



# Vincentian Charities

Newsletter and Chronicle of Activities  
DIOCESAN COUNCIL--SOCIETY OF ST. VINCENT de PAUL  
*Serving God's Poor in this Community Since 1865*

*Diocese of Baton Rouge, Louisiana*

*Lenten Edition*

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## Come Taste and You Will See

The Society of St. Vincent de Paul is proud to officially announce the publication of our first cookbook, *Taste and See – Food for the Body and Soul*. This new cookbook was the brainchild of Kathy Bishop and several other key St. Vincent de Paul volunteers who have worked diligently to put together a first-class product.

This will be a well designed hardcover book with delicious recipes from cooks throughout our community. There are a number of things that will make our cookbook a little different from others. Not only will it be filled with mouth watering recipes from local cooks, it will also have an entire chapter containing recipes from Chef John Folse. In addition, it will contain information about St. Vincent de Paul and some of our innovative programs and services.

Kathy and the other volunteers who came up with the concept saw this as an opportunity to share some great recipes as well as some of their experiences at St. Vincent de Paul. Our organization is so much more than facilities and programs. We are all about *people*, and that's a key element of this special cookbook. We will also include information explaining how people can get involved with St. Vincent de Paul programs.

Another part of this vision was to raise money for our critically needed community programs. Not only will this unique cookbook be a valuable addition to any kitchen, it will generate funds to help the less fortunate as well.

We want to take this opportunity to thank everyone that sent in a recipe. This project would not have been possible without you, and we really appreciate your help! We also need sponsors, and we are asking for help from people that have the ability to give \$500 (Chef Sponsor level), \$1,000 or more (Premier Sponsor) to help offset publication costs. Your name will be listed in the cookbook. Without financial sponsorship, this project will not become a reality. Individuals interested in becoming a sponsor can do so by sending their gift to: St. Vincent de Paul Cookbook, P. O. Box 127, Baton Rouge, LA 70821. If you need more information, don't hesitate to contact Nikki Eidson at

**Continued on page 2; see "Come Taste and See"**



The theme for this year's *Fill a Prescription for the Needy* effort is, "You can Save a Life Today." That powerful statement says a lot about the St. Vincent de Paul Community Pharmacy. Our pharmacy fills life-sustaining prescriptions, providing medicines for high blood pressure, heart disease, diabetes and many other illnesses.

Without a doubt, there are people who are alive today because of the good work of our pharmacy and our dedicated volunteers and financial supporters. The people that support our pharmacy are very generous, but they also understand that there is no single answer to the critical issue of healthcare. Even though Medicare Part D has helped senior citizens, it doesn't begin to cover all prescription medicine costs, especially for people who must take a handful of pills for several different illnesses. That means that some of the poorest people who are 65 and older may have most of their needs met, but they might be taking a drug that isn't covered by certain plans, or they may exceed the limits of Medicare Part D and be faced with the "doughnut hole" where their medications aren't covered until they reach the catastrophic level.

**Continued on page 2; see "You Can Save a Life Today"**



## Build a Basket

A very special woman came up with the *Build a Basket* idea when she heard a child say, "The Easter Bunny doesn't believe in me." Debi Grymes certainly has a full plate running *Little House & Company*, a successful children's clothing boutique at Towne Center in Baton Rouge. But that little girl's pathetic comment really touched Debi's heart, and she didn't let her busy schedule stop her from recognizing a need and beginning an effort that would bring joy to thousands of needy children.

**Continued on page 2; see "Build a Basket"**

**In this Special Lenten Issue:**

- Laughter – Just What the Doctor Ordered
- Count Your Blessings Supper

## Come Taste and See Continued from page 1

383-7837, ext. 214. We hope you will help us to publish this wonderful tool, which will increase public awareness about St. Vincent de Paul and will benefit the needy we are so privileged to serve.

We are one of the first St. Vincent de Paul groups in the country to put together a top-notch, hard-cover cookbook. We hope to promote this, not only locally and regionally, but also nationally. There is great potential here for us to help other St. Vincent de Paul groups with the same type of project in their communities. We ask each of you to remember this effort in your prayers.

## You Can Save a Life Today Continued from page 1



For other patients 64 and under, we are their only hope. In this newsletter are photos of people we serve at our pharmacy. When we ask patients, "What were you doing before you came to us?" the answers are sometimes shocking. Too often, they were skipping doses or breaking tablets in half. They may take a particular medication today and skip it tomorrow. That's not what their doctor prescribed, and it can sometimes mean the difference between life and death. Proper medication, especially for serious chronic illnesses, can determine whether someone will be able to live independently or in a nursing home. Every prescription we fill is improving the quality of life, and in many instances, is literally keeping someone alive.

