



The Voice

The Society of St. Vincent de Paul Newsletter

Columbus Diocese

Spring 2015

Volume 35, Issue No 2

President's Message Warren Wright

I hope that everyone is having a blessed Easter season. As I write this message, the Gospel for this Sunday was Jesus as the Vine and us as the branches. As Vincentians, we truly live this message in our work. Let us always remember



that we need the nourishment of Jesus the vine in prayer, Eucharistic liturgy, sacred tradition, spiritual reflection at our conference meetings, and the diocesan-wide gatherings.

Congratulations again to **Joe Anastasi of St Agatha**, the 2015 Top Hat honoree for distinguished Vincentian service, and the **Saint Elizabeth Food Group**, the 2015 honoree for Outstanding Vincentian Group. For those who missed the April 25 Top Hat Mass and dinner very brief statements of the outstanding Vincentian and Vincentian group nominees are in the report on the event along with a link to the full nominations.

Our community organizer, Wendy Tarr, reports encouraging progress in forming groups of those we serve to identify, articulate and take leadership in advocating policies which break them free from systems which hold them in poverty. In addition to the Newark Think Tank on Poverty, a Columbus group is now meeting regularly - on the third Monday of each month for leadership development and advocacy effort planning. All Vincentians are welcome to attend.

Wendy provides more information on the Columbus group in this newsletter.

As some are aware, changes have been occurring at the Furniture Bank of Central Ohio. They have a new President, Steve Votaw. They are also grappling with reduced funding from Big Lots, their biggest donor. Coughlin Automotive has stopped support for our referrals. Prior to Coughlin's support starting a couple of years ago, conferences were paying \$90 for referring someone we serve and having selected furniture delivered to the home of the person. Due to the loss of support from Coughlin and reduction in donations from Big Lots, **the new cost for referral and delivery for a family is \$210 (curbside) or \$280 (in-house)**. I know this is a large increase, but think the value of the furniture a family receives at the Furniture Bank (\$1400) is well worth it. If you are unable to meet this cost, consider twinning with another conference or contacting the Diocesan Council for support.

As always, please don't hesitate to contact me with your thoughts and ideas.

"God never spares His servants from trial because He does not wish to spare them the merit and glory", Frederic Ozanam

Mark Your Calendar! Save these dates!

May 16, Saturday, Voice of the Poor, St. Michael's, Worthington, 10AM – Noon.

June 6, Saturday: 2015 Ohio Regional Meeting,
- St. Martin de Porres Center, Dominican Sisters of Peace, 9AM – 2:30PM

August 23, Sunday, 2015 Day of Recollection –
Martin de Porres Center, Dominican Sisters of Peace, 9 AM – 3:30 PM

October 3, Saturday, 2015 Friends of the Poor Walk – Columbus St. Francis DeSales High School, sign in 9am, walk starts 10am

Events and Programs

2015 Top Hat Ceremony

Fr. Charlie Klinger, Diocesan Council spiritual advisor, began the 2015 Top Hat Ceremony with 4:30 pm Mass in the St. Charles High School chapel. Dinner followed in St. Charles' Cavello Hall. One hundred forty four Vincentians from twenty-three conferences attended. Joe Anastasi was awarded the 2015 Top Hat. Bill Sparks was awarded an honorary Top Hat for his dynamic leadership as Diocesan Council president. St. Elizabeth Food group was the outstanding group. John Rush, President and CEO of CleanTurn, gave an insightful overview of a social enterprises for returning citizens. All nominees were recognized. Below are very brief excerpts from the Top Hat nominations which only hint at the distinguished service of these Vincentians and Vincentian groups. . The entire nominations can be read on-line :

<http://www.vincentianvoice.org/events.html#2015nominations>

Deacon Tim Birie St. Vincent dePaul, Mt.

Vernon by Tony Spiegel,
Tim is a model of leadership and has constantly offered guidance and leadership.

