



The Vincentian

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

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Thank you, Steve

We gratefully recognize the great contribution that **President Steve Petruzzella** has made to our conference over the last three years. He has impressed us by the deep concern he has for the needy. Numerous individuals have gained from having Steve in their lives. We greatly appreciate his leadership, his commitment, his humility, and his kindness. We know that he will continue to be closely involved with our conference.



Relief for the Uninsured

(by Adelheid Thieme)

One July afternoon, we were delivering food in a trailer park in Tempe. As we were about to complete a visit with the family that had called us for a food box, a lady who lived in an adjacent trailer asked if she could also receive a food box. "I have three boys," she said, "and food is always scarce." The expression of her brown eyes haunts me to this day: they were warm, caring eyes, yet with a deep sense of sorrow and despair.

As we started talking, she continued, "Keeping food on the table is just one of my worries. My oldest son has cancer, and his brother lost his job due to a hand injury." She walked to the

door of her trailer and asked her two sons to meet us.

Her sons were two strong, handsome young men. If we had not known that they had health problems, we would never have guessed that anything was wrong. The younger son showed us his swollen hand. Working at a supermarket, he had injured his hand with glass. Some splinters that had penetrated deep into the flesh needed to be surgically removed. That was a big problem, though. Since he had been working and making decent money, he was not covered by AHCCCS. His job did not carry health benefits. He had tried to be treated in an emergency room, but had been rejected because his injury was not deemed life-threatening. A surgeon at a hospital had requested that he pay \$1,000 in advance, a sum which – needless to say – he did not have. The store would not re-employ him until his hand had healed.

His older brother was in even more dire straits. A year ago, he had been diagnosed with brain cancer. Up to the last couple of weeks, he had been able to hold down a job, but recently he had missed workdays due to his disease. Since he had no insurance from his job and did not qualify for AHCCCS, nobody was willing to pay for potentially life-saving surgery and chemotherapy. As a result, the cancer had spread. He had a tumor the size of an egg hanging from his left jaw, and another tumor was growing in his neck.

I cannot even remotely imagine the suffering of this family. It certainly made the two young men feel better that we took the time to write down a list of phone numbers for food programs and public dining rooms. We also referred them both to the St. Vincent de Paul clinic in Phoenix that offers limited medical services for free. The young man who was battling cancer said, "All the people at the agencies

I talked to, combined, did not take as much time listening to me as you did. All they care about is money.”

As I was sitting on the stairs of their trailer, looking into these two young faces, I tried hard not to cry. I felt helpless and angry at the same time. I brought up the situation at our next monthly meeting. Although we could not help in this particular case (the family had already moved when we tried to contact them a few days later), our conference became active in investigating solutions for situations in which uninsured clients cannot get access to medical care because they cannot pay for treatment. We have set up contacts with the Maricopa County Hospital. As of the middle of August, we can also refer our clients to the newly opened Mountain Park Health Center in Tempe.

Expecting Hope

(by Valerie and Bart Nigro)

One Saturday morning, after heavy rains, we were delivering food to a family that had called our conference for help. The tiny yard in front of their trailer was flooded. Since we could not even approach the trailer door, we resorted to knocking on a window. Mrs. H. greeted us with a smile, pointing out the pieces of scrap wood put down to form a haphazard path to the back entrance. The three of us managed to carry the bags of groceries, fire-brigade style, from the car to the door – holding on to one another so that no one would slip on the slick surfaces and fall into the muddy water. Two young children watched this delicate operation from the door.

The next issue of concern was the impending eviction that the family faced. Mr. H. had found a job but had just completed his first week of work after a period of unemployment. Fortunately, our conference had sufficient funds so that we could help with a partial payment toward their rent. With our cell phone, we called the landlord to arrange for the payment.

As we were waiting for him to pick up the check, Mrs. H. told us that she was pregnant. We asked about her health insurance for pre-natal check-ups. The family was going without health insurance because they could not afford it. We

wrote down some information about nearby sources of help. Mrs. H. was very grateful for the referrals, even though she knew that it would be difficult for her to keep a doctor’s appointment because the family had no transportation. (Her husband even had to borrow a relative’s car just to get to work each day.)

Before leaving, we prayed together, invoking God’s mercy and blessings on this family. We departed with hugs and words of encouragement.

June Potluck



At our June Potluck, on Flag Day, conference members thoroughly enjoyed good food and company: Karen Kawam, Alice Allen, Mary Vrizuela, ???, Ramona Verdugo and Frances Garcia (from left to right).

We are the light of God’s kindness
to the poor.

Give them not only your care,
But also your heart.

(Mother Teresa)

Meet our Volunteers



Mary Jean Tate, our conference secretary for the past three years, has been faithfully taking client phone calls every Friday morning ever since she joined our group approximately four years ago.

