



Our Vincentian Voice



The Monthly Newsletter for The Society of St. Vincent de Paul

Belleville Council
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March 2020



**FROM THE
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

Dear Vincentian Friends,

During this penitential season of Lent we are once again given the opportunity to draw closer to the sufferings of Christ. It is a time of prayer and penance, a time of reflection and correction. As we seek answers to our problems and questions, God is sometimes mysteriously quiet. His silence is deafening, and it is then that one must have the faith to hold on... and know that His silence is not forever.

Here at St. Vincent de Paul, it seems like we are forever just "holding on" in silence, waiting for an answer to our pleas - especially now as the world deals with the challenges and struggles of the COVID-19 crisis. Lent offers us the perfect opportunity to believe boldly that His silence has a purpose and He will answer our needs in His time.

I am trusting...

Coping with COVID-19 at SVDP

The Belleville Council Society of St. Vincent de Paul is adhering to all regulatory mandates for dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic. We have **SUSPENDED** all normal operations at the SVdP Main Office and Outreach Ministry Building, are enforcing social distancing, requiring masks and gloves when indicated and following all standards for cleaning and disinfecting.

ALL home visits are suspended. Conference members are responding to requests via the phone and text.

ALL meetings are suspended until further notice including all Council Meetings & Conference Meetings. ALL Vincentian gatherings are suspended until further notice.

The St. Vincent de Paul Office at 13 Vieux Carre is closed to all volunteers and is staffed by only the executive director and the bookkeeper for operational essentials. All programs at the office are suspended until further notice. The Officers are available by phone and email for all other business. The office is open 9am - 2pm for donation drop-offs on Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays, as well as by appointment.

The Soup Buses are out of service until further notice.



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The Outreach Ministry Building at 3718 State is CLOSED to everyone except the executive director and 5 staff members. The Soup Kitchen, Thrift Store, Help Center, and all programs associated with the Outreach Ministry Center are suspended until further notice pending the mandates regarding the coronavirus pandemic. No volunteers are permitted in the building. Donation drop-offs are accepted Monday through Friday 8am to 1:30 pm, Saturdays 9 to noon and by appointment.

We are currently disinfecting the entire main Outreach Ministry building.

While the Soup Kitchen is closed, staff prepares sack lunches for daily distribution according to mandates set forth by East Side Health District.

Easter Dinner at the Soup Kitchen is cancelled. We will be providing EASTER DINNER BAGS!

The Drop-In Center remains open 7pm to 7am daily to serve the homeless in St. Clair County and adheres to all required mandates. We provide a sack lunch in the evening and a sack breakfast at 7am. Staff members follow a rigorous daily schedule to disinfect and sanitize the building 7 days a week. The County has advised us that they want us to remain open during this crisis to provide respite to the homeless. We are praying *Psalm 91* each night and invite you to share that prayer to invoke God's protection upon the Drop-In Center and the St. Vincent de Paul Outreach. We MUST stay healthy to continue this ministry.

PSALM 91

1 You who dwell in the shelter of the Most High,^{*} who abide in the shade of the Almighty,^{*}

2 Say to the LORD, "My refuge and fortress, my God in whom I trust."^a

3 He will rescue you from the fowler's snare, from the destroying plague,

4 He will shelter you with his pinions, and under his wings you may take refuge;^b his faithfulness is a protecting shield.

5 You shall not fear the terror of the night nor the arrow that flies by day,^c

6 Nor the pestilence that roams in darkness, nor the plague that ravages at noon.^d

7 Though a thousand fall at your side, ten thousand at your right hand, near you it shall not come.

8 You need simply watch; the punishment of the wicked you will see.^e

9 Because you have the LORD for your refuge and have made the Most High your stronghold,

10 No evil shall befall you, no affliction come near your tent.^f

11 ^{*}For he commands his angels with regard to you,^g **to guard you wherever you go.**^h

These are painful times and it has been very difficult to suspend vital programs but we are trying to still meet critical needs of the poor. Our 5 staff personnel are doing an incredible job and I am so grateful.

