



The Voice

The Society of St. Vincent de Paul Newsletter

Columbus Diocese

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President's Message

Bill Sparks

The #1 strategy of our Diocesan Council's Action Plan has been to insure and enable collaboration between the Diocesan Council and the parish conferences. Communication is a crucial tactic. We are advancing. With basic email technology we are filling all significant gaps in the vertical flow of information from the council to the

conferences and back to the council. My recent email call for news reports to The VOICE is an example of the effectiveness of this vertical flow of information. I



made the call because there is a gap in the horizontal flow of information **between** conferences. We all have to work to make our quarterly newsletter, The VOICE, more effective in facilitating conferences learning how other conferences and Vincentians are living their Vincentian vocation. I was pleasantly overwhelmed with the many reports sent in from the conferences. This issue draws from the wealth of material submitted.

Sending out The VOICE is not the only vehicle for the horizontal flow of information. The website

<http://www.vincentianvoice.org> provides standing information about the structure of Columbus Diocese Society of St. Vincent dePaul. The website is also open to use of other technologies such as you-tube videos. Joe

Anastasi from St. Agatha gives a moving presentation of his art: poignant portraits of the people we serve at St. Lawrence Haven. View his 9 minute YouTube video from a link to it on our website. If you are reading this on-line as a Word document hold down your Ctrl key and click on the link below. If you are reading this as a pdf document, simply click on the link.

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0HY_mLQD6KE&feature=youtu.be

Electronic technology is not the only tool for enhancing this horizontal flow of information. As always, there is personal contact in which we share Vincentian friendship. Our Diocesan Council events provide an opportunity for use of this ancient and most effective information technology. Our next gathering is the Top Hat Award Mass and Dinner at the Cavello Center at St. Charles High School on **Saturday, April 26th**

Later this week, there will be an opportunity to submit Top Hat nominations of individuals and groups for distinguished Vincentian service. Top Hat nominations are also vehicles for Vincentians and conferences to share their ideals of Vincentians service. Excerpts from the nominations will be in the April 2014 VOICE and the full nominations will be posted on our website.

Send your comments on collaboration and communication to me (wbsparks@me.com) or if related to **The VOICE** to Charles Kielkopf (kielkopf.1@osu.edu).

Mark Your Calendar! Save these dates!

February 1: Hunger and Housing for the Working Poor Panel Discussion, Resurrection Catholic Church, New Albany, 6:30-8:30

February 2-5: Catholic Social Ministry Gathering, Washington, DC, Omni Shoreham

February 19-23: Invitation for Renewal, Indianapolis, IN, Seton Cove

April 12: Ozanam Orientation Program, In Our Lady's Center Our Lady of Perpetual Help Church in Grove City.

April 26th: Top Hat Dinner, Cavello Hall, St. Charles High School; Mass at 4:30, Dinner to follow

April 30-May 3: Midyear Meeting, of National SVdP, St. Louis, MO, Hilton at the Ballpark,

From the Clothing Center and St. Lawrence Haven

Immaculate Conception's Joe Miller shares *The Joy of Cooking* at St. Lawrence Pantry. Joe is one of the first volunteers for the recently initiated practice of preparing some hot food in the kitchen upstairs above the Haven.

Joe writes "I would like to share with all of you the extraordinary efforts of the St Lawrence Haven Ministry at Holy Cross Church. First we feed between 350-500 people M-F: incredible!! We purchase food from Mid Ohio Food Bank along with receiving donated baked items from Kroger, Giant Eagle and Panera. Conferences also bring in hundreds of sandwiches daily. AWI Food Systems gives us plenty of pop, water, and chips. So generally there is lots of food, however we can always use more.

There are a lot of the remarkable volunteers who help fuel this endeavor. My shift is 9-1 on Monday's in the kitchen. They call me a cook; Emeril I am not! As you can imagine I have met some exceptionally spiritual and funny, funny individual's!!"

