



The Vincentian

Newsletter for supporters of the
Society of St. Vincent de Paul
Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Conference

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THE ANGEL & THE LITTLE LAMB

(by Valerie and Bart Nigro)

“We thank you, Lord, for the many blessings which we receive from those whom we visit. Help us to love and respect them, to understand their deeper needs, and to share their burdens and joys as true friends in Christ.”

As we were praying this passage of our Vincentian prayers before a recent meeting, I was transported back in time to an experience that we had a couple of years ago.

Although I cannot remember the name of the client, I vividly remember his grey-bearded face and the way he moved about gingerly with his walker. We had taken a food box to the trailer home, and the disabled recipient was grateful for the provisions and our visit. Unable to seek employment, he spent much of his time working at tooled leather creations. This pastime had started as a hobby, he told us, and eventually became a source of income, when he could find a market for his work. We admired the many leather portraits that filled the small room: Western scenes and some religious themes, each one thoughtfully designed and carefully executed.

“Have you ever considered participating in local craft fairs?” we asked. It pleased him that we were showing an interest, and as it was time for us to be on our way, a tooled leather portrait of an angel gently comforting a lamb was pressed into my hands as a gift from the craftsman. Bart handed him some money, but although he tried to decline, we insisted that he accept it.

This beautiful piece graced our family room until one day when I was inspired to give it to Mrs. Pam Myskowski, the director of the Little Lambs Pre-School which our granddaughter was attending. Pam’s husband trimmed and framed the artwork. It is displayed in the classroom, where young children, their parents and their teachers enjoy it.



May God’s angels watch over all our li'l lambs and the struggling gentleman. His humble gift continues to be a source of inspiration, comfort and joy in a classroom setting.

University Presbyterian Church Helps Feed the Poor

(by John Reigelsberger)

Food donations by the parishioners at the University Presbyterian Church at College and Alameda help our St. Vincent de Paul conference meet the needs of those we serve. As their church does not have a program to respond to those calling for help, they have asked us to pick up their donation and add to our pantry.

We appreciate their generosity and ask for God’s blessings on them for helping us have the resources for the approximately 200 families we serve every month.

From the President's Pen

(by Barbara Pawlak)



In the new year, we have received many blessings from God. We are especially grateful for our new volunteers, who renew us by their fresh spirit and magnificent motivation.

Let me share as an example our new Saturday telephone person. Her experience as director of an agency that assists the physically disabled gives her compassion and concern in dealing with those who call us. On just her second week on the "job," she was hosting a group of directors from 55 states and territories who were meeting in Phoenix for an annual conference. She took them on a hike up Squaw Peak, then dropped them off for breakfast, explaining that she would rejoin them after having answered the phone for St. Vincent de Paul. Such dedication is impressive!

Our conference is always very busy. Each morning, Monday through Saturday, two people staff the phones for at least two hours. In the late afternoon or evening, another volunteer listens to the message recorder and serves those clients who called after office hours.

In addition, eight new delivery teams are functioning on a weekly or bi-weekly basis. We now have 20 teams of volunteers who deliver food boxes and do home visits. As an added blessing, Church of the Ascension Conference has assigned us their food allotment, which enables us to have more dollars for rent and utility assistance.

Our pantry manager volunteers 5 to 8 hours daily plus many extra hours during food drives and special events like Turkey Tuesday. He is assisted by a dozen volunteers who pick up food allotments, bread, pastries, and diapers. Others sort food items, stock the pantry shelves and fill food boxes.

Meetings and training sessions, such as the Ozanam Formation Program that allows our volunteers to learn more about the goals and objectives of the Society, occupy many members. All our members received conference training and will attend the "Call to Protect" program required of all parish volunteers.

Especially the officers are busy with book keeping and reporting tasks. Poor box funds are tracked weekly, checks Xeroxed, deposits made, thank-you letters sent, year-end statements mailed. Then there is the time spent writing, editing, assembling, and mailing this newsletter.

In 2006, all in all, more than 13,000 hours were spent performing the work of the St. Vincent de Paul Society at OLMC. Actually, the hours figure is on the light side since the volunteers actually do not record their hours.

Last but not least, we want to thank all of you, our faithful donors, without whom the total hours figure would be zero. We remember you in our prayers, including those we express on home visits when your generosity is especially visible. THANK YOU!

The year 2006 in numbers

Financial assistance to clients	\$ 84,000
Food boxes delivered	3,100
Number of clients served	10,000
Number of volunteers	78
Number of home visit teams	20
Volunteer hours for	
• Home visits	3,000
• Food box preparation (pick up warehouse allotments and donations, sorting, stocking, food drives)	3,800
• Office work (taking client requests by phone, referrals, maintaining records, book-keeping)	2,300
• Meetings, training, planning	3,000
• Miscellaneous (Adopt-A-Family, Newsletter, processing donations)	1,500
Total Volunteer Hours	13,600

Meet our Volunteers



Alice Allen has been a member of our conference since 2002. Initially she helped stock the pantry every Thursday morning, but ever since her English- and Spanish-speaking skills were “discovered,” she mainly answers the phones in our office. “I get a lot of satisfaction from helping people,” she says. “They are so grateful to have someone on the phone who is willing to listen to their troubles.”

