



Spring 2008
Volume 3, Issue 1

St. Vincent de Paul Newsletter

ST. VINCENT de PAUL SOCIETY – ROGUE VALLEY DISTRICT COUNCIL

Saint Vincent de Paul Creates Endowment Fund

Scheduled Events:

April 12 Dinner/Auction

April 19 Fluoride and Sealant Clinic
8:30-3:00 at homeless center

July 12 Dinner/Auction

About 3 years ago Dick Handley, one of our key idea people, began promoting the idea of establishing an endowment fund at Saint Vincent de Paul. Certainly, Dick had discovered, as he worked on grant requests, having an endowment fund went a long way toward presenting an organization with a solid future...a key characteristic for a non-profit seeking financial support.

Well, about that time our Capital Improvement Campaign got into full swing and consumed all our energies, so Dick's idea went onto the back burner. However, we are now glad to announce that in December 2007 our Board of Directors entered into a formal relationship with the Oregon Community Foundation (OCF) to manage and administer an Endowment Fund for our Council. OCF is the 10th largest community foundation in the country managing some 1300 charitable funds.

By creating the Endowment Fund we are significantly advancing our objective of



Joe Tonkovich and Len Hebert discussing the Endowment Fund

improving our short and long term fiscal stability and viability. And, as implied earlier, we have now expanded our access to more significant charitable grants. Likewise, we have increased our appeal to major donations by individuals, families, non profits and businesses. The Endowment makes it possible for patrons to make longer term monetary gifts plus donate real estate and stock to Saint Vincent de Paul. The Fund, working through OCF, will also facilitate the establishment of Charitable Trusts and Annuities.

According to our President, Len Hebert, it means that this partnership will yield

benefits to our Council and the services we provide to the needy for years to come."

If you or your financial advisor want to learn more about the available strategies for giving to our Council, contact Christina Sanz, OCF Charitable Gift Planner for Southern Oregon at 541 773 8978 or call Len at 541 772 3828 with your questions. ■

"This partnership will yield benefits to our Council and the services we provide to the needy for years to come."

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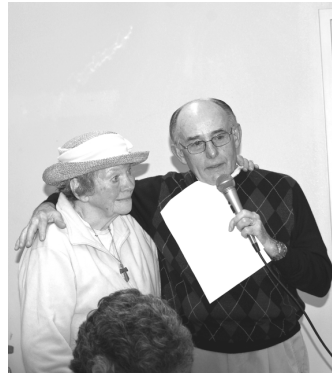
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Annual Recognition Dinner

Hearts and roses decorated the dining room at the annual Volunteer Recognition Dinner on Feb. 16, at St. Vincent de Paul. The Valentine theme was an expression of love for all who give their time and skills to the society. More than 230 volunteers and family members were on hand to receive the heart-felt applause for all they do.

Al Zon, emcee for the evening, emphasized that the volunteers are the lifeblood of the society. "Each of the conferences has a special ministry that is carried out by Vincentians, who have answered the call to serve the poor and needy," he said.



Mary Gulrich and Len

"We are the only all-volunteer council in the nation. That's really quite an accomplishment."

Great food, fellowship and even a comedy skit highlighted the evening's activities. The skit, a one-act play by Patrick Wilson, Vice President of Special Projects, provided a

comedic look at the ins-and-outs of St. Vincent de Paul through the lens of a fabricated board meeting.

The culmination of the night was the presentation of service pins to the faithful folks who dedicate their time to the various ministries. Council President Len Hebert and Volunteer Coordinator Kathy Tonkovich presented the pins. Len acknowledged the Vincentians and other members of the community who give their time to help the poor.

Members of the Latter-day-Saints, who serve lunch every Saturday,

were thanked for their work with the poor, as were Shelly Staten, Jackie Scheid and Paul Kechel, hair stylists who provide free haircuts every month.

"It is such a community effort," Len said. "We are truly blessed." ■



Len with Karen McNeilly, Thrift Store Manager

"We are the only all-volunteer council in the nation."