I encourage you to contact the Council Office with any concerns or questions. We are there to serve you and help with any problems you might have. Thank you to all who have been supporting us.



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As a faith community, prayer is essential so let us unite in prayer for all those afflicted with the virus, their families, the medical community providing care, first responders, organizations and agencies providing support during this crisis and our government leaders.

I will keep you all in my prayers and ask that you as a member of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul remember our efforts in your prayers during these difficult days.

May God bless you and your families and keep you safe. God will sustain us.
peace, pat

*Patricia Hogrebe
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Improvement made to Drop-In to provide for more Families with Children

We have had more families with children staying at the Drop-In Center than we first anticipated. To accommodate this need, we have reorganized space and converted a corner of the garage into another child care/family area. It is a beautiful addition that provides a separate space for one to two families. Our Drop-In is serving families, elderly, the disabled as well as homeless men and women from all over the Metro-East Area. It is a very SAFE, CLEAN, AND CHRIST CENTERED ENVIRONMENT.

ITEMS NEEDED FOR DONATION

*Financial donations (for options see:
<https://svdpsouthil.org> then "Donations")*

Individually packaged cookies, fun fruits, fruit cups, applesauce Chef Boy Ar Dee pasta, tuna and chicken snack packs, chips, crackers etc.

Pop Tarts and breakfast bars for sack breakfasts

Capri Sun and other drink items

Fresh fruit

Any individual sack lunch item

Cheese sticks

Yogurt

Bottled water

Cheese and meat for sandwiches

Bread

Toothbrushes, deodorant, toothpaste

Washcloths

Feminine pads

Disinfectant cleaning spray

Bleach

Toilet paper and paper towels for the dispensers

Toilet paper and paper towels not for the dispenser

Lysol Spray

Clorox wipes

Cleaning supplies

Books of bus passes to provide transportation to drop-in

Items for Easter Dinner carry-out bags, e.g., candy, treats, etc.

Thank you!



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If you didn't go this year, you missed a GREAT event! The dinner theater was another great success made possible only with the wonderful effort put forth by many people who are dedicated to the charity of the



Society of St. Vincent de Paul that made the night possible.

Our most since thanks to...

Co-Sponsor, Catholic Western Union
Master Cookie Makers Sister Millie Gross and Sister Serena Downs.
Master Basket Makers Rose Jordan, Phyllis Ernst and Eileen Ker.
Ruth Becker for donating the wine.
Mel Weick for the soda
Rosemary Buchmiller and Sister Carol Durkin, Norrenberns Catering
Die Laughing Theatre
Jo Stogner, Gerry Hasenstab, Mark Hogrebe & family and Judy Phillips
Cathedral Parish and Pastor Msg John Myler
Ladies of St. Louise de Marillac Conference
Butch & Joan Scharf
Bill Kreeb, Mary Ann Burroughs Den Furdek and the O'Fallon volunteers who helped with set up
Don Schaefer, Jim Hoffmann, Mary Ann Klosterman, Shirley Priest, Tom Buchmiller, and Sister Pat Dalton
The Underwriters and Sponsors and all the Conferences who made financial donations.

To those who so graciously volunteered their time to help at this event tonight and to ALL OF YOU for sharing this special evening to benefit such a noble cause!

May God continue to bless the Society of St. Vincent de Paul, its members, benefactors, and all those we serve.

Success Story...

While our Council can herald the successes of many of our clients, a recent article in the Messenger featured one of our most cherished. We are so grateful to the Messenger for highlighting our work. Following is the article reprinted with permission.

Long-time Homeless Woman Credits St. Vincent de Paul for New Start

By Christopher Orlet, Editor

Cindy K. doesn't mince words when it comes to her feelings for the Belleville Council of St. Vincent de Paul. "I owe my life to St. Vincent de Paul," she says.

Cindy (she asked that we not use her last name) was for many years a successful, highly ambitious woman with a good job, a nice house, a garage full of tools and a nice car.

