



The Voice

The Society of St. Vincent de Paul Newsletter

Columbus Diocese

Winter 2015

Volume 35, Issue No 1

President's Message Warren Wright

I welcome this opportunity to share some thoughts with you in this first issue of the VOICE since I have assumed the presidency of the Diocesan Council.



I have strong support and dedication from key people. Past Diocesan Council president, **Bill Sparks**, will serve on the Council as "past president. **Bob Zabloudil** will serve as Council Vice President. **Maureen Preston, Joffre Moine, Charles Kielkopf, David Lanning, Richard Shannon, and Gina Langen** will continue on the Diocesan Council as District Presidents, joined by new District Presidents **Rich Rossi** and **Barb Spangler**. **Sylvia Siemer, Marie Placide, and Will and Jennifer Matson** join **Maureen Meck** and **Jody Stahr** as at-large Diocesan Council members. **Danielle Gray** takes over as chair of the Voice of the Poor committee. **Wendy Tarr**, our community organizer hired under a Catholic Campaign for Human Development (CCHD) grant, continues to organize those we serve in Newark, Columbus and Lancaster into the Vincentian Ohio Action Network. **Heather Swiger** continues her outstanding creative management of St. Lawrence Haven, the Clothing Distribution Center, and the Saturday Food Program. We are grateful that **Fr. Charlie Klinger** is serving as our Spiritual Advisor. Our work rests on the foundation **Pat Summers** provides at the downtown SVdP office.

When I think of the support of these people, and the excellent "Bridges Out of Poverty" (BOP) video/seminars put together by Jody Stahr and Deb Zabloudil this past Fall, we can be confident that we will continue our core Vincentian programs while moving forward towards implementing systemic change. Several conferences are already showing the BOP DVDs to train their conference members. Contact Pat if you are interested in showing the DVDs to your conference. Because of requests, we will be purchasing 5 additional sets for conferences to borrow. Other Vincentians are searching out mentoring opportunities to walk with those we serve as they journey out of poverty and/or becoming more involved with the CCHD project.

Some special features for this issue are reports from Lesha Farias about progress towards empowering those we serve in the Newark area in identifying and confronting systemic problems that are barriers to them in living more fully human lives. There will be a report from the Voice of the Poor Committee on plans for 2015 as well as a report from Wendy Tarr on her organizing activities.

Finally, I am pleased to announce that the 2016 National Meeting is now scheduled to take place in Columbus. Bob Zabloudil has agreed to lead our local committee in putting the program together. Other volunteers have stepped forward. National SVdP has contracted with the Hyatt Regency for September 1 to 3, 2016. If you are interested in serving on the local committee, please contact Bob at bobzabloudil@aol.com. Look for more details in future issues of The Voice.

"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!

March 1, Youth Conference Commissioning,
St. Paul's, Westerville, 2:30 PM.

March 10, Catholic Advocacy Day,
See *Voice of the Poor* article in this issue for details.

March 21, Ozanam Orientation, St. Vincent dePaul, Mt Vernon 9AM – 3PM,

Please register no later than noon on Tuesday, March 17 by contacting Pat Summers at the St. Vincent dePaul Diocesan office at 614-221-3554.

A \$20.00 fee includes continental breakfast and lunch, and materials from the National Office :The Rule, The Manual, Orientation workbook, and a certificate of attendance.

April 25, Top Hat Mass and Dinner,
St. Charles, Mass 4:30 PM, Dinner to follow.

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

September 26, 2015 Friends of the Poor Walk
– more details to follow

Events and Programs

2014 Friends of Poor Walk

The 2014 Friends of the Poor Walk held its most successful event ever on Saturday 20, 2014. Marty Aellig (trumpet) and Chris Sullivan (guitar) provided music that kept everyone's toe tapping and spirits high. Bill Sparks welcomed everyone and invited Fr Charles Klinger forward to lead a prayer and bless the attendees. His words reminded everyone that Jesus is found in the face of the poor. Fr Charles set the tone for what many considered the highlight of day. As Walk Chairperson John Willig stepped forward he introduced Emmy award winning journalist and Channel 4 TV host Gail Hogan. He told Gail that before turning the microphone over to her;