April Auction/Dinner

The dinner/auction sponsored by the School Supplies Conference will be April 12. The menu for the evening includes the St. Patrick's Day favorite "corned beef and cabbage," along with red potatoes, hot bread, salad, and desert.

"We will be experimenting with ways to speed the serving process," says Mary Hogue, Conference President for the Kitchen. "Appetizers will be placed on each guest table and we will have two separate serving lines with access available on both sides. This will dramatically shorten the waiting time in line and increase the opportunity for guests to visit with friends and volunteers."

Purchase you tickets at the office now, before they're gone! ■



Mary Hogue, Kitchen President, reviews the menu with Frank Blaschka, Amy Stevens and Irma Blaschka

Meet Rita and Leo Dull

Since opening, the new Thrift Store has thrived, thanks to our devoted volunteers and our expanding base of loyal customers. Sales grew dramatically over 2006, increasing over 20%. And we expect between \$400,000, and \$500,000 in sales in 2008.. "A major contributing factor was our adoption of credit and debit cards," says Karen Mc Neilly, store manager. "I wager we have increased our sales at least 15% because of this added service for our customers."

"The increased sales have enabled us to dramatically expand the services and support provided by our other conferences," adds Len Hebert, our President. "We now receive \$12,000 monthly for Social Services, enabling even greater rental and utility support to our clients...especially critical now with the worsening economic situation and growing inflation, like the exploding cost of gas." In addition, it has enabled us to create our Endowment Fund (page 1), expand reserves we need during more difficult times, and pay down our debt, maximizing the funds available to directly support the less fortunate of Jackson County.

Karen detailed a number of innovations being made to ensure our Thrift Store remains *one of the premier retail thrift shopping sites in the valley*. "We are continuously striving to guarantee the store

provides quality merchandise that is readily visible to our customers. We have added a display for our flowers, a gallery for the more expensive framed artwork, and improved the location and arrangement of the toys." Another focus of our work is to reorganize the receiving areas to expedite the sorting and pricing of donations and quickly getting them out on the selling floor. In addition, we want to make certain we provide maximum support to our voucher recipients. The store now has over 5,200 clients we provide with free clothing and household needs. In addition, store personnel regularly stock the dining room with free clothing and shoes for youth and adults, as well as toys for young children.

Sales grew dramatically over 2006, increasing over 20%.

The success of the store continues to depend on the many volunteers who provide countless hours to ensure the store's reliable operation. For example, the Christmas season is extremely challenging, given the additional need to locate, sort and stock large quantities of seasonal holiday items. "Our volunteers worked long hours and we were also assisted, again this year, by volunteers from other conferences, particularly Social

Services," says Karen. "While there are too many people to identify them all, we really appreciated the unselfish support from Perri Johnson from Social



Mary Jo Rees from the Store and Nola Geaney from Social Services

Services, as well as the tremendous work of our own Mary Jo Rees, Sonja Roberts, Bob and Jeannie Hammer, Ramona Duval and Diane Wren." Karen also expressed a special thanks to her Day Managers: Mary Jo Rees, Sonja Roberts, Diane Johnson and Patrick Wilson, who make the on-going functioning of the store more effective. "These are the folks we need contacted anytime members from other conferences come to the store with a need or a question."

"We expect 2008 to be more demanding than ever with the severe slow down in the economy," says Karen. "Consequently, the bad news is our donations are down. The good news is we have even more customers than ever looking for bargains given their more limited spending ability." ■



Friday the 13th was lucky for Rita and Leo Dull. That's the day they met. "We were on a November hike with the Catholic Spirit Group on Whiting Ranch in El Torro, CA," Rita says. "We were married in October of the following year." The two, both widowed, found the hike to be the first step in what was to become a lifetime partnership. They have been married for 14 years.

Rita and Leo began volunteering at St. Vincent de Paul in January 1996. "When we started, Lil (Howe, the founder) had us stuffing envelopes," Leo says. "But I wanted to be in the kitchen." So two weeks later he began cooking what was to be the first of thousands of meals he has prepared for the needy. "We always remembered, "When I was hungry you gave me food to eat," Rita says. "And we wanted to pay back all

the people who had helped us, and also return God's kindness," Leo adds.

