



**Conference News and Notes**  
**for Ash Wednesday, February 22, 2023**  
**Sent to all Vincentians & Staff**

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***Vincentian Reflection for Ash Wednesday***  
***February 22, 2023***

**Gospel: (Matthew 6: 1-6, 16-18)** Jesus said to his disciples: *“Be on guard against performing religious acts for people to see. When you give alms, for example, do not blow a horn before you in synagogues and streets like hypocrites looking for applause...Keep your deeds of mercy secret, and your Father who sees in secret will repay you. When you are praying, do not behave like the hypocrites...Whenever you pray, go to your room, close the door, and pray to your Father in private. Then your Father, who sees what no man sees, will repay you. When you fast, you are not to look glum as the hypocrites do... When you fast, see to it that you groom your hair and wash your face. In that way no one can see you are fasting but your Father who is hidden; and your Father who sees what is hidden will repay you.”*

**Reflection:** In the gospel we hear Jesus direct his disciples to surrender their money in alms, their bodies in fasting, and their spirits in prayers. May Jesus gift us with his presence this Lent, so that we can be a gift to others in carrying out our service as we: Fast from judging others, to feast on the Christ indwelling in them.  
Fast from unrelenting pressures, to feast on unceasing prayer.  
Fast from self-concern, to feast on compassion for others.

**Vincentian Meditation:** “I should not judge the poor peasants, men or women, by their exterior nor by their apparent mental capacities. All the more is this so since very frequently they scarcely seem to have the appearance or intelligence of reasonable beings...But turn the medal, and you will see by the light of faith that the Son of God, whose will it was to be poor, is represented to us by these people.” St. Vincent de Paul (McKenna, *Praying with Vincent*, p. 59)

**Recall your most recent encounter with a homeless or poor neighbor.  
Was it an occasion during which you saw below the surface and caught a glimpse  
of God’s presence?**

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***Vincentian Reflection for the First Sunday of Lent***  
***February 26, 2023***

**Gospel: (Matthew 4:1-11)** At that time Jesus was led by the Spirit into the desert to be tempted by the devil. He fasted for forty days and forty nights, and afterwards he was hungry. The tempter approached and said to him, “If you are the Son of God, command that these stones become loaves of bread.” He said in reply, *“It is written: One does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes forth from the mouth of God.”* The devil took him to the city, and made him stand on the parapet of the temple, and said to him, “If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down. ...Jesus answered him, *“Again it is written, You shall not put the Lord, your God, to the test.”* Then the devil took him up to a very high mountain, and showed him all the kingdoms of the world in their magnificence, and he said to him, “All these I shall give you, if you will prostrate yourself and worship me.” At this Jesus said to him, *“Get away, Satan! It is written: The Lord, your God, shall you worship and him alone shall you serve.”*

**Reflection:** We are never immune to temptation; it is real. But temptation always brings choice, decision, and greater self-knowledge. In the case of the Son of God, his choice was also between God and Satan, his decision was to be faithful to God’s Law and revelation, and his greater self-knowledge led him out of the desert to begin his public ministry. In our daily living we must place our temptations and the choices within the

context of the commandment to love God and neighbor. This is Lent's challenge and invitation. (*Living Liturgy*, p. 64)

**Vincentian Meditation:** Frederic Ozanam suffered temptations against his faith, and he was literally brought to his knees. Thanks to a friend, we know that: "In the darkest hour of trial, which had become for him actual pain, the young student appealed to the mercy of God for light and peace. He threw himself on his knees before the Most Blessed Sacrament, and there in tears and in all humility, he promised Our Lord that, if He would deign to make the lamp of truth shine in his sight, he would consecrate his life to its defense." –Bl. Frederic Ozanam (Ramson, *Praying with Frederic*, p.50)

**What phrases in Frederic's words of devotion are most significant to you?**

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Your Conferences Support team wishes you and those you love best a blessed Lenten season. We are eager to support your Conference, your good works, & you in this first Lent of our *Beacons of Light* journey.

