



Winter 2006
Volume 1, Issue 4

St. Vincent de Paul Newsletter

ST. VINCENT de PAUL SOCIETY – ROGUE VALLEY DISTRICT COUNCIL

Scheduled Events:

**Salvation Army
Thanksgiving Food
Giveaway on Nov. 21,
9am until all gone,
Registration Nov. 6-10.**

**Mountain Christian
Fellowship
Thanksgiving Dinner
on Nov 24.**

**Gospel Mission
Thanksgiving Dinner
on Nov. 23.**

**Salvation Army
Christmas Toys & Food
Registration Dec. 4-8.**

**St. Vincent de Paul
Auction/Dinner
Postponed to January.**

**Christmas Dinner at St.
Vincent de Paul – Dec
25, 11am to 1pm.**

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New Thrift Store Opens to Enthusiastic Praise!

It seems to be a general consensus that our new store is wonderful!! Many volunteers and customers have made comments to that effect. Volunteer Ardith Jenkins thinks, "It's just lovely, however, I wish the floors were softer!" (We're still waiting for the concrete to dry enough to lay the tile.)

One customer said, "It's a blessing to come here. It's so large and clean and the volunteers are always friendly and smiling. Besides, I feel I'm helping the poor by shopping here."



Carol Eibner and Alice Zwan at the Thrift Store register.



Customers waiting for the Collectible's Show to open.

Our new store has 10,540 square feet of shopping space and 5,700 square feet of work and storage space, which is all being used to the fullest.

Community support has been phenomenal in terms of donations. More people are patronizing the store because of the quality, quantity and variety of merchandise offered and a desire to support the mission of St. Vincent de Paul.

Another volunteer, Diane Johnson feels, "Our number one

challenge is getting enough volunteers, especially in the sorting area." She says her main reason for being here is that, "It touches my heart to be able to help families and children in need." She also enjoys the people who work in the store and admires their generosity in giving their time and their commitment.

"Giving people a hand up, not a handout," as stated by volunteer Gayle Lawrence, seems to be the prevailing attitude that makes our store so wonderful. ■



Seasons Greetings!



At Last, a New Pantry...



Betty Burgess, Irene Rausch and Mona Rausch taking a break.



Amy Stevens, Clay and Marge Mares and Irene on the line bagging groceries.

After years of cramped quarters, we soon will have a new pantry. Amy Stevens, Pantry President, states, "The new pantry will be wonderful with more than twice the amount of space, more shelving and tables, a walk-in freezer, our own cooler and bathroom, plus a large utility sink."

Amy has no remorse about leaving the old pantry even though she worked there since 1997. According to Amy, the only challenge to the move was actually moving! John Geaney applauds the pantry volunteers saying, "They adjusted well to all the interruptions and inconveniences."

Many volunteers stepped forward to ease the load. Rich Thelan and Patrick Wilson did much to empty the old pantry and Rich also volunteered to oversee the installation of the shelving in the new area. "Vincentian pantry volunteers do a wonderful job!" praises Amy. "Pantry staff is always there for extra work besides food-give-away weeks." Clay and Marge Mares, Irene and Mona Rausch, Charlie and Betty Burgess are at St. Vincent on a biweekly basis along with Amy who arrives at 7:00 am daily. At auction time the staff completely

sets up and manages the Harry and David sales. Irene, Mona and Ginger Dickerson even put together the auction baskets. Cliff Cooper also deserves kudos! Cliff arrives at 6:00 am 3 days a week to drive the truck picking up donations from Costco and Harry and David, plus a bi-monthly run for the food purchases from ACCESS and a kitchen run to Cash 'N Carry.