Leo is the chief cook on Thursdays and Fridays. Rita helps out with preparation and makes sure the serving line moves smoothly. "A lot of folks who come in to eat say, 'I'm glad you're cooking or I wouldn't be here today,'" Leo says. Their favorite dishes are Leo's fabulous meat loaf and his spaghetti sauce. But they are not here just to cook. "We get to know those we serve," Rita says. In fact, Leo makes an effort to get out from behind the stove and visit folks in the dining room. "Sometimes I greet them at the door, but I always go out and shake hands with the diners and welcome them to St. Vincent de Paul." Rita adds, "It's really hard for some people, especially the young men, to go through the serving line. We try to make them feel comfortable." More and more folks are finding comfort in the dining room. "When we first started it was a big day if we served 60 people." Leo says. "Now we serve an average of 200 a day." They say the improved kitchen facilities at St. Vincent's have been a real blessing. "It's like working at the Ritz." Leo comments.

When the Dulls aren't cooking at St. Vincent's, they're often lending a hand to other organizations. Leo has prepared spaghetti dinners for the Magdalene Home, he and Rita cook Sunday family dinners at Our Lady of the Mountain Church, and twice they were the chief cooks for retreats at St. Rita's in Gold Hill. They also serve as Eucharistic ministers, lectors and make visits to the sick and elderly. But St. Vincent's is a big part of their lives. Leo was president of the kitchen conference for six years. He stepped down when he started to have problems with his back and knee. It only took him a couple of months to recover and he was back cooking. "We'll continue working here as long as we can stand up straight." Leo says. "We consider ourselves to be so blessed." But the thing they are most thankful for? "We're lucky to have each other," Rita says. ■

"It's really hard for some people, especially the young men, to go through the serving line. We try to make them feel comfortable."

St Vincent de Paul Competes for an Oscar!

It was time for "*lights, camera and action!*" when the Medical Teams International Dental Van came to St. Vincent de Paul in February. That's because a videographer was recording the event for a 10-minute video being produced by La Clinica about the free dental program. La Clinica received a \$20,000 grant to promote free dental care in the Rogue Valley, and St. Vincent de Paul has a starring role in the production.

The video includes interviews with dentists, clients and coordinators of this joint program between La Clinica and St. Vincent de Paul. "The idea is to present the video to

the dental community," said Maria Ramos Underwood, development director of La Clinica. "It will be used as a recruiting tool to get more volunteer dentists."

St. Vincent de Paul brings the van monthly as a means of offering free dental care to the needy. Local dentists volunteer a day to work on patients and La Clinica provides the dental assistants. So far, generous donors have underwritten the \$600 cost to bring the van from Roseburg to Medford. Dr. Harry Harbert, a Medford dentist, provided the restorative care in February and will be back in March to help out again.

St. Vincent de Paul is able to help ten to 12 patients every time the van comes to town. The van itself has two dental offices, X-ray facilities and even boasts a small waiting room. "We have more than 1,000 people on a waiting list to see the dentist," says Kathy Morgan, coordinator for St. Vincent de Paul. "This partnership with La Clinica will certainly help meet the needs of our community."

Dentists interested in volunteering time are welcome to call Morgan at 772-8976. Donations to underwrite the cost of the van also are welcome. ■

Increased Focus on Recruiting

Cheryle Tatman was recently named as the Manager of Volunteer Recruiting and Training. Cheryle is replacing Kathy Tonkovich who had been filling this role for the past 9 months. Cheryle couldn't say enough about how helpful Kathy has been bringing her on board, and indicated the two of them had spent considerable time working to get the volunteer records up to date. (Along those lines, if you know of present or past volunteers who do not receive this newsletter, please call the office and leave a message for Cheryle, so we can ensure our mailing rosters are complete.)

Cheryle started her work at St. Vincent de Paul as a cashier at the Thrift Store on Thursdays. She says, "I really

like working with the other volunteers, particularly the other cashiers with whom I work closely. And it is very rewarding helping others who clearly are so much in need."

