

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

Thanksgiving Edition

Vol. XVIII, No. IV

Thankful for the Basics

Every day at St. Vincent de Paul, we see people who no longer take anything for granted. Most of us begin each day with a nourishing breakfast, and the only concerns we have about lunch and dinner are what to prepare or which restaurant we're going to. But once someone has experienced real hunger, they have a new appreciation for this simple, basic necessity.

The people who come to St. Vincent de Paul are so thankful for all the basic necessities of life. They know what it's like to wonder where your next meal is coming from. This photo of a mother and her children is representative of the thousands who come to us for help. Again this year, we will serve over 200,000 meals, fill 30,000 prescriptions and provide over 20,000 guest nights of shelter. Those numbers are startling, but we don't serve numbers – we serve people. Everyone we serve has a story and is so thankful for the help we provide.



Every time we serve a meal, fill a prescription or provide shelter, we are doing more than filling a basic need. We are providing hope.

Time after time, we hear the words, "thank you" from people who have nothing else to give in return for the assistance they receive. Their humble expressions of gratitude are meant for you, our supporters, and we are happy to pass their thanks on to you.



PHARMACY CONSTRUCTION NEARING COMPLETION

We are thrilled to report that construction on the St. Vincent de Paul Community Pharmacy expansion is going well and nearing completion. We expect the project to be complete within the next few weeks. This new space is desperately needed if we are to continue to meet the demands in our community.

Although there is continued debate over healthcare reform, we know that if any legislation is passed, there will be gaps.

Even the Medicare Part D Program that has helped so many seniors has the "doughnut hole." This means that a patient can get their prescriptions filled until they reach a certain level. Then there is a gap until they reach what is referred to as a "catastrophic" level. Well, for someone trying to live on a small social security income, the gap itself is catastrophic.

That's where our community pharmacy plays such an important role. We're not sure exactly what gaps will exist if healthcare reform is passed, but we know they will exist. God willing, and with the help of our supporters, we will be there to fill those gaps. Our pharmacy will continue to operate in an accountable way. We are very efficient in our use of resources, and for every dollar we spend on medicine, we can provide eight times that amount in retail value of prescription medications. This is another example of St. Vincent de Paul's ability to take a little and do a lot.

Please continue to keep this important project in your prayers. We are looking forward to the day when we can announce that this much needed expansion is finally open.

What a Hit!



Rock Rockenbaugh, Charles Moniotte and Rick Bayhi, Tournament Chairman, pose for a quick photo at the very successful SVPD Brian Harris Golf Tournament.

The 2009 Annual Brian Harris St. Vincent de Paul Golf Tournament at the Island Golf Course in Plaquemine was a hit! Although the weather wasn't perfect, golfers had a fantastic time on October 12th, hitting the ball while raising critical dollars for our charitable programs. Rick Bayhi and the Golf Tournament Committee would like to

thank our corporate sponsor, Brian Harris, for his continued leadership and support, as well as our associate sponsors Kean's Fine Drycleaning and Hancock Bank.

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Annual Mass Honors Outstanding Volunteers

On September 24th, our volunteers and supporters gathered for the Annual St. Vincent de Paul Feast Day Mass at Our Lady of Mercy. This year's theme was *Beacons of Light for Those in Need*. As a part of this celebration, a number of Society volunteers were recognized for their dedication and service to St. Vincent de Paul and the needy we serve.



Rosie and Laura Martina were recognized for more than **25 years of service** as St. Vincent de Paul members. Through their support of our Dining Room efforts, they have truly been beacons of light to the needy.

The next award of the evening was the **Be A Light Award**, which went to Jan Wilson. Jan has distinguished herself by her commitment to our ministry to the poor and homeless through her dedication to our new Taste & See cookbook.



This year's **Saints Cosmas and Damian Award** was given to Mrs. Carolyn Lockwood for her years of hard work and dedication to our community pharmacy.

A group of volunteers received our **Stores Program Community Volunteer Award**. Charles Bossier, Jim Cruse, Ray Barousse, Bobbie Perrere and Rita Doran were honored for their decades of service at our Plank Road Store.



This year's **Heaven's Helpers Award** went to Debbie Shelley, a dedicated volunteer who works full-time, but gives up her lunch break every Wednesday to serve the poor and homeless in our Dining Room.

The **Top Hat Award**, St. Vincent de Paul's highest honor, is given for exemplary service as a Vincentian. This year's winner, Virginia Berry Green, is a 32-year member of the Society and has distinguished herself as a Conference member, officer and president, as well as a special works Board member.



Urgent food/supply items: salt, garlic powder, Tony's seasoning, bleach, paper napkins, plastic forks and spoons, oregano, dehydrated onions, salad dressing, hot sauce, parsley flakes, and paper towels. **Urgent food items:** rice, sugar, dry beans and spaghetti; also the following canned goods: tomatoes, green beans, green peas, corn, tomato paste, tomato sauce, and all canned fruits. **Thanksgiving specific items:** ham, turkey, cranberry sauce, sweet potatoes, etc.