Paul Breen, St. Andrew , by Cindy Coykendale and Marilyn Dougherty

Heather Swiger, manager of St. Lawrence Haven writes: "Paul has taken it upon himself to go out into the community and find additional food sources."

David Gahn, St. Cecilia by Sue Campbell and Pattie Aellig,

He has been known to go to such extremes as to actually bring a turkey and cook it at the client's home.

Deborah Kirkendall, St. John Neuman

by Deborah Jobe,
She exemplifies the true spirit of St. Francis and the Vincentian way.

Debbie Kirkendall, St. John Neumann, by

John and Marilyn Powers,
When a volunteer is needed ...Debbie is always first in line!

Bill Sparks, Newman Center, by Charles Kielkopf , Immaculate Conception

Bill never lost sight of our main mission to grow in holiness through service to the poor and needy.

Bill Sparks , Newman Center, by Joff Moine St. Mary Magdalene

His leadership has invigorated and challenged us to become productive partners.

Joseph Anastasi, St. Agatha, by Johanna Ryan

Through his work at St Lawrence Haven and the Open Shelter, Joe came to know several homeless people and felt the need to capture their spirit and humanness in his art.

Kathy Tourgema, St. Joseph Cathedral

by Kevin Dunleavy

Kathy's work with the Cathedral Christmas Giving Tree is truly remarkable for it affects so many families.

St. Michael Food Pantry by Janet Plunkett

This pantry is open by appointment all year long and regularly helps more than 200 individuals per month.

St. Elizabeth Food Group by Toni Ventresca

This past year our St. Elizabeth Food Group helped supplement over 110,000 meals.

We Care Program Committee of Lancaster by Barbara Spangler

The Program operates year round servicing around 100 families each month and assists those in emergency situations as well. A typical We Care box has enough food for 21 meals.

Newark Think Tank on Poverty by Deborah Cook-Gorsuch

NTTP has succeeded in having the voice of the poor in Newark heard by agencies and by people in power positions.

Friends of the Poor Walk

John Willig, chair of the 2015 Friends of the Poor Walk, reminded those attending the Top Hat award ceremony that the Walk is being held on Saturday Oct. 3 instead of on the last Saturday of September. John emphasized the financial benefits of having many participants in this physically undemanding event that promotes Vincentian friendship. He made available materials for registration and recruiting sponsors.

These materials are being brought to your conferences. Watch for this sign-up information.

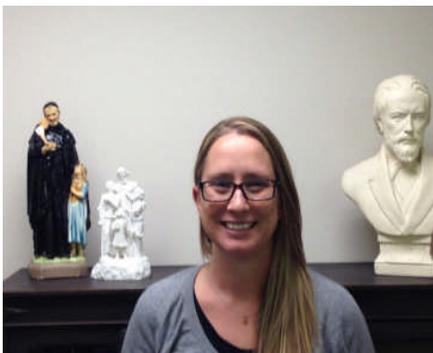
Get ready for, and get others involved in, this fun and profitable event. If you haven't done it yet, do it this year!

Voice of the Poor

We are meeting this Spring and during the Summer to plan our legislative advocacy for employment opportunities for returning citizens as well for sentence reform and immigration reform. We are also planning how to support the work of our community organizer develop action collaboratives in Lancaster and Columbus. We have meetings scheduled for May 16 at St. Michaels and July 18 in a place to be announced.

From Our Community Organizer, Wendy Tarr

Our Columbus organizing effort has begun for the Vincentian Ohio Action Network. In Columbus we are bringing together those who are impacted by incarceration to build an advocacy effort focused on criminal justice reform. As we listen to the stories and priorities of those directly impacted, we will be focusing on systemic change to reduce barriers people face upon re-entry and promoting redemptive and



rehabilitative reforms within the criminal justice system that will reduce the number of people incarcerated. This includes improving access to job for individuals with criminal histories and looking into the connections between mental health, addiction and incarceration. I am working to identify and develop leaders who are returning citizens and those who are allies for reform.