he had a surprise. Surrounded by 32 members of Bishop Watterson's Concert Choir directed by Christine Joyce, they sang an "Irish Blessing" to Gail that brought her to tears and delighted the entire crowd. It truly was a moment as big as miles. Gail, who has spoken to millions on TV and in person, was so touched that she had trouble starting her speech. When she finished the crowd roared their approval and the Concert Choir sang "God Bless America". By then everyone was raring to go and as tradition goes, Marty and Chris played "When the Saints Go Marching In" and the crowd started walking.

The final count on the number of Walkers was 533, the largest ever. Over \$47,000 was pledged for Vincentian works. Corporate sponsorship led by Kimball Midwest, Malek and Malek Law, White Castle Restaurant and Porch Swing Properties, were double what had been collected the previously year.

John Willig – 2014 Chair

2014 Bishop's Appreciation Mass for Vincentian Volunteers

The celebration of the Bishop's Annual Appreciation Mass for Vincentian Volunteers was on Monday, December 1 at 6:30 PM in St. Joseph's Cathedral. Bishop Frederick Campbell was the celebrant and homilist. Approximately 150 Vincentians from all over the diocese gathered for the mass, Vincentian friendship and the annual buffet dinner in the Cathedral undercroft supplied by the St. Joseph SVdP conference.

During dinner, Warren Wright, Diocesan Council President, expressed great appreciation for the volunteers who make possible the Diocesan Council's special ministries: St. Lawrence Haven, Clothing Distribution Center and the Saturday Food Program.

As is his custom, during the dinner, Bishop Campbell circulated through the dining area personally expressing appreciation to Vincentians for their significant services to the poor and needy.

Fall 2014 “Bridges Out of Poverty” video-seminars

Almost one hundred-fifty Vincentians from conferences throughout the diocese attended the “Bridges Out of Poverty” video-seminars this past Fall. These videos, based on sound social science and the experience of professional social workers, enabled Vincentians to feel what it is like to be trapped in systems which hold down so many of those we serve

Conferences with attendees were asked to consider how they would proceed with what they learned from the seminars. We have already had replies from St. Mary’s, Delaware and St. Joseph, Circleville.

Rich Rossi, President of **St. Mary’s, Delaware** reported:

“The introduction to Systemic Change was interesting and informative. Those of us in attendance felt frustrated by the lack of direction going forward. As a conference we will show the videos to the rest of our SVdP group. We are thinking about offering it to our parish as a Lenten project.

Going forward as we have already done, when we are discerning the needs of those who contact us, we attempt to find the bigger issue that needs to be resolved to help individuals help themselves.

A case in point, we had a young woman who was looking for rental assistance. As we delved further we discovered the “real” problem was her car was in need of repair so she could get to work. We repaired her car and she was able to get to work and support her family. It is easy to put a band aid on a problem. It takes a little more effort to get at the heart of the matter.”

Pat Meves, president **St. Joseph Circleville** wrote in: “Our conference has been showing the Bridges Out of Poverty, one by one, at our open meetings once a month for any parishioners that want to view them. Pat Summers sends them to me one at a time and I send it back. The first Tuesday we had 9 attending. We plan to continue every month and then come together with our plans.”

From the Conferences

Systemic Change in Newark

Two years ago, Lesha Farias of St. Francis de Sales Newark in Licking County, with Jody Stahr and Warren Wright, attended a national St. Vincent de Paul meeting in St. Louis on poverty and systemic change. Since returning she and her partners are organizing people from among those we serve to identify and take action to change systems which limit their opportunities and keep them in poverty.

Wendy Tarr, recently hired under a CCHD grant as a community organizer, is helping them build the Newark Think Tank on Poverty (NTTP), a grassroots organizing initiative that is part of the Vincentian Ohio Action Network.

NTTP has held eight meetings in Newark with people experiencing poverty, including a few allies within the middle class. Approximately 30-35 people are attending regular monthly meetings and the group prioritized job discrimination and inadequate access to services for people in mental health and addiction recovery, as areas of focus, forming subcommittees to work on these areas.