What a Hit! Continued from page 1

The event was a success, raising over \$20,000. St. Vincent de Paul would like to recognize and thank Rick Bayhi, Chairman of our Golf Committee, and committee members Ricky Blanton; Sister Carolyn Brady; Curtis Lanoux; Charles Moniotte; Michael Olinde; Jack Persac; Rock Rockenbaugh; Tom Tate; Jay Mitchell Ourso, Jr., Honorary Parish Government Chair; and Brian Harris, Honorary Tournament Chair. Without them, our tournament would not have been possible. This year's funding will provide school uniforms for needy children, as well as a hand-up to homeless women at our Myriam's House Program.

Letters from Some Very Special Supporters

Within a few days of each other, we received separate letters from two elderly women who have very little themselves, but wanted to share with others who are less fortunate. One envelope contained four one-dollar bills and the other gift was for \$5.00. As far as we know, these wonderful ladies are strangers, but they have something in common – unselfish, generous hearts and a concern for others. Here are their letters.

"I hope this helps. I don't have much. I live on a small social security check. Pray for me. I am 94 years old this coming February."

"..All I get is a little money every month. I live in an apartment for old people. I am 76 years old. I have a lot of medical problems. All I can give is four dollars and some prayers. Thank you. May God bless you for all you do for other people."

To protect the confidentiality of the writers, we've kept these letters anonymous, but they both deserve our highest praise and gratitude. We are reminded of the Bible story about the widow's mite. To give all that you can – who can ask for more than that?

A special thank-you goes out to these extraordinary ladies and to all the people who make our work possible. We have so many supporters with generous hearts. Some are able to make one-dollar gifts, while others have the capacity to give thousands. You all play a critical role in our ability to serve the poor and homeless. This Thanksgiving, we want to express to you how thankful we are for your support.

WBRZ's Coats for Kids Once again, WBRZ-Channel 2 and Pat Shingleton have asked St. Vincent de Paul to assist in the distribution of coats to needy children. We encourage you to support this important drive. For more information, call us at 383-7837, extension O.

Hunger in 2009

Without a doubt, we are seeing the impact of the recession here in Baton Rouge. Our meal counts continue to stay high. St. Vincent de Paul is known for taking a little and doing a lot, but this year has really put us to the test. Donated food items play a critical role in our ability to serve hot, nutritious meals 365 days a year. Please look through the list below and see if there is something you can contribute to our food service efforts.

Putting Giving into Thanksgiving

We want to take this opportunity to ask everyone who supports our shelter and housing programs to participate in this year's

Bishop Ott Collection Campaign. This year, WVLA NBC 33, WGMB FOX 44, WBRL CW 21 and KZUP RTV19 have once again stepped up to support this year's effort to collect much needed items for the homeless.

With the economic downturn, our beds are full, and we are seeing a lot of new people who have been impacted by the economy. So many people have lost jobs, while others still have jobs, but are working fewer hours. When you are already struggling to stay afloat, one missed paycheck can result in homelessness.

Please take a look at the list below and consider donating one of these items to our shelter program. Or better yet, head up a collection drive at your workplace, school or civic organization. For every item collected, there will be a very grateful recipient.

Needs List: soap, shampoo, deodorant, shaving cream, disposable razors, sheets (twin & crib size); blankets; pillow cases; pillows; disposable diapers; baby wipes; towels; washcloths; men, women and children's underwear; disposable cups, plates & bowls; plastic forks, spoons, knives; paper towels; napkins; flannel shirts; sweat suits; jackets; gloves; rain gear; blue jeans; scarves; slippers; duffle bags; socks; pajamas; diaper bags; sandwich bags; laundry detergent; bleach; drink mix (tea, lemonade, etc.); toothpaste; toothbrushes; and feminine hygiene products.



Taste & See this Thanksgiving

Last Thanksgiving, we talked a lot about our vision for a cookbook that would be filled with great recipes and true stories about how St. Vincent de Paul is changing lives in our community. At that time, our *Taste & See* cookbook was almost ready for the printer – just one step away from reality. This Thanksgiving, our cookbook is complete and supplies are available for pick-up or mail order.

Kathy Bishop, Cookbook Committee Chair, couldn't be more pleased with the finished product. Kathy commented, "This book has met with such success, and we've received great feedback over the last several months. The true test of a cookbook is the opinion of *real* cooks, and their response has been wonderful." Kathy, along with members of the Cookbook Committee, encourages everyone to share its unique message about the ministry of St. Vincent de Paul by ordering a copy today.

We would like to thank the thousands of people who have already purchased a copy of our cookbook. Your purchase has helped us to raise critically needed dollars for our charitable programs. If you haven't ordered your copy yet, now is a good time to do so. Christmas is right around the corner, and this would make the perfect gift for yourself or someone on your Christmas list.

