



THE SOCIETY OF ST. VINCENT de PAUL OF BROWN COUNTY

P.O. Box 577, 2901 Long Lake Road, Nashville, Indiana 47448 812-988-8821

Back to School Report 2022-Continuing to serve our Brown County Families in Need!

The Society of St. Vincent de Paul of Brown County (SVDP) has served families in need in Brown County since April, 1988 — 34 years of continuous service.

Currently located at 2901 Long Lake Road, the distribution center provides a client choice food pantry and warehouse which offers furniture, clothing, appliances, household goods, cleaning supplies and personal care items. Between 12 and 15% of Brown County households have contact with SVDP each year. Although there were some signs of the pandemic easing its hold on our families in need, the demand for our services remained strong. Nearly 100 new families registered with us during the course of the year. 150,390 pounds of food were distributed providing food for 8,825 individuals (duplicated number). The frequency of community pop-up distributions were reduced with the hope that more families would come directly to the pantry. It is felt that they could benefit from selecting the food from a menu rather than pre-packaged bags which are distributed at pop-ups. Community partnerships and collaboration with other agencies remained strong. Our two freightliner trucks logged more than 15,000 miles transporting food and donations.

The Back to School program began operation in 2004. It was initially started with a request from the Brown County Community Foundation to facilitate the intentions of the Truemper Family who created an endowment designated for shoes and clothing for children. Linda Beckman and Barb Tuley were primary drivers of the early days of this effort. In 2004, there were enough funds to provide \$20 vouchers for 49 children—sadly falling short of the identified need. Since 2004, the program has continuously grown—made possible by never ceasing fundraising, grant writing, and personal donations. For 2022 a voucher valued at \$60.00 which could be redeemed at Walmart in Columbus, IN was provided to the parents, grandparents, foster parents and/or guardians for each school-age child. **This year 610 vouchers were redeemed for a total program cost of \$37,265 which included most families accepting our offer of a \$5.00 Speedway gas card.** In early summer, mailing lists were compiled and 2500 post cards detailing the Back to School schedule were prepared for distribution. Eligibility was extended to any family who said they need help with back to school expenses. Ultimately, when the final report was compiled we found that the majority of families who participated were those who had been active at the SVDP food pantry or were participants in the emergency/pop-up food distributions.

Post cards were mailed to addresses on file, distributed at the pantry and at food pop-ups, provided to numerous community partners and churches, distributed at the Brown County Fair and also at the God's Grace, "On the Road Again" event in July. Vouchers were available to be picked up on July 9, 11, 16, 18, 23, 25, 30 and August 1, 6 and 8. Families had until August 9 at 9:00 p.m. to shop for specified items (see below) and redeem the voucher at the Walmart Customer Service Desk. At the conclusion of the program there were still families who had either not picked up their voucher and were in need or had picked up the voucher but not redeemed it. A special outreach was arranged through Jackson Township Trustee Sandy Higgins who worked with some of these families resulting in all but 8 vouchers being used.

Access to and the expense associated with transportation remained a challenge. At the time of the distribution, gas prices were nearly \$4.00 a gallon which meant the \$5.00 Speedway gas card didn't go very far but it showed we care.

2022 Overview

#	Description	Value/Cost
618 vouchers	Were picked up by families for their students	
610 vouchers	Were redeemed for a total cost	\$36115
616 pairs of	Shoes, boots and/or sandals were selected	\$10263
218 students	Purchased one or more packages of socks	\$2966
227 students	Purchased one or more kinds of underwear	\$3922
154 students	Purchased a backpack	\$2709
78 students	Purchased a set of ear buds or head phones	\$712
33 students	Purchased other miscellaneous clothing	\$518
36 students	Purchased a calculator, usb, or mouse	\$326
32 students	Purchased a water bottle, sketch pad, journal, zip lock bags, pencil pouch or masks	\$218
592 students	Selected school supplies such as paper, pencils, crayons, markers, notebooks, binders etc.	\$14217
250 families	Gratefully accepted a \$5.00 Speedway Gas Card (funding provided by a private donor)	\$1250
	TOTAL PROGRAM SUPPORT TO COMMUNITY	\$37365
# of Cards	2500 Invitation post cards were distributed to the community by mail and by dozens of volunteers	
Yield Rate	96.7% of vouchers picked up were redeemed	
Average Value	Average voucher was redeemed for \$59.20	
251	Different households redeemed one or more vouchers	

Distribution of vouchers redeemed by school for the past 7 years:

School Attending	Number of Children/Youth Served						
	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Helmsburg Elementary	30	31	27	27	21	85	96
Sprunica Elementary	46	57	41	42	51	99	103
Van Buren Elementary	37	45	38	34	45	77	74
Brown County Middle School	New for 2021					135	116
Brown County Intermediate	36	48	59	61	62		
Brown County Junior High	41	36	38	42	61		
Brown County High School	64	76	84	77	91	110	131
Home School	4	2	3	2	9	10	19
Indian Creek Schools	7	12	10	9	7	22	28
Head Start, Lori's Tons of Fun	New for 2020				7	7	9
Other Schools Outside County	5	0	3	6	3	31	34
TOTAL	270	308	303	300	357	576	610

18 years of engaging with Brown County families preparing for a new school year!