We thank all the pantry volunteers for the work they do to help the poor and hope our efficient bright new pantry will make this extremely worthwhile job a bit easier! ■



Collectibles Sale is Huge Success

The latest happening for the new store was this year's Collectibles Sale on November 5. It was bigger and better than ever, given all the added space with which the volunteers had to work. Nearly a thousand people showed up, as well as two of our local news stations, and we made \$18,000. This would not have been possible without the help of many volunteers...56 in all. The store conf

thanks all these folks and particularly long time volunteers Dorothy & Don Walterick, Jackie Cavanaugh, Mary Jo Rees, DeeDee Metz, Nancy Hunt, Pat McNeilly and Jane Alexander for their extraordinary efforts in getting the merchandise ready for the sale. Special thanks : to Dorothy for the hundreds of hours she spent over the past year getting ready for the show. She truly is the "heart" of the Collectibles Sale.



As Store President Karen McNeilly expressed, "Shop at St. Vincent de Paul because eventually you'll find that illusive item." Many people can attest to this from their "finds" at the Collectible Sale this year. Karen's strong leadership enabled this sale to be even more successful than in the past. ■

The Holidays Are Coming

While it's getting colder outside, things are really heating up in Saint Vincent's kitchen. Besides preparing for daily lunches and the traditional Christmas Dinner, the volunteers, under President Mary' Hogue's guidance, are struggling to work around all the construction that is underway.

The changes will result in a dining room that will be 30% larger, an improved and expanded serving line that will allow for both hot and cold holding areas, a walk-in-freezer versus the several floor freezers currently used, a more spacious and easily accessed storage area and a new scullery that will make it easier to receive and wash dishes. All these changes will allow us to better serve the people who eat at St Vincent de Paul's Monday through Saturday, as well as significantly increasing the number of folks we can accommodate at our auctions.

Because of the extent of the work underway, it is not possible for us to hold a Thanksgiving Dinner (see the schedule on page 1 for other options). Regardless, our Christmas Dinner will be a festive event for all who attend. Last year we served about 300 people and we expect at least that number this year. As always, are looking for extra help. About 15-16 turkeys must be prepared in the weeks before and we are seeking volunteers who are willing to cook and slice the turkeys in their homes. On Christmas day we will need 5-6 folks for the serving line and about 20 volunteers to delivers meals to the tables. The meal will be served from 11 am till 1 pm. Last year it was hard to determine who enjoyed the event most... the diners or the volunteers.

If you're interested in volunteering please call the office at 772 3828 starting December 1. ■



Mary Hogue and Ted Peplinski plan an upcoming auction and dinner.

Last year we served about 300 people and expect at least that number this year.



A New Training and Career Resource Center

Something new is being added to the St. Anthony Family Homeless Shelter. Under the guidance of Heidi Willey, Human Resource person at Grange Co-op, the shelter is developing a Training and Career Resource Center. The center will be located in the new classroom at the shelter.

Willey heads a committee that is overseeing this effort. She is working with Al Zon, Dave

Moosman, Nick Koutsouros, Patrick Wilson, Kathy Morgan; and Council President Len Hebert, to develop a curriculum.

A perpetual training calendar is in the works. And local agencies, including Consumer Credit Counseling, Clinica Del Valle and the LDS Training Center have expressed an interest in supporting St.

Vincent de Paul's efforts. "We want to empower marginalized individuals and cultivate their personality traits, talents, and abilities in order to become the individuals they were created to be," Willey said.

The purpose of the center is to provide training and direction to disadvantaged individuals, those

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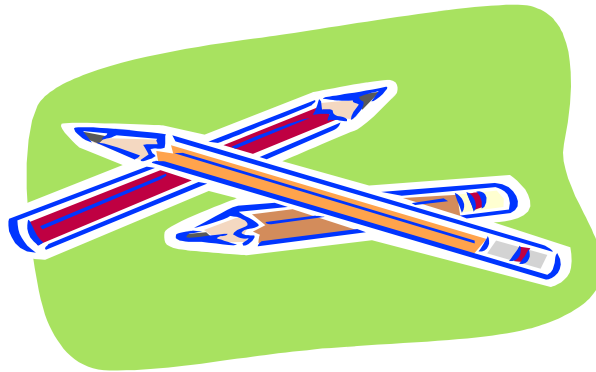
Helping Kids Get a Good Start in School

