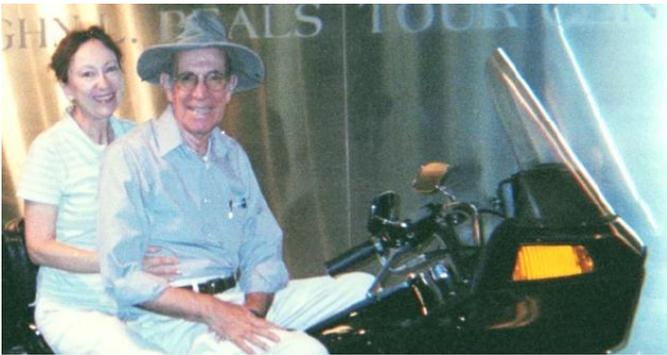


# THE VINCENTIAN

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## Spotlight on ...



**Valerie and Bart Nigro** have been members of our conference for more than three years, faithfully doing home visits every Saturday morning and serving as representatives in the Voice of the Poor Committee.

Valerie and Bart are originally from Williamsville, a small town near Buffalo, New York. Bart, whose formal training is in mathematics, computer science and operations research, taught several years at Niagara Community College, after leaving a staff management position in Engineering Analysis at Bell Aerospace near Niagara Falls. In the early 1980's, Motorola relocated Bart and his family to Arizona, where he served in a staff management position for Software Engineering at the Government Electronics Group in Scottsdale. Several years later he transferred to the Training Division of Motorola known as Motorola University (MU). Prior to retiring, he served as the Director of the Program Management Office for MU. In this capacity, he helped develop training programs for employees in the techniques needed to build quality and availability into products. Now that he is retired, Bart works part time for H&R Block as a

tax specialist, and is also available for part time college teaching assignments.

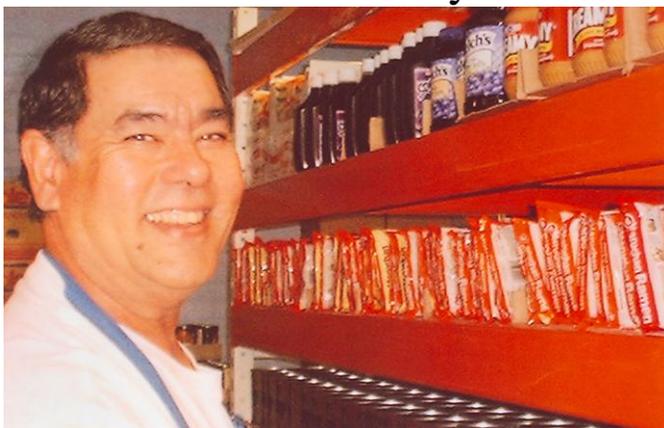
Valerie studied Spanish at Daemen College in Buffalo. She taught Spanish in high school and Montessori education for pre-schoolers. When Valerie's and Bart's four children were young, Valerie used her educational experience to establish a Montessori school in their home while still in Williamsville. Later in Arizona, she taught an elective Spanish class at Our Lady of Mt. Carmel School for seven years as a volunteer.

Valerie's knowledge of Spanish is helpful during their home visits. Both are very grateful for the many blessings that they have received and feel that it is their obligation to share their talents and resources with the less fortunate. They hope that their active participation in the Voice of the Poor Committee will contribute to changing laws and winning government support for long-term assistance that will help the needy not only *in* their poverty, but *out of* their poverty.

Currently, Valerie and Bart spend three days a week babysitting their grandchildren. They are also active in OLMC Sodality and the Knights of Columbus (KC), and their respective Rosary Groups, plus they serve the parish as Extraordinary Ministers of the Eucharist. They also share a wide range of interests: ballroom dancing, studying the Bible with Kevin Saunders, researching alternative health therapies, reading, and traveling. They fondly remember a trip to the Holy Land in 2000 where they were able to renew their wedding vows at Cana.

We greatly appreciate Valerie's and Bart's service to the poor and are grateful for enriching the work of the conference with their love, their expertise, and their wisdom.

## Volunteers Ensure Success of SVdP Pantry



**Don Ong – Vice President and Pantry Manager**

Currently, our conference delivers food to approximately 170 families per month. Each food box, with a retail value of 80-100 dollars, contains ingredients for nutritious meals: canned and frozen vegetables, soups, canned fruits, pasta, rice, beans, dry milk, meats, cereals, and snacks. Don Ong, who oversees the handling of about 10,200 pounds of food per month, answered some questions about the operation of our pantry:

***Q: How do we get so much food?***

**Don:** A good portion of the food comes from the St. Vincent de Paul Food Warehouse in Phoenix. Gerry Green and Alan LaFontain drive downtown twice a week to pick up our allocation. Julian Natividad or Gerry also obtain 50 cases of food per month from the Mesa United Food Bank. In addition, Gerry picks up bread from a Tempe warehouse twice a week. He and John Reigelsberger also get food from the University Presbyterian Church once a month.

***Q: Do we buy some of the food?***

**Don:** We often buy fresh meats such as wieners, chicken, or turkey at a discount from our SVdP Food Warehouse in Phoenix.

***Q: What happens with the food once it has been brought to the pantry?***

**Don:** All the canned food items come unsorted in banana boxes. First, each can is inspected for damage. Cans that show leakage are discarded. Then all cans are sorted by item and placed on the

shelves. We rotate the items on the shelves to ensure freshness. Finally, we pre-pack the food boxes that our teams take to our clients.