Year	Number Served
2004	49 children
2005	87 children
2006	97 children
2007	112 children
2008	184 children
2009	187 children
2010	183 children
2011	183 children
2012	224 children
2013	228 children
2014	289 children
2015	294 children
2016	270 children
2017	308 children
2018	303 children
2019	300 children
2020	357 children
2021	576 children
2022	610 children
Total	4841 children

Schools Represented in the 2022 Back to School Program			
Achieve Virtual Academy	1 Student-Grade 11	ABC Stewart	1 student-Grade 5
Columbus Central Middle	1 Student-Grade 7	Columbus East HS	1 student-Grade 11
Columbus North HS	1 student-Grade 9	Columbus North MS	1 student-Grade 7
Columbus Signature Academy	1 Student-Grade 6	Franklin Head Start	1 student-Pre School
Francis L Smith Elementary	1 Student-Grade 6	Hook Bridge Autism Center	2 students- Pre School 1 student-Grade 1
Home Schooled Students	19 students-all grades	Indiana Agriculture Academy	1 student-Grade 9 1 student-Grade 12
Indian Creek Elementary	1 student-Pre-School 2 students-Kindergarten 1 student-Grade 2	Indian Creek High School	1 student-Grade 9 3 students-Grade 10 1 student-Grade 11 1 student-Grade 12
Indian Creek Intermediate	5 students-Grade 3 2 students-Grade 5	Indianapolis School for the Deaf	1 student-Grade 6
Indian Creek Middle School	4 students-Grade 8 1 student-Grade 7 6 students-Grade 6	Brown County Head Start	9 students
Kindergarten to 12 th Grade-Online School	2 students-9 th Grade	Lillian Schmitt Elem	1 student-Grade 3 1 student-Kindergarten
Neil Armstrong Elementary	1 student-Grade 1 1 student-Grade 2 1 student-grade 3	Purdue Polytechnic HS	1 student-Grade 10
Indiana Gateway Academy	1 student-Grade 4 1 student-Grade 7 1 student-Grade 8	Break O' Day Preschool	2 students-Pre School
Brown County Middle School	35 students-Grade 6 45 students-Grade 7 36 students-Grade 8	Helmsburg Elementary School	15 students-Pre School 10 students-Kindergarten 17 students-Grade 1 14 students-Grade 2 10 students-Grade 3 12 students-grade 4 18 students-Grade 5
Brown County High School	48 students-Grade 9 28 students-Grade 10 33 students-Grade 11 22 students-Grade 12	Sprunica Elementary School	9 students-Pre School 14 students-Kindergarten 22 students-Grade 1 10 students-Grade 2 14 students-Grade 3 13 students-Grade 4 21 students-Grade 5
Other schools outside Brown County	1 student – Kindergarten 2 students-Pre-K 1 student-Grade 3 1 student-Grade 8 1 student-Grade 9	Van Buren Elementary School	9 students-Pre-School 14 students-Kindergarten 5 students-Grade 1 10 students-Grade 1 14 students-Grade 3 13 students-Grade 4 9 students-Grade 5

Summary of Funds for 2022 Back to School Program

Description of Funding Source	Amount
Church of the Lakes, Nineveh, IN	1900.00
St. David’s Episcopal Church, Nashville, IN	200.00
Jackson Township Trustee, Brown County, IN	500.00
South Central Indiana REMC Community Fund, Martinsville, IN	4000.00
Brown County Community Foundation	3000.00
Howard Hughes Memorial Morel Mushroom Sale	2020.00
Charles Truemper Fund-Brown County Community Foundation	1041.00
Walmart Foundation Community Fund & Manager Discretionary Fund	1200.00
Rotary Club of Brown County	164.00
Brown County Lion’s Club	1000.00
Christ Church Episcopal Church-Strawberry Festival, Indianapolis	3000.00
St. Vincent de Paul Discretionary Funds & Private Donors	4722.00
St. Agnes Catholic Church & St. Agnes Ladies Guild	13268.00
Individual donated 250-\$5.00 Speedway Gas Cards	1250.00
Total Program Expenditures	\$37,365.00

Back to School 2022 –Extending our Reach to those in Need

John Aumage and Shirley Boardman coordinate the program, with John distributing the vouchers and handling the contact with Walmart, purchasing gift cards used for distribution, and keeping a detailed spreadsheet which tracks families as they pick up and redeem their voucher. This meticulous recordkeeping helps identify outstanding vouchers and allows us to make reminder calls etc. It also means many trips to Walmart to keep up with the accounting and ensuring that all is going as planned. Concurrently, John maintains a data environment that has family profiles, ages of children, and contact information. Many community partners including Kim Robinson, Donna Niednagel, Cori McCabe, Sean Hildreth, Mary Kilgore, Pastor Raymond Dupree and Becky McCarty provide invaluable assistance. The Brown County System of Care members assist by promoting the program to the families they serve. Shirley handles fundraising, promotion of the program, special needs of families, and reporting.