To order your copy, call 383-7837, extension 204. Copies can also be ordered through our website – www.svdppbr.org. Remember that all proceeds from sales of the book will be used to provide critical services to needy people right here in our community.

Taste & See contains almost 200 mouth watering recipes that are perfect for any season, but there are quite a few you'll want to try for special occasions like Thanksgiving and Christmas. Dishes such as fried turkey, crawfish cornbread, garlic mashed potatoes, and squash casserole are sure to become holiday favorites.

As our Thanksgiving gift to you, we would like to share one of the recipes from the book. It would be the perfect ending for your holiday meal.

Taste & See – Sweet Potato Bread Pudding

- 16 oz. loaf French bread
- 1 ½ cup mashed cooked sweet potatoes
- 12 oz. can evaporated milk
- 2 ¼ cups half-and-half
- 4 eggs, lightly beaten
- 3 tablespoons cane syrup
- 1 cup packed light brown sugar
- 1 ½ teaspoons cinnamon
- ½ teaspoon nutmeg
- 2 teaspoons vanilla extract

Praline Sauce

- 1 ¼ cups packed light brown sugar
- ¾ cup heavy cream
- 1 tablespoon butter
- ½ teaspoon vanilla extract
- ½ cup chopped pecans, toasted

To prepare the bread pudding, cut the French bread into bite-size pieces and arrange in a single layer on a baking sheet. Bake at 300 degrees for 10 minutes or until dry and light golden brown. Remove from the oven and let stand to cool. Increase the oven temperature to 350 degrees.

Combine the sweet potatoes, evaporated milk, half-and-half, eggs, cane syrup, brown sugar, cinnamon, nutmeg and vanilla in a mixing bowl. Beat on low speed for 30 seconds. Beat on medium speed for 1 minute or until blended. Stir in the bread, coating with the sweet potato mixture. Spoon into a 9X13-inch baking dish sprayed with nonstick cooking spray. Let stand for 15 minutes. Bake for 30 to 40 minutes or until the center is firm.

To prepare the sauce, combine the brown sugar, cream and butter in a saucepan. Cook over medium-high heat until the butter is melted, stirring frequently. Bring to a gentle boil. Boil for 2 minutes, stirring constantly. Remove from the heat and stir in the vanilla and pecans. Let stand for 5 minutes, stirring occasionally.

To serve, spoon the warm bread pudding into dessert dishes. Spoon the warm sauce over the top.

Ensure that your values and beliefs live forever by remembering the Society of St. Vincent de Paul in your will.



Thankful Despite Tough Economic Times

At St. Vincent de Paul, we really started to see an increase in need last Thanksgiving. On Thanksgiving Day and Thanksgiving weekend, we saw more people at our Dining Room than we had ever seen before. The high demand continued into December 2008, and then on Christmas Day, we again saw record numbers. Not just our Dining Room, but our shelters, pharmacy and thrift stores are on track to reach new highs this year. As Thanksgiving 2009 draws near, we expect the higher numbers to continue, but with your support, our programs will be able meet the growing need.

For me, Thanksgiving is all about family. Unfortunately, many of the poor and homeless have no one else, and on this special day, we are their family. The individuals who make financial gifts, those who donate turkeys and hams, the volunteers who prepare and serve the food, and of course, our guests, are all members of one big family on this day of thanksgiving.

On Thursday, November 26th, we'll be dishing up big helpings of turkey and gravy, cornbread dressing, cranberry sauce and green beans. In addition to the single men and women joining us for this delicious meal, there will be mothers and fathers with their children, couples, grandparents, and volunteers everywhere. Many of our guests have very little food at home and cannot afford to prepare the traditional Thanksgiving meal, but it's not just the food they come for. They need the social interaction, the sights and sounds of a joyous occasion shared with others.

They also need the bright light of hope and compassion, and that's what we are giving every time we provide food, clothing, shelter and prescriptions. We are showing that every individual is important and that someone cares about them.

St. Vincent de Paul has a remarkable 144-year history of service here in our community, and nothing lasts that long unless people put their hearts and souls into it. Every time you help someone else, you are following your heart, and we are so grateful for every St. Vincent de Paul supporter and volunteer.

During these difficult economic times, we appreciate your support more than ever. Please accept our heartfelt thanks for all you do. May God bless you and your family this Thanksgiving, and may the blessings you share with others come back to you a thousand times over. -- Michael J. Acaldo, President & CEO, St. Vincent de Paul Charities

TOYS ARE NEEDED! Help us share the Christmas spirit! Bishop Robert Muench will be at the St. Vincent de Paul Dining Room on Saturday, December 19, to distribute gifts to homeless and needy children. We are collecting new toys for this effort and need your support. If you are interested in donating a toy, call (225) 383-7837, ext. 201, for more information.

Address Service Requested

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