***Q: That's a lot of work. Do other people help you?***

**Don:** Oh, yes. Several volunteers, for example Erlinda Schweller, Dot Riegel, Ken Burger, and Mike and Barbara Hoffman come in on a regular basis to help with the sorting and shelving of the food. Also, in the morning, our phone operators often pitch in whenever they have the time.

***Q: How many hours per week do you put in on an average?***

**Don:** Some 55 hours a week. But that's all right. I enjoy what I am doing, and I know that it helps a lot of people. All this could not be done without all the volunteers who donate their time and their effort.

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## Project Arizona President's Award

Congratulations to **Michael Murphy** for receiving the Central Arizona Project President's Award for Community Service. Michael has chaired our conference's Adopt-A-Family Program for the past three years. Every year between 100 and 120 needy families are matched with sponsors who provide Christmas presents for each family member as well as a complete holiday dinner. Michael donated the check of \$100 carried by the award to our conference. He has also generously volunteered to head the AAF program in the upcoming holiday season. Mike will need volunteers to help him. This program may fill the need in your life to help others.

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## Volunteers Needed

We are in need of volunteers who can help us **answer the phones** and **deliver food** to our clients.

If you are available one morning between 9 and 11 (Mondays through Fridays), enjoy communicating with people, and have some computer skills, you would be a great asset to us as a phone person. Training will be provided.

If you feel called to visit the needy in their homes and bring them a food box, contact us. You will be flexible in choosing a time when you would like to serve. You may bring a partner, or we can help you find a partner for your home visits.

## Hygienic Item Drive



Thank you for your generous response during our Hygienic Item Drive the weekend of August 1. As you can see from the photo, our shelves are now well stocked with shampoo, conditioner, diapers, and many other personal hygiene products. These items are typically scarce in our SVdP warehouse in Phoenix, and our clients cannot purchase them with food stamps. Your donation is greatly appreciated!

## Spanish Speaking Vincentians are Golden

(by Bob Erickson)

Ralph Mora and I deliver food and make home visits on Thursdays. For a few hours each week, our own personal problems seem to melt away after seeing much bigger problems. The first Thursday in August, of the four visits on the clipboard, two were to Spanish speaking families. At one time, I worried about Spanish speaking only families because of my inability to thoroughly communicate. How could I fulfill their needs?

The delivery of food is not a problem. We just drop off the food and smile; they smile and say thank you; we shake hands; then we all go our separate ways. The problem is, though, that I fail to communicate the most important reason for making a home visit. You see, our home visit is to bring comfort, friendship, and the love of our Lord Jesus Christ to those whom we visit. We must take our

church to those whom we serve, the poor, and, many times, the neglected. Many times we forget that Jesus Christ came to minister to the poor to give them his love and that it is our job to continue in his steps.

Now I feel we are serving much better. Ralph speaks fluent Spanish. We now understand their basis needs and offer additional help, such as referrals to other agencies. We now see and feel a deeper appreciation on their part. It is very humbling.

On this Thursday, we visited a family from Mexico that consisted of a young mother with a two-year-old son, her mother, and a nine-year-old brother. The young mother's older brother, the breadwinner, was in jail. Ralph determined that their electricity was to be shut off in two days and that they were behind in their rent. The young mother was starting a job as an ice-cream truck driver. We were able to guarantee payment to the utility company. We also made a partial rent payment and reached an agreement with the apartment manager that the family would not be evicted. The young mother would pay the balance of the rent from wages earned from selling ice-cream.

There are so many Spanish speaking families in our community that would not be helped in a timely manner (and maybe not at all) if it were not for our Spanish speaking Vincentians. I pray that our conference will continue to be blessed with wonderful bilingual volunteers.

## Reminder: Adoration



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.

Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Conference  
2121 S. Rural Road  
Tempe, AZ 85282

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## **Doing the Right Thing**

(by Adelheid Thieme)

A few weeks ago, we experienced once again that the work of the St. Vincent de Paul Society involves a lot more than delivering food boxes and providing financial assistance.

When we knocked on the door of a client, a slender woman in her mid-thirties opened the door. You could tell from the worried lines in her face that she had gone through hard times. The furniture in the studio, which she shared with her 15-year-old son, consisted of a twin-size bed, a table with two chairs, and a small couch. "My son uses the bed, and this is where I sleep," she said, pointing to the couch. She was attending a community college to finish up her degree in nursing and supported herself and her son on a scholarship. Since her last check had been lost in the mail, she could not pay her rent and was facing eviction.

She helped us unload the food boxes and accompanied us to the office of the apartment

manager, who was willing to accept a partial rent payment from us. She would not be evicted this month. When we left the office, we could tell from her face that she was very relieved. She then confided to us that she was three months pregnant. "There is no way I can keep the baby," she said. "My son and I live in such a cramped place already. I don't have the money to raise the baby. I am considering abortion, but I just can't decide. I was raised Catholic. I want to do the right thing."

We told her to reconsider abortion. "Abortion creates more problems than it solves," we said. "You will probably regret it for the rest of your life. The Aid to Women Center in Tempe might help you to discuss a variety of alternatives, such as adoption."

We gave her the telephone number of the facility and then talked to her for a while about our personal experiences with adoption. When we left half an hour later, she gave us a hug and smiled. I think she had found a solution, and it would not be abortion.