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### ***Your Formation and Training Opportunities & Tips***

**Last Call for Growing Conferences through Communication, our newest workshop!** This workshop is this Tuesday, 2/28 (less than 1 week away!), 6-8pm, at St. James of the Valley (Wyoming).

- Are you eager to increase awareness of your Conference's good works among your fellow parishioners?
- Do you struggle to walk the fine line that balances humble service and respect for our neighbors' dignity & confidentiality with the visibility that attracts others to partake in this Vincentian vocation?
- Do you wish - pray - for more Conference members?
- Could your Conference benefit from more donations - financial & in-kind - from parishioners and other friends of SVDP, to fuel your ability to assist more neighbors experiencing need?

We've heard you...and this workshop is your opportunity to explore ways to realize these Vincentian aspirations. This workshop, presented jointly by your External Relations and Conferences Support teams, will help you to develop skills and processes to confidently invite and strengthen relationships with local community members to share in faith, friendship, & service...utilizing practices that have proven fruitful for fellow Conferences and your Cincinnati District Council.

***We encourage every Family of Conferences to have at least one member present – and then to share take-aways within your Family. Invite a fellow Vincentian to join you for this evening.***

**To sign up for this new workshop, [please use this link](#) or reach out to Chris Kelley directly to register.**

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**Our Annual Vincentian Retreat:** Calling all Vincentians! Whether you are brand new or a Vincentian veteran of many years, you are invited to indulge yourself this Lent with a few hours invested on retreat, **led by Tim Williams – SVDP National Formation Director**, as we refresh our own Vincentian calling and the way we see the **Home Visit** on **Saturday, 3/11, 8am-noon at St. Xavier (downtown)**. Whether you make home visits yourself, or you have another role in your Conference, each of us is deeply impacted by our Conference's experience with our neighbors in unique ways which allow us to appreciate our heritage and see the face of Christ in one another.

**Signup Today!** To register for this Annual Vincentian Retreat, please use this link to our form: <https://form.jotform.com/230394151480047>. When you register, you will be asked to answer a few optional questions anonymously which will enable us to better craft materials relevant to your journey.

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Chris Kelley, our Formation and Service Learning Director, can be reached at 513.345.1767 or [ckelley@svdpcincinnati.org](mailto:ckelley@svdpcincinnati.org).

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***Ozanam Orientation Delivers!***



37 Vincentians from throughout our & adjacent District Councils - including many new to our vocation - assembled this past Saturday, 2/18, for this foundational experience. Faith, friendship, & service were front & center. So exciting for all of us to feel fresh Vincentians' zeal to live their faith through active membership in SVDP.

Huge thanks to our Good Shepherd Conference for hosting...and to facilitators Chris Kelley, Sunnie Johnson-Lain, Diane Blasch, John Ceddia, Olivia Scheper, Bob Mierenfeld, & Alec Jewell.

(Yes, that is our Cincinnati District Council CEO Brad McMonigle among our participants pictured.)

If you or a fellow Vincentian you know are yet to partake in Ozanam Orientation, we encourage you to watch for your next opportunity in April!

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### ***Voice of the Poor Resource Spotlight Landlord and Tenant Rights and Responsibilities***

Our Voice of the Poor cohort - led by facilitators Jane Phelan, Marie Hill, & Jim Dodd - hosted an information-packed presentation and Q & A, followed by a presentation on Housing Choice Vouchers by Nina Ruggley of our Council's Social Services team. 41 participants engaged via Zoom last Wednesday, 2/15 - our largest recent assembly for a Resource Spotlight.

These participants received a hearty invite to join our Voice of the Poor cohort, committed to advocating for systemic change to make our community a better home for all.

Did you say you missed this Resource Spotlight?

Take heart - the video recording is posted to our SVDP-Cincinnati website at:

[https://www.svdpcincinnati.org/member-support-forms/resource\\_spotlight/?preview\\_id=11491&preview\\_nonce=ad367d3651&thumbnail\\_id=-1&preview=true](https://www.svdpcincinnati.org/member-support-forms/resource_spotlight/?preview_id=11491&preview_nonce=ad367d3651&thumbnail_id=-1&preview=true) .

You'll also find the PowerPoint presentation on our Member Support and Forms page.