We want to take this opportunity to thank all of you who support our *Fill a Prescription for the Needy* campaign. We particularly want to thank Pat Shingleton and WBRZ-Channel 2 for their continued commitment to this important effort. We are also very grateful to the leaders and physicians at the Baton Rouge Clinic for their ongoing support of this campaign. Our supporters are helping us to raise critical dollars for people whose lives literally hang in the balance.



Anyone who wants to help us save a life by filling a prescription for the needy can do so by sending contributions to: Fill a Prescription for the Needy, P. O. Box 127, Baton Rouge, LA 70821. Thank you again for your prayers and support.



## *Build a Basket* Continued from page 1

Last year, with Debi's leadership and with the help of hundreds of volunteers, we were able to touch the lives of over 3,000 needy children in our area by providing Easter baskets. Some of these boys and girls had never received an Easter basket, and you can just imagine their excitement. No child should grow up without having a chance to bite the ears off a chocolate Easter bunny.

So many of us concentrate on giving at Christmastime, but it's wonderful to see that same spirit of giving during Lent. *Build a Basket* is a faith-filled effort that allows us to share the joyful spirit of Easter with our community's most vulnerable citizens. We have a small window of time, since Easter is early this year and we hope you will join us in this effort.

We also need your help to get the word out by encouraging your family and friends to build a basket for a needy child and drop it by our main St. Vincent de Paul campus before March 12<sup>th</sup>. Financial contributions are also welcome. Donations will go directly toward the purchase of items necessary for us to provide Easter baskets to needy children.

If you are a member of a civic group or school, please ask them to participate in this effort. So many times, when we look at problems in our community, we don't realize that we can be a blessing in the life of someone in need. You may be God's answer to someone's prayer.

We estimate that it will cost \$15.00 to provide a nice basket filled with candies and a small toy or stuffed animal. If you would like more information about how you or your group can make a difference in the life of a needy child, contact Nikki Eidson at (225) 383-7837, extension 214. Financial contributions can be mailed to: Build a Basket, St. Vincent de Paul, P. O. Box 127, Baton Rouge, LA 70821.

## *Laughter - Just What the Doctor Ordered*

St. Vincent de Paul is excited to announce its first ever Cajun Comedy Roundup. This family-oriented show will feature clean Cajun humor by comedians Murray Conque, Kent Gonsoulin and Jonathan Perry. These three local comedians have taken south Louisiana by storm, and if you haven't seen their show, you are really missing something.

We encourage you to come and laugh with us on Saturday, April 19<sup>th</sup>. Join us at the Independence Park Theatre located at 7800 Independence Blvd., Baton Rouge, LA. Tickets are \$15.00 for adults and \$10.00 for children and can be purchased at Ticket Master or by contacting Nikki Eidson at 383-7837, ext. 214. The show starts at 7:00 p.m. and the doors open at 6:00. Anyone interested in sponsoring this event can contact Michael Acaldo at 383-7837, ext. 205.

Many healthcare experts agree that in addition to regular exercise and proper nutrition, laughter can be an important part of maintaining good health. A recent study revealed that laughing for 10-15 minutes a day can burn as many calories as there are in a medium chocolate bar. So this is just what the doctor ordered! Come out and laugh with us. Bring your family and friends. At the same time, you'll be helping us raise important dollars.

Our next newsletter will contain more information about this exciting new effort to raise awareness and funds for the good works of St. Vincent de Paul.



## Count Your Blessings with a Bishop and a Chef

We invite you and your loved ones to the **13<sup>th</sup> Annual Count Your Blessings Supper** at Our Lady of Mercy's Activity Center on Friday, March 14<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 p.m. This Lenten tradition is a wonderful opportunity

for us to get together and count our blessings. Chef John Folse and Bishop Robert Muench will be there to serve you and your family a delicious soup – and in the Lenten tradition – bread and water.

Come prepared for a wonderful program put together by John Pastorek, WBRZ-Channel 2. You're sure to enjoy this evening of good food, great company and an outstanding program. You will also be helping us to raise critically needed dollars for our charitable work.

At St. Vincent de Paul, we count our blessings for you and your support. Whether through prayer, volunteerism, or financial contributions, your support means so much to us and the people we serve. One of the greatest gifts we receive from God is the ability to be a blessing in someone else's life. In a true sense, you are a blessing to the people who come to St. Vincent de Paul for a helping hand. Your support makes the daily miracles of food, clothing, shelter and medicine a reality for those in need.

This Lenten season, we hope you will come and count your blessings with us. Below you will find a ticket form for the event. We look forward to seeing you at Our Lady of Mercy for a very special, faith-filled evening.



### Please cut out and mail

Please join us for a special Lenten experience at 7:00 p.m. on Friday, March 14<sup>th</sup>, at Our Lady of Mercy. Please send me \_\_\_\_\_ tickets

at \$10.00 each. My check for \$\_\_\_\_\_ is enclosed.