There are few things as heart-warming as watching kids open gifts on Christmas morning, but seeing the faces of young people receive their bags of school supplies from Saint Vincent de Paul in early September ranks right up there. Bob Christian and his wife Debbie, who together managed the School Supply handout, were delighted to see the smiles of the 1850 kids who benefited this year. "That's over 300 more kids than last year," says Bob. "We had the help of over 60 great volunteers from the various Conferences. And this included about 5-6 teenagers, as well as some other folks who came to our assistance just for this occasion. Not to forget the support and encouragement of John Geaney and Ginger Dickerson," says Bob.

"In addition to the growing numbers of kids we serve, it was surprising to see how many schools from all over the valley were represented...some for the first time. I guess the word is getting out, because we didn't do any extra advertising this year." Bob related.

Besides ensuring the kids, which included a greater number of upperclassmen this year, received a good supply of pens, paper and the like. Back packs were also a favorite item. Alarm clocks were included this year along with calculators and other more sophisticated supplies, where needed. Bob added that, "If students receiving the school supply bags this year work as hard as the volunteers who gave the bags away, they should have an extremely successful year of learning."

Our new conference president, Bob Christian, and his wife, Debbie, said they were very happy with the this year's results and feel that next year, with only a few changes, things will run even smoother. Debbie and the other volunteers really loved being involved in the program. And, says Debbie, "Seeing the excitement and gratitude of these young people really warms you." ■



You Too Can Help

A major principle at Saint Vincent de Paul is to minimize expenses so the maximum benefit can go directly to the poor and needy. That is the reason, for example, that we ran the Capital Improvement Drive without any outside fund-raising talent. Accordingly we need your help too; there are lots of things you have laying around the house and/or routinely toss out that can be used by our Conferences. Consider the following needs:

Kitchen

- Plastic cups and glasses, complete sets unnecessary
- Metal forks, full sets not important
- Quart size cottage cheese and yogurt containers with lids
- Unused holiday and party napkins
- Old towels and tea towels

Pantry

- Plastic grocery store bags

Thrift Store

- Paper grocery store bags

Shelter

- Blankets and sheets for twin beds
- Pillowcases
- Dishes and silverware, all kinds

When you have a collection of these you can spare, please bring them to the respective conference. As always, we appreciate your contributions. And keep bringing the kitchen your excess seasonal produce and left-over party food. ■

A Better Place to Live

Rogue Valley families without shelter will be coming home for the holidays. The new 44-bed St. Anthony Family Shelter will open just in time for Christmas. The shelter, located at the site of the old thrift store, has been completely renovated. The building now sports new windows, a new roof, and a state-of-the-art facility that will offer hope and housing for the needy.

The shelter should be completed by the end of November, according to St. Anthony President Al Zon. New beds have been purchased and a commercial size refrigerator

plus washers and dryers are on order. Conference member Elsie Williams, the official decorator, is selecting curtains and accessories to make the new shelter a showplace. "It's very exciting," Al said.

During the renovation, St. Mark's Episcopal Church donated the use of a building as a temporary shelter. "We are so grateful to them," Al said. But there's nothing like having a home of your own. And although there is no fireplace, chances are pretty good that Santa will be able to visit the folks staying here for Christmas. And the warmth from the hearth probably won't be missed, as folks settle into their holiday home. ■

Meet Edwina and Virgil Jenkins



"We're still on our honeymoon," Virgil says.

Some things just go together: salt and pepper, Batman and Robin, and Edwina and Virgil Jenkins. St. Vincent de Paul's dynamic duo has been married for more than half a century. They've been the builders, dreamers and visionaries helping make St. Vincent de Paul what it is today.