Thanks to all: Knowledge opens doors to the opportunity for a better tomorrow!

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### ***Council-Wide Food & Personal Care Drive to Fuel our Pantries Network***

We have experienced a record-breaking year in our network of food pantries, with more people turning to us for help than ever before. And with SNAP benefits poised for a reduction beginning in March, we anticipate even greater need among our neighbors. Please accept this invitation - Would you and your Conference consider assisting us in fighting food insecurity by hosting a food or hygiene drive this season? If your Conference has a food pantry within our network, all items collected would stay within your pantry. If your Conference does not have a food pantry, all items will go toward stocking the shelves within the Catino Choice Food Pantry in our Neyer Outreach Center (NOC). We will provide the needed materials to help make your drive a success, such as collection barrels and promotional material. If this interests you and your Conference, please [click here](#) to sign up. You can reach out to [drives@svdpcincinnati.org](mailto:drives@svdpcincinnati.org) with any questions or concerns. On behalf of your/our neighbors, thank you!

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### ***New Process for Birth Certificate Requests***

Our Neyer Outreach Center team is once again assisting neighbors who are in need of a birth certificate. We have enhanced our process so that neighbors may request and receive a birth certificate on the same day. Neighbors should come to our NOC (1146 Bank St) and request the birth certificate. They will then be given documentation to take to Elm Street Clinic (1525 Elm St) where they may retrieve their birth certificate on the same day, or at their convenience. A limited number of birth certificates are available each week, and all birth certificate requests must be made in person.

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### ***Changes in our Re-Entry Program***

Because of staffing changes, we are currently in a transitional period in our Re-Entry Program. We are grateful for all that Dion Crockett has shared with our organization and our neighbors; he will be missed at SVDP.

Until we determine next steps for this program, all neighbors who have previously been served by our Re-Entry Program should be referred to our Neyer Outreach Center (NOC) for in-person services, and to our main Help Line (513.421.0602) for services via phone. If a neighbor does not share with you that they have previously been served by Re-Entry, and there is no indication in CMS that they have been served by that program, until we determine next steps, the Conference that serves the neighbor's address should serve them as they are able.

We remain committed to our work serving people affected by incarceration; please be patient with us as we move forward with the next chapter for this important program. We will share progress news in future Conference News and Notes as it becomes available.

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### ***Beacons of Light Progress***

**Love in Action** - Families of Parishes will be communities of charity and justice, serving those most in need and working to change systems that oppress and marginalize.

The *Beacons of Light* Pathway Planning process includes a parishioner-based Love in Action Transitional Team. **Opportunity:** this team is likely forming in your Family - and your Vincentian vocation is all about Love in Action. How is your Conference connecting with fellow ministries committed to Love in Action?

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You can find our Archdiocese's February 2023 *Beacons of Light* Parish Vitality 6 Month Report, and other *Beacons of Light* resources, by exploring at this link:

[Beacons of Light](#) .

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Our Conference Presidents and our Conferences Support team are currently preparing to meet with each of the 24 pastors of Families of Parishes within our District Council's Hamilton County footprint. Our goal is to further nurture our collaboration in *Beacons of Light* in each of the respective Families. We are quite encouraged and pleased as Conference Presidents are sharing positive developments of friendship & faith shared among Conferences within their Family. And some intra-Family Conferences are partnering with material and people resources in service.

**You are radiating Christ, recognizing Christ in our neighbors, and representing our Catholic Church in these interactions. Yes, you are evangelizing!**

**Your pastor may have ideas & aspirations of how your Conference can be an even brighter *Beacon of Light* in your Family...just as your Conference may have ways your pastor can help fuel your good works.**

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Do you have *Beacons of Light* progress to share from your Conference & Family of Parishes? We'd love to hear and share in this *Conference News and Notes* each week. You might just inspire others as we seize this opportunity to advance how we live our Vincentian vocation, engage our neighbors, transform our community, and evolve our Archdiocese. Please contact Tom Roberts at [troberts@svdpcincinnati.org](mailto:troberts@svdpcincinnati.org) or 513.345.4910.

