

St. Vincent's Way

CINCINNATI DISTRICT COUNCIL



Winter 2008

Called to a New Ministry

St. Vincent de Paul launches Winton Hills outreach

■ In a new ministry to some of Cincinnati's poorest residents, the Society of St. Vincent de Paul established a satellite office in Winton Hills this past fall.

Many of the 5,375 people living in the Winton Terrace, Findlater Gardens and Silver Oaks subsidized housing communities are young mothers living below poverty level. Almost 45 percent of residents are children.

For 60 years, The Terrace Guild served the residents of Winton Hills. However, their operations ceased in July 2007. The St. Vincent de Paul Conference at St. Bernard, which has conducted home visits in the neighborhood for years, knew the residents needed help. Moved by the needs of families in the area, St. Vincent de Paul stepped in to help by opening an onsite-office staffed with workers who focus on providing a high level of person-to-person care, a hallmark of the Society's ministry. Initially, our service has focused on emergency needs and basic necessities.

"Our mission is to help those most in need of support, whether emotional, financial, spiritual or functional," said Liz Carter, the executive director of St. Vincent de Paul. "The residents of Winton Hills are at a severe disadvantage because they are geographically isolated from so many social services. We felt a strong sense of responsibility to step in and continue the work of The Terrace Guild."

LaMonica Sherman, social services coordinator for the Society, said response of

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The Tom Carns family donated truck loads of new kid's coats through Carns Coats for Kids.

Holiday stories from the heart

A generous stranger

■ The phone at Bank Street rang close to quitting time on the Friday before Christmas. It was a formerly homeless woman had been helped with temporary housing while she waited for a battered women's shelter to take her in. "Andrea" had just found a new apartment for herself and her teenage daughter, but was having a difficult time with all the move-in costs.

Provisionally, one sponsor for the Society's Adopt-a-Family program had not received a family to adopt for Christmas. He was called immediately to see if he was willing to help, even if it involved helping more with rent than Christmas gifts. On

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Heighten your spirituality

Upcoming retreats focus on Vincentians, youth and spiritual advisors

Youth Social Action Retreat

■ Thirty students from area high schools will participate in the first **St. Vincent de Paul Social Action Retreat** on February 22-23 at the Bank Street facility. St. Vincent de Paul is working with Catholic Social Teaching Action Team (CSTAT) to plan the overnight retreat.

Service projects at area homeless shelters and visits with St. Vincent de Paul members to homes of the needy will be coupled with speakers, learning activities and reflection. For more information, contact Gary Horton at (513) 562-8841 ext. 234.

Members and Spiritual Advisor Retreat

■ Members, friends and spiritual advisors are invited to join in reflection and discussion at a **retreat and formation day** Saturday, Feb. 16 at St. Vincent de Paul headquarters. Sr. Kieran Kneaves SC, National Director of Formation, and Deacon George Bruce will lead.

In the morning, St. Vincent de Paul



Student volunteers spend Saturday mornings giving back to their community.



These brothers excitedly picked out matching warm winter coats.

members and friends are invited to focus on the spirituality of service to the poor. An afternoon formation event especially for spiritual advisors and members interested in becoming a spiritual advisor will focus on how spiritual advisors can play a critical role in a conference. For information or to register, contact Gary Horton at (513) 562-8841 ext. 234. +



Over 500 turkey dinners brought hope to many families on Thanksgiving.

Volunteer Opportunities

- **NOW:** Choice Pantry—People are needed on Tuesdays, Fridays or the 3rd Saturday of each month from 9:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m. to help stock and distribute food in the Choice Food Pantry at 1125 Bank Street.
- **NOW:** Adopt-A-Store—People are needed at any of our six thrift stores to help clean, straighten, hang clothing and/or stock merchandise. Stores are located in Winton Hills, Mt. Washington, Price Hill, Evendale, Milford and Colerain.
- **NOW:** Groups are needed to help paint our new satellite office in Winton Hills.
- **NOW:** Work directly with people in need by joining our home visit team or helping at our West End headquarters.