One victory recently came when Denison University hired one of the NTTP leaders who is an ex-felon. Because NTTP raised the issue, Denison's administration reviewed their hiring policy and practice. NTTP hopes to engage other local businesses and institutions in this effort

2nd anniversary, Knox County

The Knox County chapter of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul located at St. Vincent de Paul Catholic Church in Mount Vernon, Ohio celebrated its two-year anniversary at the Church on Sunday January 18, 2015.

The chapter, which has 12 active and 13 associate members, and is associated with the Society of St. Vincent de Paul of Columbus, disbursed over \$48,955 during its second year of operation. The money was distributed over the last 12 months to 532 disadvantaged individuals in the Knox County area.

The funds are allocated to qualified families and individuals on the basis of need after home visits by chapter members, known officially as Vincentians, and approval by a chapter committee assigned to determine how the funds will be spent.

Officers of the local chapter include Tony Spiegel, President; Brian Robinson, Treasurer; Karen Dembinski, Secretary, and Deacon Tim Birie, Spiritual Advisor

Appreciation from St. Mary Groveport

We send out our deepest appreciation to all our Columbus Conferences for their help, advice, prayers and financial help to us. With the help of our wonderful Vincentian Brothers and Sisters we are happy to say we have an apartment for our couple that had been homeless for 5 years and they have moved in. This couple had only a few clothes in a suitcase so it did not involve any work to move in. We arranged a visit to the Furniture Bank in order to help them get some furniture. This couple is so moved by our continued efforts to help them that they have joined us for Mass on Sunday morning.

Mary Miles, St. Mary, Groveport

St. Andrews Appreciation

Jane Sotak "Retires"

At its December meeting, the St. Andrew Conference honored Jane Sotak, who recently "retired" as their Treasurer after more than 12 years of service. Conference President Cindy Coykendale presented Jane with flowers and a Vincentian certificate of appreciation. Jane has served also as the Treasurer for the SVDP Funeral Fund since its inception. Taking over both these responsibilities from Jane is Kathy Jones of St. Andrew. Money from the Funeral Fund is distributed after a referral from Ruth Beckman at JOIN to provide partial funeral cost assistance to indigent families.

St. Joseph Scioto County Moves into Monastery

The St. Joseph Scioto County conference in Portsmouth moved operations in October 2014 into a vacant monastery previously occupied by the Little Sisters of the Poor. The conference joins Catholic Social Services' Portsmouth office and Raphael's Hands in the St. Francis Catholic Outreach Center. The three organizations collaborate in providing an array of services to the neediest members of the Portsmouth community. An Open House celebrating the new building was held on November 8, 2014. Thanks to Catholic Social Services for providing leadership on the move and to the Diocesan Facilities group led by Bruce Boylan for performing the necessary upgrades to the building. The St. Joseph Scioto conference is currently setting up a thrift store in the basement of the building, with an anticipated opening date of March 1, 2015.



Report from our Community Organizer



With a CCHD grant The Diocesan Council hired Wendy Tarr as a community organizer to promote systemic change. For four months Wendy has

been working with those we serve in Newark, Lancaster and Columbus. She is developing and strengthening relationships between SVdP and other agencies that deal in homeless advocacy and re-entry, including the Columbus Coalition for the Homeless and the Franklin County Re-entry Coalition. She is also working on the identification and development of low-income

and marginalized leaders, especially among the formerly incarcerated, to work on systemic issues they encounter related to re-entry and the criminal justice system. These leaders will also be trained to speak to conferences throughout the diocese of their experiences and ways to support change.

On Thursday January 22, the Newark Think Tank on Poverty organized 12 leaders to Columbus, joining over 200 other grassroots advocates at the **People's First Assembly**, a statewide event focused on highlighting Fair Hiring of those with criminal backgrounds and the need for reform within the prison and criminal justice system.

