

The Quarterly Informer

October, 2016
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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 2015-2016

During the fiscal year 2015-2016, the Society faced new challenges due to the noticeable increase in homeless families and the demand for transportation. Spending was lower due to a mild winter, resulting in lower demand for heating needs. We helped 688 people, representing an estimated 255 families.

During the period, Direct Aid receipts totaled \$91,549. OLM parishioners contributed \$56,880, down from last year's \$64,458. The remainder came from the quarterly Community Thrift Store Grant, Big Canoe Chapel, and \$15,720 in transfers from the Family Uplift account.

Spending for Direct Aid during the period totaled \$90,268 compared to \$104,455 for the last year, primarily the result of the aforementioned milder winter. Assistance with utilities comprised the largest category of spending totaling \$44,885. Rent/mortgage assistance totaled \$36,377. We assisted several homeless families with an additional \$2,123 in temporary lodging at a local motel. The balance of spending went for transportation-related expenses in the amount of \$3,371; clothing/food, \$1,658; and miscellaneous aid in the amount of \$1,854.

Operating expenses totaled \$6,124 which is made up primarily of the solidarity payment to the Georgia SVdP Council (\$4,327), OLM phone and office supplies (\$1,342), and miscellaneous expenses (\$455).

Regarding the Family Uplift Program, receipts for the year totaled \$42,091, with transfers to Direct Aid in the amount of \$15,720 (we make transfers from the Family Uplift account to the Direct Aid account as funds are needed). There was only one participant in the program during 2016 with spending totaling \$8,670. We continue to seek eligible candidates for the program.

The thirty-seven St. Vincent de Paul Society volunteers of Our Lady of the Mountains spend countless hours and drive countless miles to aid the folks of Pickens County. Without their commitment and dedication, the works of the Society in Pickens County would not exist.

As always, the Society is grateful to all who make this charitable mission possible. Special thanks to OLM parishioners and organizations, the anonymous donor

who provided matching funds, a family foundation, the Community Thrift Store, and the Big Canoe Chapel Benevolence Fund for their support during this quarter.

SEVENTH ANNUAL MATCHING GIFT KICKS OFF

Our generous anonymous donor is again offering a matching gift of \$7,500 for all donations to the Society beginning with the Thanksgiving Day collection and continuing through Christmas. In previous years, parishioners, parish organizations, and other donors have risen to the occasion and gone beyond the matching amount.

During the winter months, demand for assistance, especially as it relates to heating, is great. Historically, contributions to make the match have provided significant funding to meet these needs. Please be generous during this holiday period so we can again meet the needs that always seem to be there.

THE SOCIETY ELECTS OFFICERS

We held our elections (we elect officers every three years) and our new officers are:

- Conference President, Joe Schroeder (his term began October 1st);
- Vice-Presidents, Mike Martin and Jack Marcacci;
- Secretary, Karen Schroeder;
- Treasurer, Allen Hahn; and
- Spiritual Advisors, Kathy Crawford and Mila Fick.

Thanks to Jack Russell, our outgoing President, for his service for the past three years.

TRANSPORTATION ISSUES The Need for Car Donations

Recently, we have seen an increase in one path that leads to homelessness. Many of our clients can manage to pay for groceries, but need help to pay their rent and utilities. This year rental assistance was up significantly and utility assistance was slightly down, indicating a possible movement to the priority being for rent, to keep a roof over their heads. For many, the lowest priority is maintaining the car, especially when food, rent, and utilities take all their available funds. Then, their car breaks down and they can't afford to fix it.

They can't get to work, lose their jobs, and their income ceases. Next comes homelessness.

One way the Society can help a family in this dilemma is to provide a vehicle. This past year, the Society was able to purchase a good used car for under \$1,500 and received a donation of another car in good condition. Because of this, we were able to provide two families with cars, along with initial insurance and tags. Both families avoided becoming homeless.

With these examples in mind, please think about donating to the Society any well-maintained cars that you no longer need (note that the cars must pass an inspection to assure they are road-worthy before the Society can accept them and issue a tax deductible receipt). Help us help those in need in Pickens County!

BENEFITS FROM THE GEORGIA COUNCIL OF THE SVdP SOCIETY

As noted in the financial recap, OLM's Society pays a solidarity fee to the St. Vincent de Paul Society Georgia Council that totaled \$4,327 during the past fiscal year. By paying this solidarity payment, OLM's Society falls under the Georgia Council's 501c3 tax exemption. That means we do not have to be experts or be concerned about knowing all of the compliance issues; we just have to follow the guidelines required by the Georgia Council.

Additionally, the Georgia Council provided the Pickens County CARES Food Pantry with two freezers and a share of Kroger Food Donations. They also gave CARES nearly three pallets of food products at no cost. Over the past several years, the Council Beds Program has provided beds and mattresses to several Pickens County SVdP clients.

They also offer a number of training tools and other programs to Conferences throughout Georgia. The Georgia Council is a great resource and we really appreciate their help!

18TH ANNUAL HEAD START CHRISTMAS PARTY

The 18th Annual Head Start Christmas party will be held December 15th at the Head Start School. Cathy Tucker has volunteered to head the project. The party will be celebrated with over 100 students, complete with Santa Claus and a gift bag. The party is funded by special donations from businesses in the community as well as a special second collection at OLM. Unfortunately, this year's collection was significantly lower than past years' collections. If you missed it, please include your donation in your next SVdP envelope and mark it for Head Start Christmas Party. Your generosity is appreciated.

SVdP volunteers will be assisting Cathy in purchasing gifts, assembling them into bags, transporting the bags to the Head Start School, and then enjoying the event as it unfolds. For many of these children, this will be the high-

light of their Christmas. Gifts include reading books, coloring books and crayons, scarves, caps and gloves, toothbrush/toothpaste, flash cards, a boy/girl appropriate toy, and as always, the best of all gifts, an apple!

QUARTERLY FOOD DRIVE October 22nd–23rd

During each quarter, the Society has a food drive to benefit the CARES Food Pantry. Thanks to Society volunteer Kathy Crawford for organizing this event and making it happen. And thanks to OLM parishioners for contributing food donations that help so many in Pickens County who are in need!

CHRISTMAS TOY ASSISTANCE FOR PICKENS COUNTY FAMILIES

Many families in Pickens County may need assistance in providing Christmas gifts for their children. If you know of such a family, please tell them about Pickens County Toys for Tots (PCTOT) and the Jasper Lions Club, both of which provide Christmas toys. PCTOT applications can be picked up at the Pickens County Sheriff's Office at the County Jail beginning November 1st. The Jasper Lions Club will accept applications until December 10th; you can apply online at www.Knowpickens.com or pick up an application at any of the Pickens County elementary/middle schools, the Head Start school, or DFCS.

SVdP CONFERENCE CHRISTMAS PARTY

Each year, OLM Vincentians have a Christmas Party. It is the one time of the year when we gather to celebrate the joy of the Christmas Season and further one of the traits of Vincentians...friendship. This year's celebration will be held December 4th at the Big Canoe Lodge, from 4-6:00 p.m. All SVdP volunteers are invited.

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

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.