Other opportunities include:

- **Neighborhood Volunteer:** Join a group of parish volunteers to care for the needy through home visits, food and rental assistance, transportation and more.
- **Operation Bootstrap Aid:** Help with the organization and/or presentation of leadership/job readiness classes, or transportation of candidates to and from classes at Christ Hospital and Xavier University.
- **Organize a Drive:** Our staff can help you organize a drive or event at your school, office or church by collecting clothing, household items or furniture.

Get started making a difference in someone's life today by contacting Sarah Gerrety in the development office at (513) 562-8852 ext. 217 to sign up or for more information. +

Survey shows unmet health needs in adults

■ The St. Vincent de Paul Charitable Pharmacy continues to meet a tremendous need in our community. During 2007, our first full year of operation, we provided \$633,000 in free medication to people in need. The gratitude shown by those we help is humbling, and we look forward to the coming year with anticipation, but also with some concern.

As more people learn of this desperately needed service, our pharmacy has become busier and busier. If you are a pharmacist, pharmacy technician or other medical professional, please consider volunteering a few hours at the Charitable Pharmacy. We promise it will be time well spent!

Also, a recent survey was conducted on the need for health and wellness services at St. Vincent de Paul. On the survey, clients could request several areas of health care which they might utilize if the Society provided them.

Results found that an estimated 80 percent of the respondents requested eye exams, 75 percent requested blood pressure screenings and 54 percent requested flu shots. "The results of this survey along with the rising problem of adults who lack health insurance suggest there is a significant health care need in the community," said Gray Still, an AmeriCorp worker and patient advocate.

Next steps will be to determine how we might provide some of these services. Anyone willing to volunteer their time, provide contributions, or having any suggestions relating to this health and wellness proposal is invited to contact Gray at (513) 562-8841 ext. 230. +



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community members has been very positive. The new ministry "puts the Society in even closer touch with some of the community's neediest residents," she said. "This ministry has taken us a step further. We are right in the heart of a community that really has a lot of needs, in an area that has often been forgotten," she said.

With a goal to encourage self-sufficiency, St. Vincent de Paul will gather a group of residents and experts to plan and implement programs that encourage betterment. Possible areas of services to be discussed include workforce and job training, addiction counseling and programs geared toward helping women become more independent. St. Vincent de Paul has also worked to continue an existing Cincinnati Public Schools GED program.

Needs at the satellite office include computers, improvements to the Winton Hills office, volunteers to help with painting and funding for staff. For more information, contact Julie Rack, development director, at (513) 562-8841 ext. 225. +

Donations made easier!

Each year, the Society of St. Vincent de Paul helps thousands of people who need decent clothing, basic household items or furnishings for their home. People in need are given vouchers to shop for basic necessities at any of our area thrift stores. Gently used items you no longer use can be a tremendous help to a family struggling to make ends meet.

But we can only give what we receive! We are seeking businesses or churches willing to host a St. Vincent de Paul donation drop off box. The newly fabricated, industrial strength metal boxes are clean and attractive, and provide an easy way for people to make donations to St. Vincent de Paul. If you are willing to locate a box at your business or organization or if you would like more information, please contact Prentice Carter at (513) 562-8841, ext. 245.



Volunteers worked hard to box up hundreds of meals. Crossroads Community Church donated food, and JTM helped store and transport it.



After browsing through many racks of coats, this gentleman found warm coats for everyone in his family.



Compassionate giving part of the Vincentian DNA

By Mark Kroeger

■ For most Vincentians, the call to serve the poor is so pervasive in their lives that it doesn't even dawn on them that they're making a personal sacrifice when they give freely of their time and money.

Making home visits, being compassionate to others, and helping wherever they can is their way of life. It's what they do, day-in and day-out, year after year. For Vincentians, serving the poor is like breathing. They wouldn't have it any other way.