We are meeting on the 3rd Monday of the month from 5-7pm. Outreach is being conducted at Community Kitchen and other agencies. I would love SVDP conferences and members to help with outreach for building our leadership and/or by sponsoring a monthly leadership meeting by providing a meal for the group since we meet in the evening around dinner time. Please contact me if you would like more information on how you can become involved- wtarr@colsdio.org. For updates on the Newark Think Tank on Poverty, you can visit our new website at www.newarkthinktank.org

From the Conferences

St. Brendan, Hilliard

The Saint Brendan Conference looks forward to Spring and Summer 2015 as a continued opportunity serve the less fortunate of Hilliard, Ohio as well as Vincentian works throughout the diocese. We receive generous financial support from the parish community. We will be conducting a summer food drive for the Hilliard Food Pantry that is outside of the Mid Ohio Food Bank network. We are able to continue to help financially our sister conference, JOIN, Saint Lawrence Haven and the Funeral Fund. We have just added a second monthly recurring Saint Lawrence Haven. We are blessed to have a faith-filled Spiritual Advisor that provides us good spiritual reflections at our meetings. We are welcoming new Vincentians to our conference.

Jason M Thomas

St. Stephen, The Martyr, Columbus

When our parish, St. Stephen the Martyr, opened in 1964, the West side of Columbus was flourishing with many families who practiced their faith. St. Stephen's was one of several parishes on the West side with its pews filled with active parishioners. As years went on, the church was in danger of being closed due to small numbers of parishioners in the late 90s.

Sister Ann McCarrick led our parish when she came in 1996 and changed the trajectory of our parish, welcoming the Latino community with open arms. The 10 am English Sunday mass attracts less than 50 parishioners. Spanish speaking parishioners fill the pews at 8 am, Noon, and 7 pm masses. The Latino community has turned our dying parish into one that is thriving. SVdP helps these families and in return is humbled by their faith.

Sylvia Siemer

Sacred Heart Coshocton

Sacred Heart Saint Vincent DePaul Conference is located in Coshocton County. There are approximately 54 churches of various denominations in Coshocton County. Sacred Heart is the only Catholic Church in the County and has a total membership of 540 parishioners. Based on the 2010 U.S. Census, Coshocton, registered Catholics are 1.5% of the county population. The Sacred Heart Conference has 17 active members and receives the majority of its funding through the very generous donations of the church parishioners. In 2014, Sacred Heart was awarded a Grant from The Catholic Foundation for \$5,000.00. With the grant money and other money received we were able to disperse over \$30,000.00 from January through December. The Parish Office had over 422 calls from individuals and families who needed help. SVdP helped a total of 571 people. Rent and utilities continue to be the major need. Help is based on need and not church or religious affiliation.

Richard Shannon

Scioto County St. Joseph St. Vincent de Paul

Two weeks ago we opened Clare's closet in the basement of the outreach center after a month's worth of cleaning and remodeling. Customer's are starting to visit, we are using the information we retrieve for our pantry sign-in forms to help determine where we need to be doing more out-reach in the county. Another big project for 2015 will be a soup kitchen at the out-

reach center, so busy with God's work, so challenging, so fun. Keep us in your prayers.

Carl Gulley

St. Mary, Groveport

St. Mary Church in Groveport, Ohio has a unique mix of members among its St. Vincent De Paul society and youth SVdP. Our adult leader Mary Miles and our youth leader Christine Boucher go beyond the demands to make our organization effective, helpful, and productive.

Through our organization, we have provided emergency shelter, bus passes, food and clothing to clients in need, prepared hot meals for the men's shelter 5 times each year, made "goodie bags" for the men in the shelter (150 bags) with essential toiletry items, paid for gas, electric, and water bills for clients in distress, provided for a car repair expense, provided 500 sandwiches once per month for the St. Lawrence Haven clients. We have taken collected and donated food pantry items to the food pantry once per week. Twice each year we collect clothing etc., for the Lancaster thrift store. All of this takes money. Our SVdP members provide a collection basket to collect money once per month after all the masses; we sponsored a spaghetti dinner at the church; we hold an annual silent auction with donated items from businesses and parishioners.; we had a "barn" yard sale with donated items; we have sold books donated to the church from members of the parish; The youth sponsored and sold honey baked hams at Easter time; we have had donations from businesses and for special causes from members of the parish; and we have collected donated food pantry items placed in a basket at the church.