Heather Swiger who manages both the Haven and the Clothing Center calls for volunteers. Respond to her calls at (614) 241-2569

"We are in need of additional Volunteers for our Clothing Distribution Center. If you or any of your Vincentians could work just one day a week from 10 to noon it would be a big

help. We have "crews" that work each day either sorting clothes or working with clients in selecting clothes. "

"We also need substitutes for our St. Lawrence Haven Sack Lunch line for each weekday. Again if you or any of your Vincentians could be available to sub when one of the regular crew members can't make it, that would help us out a lot. "

Collaboration & Twinning

It is a Vincentian tradition for conferences to collaborate by twinning. The collaboration may focus on a particular project or be for a long term. The twinning conferences may be in the same diocese, elsewhere in the country or even another country. National SVdP is restoring a reliable international twinning program. In any event, twinning is alive and well in the Columbus Diocese. Through a bequest that it received the SVdP Diocesan Council also has twinning funds available.

St. Andrew's Cindy Coykendale shares her thoughts on the importance of twinning. "**I love Twinning!!** When I learned about the Society of St. Vincent de Paul, I thought, "this is the place to put my faith into action." As I became more involved, I realized that our mission addresses a specific area of need. We are not 911, and we are not a social service agency. We go into the homes of folks in our parish areas as friends, helping out as we can. Of course, those parishes with the greatest need most likely do not have the greatest resources. This is where Twinning comes in. Our circle of friends does not have to be restricted to our parish area, because in the Diocese of Columbus, we are all in this together. Any conference that has made a home visit and concluded there is a genuine case of need can call on other conferences for assistance with the cost involved in helping those we serve. "

St. Paul's Westerville and Columbus' **St. James the Less** have twinned since 2004 to

operate a much needed food pantry. St. Paul's Joe Anclien submitted the following.

“Bill Tompos is the chairperson of the St. James food pantry committee for St Paul's SVdP. He has done a wonderful job of building a very strong team. Besides soliciting volunteers to work at the food pantry, Bill serves as the primary interface with St James food pantry volunteers. On a normal evening at the pantry, a volunteer calls clients and sets appointments for that night. The team of volunteers then packs food based on the number of people in each family. The food is then staged and given to the clients when they arrive. Pat Woods, manager of the St. James Food Pantry, does an outstanding job in running the pantry.

Presently, we have 38 full time members, and 17 substitutes from the St. Paul SVdP membership working at the Food Pantry. The Pantry is open Monday through Friday from 6 pm to 7 pm. In 2013 the Food Pantry served a monthly average of 193 families or 918 individuals per month. In addition, 410 families were served for Thanksgiving and 430 families for Christmas. ST. Paul SVdP volunteers also assisted in packing Thanksgiving and Christmas baskets.

Besides volunteers to assist in operating the Food Pantry, St. Paul SVdP Conference also provides monetary support each month and additional funds for Thanksgiving.

From amongst the many services of the **St. Mary, Delaware** conference reported by Rich Rossi, one especially illustrates the value of collaboration.

“A Winter fire severely damaged the house of a Delaware man and his son. He had had a 5 alarm fire when the chimney on his wood burning stove caught fire. He had a gaping hole in his roof & window broken out. His second floor was filled with wet smoke-filled stuff & he & his son were sleeping on soot covered mattresses in the living room. No agency in the county would help him. Our SVdP president called in city inspectors who went over the building & determined it was structurally sound

& would not be condemned. He then contacted the St. Mary Knights of Columbus and together with SVdP members and parishioners embarked on a project restore the house. With a \$1000 grant from SVdP Diocese downtown, we were able to order a dumpster. The first order of business was to clear the stuff from the second floor. Then trusses needed reinforced. Walls with black mold needed to be cleaned and doubly painted with Kilz. Wiring was redone. A parishioner donated windows & installed them. Dry wall was put up and then painted. The final touch came when email came from SVdP in Grove City at Our Lady of Perpetual Help. They had mattresses they wanted to donate. We were able to replace their mattresses & give them a new start. When it was completed the older gentleman looked around and said "I'm proud of this place. That was thanks enough. You can see the collaboration between St Mary's, the diocese and other SVdP conferences helped in this grand effort. What was thought to be a 3 month effort took 3 weeks to complete.”

St. Mary Magdalene collaborates with **St. Aloysius** and the Columbus Hilltop community.