Two of the most pressing volunteer needs are finding more cashiers for the store and drivers for the pantry and the store. "These are critical positions," Cheryle says. "Without enough cashiers to handle all our customers every day, we may as well close the doors." Likewise, "she went on, "our drivers keep the goods rolling... the donations of food and furniture from businesses and individual contributors."

Cheryle is also trying to identify why so many volunteers leave after only a short period. "If we can

define the reasons, perhaps we can take measures to improve the situation."

"There is a wealth of retired people who would be willing to volunteer, if we could make individual contact and help them understand how greatly our clients would gain from their assistance," Cheryle mentions.

Cheryle, a native Oregonian born in Medford, has lived most of her adult life in San Mateo, California. She was a licensed insurance broker for 30 years (a good source if you have insurance questions) and was Vice President of Risk Management for two Fortune 500 corporations.

A big welcome and thanks to Cheryle for taking on these responsibilities. ■

Our Lady of Guadalupe Provides Welcomed Support to the Needy

Paul Hammer, the Headmaster of Our Lady of Guadalupe Academy in Jacksonville, is rightfully proud of his school and his students. The school teaches students from grades 9 to 12 and has 6 full time and 4 part time students. Besides teaching the traditional subjects, the objective of the school is to ensure that graduates can think critically, write effectively, know their history, and appreciate their culture.

In spite of the small number students, they have big hearts and helped make a large impact this past Christmas. As many of you know, Sacred Heart creates a *Giving Tree* for the poor and needy every holiday.

Students from Our Lady of Guadalupe decorate the tree. The tree is also a family project for Kathy Wilson, husband Tom, and their children who do all the detailed work of defining the many needs. The names of underprivileged children and adults, along with their Christmas wishes are placed on tags by the Wilson's and added to the tree. Parishioners are encouraged to select individuals they would like to help. As names are removed, new tags are added. Because of the generous response of the parishioners, tags were added several more times this past holiday and the gifts came pouring in.



Once the gifts were secured, the youngsters of Our Lady of Guadalupe swung into action. Their job was to gather up the gifts and deliver them to Saint Vincent de Paul and to the Magdalene Home. Over 20 shopping carts of gifts were received at Saint Vincent de Paul by Nola Ganey, President of the Social Services Conference. Nola's counselors gave packages to clients they met with as the holiday approached. Many gifts were given to adults and children coming to the dining room each day for the noon meal and numerous more presents were distributed to the folks who attended our Christmas day meal. Lots of practical needs were met for sleeping

bags, blankets, coats and other warm clothing, as well as toys to brighten the holidays for the very young.

Nola remembers a group that was touched in particular. "One day two grandmothers came in with their 6 grandchildren. The grandmothers had taken over raising the children when they were abandoned by the parents who had become addicted to drugs," says Nola. "They were obviously struggling and had come to us hoping to find some cheer to add to the Christmas for their young charges. Tears came to the grandmother's eyes when we were able to provide gifts of clothes and toys. It was truly touching." ■



From left, Dianne Erickson, Cheryle Tatman, Len Hebert, Patrick Wilson, and Dennis Mihocko present a one-act play ... A spoof of a fictional board meeting at St. Vincent de Paul. It garnered lots of laughs and everyone seemed to enjoy it immensely.

Thanks to the Saint Vincent de Paul Actor's Guild!

Editors note: Please remember St. Vincent de Paul when you complete your State tax form...Oregon Charitable Checkoff.

Cashiers Carol Eibner and Rosemary Beers manage the registers at the Thrift Store.



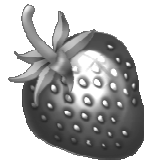
Pantry Struggles to Keep Up

The rising price of food and gas and the increase in need left the food pantry in a bit of a pickle during the holiday season. "We were spending more and more and getting less and less," said Betty Burgess, co-president of the pantry conference. "And with the economy in such dire straits, many more people need help."

After Betty and Charles were interviewed for a story in the Mail Tribune about their plight, the pantry's shelves began to fill.