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### ***Winter Coat Vouchers - February is our Final Month This Season Just 1 Week Remains***

Any Hamilton County resident who has not yet received a coat from St. Vincent de Paul is welcome to come to our Neyer Outreach Center (NOC, 1146 Bank St) to request a coat voucher. These vouchers can be redeemed at our Clothing and Home Resource Center (CHRC, in our Liz Carter Center across the street, 1125 Bank St) or any of our 7 SVDP-Cincinnati thrift stores (our Outlet Store on Chickering Avenue excluded). Neighbors must have a photo ID for themselves and any other member of their household for whom they request a coat. **The last day to redeem coat vouchers will be this coming Tuesday, February 28. We are continuing to write vouchers, but all February vouchers have a 2/28/2023 expiration date.**

Vincentians may request a coat on behalf of their neighbor using the following process:

- Check for eligibility in CMS. Neighbors are eligible to receive one coat per household member per winter (from either a voucher or a distribution event). Previous coat assistance is listed in CMS under Programs – Coats through Liz Carter.
- Email Erin at [enowak@svdpcincinnati.org](mailto:enowak@svdpcincinnati.org) to request a voucher. Please include:
  1. The name and date of birth of each household member who will be receiving a coat (including the head of household)
  2. Where the voucher should be sent (the address of either the neighbor or the Conference member who will be delivering the voucher)
- Please ensure that the neighbor is aware they will need some form of ID for each person listed on their voucher. Acceptable forms of ID are listed below, as well as on the voucher itself:
  1. Driver's license or other photo ID (including VESTA card, MARC ID, or work photo ID); or
  2. Social Security card; or
  3. Birth certificate; or
  4. Medical/Insurance card; or
  5. Lease agreement with household members listed
- Our Outreach Center Programs team at the NOC will take care of writing and mailing out the voucher, as well as entering the assistance in CMS.

**We have shared a record number of coats with our neighbors this season. Simply**

put: we could not accomplish this together without so many donations of coats and caps and scarves and gloves and mittens. We are still eagerly and thankfully accepting donations of these items which will supply these voucher redemptions and provide a start for our winter coats assistance next fall. Huge thanks to all who have donated, have hosted drives, and continue to attract coats.

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### ***CMS Tips, Tricks, & Transformations***

CMS is accessible from your web browser, using <https://cincinnati.cmssvdp.org> and nothing else.

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Voucher Data Cleanup: Many thanks to all who have been participating in the data cleanup for furniture vouchers and clothing vouchers issued for our SVDP thrift stores. This is very helpful to us, ensuring we are tracking and cross-referencing data properly.

Just as a gentle reminder, if you are issuing a voucher for SVDP Stores, the “Resource” on the assistance entry in CMS will be “Voucher - .....”

This does not apply to Rahe Bed vouchers. The process for entering those into CMS is found in the “Bed Fund Conference Guide”, located in the “Member Support and Forms” section of the members area on the SVDP website.

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Training: Please note that the CMS training videos will be getting updated so that they are using the latest version of CMS since the 4.1 enhancements made the videos a bit outdated but they are still relevant and useful.

Speaking of training, if your conference needs any “refreshers”, feel free to contact John Wessel via phone or email; 513.562.1823, [jwessel@svdpcincinnati.org](mailto:jwessel@svdpcincinnati.org).

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Merge Request in CMS: Should be done IF and ONLY IF there are multiple client records. I.E., more than one for the same neighbor. A merge request is NOT required if you are changing their information on the CMS case. Client records can be merged in CMS and not individual cases. Once a valid merge is completed then all of the cases from the multiple client records appear under the new merged client record. There are some training videos on Client Merge available on the CMS Support page. If you are submitting a merge request, it is your responsibility to do the necessary research and provide all of the necessary merge information in the instruction area of the merge request rather than just noting same first name and last name, etc. Additionally, please make sure that if there are different spellings of first or last name that it is noted appropriately in that instruction area. Ensure that you note correct values for DOB, SSN, Phone, etc. if there are disparities between the multiple records you wish to have merged.