Pam Scott

St. Joan of Arc, Powell

St. Joan of Arc, SVdP conference continues to support a number of diocesan and parish food and clothing programs. Specific examples include 2 times a year we have a formal clothing drive to support the Vinton

county area. We collect clothing on a weekly basis and are able to fill a 26 foot box truck twice a year and deliver to St Francis in Vinton county. Another example is our support for the parish Giving Tree program where we lead the parish effort to support 1300 individuals with gifts during the Holiday season.. Lastly, we have recently entered into a partnership arrangement with a local food pantry called Help Thy Neighbor. Plans are to work with this group and other local churches to expand this effort.

Dave Boudreau

St. Philips, Columbus

The St. Philip's Conference main purpose is to provide food to our neighbors in three different zip codes. We rent out our school building to Renaissance Academy. It is a grade school from kindergarten thru 8th grade. They have helped us by donating food. Their goal is to donate 1000 cans of food and I believe they have made that goal. It has been a big help.

Sue Wein

St. John Neumann, Sunbury

The fifteen members of the SVdP Conference at St. John Neumann Parish in Sunbury continue in our mission to assist those in need in our community. In addition to our one-on-one **Assistance Intake** ministry lead by Steve & Kay Eyerman in which twenty-one families were provided rent, utility, educational and medical expense assistance during the winter, the Vincentians from St. John Neumann also provided valuable volunteer time with several valuable programs in our area. Foremost among those programs is **Big Walnut Friends Who Share**, an interfaith volunteer group providing assistance to 350 families living in the Big Walnut School District with food, small household items, furniture and appliances. We also actively support **Family Promise of Delaware County**, an interfaith ministry offering temporary bed & board to homeless families while they search for jobs and permanent housing. Ed & Gretchen Kramer from our

Conference organize volunteers from our Parish to prepare and serve dinner and act as overnight hosts during our "host" week at the Delaware home four times per year. Vincentian Jack Bryant has begun a **Prison Ministry** in cooperation with the Chaplain at Delaware County Jail to serve the spiritual and religious needs of Catholic inmates. To better understand the needs of the poor, eight of our Vincentians completed Ozanam Orientation at St. Vincent de Paul Parish in March, and all of us will view the "Bridges Out of Poverty" DVD's during upcoming meetings.

John Powers

St. Andrew, Upper Arlington

The St. Andrew Conference considered how best to share the Bridges Out of Poverty concepts with our members. We decided to purchase a set of the DVD's (\$120) to show and discuss, one at a time, following regular meetings. This gives us flexibility in the timing, and also allows us to loan the DVD's to members who may prefer to view them at home. We have also been coordinating some of our activities with other St. Andrew organizations. The Women's Club partnered with us on collecting personal hygiene items for JOIN during Lent; and we fund the cost of monthly Sandwich Making for St. Lawrence Haven done by the Singles Group.

Cindy Coykendale

St. Paul, Westerville,

The importance of Saint Vincent de Paul's Elder Companionship Committee continues to grow in our community as the economy evolves. We have found that many people have moved away from their families to seek employment. Often times, family members are no longer close at hand so visits to their aged love ones occur rather infrequently.

We are expanding our reach in Westerville where there are ten assisted living facilities to address this growing need. Our mission is to offer friendship and compassion to

people confined to assisted living facilities who are seldom visited and to develop lasting relationships. Our program is very well accepted by the town's facilities and more Vincentians have become active in this committee.

