

The Quarterly Informer

April, 2017
Volume X, Issue 2

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 2nd Quarter, 2016-2017

The second quarter of 2016-17 began January 1st and ended March 31st, 2017. During this quarter, Society members met with 92 clients, for a total of 190 people.

Total revenue for the period was \$35,261. Of this amount, \$16,513 came from Our Lady of the Mountains parishioners. The balance of revenues came from the Community Thrift Store and Big Canoe Chapel grants.

Direct aid and Family Uplift Program spending totaled \$35,809. Of this amount, we paid \$16,741 for utilities (primarily Amicalola EMC and Georgia Power), but we paid \$2,731 of this amount to propane or natural gas companies covering twelve clients. Rent and temporary housing totaled \$10,907, \$1,966 for temporary lodging for clients who were homeless (see accompanying article on our new homeless project). We purchased Kroger gift cards totaling \$1,000 to help with immediate needs for clients who had no food or no gasoline for their vehicles. The remainder was for miscellaneous assistance and operational expenses.

As noted above, we helped twelve families with propane and natural gas assistance for the heating season, but in fact, many of the payments for electric power were to meet heating needs, too.

As always, we are so grateful for OLM parishioners, the OLM Men's Club and OLM Women's Guild, the Community Thrift Store Grant, the 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.

PICKENS COUNTY SUPPORTIVE HOUSING PROGRAM

In recent Newsletters, we have mentioned that a small study group of Vincentians and others have begun seeking a solution to the growing problem of homelessness in Pickens County. Resolving homelessness for all

homeless people is impossible, due to many intractable problems that exist for some people. And, a significant roadblock to the success of this program is the lack of permanent housing in Pickens County, i.e., habitable rental units. Nevertheless, the study group has moved forward and as a first step, defined what types of families they would try to help: those homeless families consisting of one or more adults with at least one child under 18 years of age, all free of drugs and criminal records. The study group decided to call the project the 'Pickens County Supportive Housing Program.'

The success of the program will depend on the candidates themselves, sufficient volunteers, sufficient financial support, and available permanent housing. Candidates for the program must be willing to work or have some financial means and meet other requirements for moving toward self-sufficiency. The program will have a paid coordinator, but volunteers from area churches will be needed to mentor families with day-to-day support, including providing food and temporary shelter, helping with a job search, and other links to self sufficiency. Down the road, a tax exempt charitable organization will be needed for funding. This is the proposed program in a nutshell.

The study group suggested the proposed program be tested before going forward and we have agreed to do so. A description of the pilot project follows.

THE PILOT PROJECT: A HOMELESS SINGLE MOTHER WITH THREE CHILDREN

The Society received a call from a single mother with three children under 14 years of age who had just become homeless. The mother had been recently laid off from her job and was evicted from the rental property they had occupied. One of the children has medical issues; all three children are enrolled in Pickens County schools. With this information, it appeared this family would be a good candidate for the Supportive Housing Program pilot project.

The family was placed in a local motel pending review of other information that could qualify them for the pilot project. The mother very quickly found a job paying \$12/hour and was also looking for permanent housing. At the same time, SVdP volunteers and one other volunteer

from the project team were providing temporary food and gas needs, extending the temporary stay at the motel, and working with the client seeking outside grant support (Ninth District and/or Action Ministries) to obtain permanent housing and help with rent and utility deposits.

Providing temporary shelter in a motel is too costly and will eventually reach its limits, when the client will once again become homeless. Obviously, the Society wants to prevent this from happening and is still seeking permanent housing for the client and her family. But having found no permanent housing in Pickens County, the Society suggested the client contact the Cartersville shelter, which may be better equipped to help her find long-term housing.

Funding for this pilot project has been undertaken entirely by the OLM Conference of SVdP. Fortunately, reserve funds are available to explore this venture and, we hope, to prove its viability, leading to the next steps of a Supportive Housing Program for qualifying Pickens County families.

SERVANT LEADERSHIP AND CHARACTER

Vincentians are servant leaders. With a servant leader, the natural feeling that one wants to serve comes first, then, a conscious choice to aspire to lead. The best test to determine whether one is succeeding at being a servant leader is to ask oneself, "Do those served grow as persons; do they become healthier, wiser, freer, more autonomous, more likely themselves to become servants? What is the effect on the least privileged in society—will they benefit, or at least, not be further deprived?"

As we work with clients, we gain a deepening understanding of the following characteristics and how they contribute to the meaningful practice of servant leadership. These ten characteristics include listening, empathy, healing, awareness, persuasion, conceptualization, foresight, stewardship, commitment to the growth of people, and building community.

The last Newsletter expanded on the first five characteristics of Servant Leadership. Following are the final five characteristics:

- **Conceptualization**—The ability to look at a problem or an opportunity from a **conceptualizing** perspective means that one must think beyond day-to-day realities. Vincentian Servant-Leaders seek to nurture their abilities to inspire Councils and Conferences.
- **Foresight**—One knows **foresight** when one experiences it. It is closely related to conceptualization. The ability to foresee the likely outcome of a situation is hard to define, but easier to identify. Vincentian foresight is a characteristic cultivated through prayer and study that enables the servant-leader to understand the lessons from our rich heritage, applied to the present and the future.

- **Stewardship**—Vincentian **stewardship**, like Vincentian Servant Leadership, assumes first and foremost a commitment to serving the needs of others. It is a commitment to balancing the passion for charity with the need to sustain the ministry of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul. It also emphasizes the use of openness and persuasion in the context of discernment and participative decision making whenever possible.
- **Commitment to the Growth of People**—Vincentian Servant-Leaders believe that people have an intrinsic value beyond their tangible contributions as volunteers or paid staff. As such, the Servant-Leader is deeply committed to the **spiritual growth** of each and every individual within his or her Conference and Council.
- **Building Community**—The Vincentian Servant-Leader understands that the essence of the Vincentian tradition is rooted in the spirituality of Christian Love expressed in **community** through service to the poor. Servant Leadership in the Society of St. Vincent de Paul is focused on building and sustaining a community of individuals formed in a common vision of our Rule, a community dedicated to expressing their Christian spirituality through reverent service to the poor and marginalized.

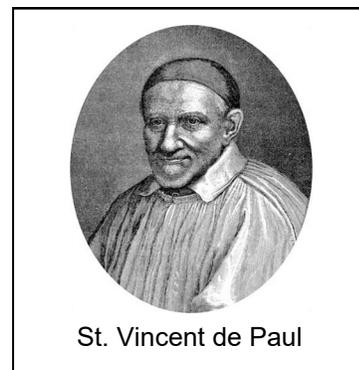


PLEASE REMEMBER THE SOCIETY

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.