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Our next CMS Webinar will be held on Thursday, 3/2, 5-7 pm. Your CMS administrator has the invite and can forward that to you if you wish to attend.

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CMS Statistics are available for you under the members area of our SVDP-Cincinnati website. Direct link to the page is <https://www.svdpcincinnati.org/conferences-members/member-support/>; then scroll down and click on “CMS Statistics – Conferences”. If you are not familiar with accessing and navigating the SVDP website, please contact your Conferences Support Team.

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### ***Free Income Tax Preparation Services Available***

It is tax filing season. And for many of our neighbors feeling the financial squeeze, a tax refund is at least a short-term solution within their reach...sometimes with a little help. **Free Tax Prep**, an initiative of United Way of Greater Cincinnati funded by the IRS, provides free (federal & state) income tax preparation and filing services for low to moderate income neighbors residing in our Greater Cincinnati area. These same services are available to neighbors on fixed incomes, neighbors with disabilities, and those with limited English language abilities. To learn more, explore United Way's webpage by clicking [here](#), or calling United Way of Greater Cincinnati's 211 helpline or 513.762.7900. Please also note that United Way is seeking volunteers to help provide this service. More information about volunteering is available at this link to their [website](#) page.

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**Upcoming Changes to SNAP Benefits:**  
**Anticipating Impact Upon our Neighbors - and our Food Assistance**  
**(additional info provided here)**

During the COVID pandemic, neighbors receiving SNAP benefits had a second emergency allotment benefit loaded on their card, subsidized by COVID funding. This federal emergency funding is about to expire. **Beginning in March 2023 - this coming month**, neighbors will only receive the amount of their first benefit. This comes at a time when our food pantry network is already experiencing far greater demand relative to prior quarter or prior year, and food inflation is the highest it has been since 1979. Every household that receives SNAP benefits will be affected. The minimum reduction amount is \$95, and many families will see a significantly higher reduction (depending on whether they were receiving the maximum benefit amount prior to COVID). In addition, many households did not send in their proof of deductions (such as rent, childcare, etc) during the emergency allotment period. Please share this information with neighbors and help them plan for the reduction of benefits. Ask them whether they've submitted proof of deductions to JFS, and encourage them to use the Ohio Benefits Self-Service Portal to do so. If they need assistance using the portal, they can reach out to a certified SNAP benefit assister at the Freestore Food Bank, 513.381.7627. Click [here](#) for a flyer with additional resources.

The Center for Community Solutions hosted a webinar last week entitled, "Helping Ohioans Prepare for the end of SNAP Emergency Allotments". You can find a recording of the webinar [here](#). It is a little over an hour long and well worth the time if you're looking for a better understanding of these upcoming changes and how our neighbors will be affected.

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**More Resources for our Conferences and Neighbors**

**Conference Assistance Fund (CAF)**

**Our January activity:**

- You submitted **206** fresh applications
- We approved **192** applications; **4** were declined and **3** withdrawn

**Our February activity (now 3 weeks in, with 1 week to go):**

- We've received **130** fresh applications
- We've approved **127** applications; **4** have been declined and **3** withdrawn
- We currently have **22** applications in process

We expected heavy volume in January - and we got it. Approximately \$85,000 in CAF assistance was extended to these 192 neighbor families/households. And February is proving to be quite active as well.

You can check on the status of CAF applications you have submitted by going to the Member Support and Forms page of our SVDPCincinnati website and clicking on CAF Application Status, or use this link:

<https://app.powerbi.com/view?r=eyJrljoiNjQyZDg5NmMtNWQ1ZC00OTAyLWlwYmUtZTA2NGMwZmZmNmZiliwidCI6ImY2NWUwODUxLTYxM2QtNDEzNS05ZTE2LTUwOWFkYThjMDY2YiJ9>.

This resource is reserved for Vincentian members only; access to this resource can not be shared with neighbors, landlords, etc, under any circumstances.