Joe Anclien

St. Pius X, Reynoldsburg

The SPX conference held its annual Christmas Basket Program on Saturday, December 20th in the school cafeteria. The elementary and PSR students collected over 2,100 canned food items during a 5 week period. The record food drive, along with monetary support from the parishioners, enabled our conference to provide assistance (food and gift cards) to 51 families and 2 Veteran homes. All remaining food items were donated to the local HEART Food Pantry. Working alongside the Jr. High School service group at St. Pius X elementary school, 300 bologna and cheese sandwiches are assembled and delivered monthly to St. Lawrence Haven.

Mike Krolkowski

Lancaster Community Conference

Helping families that have cutoff notices from their utility company has been one of the major activities that the Lancaster Community Conference has performed over the years. We meet with these families to try to understand their individual situation. During the interview we document the family income, expenses, SS numbers, ID's, cutoff notice, etc. If we determine there is true need we typically offer to pay half of the bill and request the family pay the other half. Sometimes we may decide to pay more than half. In nearly all cases we require the family to pay some on the outstanding bill. We pay nothing on the bill until the family has paid what they agreed to pay during our meeting. Last year we spent over \$40,000 to help prevent utility cutoffs to over 350 families.

The money to support this activity comes from our thrift store, 5th Sunday collections, and

donations from individuals, businesses, and churches in our community. After public money such as HEAP, we assist the most families in the county.

Jerry Welker

Seton Parish SVdP, Pickerington

We had wonderful support from the Pickerington community for the holidays and through the long, cold winter. We get the majority of our referrals from Fairfield County 211, and we work very closely with the Pickerington Food Pantry. We are able to assist clients with their utility bills, which is a real blessing, helping them avoid getting disconnected. We also twinned with three area SVdP Conferences, requesting our assistance. We are hoping to be able to assist more families during the summer months.

Betty Crock

Our Lady of Perpetual Help, Columbus

A special mission of Our Lady of Perpetual Help conference is a semi-annual clothing, furniture, toys, etc., collection for the community of Laurelville, a community about 45 miles southeast of Grove City. Two 24' trucks are filled with contributions from parishioners and local residents. The Laurelville "10 Cents Sale Group" sorts the donations. All clothing items cost 10 cents. A win-win-win result occurs: the buyers feel they are not receiving charity, proceeds are used for food pantry purchases and payments of residents' bills, and OLPH provides a Catholic presence to this Appalachian community.

Frank Schmidt

St. Mary, Delaware

We have just completed the viewing as of the DVD set for Systemic Change. We presented them to our council members on three separate days over 2 a week period. Some members that could not attend or missed a session have taken the DVD's home to review. Our next staff meeting will be on April 22nd and we will have an open forum to discuss "What's Next". I see this as an open discussion as a group, probably

more like a brain storming session. What's unique about Delaware is that an ecumenical church has begun what is called the Stepping up Program. From what I know about it, it is similar to Systemic Change. This ultimately may become an ecumenical outreach program together with our Christian friends.

Rich Rossi

St. Aloysius, Columbus

In addition to her work with our conference, our treasurer, Pat Huffman, volunteers each week with JOIN. Her experience with JOIN has been incredibly helpful in making the most of our resources with our clients on the Hilltop. The staff at JOIN has an amazing network of contacts with utilities, government agencies and other charitable groups. It really stretches our dollars to help the most people. Pat's willingness to be a conduit between the two groups is a tremendous blessing and helps us to be more responsive to the people on the Hilltop in need.

Cliff Eckle

St. Colman's, Washington Court House

Here is what we want to tell other conferences about our conference. AAH! Amazed. Appreciative. Humbled. That is St. Colman Conference of SVdP in a nutshell. We are continually *amazed* at our community, from the long-time support of our church members (with our wonderful secretary), our Knights of Columbus, and our network of people we collaborate with in service to those in need, to new support from several area churches and service clubs. We are so *appreciative* of each dollar donated, and send thankful prayers for guidance to a God who understands the poor far better than our heartfelt human abilities ever could. We are so *humbled* by the trust others place in us, showing such confidence in our decision-making. It may also be AHA! When we realize what a joy and a privilege it is to be followers of St. Vincent de Paul.