Her husband once commented that she would do anything to get out of making a phone call, so she is surprised that she is thoroughly enjoying the opportunity to serve the needy as an “intaker.” When asked if she would have signed up to volunteer if she had known about serving as a telephone person, she replied, “Probably not. But I definitely do not regret accepting this assignment. It has been an opportunity to reach out to the poor and the most disadvantaged in our community, to listen to them and help when it is possible.”

A native of Utah, Mary Jean earned her Bachelor of Arts Degree in Political Science from Stanford University and her Master of Arts Degree in Foreign Languages from the University of Utah. This is where she met her husband, Don, who later accepted a professorship in the School of Business at Arizona State University. Mary Jean and Don came to Tempe in 1958 after an 18-month stay in Turkey, where Don was overseeing a program between New York University and the University of Ankara. She enjoyed the opportunity to travel extensively in Europe and the Middle East.

Besides volunteering with the St. Vincent de Paul Society, where her Spanish-speaking skills are extremely useful, Mary Jean has many other interests that keep her very busy: She is involved with the Tempe Adult Day Care Center, serves as a Democratic Precinct Committeeman, mentors the Guild Leaders for St. Monica’s Guild in the OLMC Sodality, serves as Treasurer and Board Member of the Greater Phoenix Chapter of the United Nations Association (which advocates land mine removal), and is currently Chair of the Valiant Woman Selection Committee of Church Women United. In her spare time, she enjoys playing the piano and the harp.

We truly appreciate having Mary Jean as a member of our conference, where she is giving a lot

of support and encouragement to the less fortunate in our community. “As a volunteer, you will receive much more than you give,” she says, “and you know that you have made a difference in someone’s life.”

Congratulations, Darami



Darami Lam (left) and his mother holding the certificate and letter of recognition awarded by Vice President Don Ong.

Congratulations to Darami Lam on completing his Master’s degree in Engineering at Arizona State University and locating a well-deserved job in California. Ever since he was a student at McClintock High School, and throughout his college years, he has faithfully delivered food boxes and visited the less fortunate in their homes. He has enriched our conference by his reliable service, his sound judgment, and his cheerful attitude. We wish him all the best in his professional endeavors as he moves to a different state. We will keep him in our prayers and hope that we will remain in contact.

Quarterly Report (April – June 2006)

Home visits: 380 (2,760 persons served)
Food boxes delivered: 760
Clothing and furniture vouchers: 30
Rental and utility assistance to clients: \$15,000
Volunteer hours in our conference: 900

November Ballot Measures

What can you do?

(published by the Voice of the Poor Committee)

The following measures are supported by the Diocesan Board of the St. Vincent de Paul Society. Please consider supporting these measures. The Diocesan Board believes they will benefit the people who turn to the Society for assistance.

PROP 202 – Arizona Minimum Wage Amendment – Proposing an amendment to the Constitution of the State of Arizona, setting a minimum wage of \$5.95 per hour, effective July 1, 2007, to be raised to \$6.75 per hour on July 1, 2008, and thereafter to be adjusted for inflation each year; raising the minimum wage of ‘tipped employees’; providing for civil enforcement of the minimum wage; and authorizing the Legislature to establish remedies for violation of the minimum wage and to adopt such statutes and regulations for implementation and enforcement.

PROP 203 – First Things First for Arizona’s Children – All Arizonans benefit from voluntary early childhood education. Children start school ready to succeed. Parents are able to keep good jobs and earn higher incomes, and taxpayers save money because early childhood education lowers drop-out rates, reduces crime and cuts the cost of social services. This proposition would increase funding for early childhood development and health programs. Local councils who know their communities’ needs would distribute the majority of the funding, with oversight by a statewide board subject to audits and other accountability measures. Dedicated funding would come from an increase of the price of tobacco products.

The following measure is opposed by the SVdP Diocesan Board. Please consider voting against this measure:

PROP 300: Public Programs; Citizens – This proposition prohibits the Department of Education from providing adult education classes to adults

who are not citizens or legal residents of the United States or are not otherwise lawfully present in the United States. It also prohibits a person who is not a United States citizen, a legal resident or without lawful immigration status from being classified as an in-state student or from receiving tuition waivers, grants, scholarship assistance, financial aid, tuition assistance or any other type of assistance that is subsidized or paid in whole or in part with state monies.

Beatitudes

(For Friends of the Aged)

Blessed are they who understand
my faltering step and palsied hand.

Blessed are they who know that my ears
must strain to catch the things they say.

Blessed are they who seem to know
That my eyes are dim and my wits are slow.

Blessed are they with a cheery smile
Who stop to chat for a little while.

Blessed are they who never say
“You’ve told that story twice today.”

Blessed are they who know the ways
to bring back memories of yesterdays.

Blessed are they who make it known
that I’m loved, respected, and not alone.

Blessed are they who know that I’m at a
loss
to find the strength to carry the Cross.

Blessed are they who ease the days
on my journey Home in loving ways.