**In mid-October, our Council temporarily augmented our original FY2023 CAF budget provision of \$60,000 per month. Our Council subsidized \$80,000 per month for October, November, & December, 2022, and January, 2023. So, with carryover, we have February (a shorter month) provisions of approximately \$75,000.**

**Please note:** We can extend this Council subsidy plus any (welcomed and encouraged) twinning to CAF from fellow Conferences. If your Conference is currently blessed with funds exceeding 2-3 months of your normal operating outflow, please know that we have fellow Conferences in search of funds to invest in lifting neighbors right now. Please contact Tom Roberts, 513.345.4910 or [troberts@svdpcincinnati.org](mailto:troberts@svdpcincinnati.org), for more info or to twin.

**We continue to encourage you to guide our neighbors to other publicly- & privately-funded resources available within our community...and to nurture relationships that extend well beyond immediate basic needs (material) assistance to provide lasting**

**impact. Budgeting can be an eye-opening exercise that leads to changes to create a sustainable, livable new monthly model. How will our neighbor pay their rent, utilities, and other bills in the months to come?**

### **Publicly-Funded Emergency Rental Assistance Program (ERA 2)**

ERA 2, funded through the City of Cincinnati, was available for qualified/eligible tenant neighbors who reside within the City of Cincinnati. The City's funding was committed to us only through December, 2022. We (Conferences) processed and approved **132** ERA 2 applications (of 139 submitted) which resulted in **\$398,488** in assistance to our neighbors. Huge thanks to those Conferences and Vincentians who submitted ERA 2 applications...and to Olivia, Alec, Mary Reid, and our Finance team for turning these applications into assistance extended to our neighbors.

**No new news yet. We will share any new developments as they present themselves.**

### **Rahe Beds Fund & Program**

Our March bed request period will be March 1 – 5. Please submit requests using our online form, which can be found [here](#). Due to high demand (and a welcome increase in number of vouchers redeemed!), **we will be accepting five requests per Conference in March**. Each month, we will evaluate the number of vouchers we can extend based on the number of vouchers that have been redeemed. In recent months, we've been providing vouchers for significantly more beds than we have the budget to cover, due to low redemption rates. Now that our redemption rates are picking up, we need to pull back slightly the number of vouchers we extend. While fewer vouchers may seem like bad news, the reality is that **more neighbors are receiving beds than they were before**. January 2023 set a record for number of beds distributed through the Rahe Fund, and we expect the new bed model will continue to keep distribution numbers high.

You will notice that March vouchers will have slightly different voucher numbers than you're used to. This is an effort to standardize our reporting. Beginning March 1, all voucher numbers will be seven digits with the format FYB-XXXX. FY is the current fiscal year, B stands for bed, and the Xs will be a four-digit number (for example, 23B-0001). Please be sure you're recording the voucher number exactly when entering the assistance in CMS.

If your Conference is considering **purchasing** beds to extend as assistance, you can get info, including current pricing, or purchase by contacting Dave Chidlow, Stores Retail Resource Manager, at [dchidlow@svdpcincinnati.org](mailto:dchidlow@svdpcincinnati.org) or 513.853.1002. Your purchased beds will be picked up at our Clothing & Home Resource Center (CHRC) within our Liz Carter Center (LCC), 1125 Bank St. - the same place our Rahe bed vouchers are redeemed. **Please be aware that the bed purchase pricing has changed with our new bed vendor.**

**A limited number of cribs and pack 'n' plays are available for neighbors with children younger than two. They can be requested by emailing [rahebedfund@svdpcincinnati.org](mailto:rahebedfund@svdpcincinnati.org) with the neighbor's name, date of birth, and address.**

### **Metro Bus Passes (Everybody Rides Metro)**

Your Conference has access to Metro single-day bus passes to be extended to neighbors for use for any of 3 defined purposes:

1. Commute to/from new employment
2. Commute to/from our Bank St services hub or other community social services
3. Commute to/from medical appointments

Please understand that these passes are sourced through the Everybody Rides Metro program and our Council is required to comply with the above-referenced usages and submit reports of passes distributed. Please also understand that your Conference will need to record bus passes extended in CMS for the neighbors receiving this assistance.