So, I wasn't at all surprised when the Society's Cincinnati District Council stepped forward without hesitation a few months ago to embrace and serve residents of the Winton Terrace community.

A little background is in order.

For the past 60 years, the Terrace Guild has been ably providing a wide range of social services focusing on Winton Terrace and immediately surrounding neighborhoods. The Guild's programs included, among other things, adult and youth education services, life counseling, and emergency assistance of the kind that we provide at St. Vincent de Paul.

The Guild did a great job and I'm sure would have continued its work for another 60 years if its funding had held up. But there was the rub. There wasn't enough money to keep the lights on.

The Society of St. Vincent de Paul was invited to step in, and step in we did.

In short order, the Society assumed responsibility for Terrace Guild's office space in Winton Terrace, which it leased from the Cincinnati Metropolitan Housing Authority for a nominal monthly amount. The Society made sure the Guild's important GED program continued uninterrupted in the fall, and it continued providing emergency assistance to those in the neighborhood who needed it.

With the Este Avenue thrift store near by and with an assist from the neighborhood

conference at St. Bernard, Winton Terrace residents who are in need of help can rely on the Society of St. Vincent de Paul to be there for them in a meaningful way. This year, we will explore ways to address some of the systemic causes of poverty in the neighborhood.

In the spirit of Frederic Ozanam, the Society responded swiftly, decisively and compassionately to a clear need in one of our community's most economically challenged neighborhoods.

As Vincentians, it's what we do. +

NEEDED: People to help with downtown home visits

■ Volunteers, especially women, are still needed to help with home visits conducted through the Bank Street ministry center. Visits are conducted on Wednesday mornings and the time commitment is only about two and a half hours. Teams consist of one man and one woman who visit clients in their homes to determine needs for furniture and household items. Volunteers will be paired with experienced members for the home visits. To volunteer for this ministry, contact Bob Mierenfeld at (513) 562-8841 ext. 235. +



Brother and sister played with new Christmas toys while a social worker helped their mother with basic necessities.



Receiving food or gifts brightened the holidays for over 6,000



A mother and her infant son found relief in their struggle through prayer and assistance from a social worker.

The many faces of the St. Vincent de Paul Ministry



Students at Nativity organized a canned food drive for the holidays.



families this year.



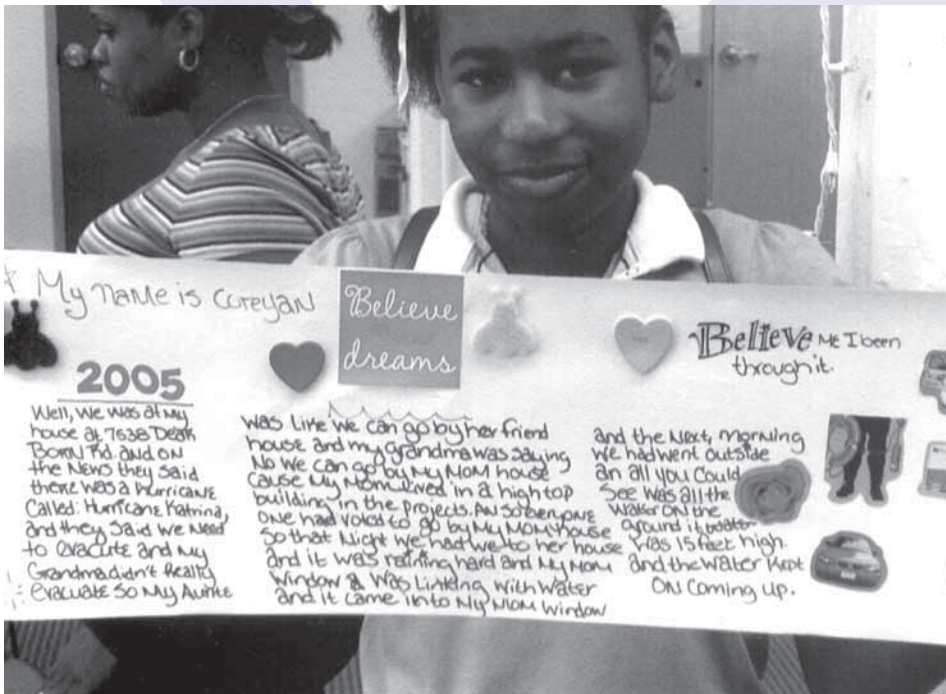
A little girl found a warm coat in her favorite color with a fancy fur trim.



