525.51

## Rekindling the Light

(by Adelheid Thieme)

One afternoon in January, we visited two families that had requested food and financial assistance. At the apartment of Carol and her three children, the oldest boy, who was 11 years old, politely invited us into the living room where his mother was feeding his baby brother. When his younger brother (7) saw the food boxes, he cried: "Great! No more sour pickles. That's all we have." It was so cold inside that the boys were shivering in their t-shirts. Their eyes shone as they saw the cereals, crackers, and also a few candy bars.

Carol told us that she had recently moved into the apartment. She and her children had been evicted before Christmas after she had lost her job. As a pharmaceutical assistant, she had a hard time finding work because many employers considered her over-qualified for a low-wage job. She said, "The worst thing was spending Christmas in our van. My children did not have a Christmas tree or presents. We just drove from place to place, trying to keep warm and fed. The long nights in the cramped van were hard on the children. I felt so bad for them." She was relieved that, with our help, she would be able to pay her rent. We also left her a voucher so that she could get warmer clothes for her children.

When we arrived at the home of the next family, it was already dark. Rachel, a mother of six children between the ages of 4 and 14, was waiting for us in front of her house. As she helped us carry the food inside, she told us that she could not turn on the lights because her electricity had been disconnected. Both she and her husband had recently lost their jobs, and the money that her husband occasionally earned as a day laborer did not even suffice to pay the rent, let alone the electricity bill. Crouched on the floor, by the light of two votive candles, we read the eviction notice and wrote a check for the rent. We also referred her to a job bank and another agency that would probably help her to have her electricity reconnected.

Carol and Rachel were both very appreciative and warmly thanked us when we left. We hope that the assistance we could offer would

help rekindle the light in their homes and in their hearts.

## Thanksgiving Food Drive

This past Thanksgiving, our conference delivered food boxes and turkeys to 197 families. Thank you to all those parishioners and Vincentians who helped us with the delivery.



(Ben Picone , Don Ong, John Reigelsberger, and Mary and Leo Wenning at the Thanksgiving Food Drive)

## Adopt-A-Family 2003

(by Mike Murphy)

With the help of our sponsors and our SVdP committee, we were able to provide 96 families with gifts, food, and goodwill this Christmas season. Over the past four years, the Adopt-A-Family program here at OLMC has helped approximately 400 families have a brighter Christmas.

The success of this Adopt-A-Family program this year was the result of cooperative efforts of our St. Vincent de Paul members and our sponsors who make it all happen.

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### Amy Deleo

We are grateful for the monies that were donated to our Conference **in memory** of Amy Deleo. She will be remembered in our prayers.

# Cash Assistance for Needy Families

(by Bart and Valerie Nigro)

Please pass on the following information to persons of whom you believe that they are low-income families:

Families with modest incomes can take advantage of federal and state income credits even if not required to file income tax returns. These credits are:

1. Earned Income Credit (Federal) (up to \$4204),
2. Family Income Tax Credit (State) (up to \$240),
3. Increased Excise Tax Credit (State) (up to \$100).

(1 and 3 are refundable credits, i.e. they are available to needy families even if their taxes are less than the credit or zero, while 2 is non-refundable, i.e. it is subtracted from taxed owed.)

In order to take advantage of these payments, the needy family must file a federal and a state income tax return, even if not required to do so (the family must have some earned income, i.e. job income from employer).

The IRS office in Tempe at Mill and Baseline, can provide federal forms, and answer questions. The Tempe Library can provide state forms. The City of Tempe is also providing help for this activity. For information, call 480-858-2323.

## Arizona Tax Credits

If you made a contribution to the St. Vincent de Paul Society during 2003, you can deduct up to \$200 from taxes due the State of Arizona for 2003.

You must complete Arizona Tax Form 321. It will ask you for your charitable contributions in 1996, which is considered the base year. As long as your contribution for 2003 is larger than that for 1996, you can reduce your taxes owed to the State of Arizona by the amount that your 2003 charitable contributions exceed your 1996 contributions up to \$200.

## Letter from a Client

Dear Family of God,

I want to thank you so very much for your kindness in bringing me goodies and allowing me to get clothes. I want to thank the people of the Church who gave so willingly with love for others, the lady that answered the phone so politely, and the kind-hearted young man who delivered the groceries. Your goodness made me cry with joy. Thank you so much for caring about me.

The N. N. Family

## Threat to Low Income Health Care Coverage

A bill, SCR 1039, which is under consideration by the Arizona Senate, would place a referendum on the November ballot to allow reduction of AHCCCS (Arizona's Medicaid) health care coverage for low-income families by a majority vote of the Legislature.

Arizona voters have voted twice (1996 and 2000) to expand eligibility for AHCCCS to families whose income does not exceed 100% of the federal poverty level (\$19,000 annual income for a mother and two children). If voters pass SCR 1039, the Legislature by majority vote could (1) raise the income eligibility standards for AHCCCS, (2) impose a cap on enrollment, (3) allow the Legislature to refuse additional funding for AHCCCS from the General Fund if tobacco monies are insufficient. If AHCCCS returns to prior levels of eligibility, over 100,000 Arizonans would no longer have health care coverage.

### What can you do as a Vincentian?

E-mail or call your State Senator. State that you are a constituent and member of the St. Vincent de Paul Society. Urge a "NO!" vote on SCR 1039.

If you are not sure who your senator is, you may call the Info Desk at (602) 926-3559.

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## Prayer of a Veteran Vincentian

Lord, you know better than I know myself that I am growing older and will someday be old. Keep me from the fatal habit of thinking I must say something on every subject and on every occasion.

Release me from craving to straighten out everybody's affairs: Make me thoughtful but not moody, helpful but not bossy. With my vast store of knowledge, it seems a pity not to use it all, but you know, Lord, that I want at least a few friends at the end.

Keep my mind from the recital of endless detail; give me wings to get to the point. Seal my lips on my aches and pains. They are increasing, and love of rehearsing them is becoming sweeter as the years go by. I dare not ask for grace enough to enjoy the

tales of others' pain, but help me to endure them with patience.

I dare not ask for improved memory, but for a growing humility and a lessening arrogance when my memory seems to clash with the memory of others. Teach me the glorious lesson that, occasionally, I may be mistaken.

Keep me reasonably sweet. I do not want to be a Saint – some of them are so hard to live with – but a sour old person is one of the crowning works of the devil. Give me the ability to see good things in unexpected places and talents in unexpected people. And give me, O Lord, the grace to tell them so. Amen.