Edwina has been with St. Vincent for 23 years. "I started in the kitchen at the old rectory," Edwina said. "I really didn't like that, so Lil (Howe, the founder) suggested I work as a counselor." And Edwina is *still* a counselor for the Sacred Heart Conference where she has served as president, secretary and treasurer. "She is the kindest person I've ever met," said one client. "I've been coming to see Edwina for more

than 15 years. I think she's a living saint."

But this saint has a loving husband and he wasn't going to let Edwina do all the work, so he joined in. When the Jenkins started, we had a small thrift store on Riverside Street and no food pantry or homeless shelter. Lil and Edwina created the food pantry; giving groceries away the last Friday of each month. "We mainly gave food to single people, maybe 15 or 20 bags a week," Edwina said. "My how it has grown."

With no homeless shelter, the pastor of Sacred Heart agreed to allow the homeless to sleep in the church. "Many nights we would curl up in our sleeping bags on the floor,"

Virgil says. It became obvious that St. Vincent needed to expand. In the late '80s, the current property was purchased. "I was the only one who voted against it," Virgil says. "Edwina wouldn't talk to me for a week."

Even though Virgil resisted the move, he was still a mover and shaker, serving as President of the Council for two terms and also starting the homeless shelter. "It was a one-person conference," Virgil remembers. "Back then, the shelter was for single men." Today, Virgil is still a member of the shelter conference. And Edwina is still a counselor and also works in the new thrift store. "We've seen so many changes," Edwina says. But some things never change. "We're still on our honeymoon," Virgil says. ■

“Volunteering Makes You Feel Closer to God.”

More important than what she does at St. Vincent, according to Mary Gulrich, is what St. Vincent does for her. Mary softly states, “I get a feeling of being closer to God when I volunteer here.” Mary has worked helping the poor and needy of Jackson County for over 24 years. She began in 1982 at the Sacred Heart rectory in Medford working for the Legion of Mary, which soon became St. Vincent de Paul.

“At first I brought in food from home, served it and did dishes,” explains Mary. “Our number one rule was to mingle with the poor.” As time progressed

clothing was collected to be given away. Mary remembers, “We received so many donations that clothing had to be stored upstairs in the old rectory on Oakdale. Only two people at a time were allowed upstairs because the floors were so unstable!”

Mary was born in San Francisco. Her greatest achievements and pleasures included raising 7 children, having an interesting career and volunteering with the church and St. Vincent de Paul. Mary says, “I was blessed with a wonderful husband and had seven great children, five of whom still live in the Rogue

Valley. I enjoyed volunteering for the church by typing out the bulletins everywhere I lived, but I never really learned to type.” She now comes each Fridays and does computer data input for the office! Mary worked for RVMC for 30 years as a dietary supervisor and only retired five years ago at the young age of 77.

It seems Mary can find many ways to give. She has donated over 22 gallons of blood in her lifetime and continues to give not only with her work at the computer, but also by being such a bright happy person in the office she makes others feel closer to God. ■



Mary Gulrich

Mary has worked helping the poor and needy for over 24 years.

A Training and Resource Center... *continued from page 3*

living in the shelter and others interested in bettering themselves. Classes will cover everything from personal hygiene to household budgeting to time management and writing resumes. Classes on parenting and nutrition also will be added...“I think we can really make a difference in people’s lives,” said Koutsouros, shelter manager.

The target date for opening the center is mid-February. Anyone interested in helping to implement the program should call St. Vincent de Paul, 772-3828 (between 10 a.m. and 2 p.m. Monday through Friday). Trainers are needed in the following areas:

**Social Skills - Household Budgeting - Personality Traits, Talents and Aptitudes Assessment
Work Ethic and Personal Responsibility - Personal Hygiene - Dental Hygiene - Nutrition
and Personal Wellness - Creating a Resume and Completing Applications for Employment
Job Interviews and Etiquette - Work Performance and Job Expectations - Networking
Time Management - Mentorship and Accountability**

Volunteer Recruitment forms will be mailed upon request. ■

Providing a Helping Hand in Ashland

A single mom was struggling, trying to support herself and two children

She was almost crying when we told her how we could help.