On Thanksgiving Day, hundreds gathered at table and enjoyed a full traditional Thanksgiving Day meal. The St. Aloysius Church Family Center hosted the dinner. The annual community Thanksgiving Day Dinner has been a tradition in the Columbus Ohio Hilltop area for 39 years, being established in part by the late Steve Joyce who served as a longtime member of the Columbus St Mary Magdalene parish SVdP conference. The annual free Thanksgiving Day Dinner is a community outreach to the hungry, the less fortunate, the homeless and all who would otherwise be alone on the holiday. Everyone who walks in the door is welcome to share blessings, food and fellowship. The St. Mary Magdalene SVdP conference provided a prayer table with resource information, prayer cards and members for spiritual support. Face painting and religious coloring books were also provided for the children. Coats, blankets and assorted clothing, as well as bags of fresh fruit, vegetables and dry good food items were available to go for folks.

Promoting Systemic Change

The Newman Center Conference is already practicing the Systemic Change mentoring approach. We see this in their account of a series of visits to two homes.

"This past year has been a very rewarding year for Newman SVdP Conference. We have been able to assist about 20 households with their food, clothing and furniture needs, and rent, electric, gas and water bills. The most exciting program was to help 2 households get back on track with their budgets and find their way to at least break even at the end of the month. We did this by sitting down with the people involved and going over a detailed list of all their expenses and income and arrive at what they needed to do to make it happen.

In one case the single person reduced their monthly expenses \$180.00 by changing their phone, times to the hairdresser, going on PIP for utilities, doing an apples to apples reduction to their utilities. We worked with the electric company to have this happen and their landlord to take care of systems in the apartment that were hurting their heating bills. A benefactor came thru and paid her past due electric bill which she is repaying per month. This was required to turn her electric back on. Here was collaboration with people we serve to allow them to be a partner in the venture.

In another case involving a family of 8 people we were able to work with them to reduce their monthly expenses by \$260. The man has a job but with their present bills was impossible to pay the rent and expenses. They were renting a home and the landlord was in San Francisco. The manager that was handling their rent did not send all the rent to them and subsequently it appeared the people were behind in the rent. The landlord is taking care of the manager situation. In detailing their expenses and income we were able to work together to arrive at a solution. They agreed to reduce their cable/TV/internet/phone to \$0 from \$160/month and use lifeline free phones. They were able to keep their old phone number. Reduce the times to the hairdresser \$40/month, be observant as to water, electric and gas use

even though they are on PIP except for water. In working with the landlord in California she agreed to reduce their rent from \$625/month down to \$575/month if we would pay off their behind rent and water bill. A very generous SVdP benefactor did that so the rent is reduced to \$575. We were able to get them to a \$0 debt situation by Jan. 01 and they are able to keep it that way barring any major catastrophes. We have kept in touch with them since then. The woman's mother has agreed to pay for the minimum cable/TV/internet as their 18 year old son uses it for his high school which he graduates from this June."

Two Annual Summaries

St. Francis de Sales, Newark, thanks its supporters whose financial donations and service hours has been crucial for operation of The St. Vincent Haven
The Thrift Store
Food Pantry

as well as following services: 753 people were helped with utilities which totaled \$29,218, 459 people were helped with rent related issues which totaled \$33,218 and 78 people were helped with emergency shelter which totaled \$14,938

The Knox County Conference of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul located at **St. Vincent de Paul Catholic Church in Mount Vernon, Ohio** celebrated its one year anniversary on Sunday January 19, 2014.

The conference, which has 14 active and 16 associate members, collected over \$25,000 during its first year of operation. The money was distributed over the last 12 months to disadvantaged families and individuals in the Knox County area.

The funds are allocated to qualified families and individuals on the basis of need after home visits by conference members and approval by a conference committee assigned to determine how the funds will be spent. Generally, the funds are allocated to pay rent or utility fees, but can sometimes be used for one-time expenditures, such as emergency vehicle or housing repairs.

Conference Snapshots

Conferences responded enthusiastically to a call for reports of Vincentian service, projects and programs. Only snippets of these many Vincentian activities are cited here.

St. Peter's, Columbus tells of meeting a Christmas Eve emergency

“A call came in on Christmas eve day. The person had no food. Since everything was closed (food pantries, J.O.I.N, etc.,). A member of our conference purchased two Kroger cards (\$100) and delivered them to the east side of town way even though it was way out of our area.”

Last month, members of **St. Cecilia's conference** assembled 134 baskets of food for the annual Christmas Basket program. Mike Cunningham led the project. Baskets included a large turkey, stuffing, potatoes, yams, stuffing, fresh produce, breads, and many other foods to make a delicious holiday meal (and more) for several families. Members of St. Cecilia parish, including many students from the school and PSR programs, and the youth group helped assemble and deliver baskets.