During the voucher distribution period, more than 24,000 pounds of food was provided to families as well as generous amounts of household goods, clothing, personal care items and cleaning supplies were on hand to help families stretch their resources. Some families identified a need for a mattress, bed linens, towels, beds, dressers or a desk. When available, these were also provided.

A few reflections:

- As noted earlier, the cost of gas was hovering near \$4.00 a gallon during this distribution period. Families were stressed and stretched to find ways to get to Columbus to make their purchases. The \$5.00 gas cards were probably more symbolic than impactful but showed we cared and were clearly appreciated.
- An analysis of the cash register receipts showed the impact of higher costs. Most families could use more than \$60.00. This year the cost of shoes, socks, and underwear were notably higher. For example, the average expenditure for a pair of shoes was 27% higher than in 2021.
- The Brown County school administrative team helped us by providing school supply lists which were a great help to our families.
- Having ordered 2500 postcards, we were a little worried as to what the demand might be. We distributed the post cards widely at the food pop-ups, churches, the Brown County Fair, at the “On the Road Again” event in addition to mailing to more than 500 to families in our data bases. Further distribution on social media and via the Brown County System of Care further promoted the program. The weekly food alliance meetings, with Donna Niednagel at the helm, provided weekly guidance and input to the outreach effort.
- Once again, we opted to be generous, low barrier, and let families determine if they were in need. We saw no evidence of families “taking advantage” of the program. Many of our families are multi-generational with grandparents, parents, and children all living together in the same household.
- Funding sources were again generous but it took a great deal of faith and effort to secure the necessary funding. Many private donors contributed from \$5.00 to \$1000. One private donor provided a jaw dropping \$10,000 which gave us the energy to keep looking for additional resources.
- This is a high touch program. Communicating with families, donors, community partners and keeping up with the cash flow at Walmart requires countless hours. Record keeping, analysis, and reporting as well as expressing our gratitude to all who make it possible are time consuming but make it possible for this program to thrive.
- The Customer Service Personnel at Walmart in Columbus remain our heroes as they, also, work one-on-one with each family to insure that purchases are consistent with the program guidelines.

Once again, artwork cheerfully provided by Ransom whose parents had all that was needed for his return to school but wanted to share some artwork for this year's report. Thank you, Ransom! Your smile and artwork brighten our world.



Program report prepared by John Aumage, Treasurer and Back to School Coordinator, and Shirley Boardman, Secretary & Development Coordinator. Questions may be directed to Shirley Boardman at sboardma@iu.edu or 812-322-8605. Prepared 12.22.2022

Ad printed in the Brown County Democrat, December 27, 2022 is below.

**Society of St. Vincent de Paul of Brown County
Back to School Program 2022**



As our community continues to recover from the pandemic, the Society of St. Vincent de Paul of Brown County (SVDP) delivered yet another record-breaking Back to School Program. This year marks the 18th year of the program. The Board and program co-leaders, John Aumage and Shirley Boardman, wish to thank donors and supporters for going the extra mile to make this year's program a success. Through the generosity of many, 610 students redeemed vouchers for \$60 each at Walmart in Columbus and purchased shoes, socks, underwear, backpacks, calculators, and school supplies. 250 families were provided a \$5.00 Speedway gas card to help with transportation expenses. The total program cost was \$37,265.

So many of the community come together to support this program. Members of the Northern Brown County Food Alliance convened by Donna Niednagel provided outreach. Sandy Higgins, Jackson Township Trustee, personally worked with numerous families and Kim Robinson, COAD, also helped identify families in need. The Brown County System of Care network promoted the program. Invitations to participate were distributed by social service agencies, area churches and at community events including food pop-ups.

Organizations/Churches who donated financial support:

- Brown County Community Foundation & Truemper Fund**
- Brown County Lion's Club**
- Church of the Lakes, Nineveh**
- Christ Church Episcopal Church-Indianapolis**
- Howard Hughes Memorial Morel Mushroom Sale**
- Jackson Township Trustee/Sandy Higgins**
- Rotary Club of Brown County**
- South Central Indiana REMC Community Fund**
- St. David's Episcopal Church**
- St. Agnes Guild/St. Agnes Catholic Church**
- St. Vincent de Paul of Brown County**
- Walmart Community Fund**

We also wish to acknowledge many private donors and the parents and grandparents who transported their young scholars to Columbus and helped them to make their selections. And, a special shout to the Customer Service and Accounting personnel at Walmart in Columbus who worked with the families to make their purchases. We couldn't do this without them!

St. Vincent de Paul Food Pantry and Warehouse is located at 2901 Long Lake Road. You may call 812-988-8821 or visit our website at: <https://stvincentdepaulbrowncounty.com/> Volunteers are always welcome and you can access the schedule from the website. Founded in 1988, SVDP has provided 34 years of continuous service to our neighbors in need.

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