It's not like *Ralph and Debora Wasche* don't have enough to keep them busy. They have 9 daughters between the ages of 8 and 33. And with the job of rearing this large family on one salary (Ralph worked as a VA case worker until retiring), they have certainly had times when they were really stretched. But in spite of their circumstances, this loving couple are secular Franciscans, members of the Our Lady of the Mountain SVDP Conference in Ashland and active in home visits.

They related to me the following case that really touched them. Ralph said, "We were recently called by a single mom who was supporting herself and two children, ages 2 and 14. When we first spoke she had already been struggling for some time to reach us on the phone because of phone problems we were experiencing." "It was clear she was very self conscious about asking for help. And when we went to her home, her 2 year old, while sick, was still very active...

bounding and jumping about. This seemed to cause additional embarrassment," says Deb.

Ralph explained the woman's problem as, "She had been receiving \$800 each month from the state and without warning they reduced it to \$400. She was really in a bind and struggling to keep her utilities on. It was obvious from the start she was trying to do her best. She had already gotten a diploma in natural healing and had been doing well for same time, but a thyroid problem now prevented her from pursuing that work. So here she was again...back in school supporting a family and working on a nurse's degree. Just about where she had been when her 14 year old was still a baby."

Deb continued, "She was living from paycheck to paycheck without anybody else to assist her. She was certainly relieved to learn we could help. We detailed the groups that could assist her. We can't provide any

support until the individual takes action to help themselves using these agencies. That done, we covered the major part of the electric and gas bills that were hanging over her head, as well as providing her with vouchers for clothing for her and the children. She was almost crying when we told her how we could help."

Before I ended my interview with Ralph and Deb they enthusiastically described what a tremendous job *Alice Nagel* and *Charlotte Dorsey*, current and past president of the Conference, had done to prepare them for doing home visits. "In all my work with the Veterans Administration I never came across anybody more professional or caring than these two ladies," said Ralph. "We also get together with all the volunteers doing home visits in Ashland twice a month to review our work and discuss better ways of doing home visits. And we always have lots of laughter and spiritually uplifting exchanges", added Deb before we ended the interview. ■



Volunteers at work.

President's Message

Dear fellow volunteers and supporters of St. Vincent's in the Rogue Valley, I want to bring you up to date on our on-going Capital Improvement Project.

To date we have completed about 2/3 of our Capital Improvement Project. The Project consists of a land purchase, demolition of our former Shelter, the construction of a 16,000 square Thrift Store and Warehouse building, the remodeling of our main building and the associated code required site improvement work. As stated previously, the project is planned to keep up with the growing demands for St. Vincent's services in the County

while improving the efficiency, effectiveness and safety of those services. And St. Vincent's services are improving as we move toward completion of the Project. Our Thrift Store and Warehouse facility is up and operational. During the remaining months of 2007, our Emergency Family Shelter, Food Pantry and some of our Kitchen/Dining room will be housed in the remodeled spaces of our main building. The remainder of the remodeling effort is planned to be completed by February 2007. The Capital Campaign to fund our Project is about complete; with less than \$100,000 more needed (an envelope for contributions

is included). That will fulfill the objective of St. Vincent's being debt free after its completion. The largest surprises we encountered during the construction effort were, price increases, some schedule delays and the need to replace the old dry rotted (in parts) roof of our main building.

Many Thanks to all our supporters and please stop by to see our progress.

Sincerely, **Len Hebert**

P.S. I would like to extend particular thanks to three of our major benefactors: Ashley Furniture, Costco and Harry and David's. Keep these friends in mind when you are shopping

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St. Vincent de Paul

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