St. Francis of Assisi conference reported a Christmas program, amongst other of their activities.

“In December, our SVDP conference sponsored the giving tree. A Christmas tree is located in the back of our church and decorated with "ornaments" that are suggestions for gift cards for teens. These are taken to J.O.I.N. to be distributed to families to help make the holidays a bit nicer. We donated approximately \$1,500.00 in gift card for teens to J.O.I.N.”

Immaculate Conception, Columbus held a four week winter clothing drive. At least fifty blankets and over two hundred warm coats, let alone, many, many winter trousers, sweaters, hats and gloves were brought to the Clothing Distribution Center. IC Vincentians serve several hours each week at the Clothing Center.

St. Elizabeth donated 598 pairs of warm heavy cotton socks to the homeless at St. Lawrence Haven, the SVDP Family Clothing Center, and to Bryden House.

Their reporter added: “Many times we think of the gloves and hats that are needed in the winter time. We, along with other organizations, do donate hats and gloves but from what I have heard it is socks that are perhaps the most overlooked and needed item. Why stop with donating during the cold months?”

For several years, the **St Michael conference** has supported a food pantry and a clothing room as part of our mission to serve the poor. We assist Worthington area clients who are referred to us by Hands On Central Ohio and operate on an appointment only basis. We typically serve over 900 families a year. Parish members donate food and clothing which enables us to provide these services.

These functions have recently moved into rooms dedicated specifically to those purposes in the new office building just constructed by the parish.

New Presidents

Our Lady of Miraculous Medal – Tony Bishel, replacing Tim Hickey

St. Vincent de Paul, Mt. Vernon – Tony Spiegel, replacing Terry Cohen

St. Paul – Joe Anclien, replacing Mike Habing

St. Mary Magdalene – Joff Moine, replacing Rick Schirtzinger

Sts. Augustine/Gabriel – Marie Placide, replacing Tanya Holliman

Our Lady of Mt. Carmel - Harold Crabtree, replacing Pat Mayes.

Remember in your prayers

Anita Canary, a long time **St. Timothy SVdP** member and supporter passed away last year in Florida .

Mike Ohm, **St. Anthony**, who is seriously ill.

DIOCESAN COUNCIL

Officers:

- Diocesan Council President: Bill Sparks
- Diocesan Council Vice President: Warren Wright
- Treasurer: Janet Jobko
- Secretary: Kym Haskins
- At Large: Jody Stahr, Darrell Bragg, Maureen Meck
- Spiritual Advisor: Fr. Charles Klinger

District Council Presidents:

- East: Tim Hickey
- East Rural: Richard Shannon
- N-NW: Charles Kielkopf
- N-Central: Maureen Preston
- N-NE: Bob Zabloudil
- E-SE: Lesha Farias
- South Rural: David Lanning
- Inner-City: Gina Langen
- S-SW: Joffre Moine

Website address:

<http://www.vincentianvoice.org>

Committee Chairs:

- Ozanam Orientation: Maureen Meck, Kevin Murphy
- Voice of the Poor: Warren Wright
- VOICE & Website: Charles Kielkopf
- 2014 Friends of the Poor Walk: John Willig
- Publicity: Dianne Keller-Smith
- Music: Joann Wright
- Photographer: Angela Ray

Secretary, Pat Summers

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Send news items and articles for The VOICE
to Charles Kielkopf kielkopf.1@osu.edu or to
the Diocesan office.

Poetic Reflections from St. Elizabeth Vincentian Wordsmith,

Leaving the comforts of my abode headed down the road.
I had one goal in mind, TO MEET CHRIST
But I wondered how difficult he would be to find.

My first stop was St. Lawrence Haven,
Where I was able to give him a sandwich to eat
Next I went to Bryden House
Here I gave him a pair of shoes for his feet

As I moved on, He next appeared as a distraught mom,
I gave her some formula and diapers for her infant son.

Continuing to roam I walked into a rest home.
HE was sitting there looking somewhat lonely.
We chatted for maybe an hour.
When I left, HE said: "Thank you for assisting ME.

My journey has taken me many places throughout the
years.
I have see CHRIST in many faces
And I am still moved every time HE appears.

I have found that HE is easy to find.
HE is out there everywhere
The tough part is turning off that TV
And getting out of that reclining chair.