Our Bus Pass Guidelines sheet for Conferences is available to you on the Members Support page of our website <https://www.svdpcincinnati.org/conferences-members/member-support/>

or use this link to go directly to this document:

<https://www.svdpcincinnati.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/Bus-Tickets-Policy.pdf>

If your Conference wants to learn more about this program or request passes, please contact Alec Jewell, Conferences Manager, at [ajewell@svdpcincinnati.org](mailto:ajewell@svdpcincinnati.org) or 513.345.4983.

***Cooking Improv* with La Soupe**



Our partner La Soupe teams with our Catino Choice Pantry to present monthly Cooking Improv demonstrations in the Teaching Kitchen at our NOC. Instructors from La Soupe and volunteers engage participants on basic cooking principles and how to use what you have to create delicious, nutritious meals. **All recipes are based off ingredients found daily in our Catino Choice Pantry. Neighbors are encouraged to sample the delicious dishes and discuss preparation and ingredients with our staff, volunteers, and resident La Soupe instructor, Chef Mona!**

These sessions are held on the first Wednesday of each month - which means **our next event is this coming Wednesday, 3/1, 11am-1pm**. No pre-registration is required. Feel free to share this information with your neighbors.

### ***Haircuts from the Heart* in our NOC**

This is a free haircut program, courtesy of our partner Franciscan Ministries. As enhanced this month, **stylist Margarita is in our NOC every Monday, 9am-noon**, cutting hair in a room on the 2nd floor. Neighbors are accepted on a walk-in basis, and should sign in at our NOC reception desk upon arrival.

### **Education Center Within Our Neyer Outreach Center**

Our NOC Education Center is available for our neighbors and Vincentians to use during our operating hours: Monday - Friday, 8am - 4pm, and Saturday, 8am - noon.

### **Language Service Available to our Conferences**

A growing number of our Conferences are experiencing increased interactions with Latino members of our community...and are struggling to effectively communicate with neighbors who are most fluent or exclusively fluent in Spanish. We have contracted a dedicated language service to help you engage these neighbors in a welcoming, affirming manner. Any Conference member can download the "LanguageLine InSight" app on your smartphone, tablet, or computer at <https://insight.language.com/>. You simply need to use the Authentication Code **6NN692GLS2** the first time you login. Through this app you will have access to over 40 different languages, including Spanish, via an interpreter. You will have the option of either audio or visual (for those needing sign language); we strongly encourage using visual only when you must. **Please be efficient in your utilization as our Council pays by the minute for this service; and visual is nearly twice as expensive as audio. When you access the service, you will be asked for your name and department, you simply need to state your name, then "St Vincent de Paul Cincinnati Conferences", then your Conference name.** Be sure to only call through the app; you cannot use this service through a regular phone call.

Our Charitable Pharmacy, Social Services, and some Conferences are leveraging this tool to better engage our Latino neighbors.

If you have any questions or are having trouble accessing the service, please reach out to Alec or Olivia of your Conferences Support Team.

**A final seed to plant: If your Conference is among those engaging more neighbors preferring or needing to communicate in Spanish, please consider this an opportunity to seek the addition of Spanish-speaking members. This could enhance your responsive communication and expand your Conference's perspective.**

### **Christ Church Plumb Line**

You've appreciated this community resource extending financial aid for qualified neighbors who are employed. Volunteers @ Christ Church are administering the Plumb Line on Mondays, 1-3pm, and scheduling in-person meetings for applicants for the following Monday (example: Volunteers in on 2/27 will be scheduling appointments for 3/6). **Please note: Since the volunteers @ Christ Church prefer to do an in-person interview with neighbors referred to them whenever possible, please be sure to tell the neighbor to expect Christ Church to reach out for an in-person interview when you are filling out a Plumb Line referral form with/for your neighbor.**

Olivia Scheper, our Conferences Support Coordinator, [oscheper@svdpcincinnati.org](mailto:oscheper@svdpcincinnati.org) or 513.345.4986, will continue to be your/our central contact point-person. **Plumb Line will only accept SVDP referrals from Olivia.**

### **Greater Cincinnati Water Works (GCWW)**

GCWW's **Emergency Rental Assistance (ERA) Program** provides funds for assistance for eligible tenants residing in the City of Cincinnati. There are eligibility stipulations. Tenants must qualify by completing an online application at [assistance.mygcww.org](https://assistance.mygcww.org). Renters can also call 513.591.7700 to receive assistance from the call center to complete an application. There is also a flexible payment plan through the PromisePay Portal.

