

The Quarterly Informer

July, 2017
Volume X, Issue 3

St. Vincent de Paul Society
Our Lady of the Mountains Conference

Whatever you did for one of these least brothers of mine, you did for me. Matthew 25

ST. VINCENT DE PAUL SOCIETY Our Lady of the Mountains Conference Financial and Activity Report 3rd Quarter, 2016-2017

The third quarter of 2016-17 began with April activities and ended June 30th, 2017. During this period, Society members met with 88 clients, helping a total 152 people.

Total revenue for the period was \$23,975. Of this amount, \$13,975 came from Our Lady of the Mountains (OLM) parishioners. The balance of revenues came from the Community Thrift Store and Big Canoe Chapel grants. The Society used some surplus funds to cover spending that exceeded receipts during the period.

Direct Aid and Family Uplift Program spending totaled \$30,441. Of this amount, \$14,837 was for housing/rent with \$828 paid to motels to provide temporary shelter for homeless families. The Family Uplift Program currently has two participants; we paid \$2,392 for their housing/rent. Utility assistance totaled \$9,206 with \$4,506 paid to Amicalola EMC, \$2,712 to Georgia Power, \$964 for City and County water, with the rest going to other utility-related items, including \$284 for the Family Uplift Program participants.

We purchased twenty \$50 Kroger gift cards for a total of \$1,000 which we used to meet the immediate needs of clients for food and/or gas (we always encourage clients to utilize the CARES food pantry and Food Stamps so they can save any cash they might have to meet their monthly utility, rent, and other bills). Transportation assistance amounted to \$1,989, with \$687 going for a car repair enabling the family to get to and from work, with the remainder for car insurance.

Additional funds were spent on a special situation described later in this Newsletter (Recent Cases of Interest) in the amount of \$2,750 for home repairs.

There are numerous obstacles that make it difficult for many of our clients to sustain an independent life style—lack of public transportation, limited affordable housing, and lengthy time period to obtain disability assistance. Volunteers do their best to point clients to the proper resources that can help them achieve self-sufficiency. Sometimes, that can be as little as offering the phone number of the Cartersville Shelter or providing a means to update a résumé to find a better job.

As always, we thank OLM parishioners, the OLM Men's Club and Women's Guild, and the Community Thrift Store Grant, Big Canoe Benevolence and Women's Guild, and so many others who support the good works done by the Society of St. Vincent de Paul. Finally, we thank our many SVdP volunteers at OLM who make all of these good works happen.

THE CLIENT INTAKE PROCESS

We currently conduct a client intake in the lower level of the church each Wednesday of the month. By having an intake every week (we used to hold them only the first and third Wednesdays of the month), we hope to limit home visits to only those who are homebound or have a legitimate reason for not being able to attend intake, since we have a shortage of home visit volunteers.

At each intake, volunteers interview clients and try to provide a solution to each situation. As caseworkers gain knowledge and experience, they get better at pointing clients in the direction of self-sufficiency, which is our ultimate goal. Unfortunately, many situations are so grave that there are no solutions, only temporary relief. We do the best we can.

We direct clients seeking employment to the Community Resource Center for résumé preparation and pointers on finding a job. To those looking for an apartment, we give a list of apartments in the community, including the Jasper Housing Authority, although they have a one-year wait list. Whatever the problem, OLM volunteers try to refer the client to an agency and/or resource that may be able to help them with their particular situation. In cases where the amount of rent or the power bill exceeds SVdP/OLM limits, we partner with CARES, North Georgia Community Action, and/or other agencies that provide this assistance. Sometimes, for whatever reason, we may not be able to help financially and can only direct a client to another resource. Again, the SVdP goal is to provide the best help we can.

At the end of each client intake, all of the volunteers meet and discuss each case. A group decision is made to determine the amount of funds to be expended, but more importantly, our new volunteers learn from the experienced volunteers how to arrive at the best possible solution.



PICKENS COUNTY SUPPORTIVE HOUSING PROJECT UPDATE

During the past quarter, the number of homeless families and individuals seeking assistance has increased. A small group within SVdP continues to look for a solution for homeless families (defined as one or two adults with a child under 18 years of age), but finding a solution has proved to be extremely difficult since temporary (under 90 days) housing is almost non-existent in Pickens County. Further hindering progress is the lack of church group volunteers to mentor homeless families.

To make such a community-wide program succeed depends on sufficient volunteers, financial support, and available permanent housing. Candidates for this program must be willing to work or have some financial means and meet other requirements for moving forward to self-sufficiency. Volunteers are needed to assist a paid coordinator to deal with the day-to-day support for clients. Down the road, we hope a tax exempt charitable organization will come forward and help with funding.

RECENT CASES OF INTEREST

The Society can help with many situations, but some things are beyond what we can do. "No need is beyond the scope of the Society" is often quoted by Vincentians; however, judgment and careful scrutiny of the facts surrounding a situation must always be a part of the final decision whether we help or not.

Home Repairs—A young lady recovering from injuries received in a head-on collision caused by a drunk driver sought assistance to renovate her trailer home. She wished to live independently from her parents, complete her Nursing degree, and become gainfully employed. Up to the time of the accident, she was in the process of buying a home and was renting out the trailer. Due to the accident, she lost out on buying the home and had to move into the trailer. During her extensive recovery period, the trailer fell into disrepair, hence, her request for help to bring the trailer up to living standard.

The young lady came to the Society with a list of materials that totaled approximately \$3,300, explaining that her father, who is a handy man, and a relative, who is in the construction business, would do the work. The materials were provided by Home Depot which gave a discount, bringing the total materials cost to \$2,750. From time to time, a Vincentian drives by the home and has observed that progress is being made.

Usually, a project of this nature is beyond the scope of the Society. However, with no assistance, this young lady might have been doomed to homelessness and put in a position of never achieving independent living. Since she wanted only help paying for the supplies and not help with the actual work, we were able to assist her.

Since the Society helped with this project, the word has spread, and at least two other requests have been made to the Society for "home repairs" assistance. This is

always the danger of providing unusual assistance, as it instantly becomes a need for many, many others. However, most Vincentians do not have the skills to oversee construction projects, so we had to decline these requests.

NSF Check—A woman called the SVdP message line on a Saturday afternoon stating that she was going to jail for a bad check she had written if \$75 was not paid by 8:00 a.m. Monday. We responded that the Society does not cover bad checks or any other illegal activities. As it turned out, a relative paid the \$75 for her.

Homeless—A young man called stating he had left an abusive situation and was now homeless. He had no driver's license or vehicle (no transportation), no place to live, and said he had a part-time job. We advised him to contact the Good Neighbors Shelter in Cartersville to see if they could help. However, he was provided temporary shelter with another local agency.

PLEASE REMEMBER THE SOCIETY

You can provide the Society significant financial support by remembering us through memorials, gifts, and/or including the Society in your will or trust. As always, your prayers are most welcome, not only for the success of the Society, but for all those we serve.

Mail donations to:

St. Vincent de Paul Society
Our Lady of the Mountains Conference
1908 Waleska Highway 108
Jasper, GA 30143



St. Vincent de Paul

If you or someone you know is in need of emergency financial assistance, please call 706-692-7604. Leave your name, number, and a brief message, and someone from the Society will call you back.