First grade students from Hoover Elementary School donated 100 bags of groceries. A local hockey team held a benefit game for the food pantry where spectators Center for Spiritual Living made two big donations, and the Grange Co-op brought in more than 500

cans of food. But the giving didn't stop there. The news article mentioned that Charles was celebrating a birthday, so the kids from Hoover brought a birthday cake and even serenaded the pantry's co-leader with a rousing rendition of "Happy Birthday to You." Cash donations also were given. One check for \$500 was tucked into an envelope.



The pantry was able to make it through the holidays and even had some food left over. But the number of people using the

pantry continues to grow. "In January we gave out food to more than 2000 people," Betty said. "That compares to about 600 bags we gave out in January of last year." Prices won't be going down. But the Burgesses keep their spirits up.

"Whenever we start to worry about the cupboards being bare, someone always steps up to the plate," Charles said. "It is amazing, and we're pleased as, ummm, a pickle." ■

"In January we gave out food to more than 2000 people. That compares to about 600 bags we gave out in January of last year."

Meet Bob and Jeannie Hammer

Back in the 70's two crazy young kids were at the Alibi Tavern in Medford one night and met over the Foosball table; so began the relationship of Bob and Jeannie Hammer. They dated for about 6 months before they were married in Reno. Bob was working for the railroad and Jeannie was an RN.

They both started volunteering with Lil Howe when the food bank and kitchen were run by Sacred Heart Church. Bob picked up merchandise for the homeless and helped Jeannie, first in the food bank and then later the kitchen. They started working for the SVDP Thrift Store about 20 years ago and continued until Bob's job took him to Colorado and then Idaho. Just as soon as they returned, 6 years later, they returned to help in the Store. Along the way two daughters were born...Lori and then 4 years later, Karale.

On their return Jeannie first worked as a cashier and

eventually took over responsibility for the toys. Jeannie says, "I really like the sense of accomplishment I feel getting the toys cleaned, assembled and working.



My grandson, Jacob, and my daughter, Karla work together with me. Jacob often reminds me he is a volunteer and quite proud to be one. He takes the toys I can't even begin to figure out and goes off and fully assembles them. The two of them started helping at a time when I was starting to feel burned out. Working with them has really energized me."

Meanwhile, Bob has continued to pick up merchandise and deliver all these years, as well as helping out as a cashier several times a month. He says, "Sometimes you go into a house and it's very dark, so we're not quite certain what were accepting until its loaded and we're back in good light again." He enjoys the generosity of the many people who donate, particularly given so many contribute really fine furniture. "Working as a cashier is also great because, I like interacting with our customers. Even though, every once in awhile, you get a tough customer and I have to just push myself to remain quiet."

Clearly we are lucky to have these two dedicated volunteers, as well as their daughter and our youngest volunteer, grandson Jacob. ■

President's Letter



Previously, I discussed how the colder winter season would likely challenge our ability to provide for growing demand for our services. We were indeed challenged and because of your dedication, skill and support, the unfortunate in our area were served reasonably well. Thank you for your unselfish contribution. Remember, our services help those who can't quite completely help themselves and, in turn, enhance the quality of life for all of us in this Valley.

Let's take a closer look at 2007 and the services we provided. We now have 225 volunteers in our Council. We collectively donated over 70,000 hours last year. Social Services and Home Visit volunteers provided rent, utility and prescription cost relief to over 12,400 families and individuals. In addition, they worked with our Thrift Store volunteers to provide needy families and individuals with free donated clothing and household items. The Thrift Store continued to be the largest source of our Council's financial resources allowing us to overcome the costs of our services. Our Kitchen and Food Pantry provided almost 47,000 hot meals and over 10,000 bags of groceries. School Supplies volunteers distributed grade-specific kits of school supplies to about 2,000 needy children. Family Shelter volunteers provided over 3500 bed nights and our Med Assist volunteers continued to ensure access to free prescription drug assistance. In addition, they initiated a dental screening and restoration service in conjunction with eight volunteer Valley Dental professionals. And our Administration volunteers provided the glue that made everything run smoothly.

Thanks again to all of you and for who you are.

God Bless you,

Len



St. Vincent de Paul

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