Alice grew up in Tucson in a family where Spanish was spoken in the home. After her graduation from high school, she worked several years as a secretary for National Van Lines, a moving company. Together with her husband, who passed away 25 years ago, she raised two beautiful daughters, Barbara and Julie. Alice loves children and spends a lot of time with her 5 grandsons. During our parish food drives, Alice can be seen with her daughter Barbara, a computer specialist at Our Lady of Mt. Carmel School, and her grandsons passing out food bags as well as carrying and sorting donated food items. Together with Mike, her 15-year-old grandson, she picks up bread at A.J.’s every third week.

Alice’s spirit of caring for others shows in all her activities. She has been a caregiver for children from approximately 75 families, watching over them from a few hours to a few days in her home. She also took care of her mother and her sister when they most needed her in times of illness. She volunteers for the March of Dimes, the American Diabetic Association, and Tempe St. Luke’s Hospital.

In her spare time, Alice enjoys crafts like sewing and quilting. She is also a member of the rosary-making group at Our Lady of Mt. Carmel and makes about 30 rosaries per month for our parishioners. She also makes rosaries that her sister distributes in the missions in Chiapas, Mexico.

Our St. Vincent de Paul group is fortunate to have Alice as a volunteer. With her loving and gentle demeanor, she is a blessing for both members and clients.

Special Pantry Helper



(Becky Hamant (right) and Melissa Schmiesing stocking the shelves in the SVdP pantry.)

One of our youngest volunteers is **Becky Hamant**. Together with Melissa Schmiesing, a student at Arizona State University, she comes into our pantry every Friday afternoon to stock the shelves. Due to her intellectual disabilities (4 p-Syndrome), she requires some special accommodations, but she gets an amazing amount of work accomplished within a short time.

Becky is hoping to find customized employment with supports in the community. Even though she is non-verbal, she communicates effectively with the assistance of an augmentative communication device. A quiet environment where she would do tasks such as sorting, shredding, or copying would be ideal for her.

Becky feels good about being able to help the poor through her work, and our conference is grateful for having her as one of our volunteers.



Please join us for adoration of the Blessed Sacrament the **first Friday** of every month from **12:00 noon to 1:00 pm**. This is an invitation for everyone to join our conference members as we spend time with the Lord in the Eucharist.

Togetherness



God, our Creator, continuously bestows many gifts on us. For Vincentians, the opportunity to serve the poor is a gift from God. We, in turn, pass on this gift by our concern, esteem and love for those we help. We do not regard our clients as “them”, but as a part of “us.” Heaven is a “we” place. At Mass, it is not a “My Father” but an “Our Father” that is sung. Therefore, like heaven, earth must be a “we” place.

We must remember that we are persons who are

- a) created by God.
- b) in a co-creation act with God.
- c) to help each other to live out God’s plan.
- d) to be eternally with God.

We are imperfect creatures, existing in an imperfect world, helping each other live out God’s plan for our lives. We want to be with others, to love and be loved. Why? To better desire God Who is Perfect in all our imperfections. With such wants satiated, we are happy.

Prayerfully your fellow Vincentian,

Fr. Johnrose, Spiritual Advisor

In Memoriam

We honor the memory of **George Herman**, a dedicated parishioner, who was a long-time benefactor of our conference.

We also remember **Charles Green**, who, along with his brother, Gerry, was an active volunteer in our conference until he was no longer able to continue due to his health problems.

We will miss both of these gentlemen. May the Lord reward them for their generosity and service. We will keep them in our prayers.

From Wealth to Worth

(by Adelheid Thieme)



During our monthly meeting at the beginning of this year, Barbara Pawlak, our President, praised the generosity of our parishioners, especially during the holiday season. “Our parishioners truly care about the needy in our community and give out of their surplus, or out of their own need, so that the poor have a chance at a dignified life. What a blessing!” This concern for the less fortunate is a blessing indeed, but not only for those who receive help from the St. Vincent de Paul Society, but also for those who volunteer their money and their time.

Let me share with you a conversation that I had with one of our volunteers. Paul (he asked me to change his name for privacy purposes) had been a contributing member of our conference for many years. He was a successful professional and he was charitable. He was happy to share his wealth with those who had fallen on hard times. A few months ago, at a ministry fair, he talked to a volunteer at the St. Vincent de Paul desk and was invited to become a member of a home visit team or help out in the pantry. He now takes time out of his busy schedule and volunteers regularly once a week.

“When I heard about food deliveries and home visits to the poor, it was like a switch went off in my head,” he said. “What has happened since has added a warmth to my life that is hard to explain. For a lot of years, I was mainly concerned about money and success. Now it’s more about having significance in the lives of others. There is nothing more valuable than the feeling that I am helping some people. I like the idea of doing something useful, and I feel as if I’ve come a long way.

Paul has come a long way, traveling in a few months – as he calls it – from “wealth to worth.”