(Mail your financial gift to:

St. Vincent de Paul, P.O. Box 127, Baton Rouge, LA 70821-0127.)

## Wasn't Christmas Just a Few Days Ago?

It seems like just yesterday that we were wrapping Christmas presents, and here we are in Lent. Of course, the 2008 Lenten season falls earlier than usual and is one of the earliest in recent years. This also means that there's just a small window of time to prepare for Easter. With every passing year, it seems that time goes by faster and faster. Why is that? Is it because we're all so busy that the days seem to fly by? Despite the hectic pace of today's world, we are thankful that so many good people make the time to give of themselves – sharing their time, talent and treasure with the less fortunate.

This Christmas season was spectacular! You could really feel the Christmas spirit throughout our many charitable works.

At our pharmacy, staff, volunteers and guests got into the spirit of things with a Christmas tree and music. One of our pharmacy guests dressed up as Santa. The waiting area was filled with smiling faces, and the adults were just as thrilled as any child when Santa passed out candy canes. At our shelters, flannel shirts and toiletry items were given out to the men and women, and every child received several gifts.

If only you could have been here the Saturday before Christmas when Bishop Muench came out and distributed gifts to needy children. What a great day that was! From our Dining Room doors, the line extended all the way down the street, around the corner and down Florida Boulevard. Eager boys and girls waited patiently to see what "Santa" had for them. Over 1200 Christmas gifts were distributed!

On Christmas Day, we again had a long line of people waiting outside our Dining Room, this time to share a traditional Christmas feast. Our volunteers served up heaping plates of turkey with all the trimmings and made sure that no one left hungry.

We are constantly reminded that St. Vincent de Paul is more than just a city block containing buildings and facilities. Our organization is a family of people who care about what's going on in our community and recognize that each one of us is a special gift from God. When we see someone in need – whether they are hungry, in need of clothing, shelter or medicine – we are all called to respond and extend a helping hand.

As we join forces to do God's work, we are changing lives, and whether we realize it or not, we are ultimately changing the world.

## Empty Bowls

Julie Harrison and volunteers from the Louisiana School for the Deaf, along with private and public schools throughout our community, are stepping forward once again to hold the 5<sup>th</sup> annual *Empty Bowls* event. This event raises critical dollars every year for the St. Vincent de Paul Dining Room and the Greater Baton Rouge Food Bank.

If you have never been to *Empty Bowls*, we encourage you to join us this year. Everyone that attends receives a ceramic bowl made by students of the Louisiana School for the Deaf and other schools throughout our area, along with a delicious meal of gumbo prepared by Chef John Folse and Company. This year's event will be held once again at the Louisiana School for the Deaf located at 2888 Brightside Lane, Baton Rouge, LA, beginning at 6:00 p.m. on Thursday, February 28<sup>th</sup>. Anyone interested in purchasing tickets can call Nikki Eidson at 383-7837, ext. 214.

The Society of St. Vincent de Paul salutes the Louisiana School for the Deaf, Chef John Folse & Company, and all those who play such a critical role in making this event a reality. We encourage you to come out and be a part of this special occasion.

# Jesus Came to Comfort the Disturbed

I recently participated in a Catholic High School Alumni Prayer Breakfast where the keynote speaker was Father Trey Nelson. He spoke about the importance

of rest, relaxation and rejuvenation of the mind, body and spirit. One powerful statement he made during his talk really stuck in my mind because I think it captures what we do here at St. Vincent de Paul: “*Jesus came to comfort the disturbed and to disturb the comfortable.*”

That’s what the Society of St. Vincent de Paul does every day. We reach out and comfort people who may be disturbed by poverty, poor health, unemployment, mental illness or addictions. And who are the people that represent St. Vincent de Paul and support our work? Who are these people that serve as Christ’s hands here on earth? You are. Our St. Vincent de Paul family consists of individuals like you – people that are, for the most part, “comfortable,” except for a heartfelt concern for the less fortunate. It disturbs them to think that there are others in desperate need of the basic necessities of life. They have heard Christ’s message and know in their hearts that when they provide a service to someone in need, they are serving Jesus himself.

During this Lenten season, we are especially grateful for your continued involvement and support of our efforts to comfort the disturbed. You share our concern for the quality of human life and feel called to do something about it. At St. Vincent de Paul, lending a helping hand to the poor and homeless of our community continues to be our guiding principle, as it has been for over 140 years. You – our supporters – are the lifeblood of our organization and the driving force that makes this possible.

As we pause to reflect on the many blessings of life, we want to express our sincerest thanks for those who are disturbed by the plight of the poor and homeless. You are all unsung heroes, expecting nothing in return except for the satisfaction of knowing that you are following in Christ’s footsteps. – **Michael J. Acaldo, President & CEO, St. Vincent de Paul Charities**

Address Service Requested

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