

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

Phone: 480-966-1974

E-mail: thieme@asu.edu



# The Vincentian

Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Conference

Fall 2007

## Contents

Brownie Troup #1516 supports St. Vincent de Paul 1

Quarterly Report: April to June 2007 1

Successful June Food Drive 1

“Hell is ... not knowing how to save your child” 2

In Memoriam: Minnie DeVirgilio 2

From the President's Pen: Eagle Scout Award for Kevin Nance 3

A Plea for Help 4

Are You Listening? 4

## Brownie Troup # 1516 supports St. Vincent de Paul



Under the leadership of Jean-Anne Kneblsberger (right) and assistant leader Carey Gass (left), **Brownie Troup #1516 at Our Lady of Mt. Carmel School** presented a check of \$100 to St. Vincent de Paul. The girls raised this money for the benefit of the poor through the sale of Girl Scout Cookies. Girl scouts pictured from left to right are Rebecca Kneblsberger, Mira Garcia-Kennedy, Carly Bych, Felicia Gass, Madeline Baker (back row), and Riley Chaisson, Sarah Ballor, Molly Tomah, Mary O'Melia, and Yejoo Hong (front row).

A big **Thank you** to all of you who participated in our **June Food Drive**. We collected more than 80 banana boxes of non-perishable food items and received \$1,156 in financial contributions. The donations reached us at a time when our pantry was (and still is) low on canned food. Your monetary donations were also much appreciated. May God bless you for your generosity!

### Quarterly Report: April to June 2007

Deliveries to clients:	388
Food boxes:	776
Vouchers for Clothes	\$ 560.74
Rental Assistance:	\$ 12,359.36
Utility Assistance:	\$ 3,435.15

“Cheerfulness strengthens the heart and makes us persevere in a good life.”  
(St. Philip Neri)

## Hell is ... not knowing how to save your child

(by Adelheid Thieme)

When we deliver food to families and provide financial assistance for them, we know we are tending to their vital needs. One of our recent home visits, however, demonstrated to me that their material needs are often just “the tip of the iceberg.” Underneath these requests for help are hidden concerns, troubles, and worries that go so much deeper.

After having brought in the food boxes, we asked Sharon, who had also requested rental assistance, about her situation. Sharon tried to fight back her tears, but then burst into sobs. She showed us a portrait of her family: four gorgeous children with wide-open smiles, and a proud and radiant mother. Still crying, she pointed to her oldest daughter, Kenisa, a 14-year-old with long, black hair, and said, “Look at her. Isn’t she beautiful? She is in a juvenile detention center now, and I made sure she got there.”

After Sharon had calmed down a little, she told us that she had moved from Los Angeles to Tempe about a month ago. She had given up her job as a high school teacher after she had found out that Kenisa was involved in drugs and prostitution. Sharon had tried everything she could to get her daughter out of her self-destructive environment: she had talked to her, contacted the school counselor, signed her up for after-school

activities, but to no avail. Craving “the good life” with plenty of clothes, expensive make-up, a cell phone and other electronic gadgets, Kenisa had chosen not to change her lifestyle, even after a close friend of hers, who had also traded material goods and drugs for sex, had been killed. As a last resort, Sharon had decided to move her family to Tempe, hoping that the change of environment would help solve the problem.

Two weeks after the move, though, Kenisa had met a man who helped her get in contact with an “acquaintance” in Los Angeles. While Sharon was at work, he had picked her up and taken her back to California. After the expenditures of moving to Tempe, Sharon was in debt and could not afford to drive to Los Angeles. After many futile attempts, she had finally succeeded in reaching Kenisa on the phone and learned that she was back at her old school. In her desperation, Sharon called the police on a different phone and asked them to detain Kenisa until she herself could travel to Los Angeles. “I feel so bad about causing the arrest of my own daughter. But what else can I do to keep her safe? It is hell ... not knowing how to save your child.”

Before we left, we assisted her financially so that she could keep her apartment in Tempe and referred her to an agency that provides emergency travel funds. May the Lord answer the prayers that we offered together with Sharon and her other three children on behalf of Kenisa.

## In Memoriam: Minnie DeVirgilio

We mourn the loss of **Minnie DeVirgilio**, a member of our conference, who passed away in May. For many years, Minnie answered the phones in our office, where her compassion and genuine kindness made her a source of inspiration for clients and members alike. When her health was failing, she still came to the office, together with her friend, the late **Anita Lynch**, to sort food and personal hygiene items, fill food boxes for the elderly in her neighborhood, and purchase fresh eggs for food boxes. May the Lord reward her for her generosity and her spirit of service.

## *From the President's Pen*

(by Barbara Pawlak)

Red, white and blue streamers and confetti surrounded the American flags that graced the tables at a very special celebration – the Eagle Scout award ceremony for **Kevin Nance**. Kevin, an outgoing young man who is soon headed for ASU, had successfully completed his Eagle Scout project, which benefited our Conference at OLMC as well as our neighboring friends at St. Margaret's Parish, whose residents fall under our care.