Students collected food just in time for the holidays.



This family received food and a renewed Christmas spirit during a hardship.



Katrina Kids Day provides outlet for grief and joy

Child survivors of Hurricane Katrina gathered recently to share memories and create new ones. Children created ceramic masks, wrote stories and drew time lines to express the changes they have undergone in recent years.

Kevin Lab, director of the Society's Katrina relief efforts for the past 18 months, said 15 volunteers planned the one-day event for children living in Cincinnati, Middletown and Dayton. Petermann bus service donated transportation to the event and Fernside, a Cincinnati-based organization dedicated to helping children deal with loss, "added special depth to the program," Lab noted. +

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Christmas Eve, "Andrea" received a gift card for Christmas presents and a voucher to pay her rent. "Andrea" said she had not even expected a return call so close to Christmas, much less an answer to her prayers.

Thanks to help from a stranger who cared and St. Vincent de Paul, this family embarking on a new life after a time of great difficulty enjoyed a peaceful Christmas.

Although Yvonne works full-time as a teacher's assistant and her husband works at a car wash, their paychecks do not stretch far enough to provide their five children with any Christmas surprises, much less a Christmas tree and ornaments.

The Forest Park family is among the working poor, those just getting by and often going without basic necessities. Although they own their own home, they live paycheck to paycheck. However, thanks to a caring sponsor in St. Vincent de Paul's Adopt-A-Family program, this hard-working family celebrated Christmas morning with gifts of toys, warm clothes and household necessities. Yvonne also was able to obtain a fresh Christmas tree and ornaments for her holiday celebration, much to her children's delight.

Yvonne said the kindness shown to her family by her sponsor was a blessing from

God. "God always makes a way, and He's provided through people like LaMonica Sherman (organizer of the holiday Adopt-A-Family Program), our sponsor and St. Vincent de Paul," she said.

Christmas Brunch at Gaslight Inn in Pleasant Ridge

"Christmas gifts don't always come in packages," noted Gary Horton, conference coordinator for St. Vincent de Paul. "Sometimes they come on a plate served with a side of friendship."

Gary Schlegel, the owner of the Gaslight Inn in Pleasant Ridge, wanted to celebrate Christmas in a special way by serving brunch to community members who would not have a Christmas meal otherwise. Gary turned to his friend Rick Shuckman, a member of the Nativity St. Vincent de Paul Conference, for help.

Before long, the entire Nativity Conference was involved in personally inviting needy families to share a Christmas brunch with them. On Christmas morning, Gary, Rick, Bob Harper and other volunteers prepared the food and then sat down to share a prayer, friendship and a warm meal with 10 guests who could not afford to prepare a holiday meal.

A grandmother of six says thank you

Peggy, age 58, has taken care of her six grandchildren for the past five years. She finds it impossible to work and keep track of the children, ages 5-15, so she is always stretching to make ends meet. Although she had tried to get something for the children, Christmas was going to be very sparse.

The Mt. Healthy grandmother visited St. Vincent de Paul a few days before Christmas on the advice of a friend who said, "There are nice people down there. They try to help you."

St. Vincent de Paul social workers were able to help her with toys, pots and pans, blankets and housewares—gifts to make the holidays a little brighter for Peggy and her grandchildren. +





With the help of friendly, workplace competition, employees at Harte-Hanks collected hundreds of pounds of food to help those in need.