GCWW customers can visit [GCWW.promise-pay.com](https://gcww.promise-pay.com) for details about the program and how to enroll. Renters not residing in Cincinnati city limits but living in Hamilton County can visit <https://erap.hcjfs.org/> for utility assistance. If you need additional materials or information, please contact GCWW at [GCWWCares@gcww.cincinnati-oh.gov](mailto:GCWWCares@gcww.cincinnati-oh.gov).

### **Duke Energy**

On 1/25/2023, Duke Energy sent a release to community service partners with links to a variety of resources to assist their customers struggling with winter energy costs. We forwarded this release to our Conference Presidents on Thursday, 1/26/2023.

You can also find info by going to the Duke Energy website, clicking on the Financial Help tab, and then clicking on Ohio.

Duke encourages us to follow our standard steps for processing pledges on customer accounts. For questions on accounts or pledges for neighbors requesting utility assistance, please contact Duke Energy's Centralized Agency Team at 800.241.3194. Advocates are available Monday through Friday, 7:30am - 5:30pm.

Should our neighbor / their customer not meet Duke's qualifications for assistance, please refer them to Duke's customer care organization at 800.544.6900 where they may find assistance through a flexible installment plan.

### **State of Ohio Program for Struggling Homeowners**

**Save the Dream Ohio** helps eligible Ohio homeowners facing foreclosure and/or who cannot afford to pay their mortgage payments, utility payments or other related housing costs as a result of economic hardship caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. The state of Ohio was awarded \$280 million from the U.S. Department of Treasury through the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 for the program. Click here for more information:

[Save the Dream Ohio - Managed by the Ohio Housing Finance Agency \(ohiohome.org\)](https://ohiohome.org)

### **Hamilton County COVID Assistance**

Our neighbors & you can still find info and resources at <https://513relief.org>. **Hamilton County has refreshed funding at Hamilton County Job & Family Services (JFS).**

Neighbors can apply at 513Relief.org on their mobile device or desktop. [The Hamilton County Rent and Utility Program's application](#) can be submitted on a smart phone.

Please note: this funding comes from the same federal pool as ERA and other COVID relief programs, so a neighbor who has previously exhausted their access to this pool will be ineligible. Please refer Hamilton County neighbors who you believe to be eligible.

### **Cincinnati Eye Institute Foundation (CEIF) Vision Clinic in our Neyer Outreach Center**

The Vision Clinic operates **by appointment** on certain Monday mornings & Thursdays as designated by CEIF. **This Vision Clinic will be open on Thursdays only in February & March, as follows: all day tomorrow (2/23); the mornings of 3/2, 3/9, & 3/16; then all day on 3/23 & 3/30.** A limited number of walk-in exams can also be accommodated. To schedule an appointment, or to inquire for additional info, please call 513.207.6140.

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## *You are Both Thanked & Invited*

We thank you for your readership - we welcome your feedback to Tom Roberts at 513.345.4910 or [troberts@svdpcincinnati.org](mailto:troberts@svdpcincinnati.org) - and we are eager for your content, including pictures, to make this weekly connection all the more relevant and empowering for you!

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## *Our Mission*

A network of neighbors, inspired by Gospel values, growing in holiness and building a more just world through personal relationships with and service to people in need.

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## *Our Call to Prayer*

Lent is a time for renewing our desire to serve as Jesus served, and so we pray:

**When we walk with those caught in the cycle of poverty,  
Help us to see your face, O God!  
When we look into the wondering eyes of a child,  
Help us to see your face, O God!  
When we reach out to the homeless,  
Help us to see your face, O God!  
When we listen to the fading voice of the aged,  
Help us to see your face, O God!  
Amen.**

STAY CONNECTED



St. Vincent de Paul - Cincinnati | 1125 Bank Street, Cincinnati, OH 45214

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