"I was living the American dream," she recalls. Then, through no fault of her own, Cindy's life took a sudden turn for the worse. Cindy suffered through three separate cancer diagnoses. Doctors prescribed opioids for the pain, and as is so often the case, she became addicted to the medication.

Like many people addicted to opioids, the drugs completely took over her life.

"I lost everything, my family, friends, my former self," she says.

For years Cindy's life consisted of a desperate routine of searching for a little food and a safe place to sleep for the night. One year, she slept in her car at the Flying J truck stop west of Belleville.

"Living on the street is an experience that will stay with me forever," Cindy says.

Then one day Cindy just happened to walk into St. Vincent de Paul's Cosgrove's Kitchen on State Street in East St. Louis.



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"I went in for a hot meal and that experience changed my life," she says.

At St. Vincent de Paul, which is a recipient of funding from the Catholic Service and Ministry Appeal, Cindy met caring, dedicated and selfless people who saw in her, not just someone down on her luck, but the face of Jesus.

Cindy met with Pat Hogrebe, executive Director of St. Vincent de Paul, Belleville Council. "She took the time to talk to me," Cindy says. "Pat sees the good in everyone and she sees the potential in everyone."

With the help of St. Vincent de Paul staff, Cindy saw the opportunity to turn her life around and start anew.

St. Vincent de Paul fed me, clothed me and gave me the resources to pull myself up and off the street," she says.

Cindy worked with – among others – Evelyn Weber, a long-time St. Vincent volunteer who was instrumental in helping Cindy re-engage with the workforce.

"Evelyn is our number one volunteer with the JOBSKILLS Program and has tons of experience," Pat says.

Pat, Evelyn, and others helped Cindy with bus tickets so that she could get her license renewed, helped get her car repaired, provided food to get her through some tough days, as well as clean clothes and shoes. They also arranged classes in money management and how to search for employment.

With the help of Pat Hogrebe and her dedicated volunteers, Cindy soon landed an internship with a local manufacturing company.

But even with all that help, getting her life back was no cakewalk for Cindy.

"Coming off the street I really had to prove myself and St. Vincent de Paul helped me every step of the way," she says.

After a period of six months Cindy became a full-time employee of the company. Today, several years later, Cindy is a vital part of the company's operation. She now works in a division of the company that breeds, raises, and trains show dogs. She says it is her dream job.

"Every day I thank Jesus for bringing me to St. Vincent de Paul, Pat Hogrebe, and her wonderful volunteers.

National Vehicle Donation Program

Is it time to replace your car? If so, the Society will be happy to accept your old car as a donation. This national program can channel your donation directly to our Belleville conference. For details click [here](#).

Even better? The program also accepts motorcycles, trucks, trailers, boats and more.

You won't believe how easy it is to donate!

Just be sure to note the Belleville Council when you speak to a representative about the details of your donation.

Did you know?

The St. Vincent de Paul Feeding Programs served almost 10,000 meals each month for the months of January and February.

Have you checked out the website lately?

The recent overhaul of our website makes it so much easier to share information about our Council, the conferences, programs, and current events. Please visit often at:

<https://svdpsouthil.org>



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Please remember in prayer our members, volunteers and donors who are experiencing sickness or surgery.

Please remember in prayer those members, volunteers and donors who have recently died.

The Society of St. Vincent de Paul

“The Society of St. Vincent de Paul is a volunteer organization composed of people from all walks of life who feel God’s call to devote a portion of their time to serve those in need.”

President: Charlie Cullen

Vice President: Joe Hubbard

Secretary: Diane Herrmann

Treasurer: Carol Williamson

Formator: Dennis Furdek

Book Keeper: Jo Stogner

Executive Director: Pat Hoglebe



The Society of St. Vincent de Paul Vincentian Giving and Memorial Program

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The Newsletter for the Belleville Council Society, is published monthly to bring you news, information, and items of interest. Brought to you in your email inbox and online at our website at : <https://svdpsouthil.org/>

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