The Lord not only works in mysterious ways... He also works in wonderful ways

By Carol Herbert, St. William Conference

■ There is no mystery how the Lord worked his way at the St. William conference lately. It all started when we were getting short on members.

Our pastor, Fr. Andrew Umberg, took it

upon himself to make an appeal for us from the pulpit—not one, but two Sundays in a row. Well, that very day we were having a get-together downstairs in the Fr. Reardon Hall. Two people came up to me and said they were interested in joining St. Vincent de Paul. One did, in fact, become a member. Three other women who had heard Father's appeal, later joined and we eventually wound up with four new wonderful members.

Now the mystery part comes into play. Who knew we would need four new members when at that time we had six members. Our treasurer even said, "We'll be tripping over each other in the food pantry." Well, come the holidays, we were down four regular members. One was in and out of the hospital and her daughter was busy taking care of her. One was injured and two were unable to help on those dates. So, the Lord, in his wisdom, knew I would be all alone come time to take care of Thanksgiving and Christmas food and gifts. If not for my four new members, (one member even brought her fantastic 11-yr-old son to help) I would have been all alone. +

Make Giving Last Through a Planned Gift

Your support for St. Vincent de Paul can continue for years to come and can be directed to the program you most want to benefit. A bequest from your will, a life insurance policy, a gift annuity or inclusion in a charitable remainder trust are but a few of the planned giving strategies that are available for you to use to benefit St. Vincent de Paul. For more information, contact Julie Rack at (513) 562-8841 ext. 225 or jrack@svdpcincinnati.org.

How you can help

To schedule a pick up of your quality used goods or inquire about donating a vehicle: Call (513) 421-CARE Monday-Friday 8a.m.-5p.m. Drop off donations during business hours at any SVDP store.

For more information on the Society and how you can be part of it, please e-mail Julie Rack at jrack@SVDPCincinnati.org or call (513) 562-8841, ext 225.

The Society of St. Vincent de Paul Cincinnati is a non-profit organization dedicated to caring for poor and disadvantaged people.

ST. VINCENT DE PAUL MINISTRY CENTER

1125 BANK ST.
(513) 562-8841

ST. VINCENT DE PAUL THRIFT STORE LOCATIONS

COLERAIN

6900 COLERAIN AVE.
(513) 741-1641

ESTE AVE. SUPERSTORE

4530 ESTE AVE.
(513) 681-9838

EVENDALE

9864 READING ROAD
(513) 563-2949

PRICE HILL

3707 ST. LAWRENCE AVE.
(513) 251-4330

MT. WASHINGTON

2129 BEECHMONT AVE.
(513) 231-1239

MILFORD

813 MAIN ST.
(513) 248-2664

Shopping with Bengals was “awesome”!

■ Eight members of the Cincinnati Bengals football team helped make the holiday season brighter for 60 local children from the St. Vincent de Paul Adopt-A-Family program with a shopping spree at ToysRUs Kenwood. Here's a letter we received after the event:

My entire family was in shock! All three of my kids, even little Gina, said it was the best night of their life! Shayne Graham was truly remarkable and is a wonderful, generous person. I just can't thank you enough or put into words the deepest sincere thanks that we feel. I hope one day I can give to others what you have been able to provide us with. They say God works in mysterious ways—I believe it. They also say that there are angels on earth—I definitely believe that, too.

*Sincere thanks,
Vicki, Nick, Dominic, Maria and Gina*

Thanks go out to Bengals Kicker Shayne Graham, who is pictured at the event and DeMarrio Howard, Layona Schueler and Deonjelo Howard. Bengals players Landon Johnson, Levi Jones, Kenny Watson, Bobbie Williams, Hermana-Daze Jones and Stacy Andrews. ✦



St. Vincent's Way



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