Jana Deeks

St Peter, Columbus,

A client called our St Vincent de Paul line requesting we help her retrieve her car from the City Impound Lot. The car was rapidly accumulating daily impound fees and the client estimated the total fee would be about \$350. We needed to act fast because of the daily fees and called the parish in her zip code and they said, according to the address, she lived one block out of their parish but they would twin with us for \$150. We called the parish she lived in and they did not have time for a visit but would twin with us for \$200 if we took care of the issue. We thought we had it covered, made a visit to the client's house, met her three young children and proceeded to the City Impound Lot. We found there that the bill was not \$350 but \$585! The client offered that she had \$100 cash. We let her pay \$85 and our parish paid the remaining \$150.

Twinning works!

Bill Dotzauer

Immaculate Conception, Columbus

Once again the IC conference is hosting a week, and maybe two, of the summer lunch program at the Broadmeadows apartment complex. Food is provided by the U.S. Department of Agriculture through the Clintonville Resources Center. Volunteers serve the food which is only for children. These lunches become picnics on the banks of the Olentangy.

New Presidents

St. Peter, Chillicothe – Mary Elsass, replacing Timothy Scheeler

St. Margaret of Cortona – Laurie Davis, replacing Joe Wickham

Remember in your prayers

Eric Hess, past president St. John Neumann
Kathryn Killilea, daughter of Bill Killilea, St. Anthony

Cris Damo, husband of Elaine Damo, St. Michael

DIOCESAN COUNCIL**Officers:**

- Diocesan Council President: Warren Wright
- Diocesan Council Vice President: Bob Zabloudil
- Past President: Bill Sparks
- Treasurer: Janet Jobko
- Secretary: Marie Placide
- At Large: Jody Stahr, Maureen Meck, Sylvia Siemer, Will and Jennifer Matson
- Spiritual Advisor: Fr. Charles Klinger

District Council Presidents:

- East: Vacant
- East Rural: Richard Shannon
- N-NW: Charles Kielkopf
- N-Central: Maureen Preston
- N-NE: Rich Rossi
- E-SE: Barb Spangler
- South Rural: David Lanning
- Inner-City: Gina Langen
- S-SW: Joffre Moine

Website address:

<http://www.vincentianvoice.org>

On their website **St. Brendans** answer what distinguishes the Society of St. Vincent dePaul from other charities by quoting two historical International SVdP presidents.

<http://stbrendans.net/saint-vincent-de-paul>

President-General Adolpe Baudon, in his Circular Letter of January 1, 1877, writes:

"It is laid down in our Rule, and it has been always understood among us, that in uniting to serve our masters the poor, as St. Vincent de Paul expresses it, our object is not only to relieve material misery, a very laudable purpose in itself, but to aspire, especially, through the practice of that most sublime of virtues "charity" to render ourselves better and more fervent Christians, and to make our poor enter on the same path, if we have the happiness of succeeding."

In his Circular Letter of December 12, 1915, Vicomte Hendecourt, President-General writes:

"The Society has two aims: to do a great deal of spiritual good to its members through the exercise of charity, and to do a little spiritual and temporal good to a few poor families in the name of Jesus Christ. If it did not continually seek to combine these two aims, it would lose its *raison d'etre*. If it were to seek only the holiness of its members through pious exercises, there is no lack of Confraternities and Third Orders to meet that need. If on the other hand, it were to seek only the relief of the temporal miseries of the poor, it would only add one more to the list of public and private institutions founded for that purpose."

Committee Chairs:

- Ozanam Orientation: Maureen Meck, Kevin Murphy
- Voice of the Poor: Danielle Gray
- VOICE & Website: Charles Kielkopf
- 2015 Friends of the Poor Walk: John Willig
- Publicity: Dianne Keller-Smith
- Music: Joann Wright
- Photographer: Angela Ray

Secretary, Pat Summers

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