Wendy also brought newly engaged Columbus leaders to join the effort and helped arrange meetings with 7 legislative offices from Franklin County and 2 offices from Licking County. The meetings focused primarily on Fair Hiring, a topic SVdP will emphasize on our March 10 Advocacy Day. Thank you to the SVdP leaders who attended the gathering (Leshia Farias, Deb Cook-Gorsuch, Marie Placid, Karen Schied).

Voice of the Poor

The Voice of the Poor committee has made progress in developing a ministry to compete with PayDay and AutoTitle loan services that exploit the poor. It is called: "Low Interest Loans for lower income" (LILI)

Using LILI models from Bellville, IL, Indianapolis, and Austin, TX, Jim Emley, of Immaculate Conception, has developed a draft plan for providing emergency loans up to \$500. (Details of the program can be accessed from a link on the front page of our website <http://www.ventenianvoice.org>) According to the draft plan, loans will be made through a credit union and are backed by deposits in an account of funds deposited by conferences or other funding sources. If the program moves forward as planned, St. Vincent de Paul conferences will be able to refer individuals to the program for loans. Volunteer Vincentians will serve on loan-approval committees and trained micro-loan

specialists will provide loan applicants with financial mentoring and advice. Jim is currently working to determine an appropriate credit union to establish a partnership in order to move to the next phase in the planning process.

March 10 is our Legislative Advocacy Day. St. Vincent de Paul and the Diocese of Columbus Office of Social Concerns are sponsoring a legislative advocacy on March 10th. The event will be held at the Catholic Foundation, 257 E. Broad St, Columbus OH 43215. We will gather at 9:00AM.

At this event participants will:

A. Connect with other Catholic advocates from around the diocese, **B.** Listen to briefings on issues that impact the poor and the vulnerable **C.** Learn how to effectively communicate with public officials, **D** Visit with state legislators and staff

There will be a morning briefing, where participants will learn about current issues of concern to the poor and vulnerable. In the afternoon, participants will meet with their legislators to discuss these important topics. Registration is free. Register by calling the Office of Social Concerns at 614-241-2540 or e-mailing socmailbox@colsdio.org.

New Presidents

Church of the Blessed Sacrament – Amy Ghiloni, replacing Ferrell Vanwy

St. John Neumann – John Powers, replacing Eric Hess

St. Thomas More Newman Center – Linda Cannon, replacing Ann Mischo

St. Edwards, Granville – Kathi Jackson replacing Greg Hinterschied

Church of the Ascension, Johnstown – Don Vocca replacing Don Litterini

Remember in your prayers

Don Duhigg – St. Andrew conference.

C. Thomas Ridenour – former Diocesan Council Treasurer and member of Our Lady of Peace Conference

Clarence Smith - St. James the Less Conference

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>

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

In an 1835 letter of Frederic Ozanam to a friend,* we read the following.

“Oh, yes, my friend, the faith, the charity of the first centuries. Are we not like the Christians of the first centuries, thrown into the midst of a corrupt civilization, of a collapsing society? Are we not as relegated to the catacombs in obscurity and beneath the contempt of those who consider themselves great and wise? Cast your eyes on the world around us. Are the rich and favored much better than those who replied to St. Paul: ‘We will hear you another time?’ And are the poor and the populace better instructed and are they better off than those to whom the apostles preached?”

The savants have compared the state of the slaves of antiquity with the conditions of our workers and proletariat and have found these later to have more to complain of, after eighteen centuries of Christianity. Then for a like evil like remedy. The earth has grown cold. It is for us Catholics to revive the vital beat to restore it., it is for us to begin over again the great work of regeneration, if necessary to bring back the age of martyrs. For to be a martyr is possible for every Christian, to be a martyr is to give his life for God and his brothers, to give his life in sacrifice, whether the sacrifice be consumed in an instant like a holocaust, or be accomplished slowly and smoke night and day like perfume on the altar. “

**Frederic Ozanam: A LIFE IN LETTERS*, p. 64 ed & trans Joseph Dirvin CM, St. Louis 1986

Thanks to all contributors and Warren Wright, Pat Summers, Wendy Tarr & Lesha Farias for editing assistance.