Many months ago, Kevin called our Conference office seeking approval for his project – the construction of **food collection boxes** to be placed near church entrances. Parishioners who attended Mass would be able to drop off items to share with the poor.



What a great idea, we thought. The moms we visit always smile when we deliver the personal hygiene items that cannot be purchased with food stamps and the staples that will provide nutritious meals for their families. Children cry out with excitement when they spot the few treats that we try to include in every food box.

But what can we do when our shelves slide toward empty, our allotments for the month have been picked up from the warehouse in central Phoenix and a parish food drive is weeks away? Kevin was offering a wonderful way to alleviate our shortages. Large, attractive food collection boxes placed in a convenient location seemed

a perfect answer. Father John BonavitaCola was most enthusiastic. The project could go forward!

At the award ceremony, which I was honored to attend together with Debbie Corte, 1<sup>st</sup> vice president, and Bob McKay, a Valley transplant with over 20 years of previous Scout Master experience (Bob wore his uniform to the delight of the local Scout Masters), we thanked Kevin for the two large collection boxes that he constructed for both OLMC and St. Margaret's parishes. We trust that Kevin's community outreach will become a pattern in his adult life. We share his parents' pride in Kevin's admirable accomplishment. We know that many poor families who benefit from the additional food collections in the church are also grateful.



Kevin Nance with his parents, Elizabeth and Daniel Nance, at the Eagle Scout award ceremony.

Please remember Kevin, his family, and all the other young people who stock our pantry shelves, carry bags and baskets from parked cars to the collection hall, move the filled boxes to our pantry, or join their parents and grandparents as members of our delivery teams. We are indeed privileged to have their commitment and support.

As always, we ask God's blessings on you and yours.



## Responding to a Plea for Help

(by Valerie and Bart Nigro)

In Tempe, AZ, it can be quite uncomfortable indoors in the summer. When we arrived at Tina's home that toasty Saturday morning, we were anxious to prevent a power turn-off. A notice from the electric company showed that the electricity would be shut off if the bill could not be paid without delay. Although Tina had a job interview later that week, she would not have sufficient funds in time.

Our conference focuses on helping families with children, but also assists the elderly and persons with serious health problems. This was one of those situations. Tina was completing three months of chemotherapy and had fallen behind with her bills during her illness. Her ex-husband and a next-door neighbor had been providing some financial assistance, and now she was struggling to get back on her feet and resume normal activities.

Thankfully, we had brought some groceries, although not requested, and as Tina greeted us with a hug and tears in her eyes, she revealed that her pantry was empty. She had never sought public assistance in the past and was humbled by our response to her plea.

We phoned the APS office to find out what would be required to maintain service, and we were told what portion of the payment had to be paid no later than Monday at noon. To be certain that the deadline would be met, we promised to visit the Chandler office first thing on Monday to provide the required payment.

The aid supplied by St. Vincent de Paul was much appreciated by Tina, and the three of us prayed together in thanksgiving. She expressed a desire to help us reach out to others in need once her health was restored and her finances stabilized. For the time being, though, she was looking forward to a new job and success with her approaching yard sale.

## Are You Listening?

(by Mary Jean Tate)

Listening is a skill. Some people have a special talent for listening. Others have to develop it. Sometimes we listen intently because we are really interested. Sometimes we hear, but we aren't listening because we are thinking about something else. Sometimes we don't listen because we don't like what is being said. When we pray, we hope that God is listening.

To be a telephone volunteer, it is important to listen and to get all of the information necessary to complete a client request. Most requests fall into categories: food, rental or utility assistance. The clients, however, can be very different. Some express embarrassment because they have never had to ask anyone for help. Some are experienced and know just what information is needed. Some are lonely and seem glad to talk to someone. They don't mind if you ask them to call back in a week or ten days for a food delivery because it will give them the opportunity to talk to someone again.

A recent call was different. We had helped the client before with food and rent, but he had moved to Phoenix. We gave him the name of the appropriate St. Vincent de Paul Conference in Phoenix and the telephone number. He called back soon and said that he could not get through to them and that they only took calls on Thursdays and Saturdays. Why wouldn't we help him? I explained to him that each conference has its geographical boundaries so that our conference in Tempe does not do home visits in the Phoenix area. He wasn't convinced. Finally he said, "Jesus didn't use geographical boundaries." I responded, "I'm sorry," and we ended the conversation.

Was there a better answer? What would you have said?



Yes, I would like to support the ministry of the St. Vincent de Paul Society at OLMC.

I would like to contribute \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Please mail your check to

St. Vincent de Paul Society  
2121 S. Rural Road  
Tempe, AZ 85282

**Thank you!**



Last name: \_\_\_\_\_

First name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

I would like to receive the quarterly St. Vincent de Paul newsletter via email:

E-mail Address: \_\_\_\_\_