

The Quarterly Informer

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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 1st Quarter 2017-2018 Financial and Activity Report

The first quarter of 2017-18 began October 1st and ended December 31st. During the quarter, Society members met with 111 clients, helping a total of 286 people.

Revenues for the period totaled \$52,026, which included \$33,946 donated by OLM parishioners, the \$7,500 matching gift, \$5,000 from the Community Thrift Store, and \$4,056 raised from local businesses for the Head Start Christmas Party (see article below).

Total spending for the period was \$42,069. Of this, \$34,175 was Direct Aid for rent/mortgage (\$13,988), utilities (\$15,398), transportation (\$468), Kroger food/gas gift cards (\$500), a disaster relief donation (\$1,000), and operating expenses. Compared to the same period last year, Direct Aid spending increased this year by nearly \$8,000, almost entirely due to the increase in assistance for rent/housing (\$13,988 this year versus \$6,561 last year).

The Family Uplift Program spent \$4,440 on three Uplift participants for rent (\$2,609), utilities (\$1,090), and transportation (\$740). Spending for the Head Start Christmas Party was \$3,454.

As always, we are so grateful for our anonymous matching gift donor, OLM parishioners, the OLM Men's Club and OLM Women's Guild, the Community Thrift Store Grant, Big Canoe Chapel Benevolence, and so many others who support the good works done by the Society of St. Vincent de Paul. Special thanks to Father Byrd for his support for all the Society does in the community. Finally, we thank our many SVdP volunteers at OLM who make all of these good works possible.

RECORD-SETTING EIGHTH ANNUAL MATCHING GIFT!

Thanks to our anonymous donor, we were able to have the matching gift program again this year, and we set yet another record! Donations given from Thanksgiving through Christmas to match the gift totaled \$26,026, compared to last year's record of \$19,915. Adding the \$7,500 matching gift, total receipts amounted to \$33,525. In

addition to our gratitude to the anonymous donor, we thank all donors who help set this record.

20TH ANNUAL HEAD START CHRISTMAS PARTY WAS A GREAT SUCCESS!

In preparation for the annual Head Start Christmas Party, Vincentians gathered Tuesday, December 19th, at Our Lady of the Mountains Parish Hall to pack individual gift bags for each child. The Christmas bags contained educational items, hats, gloves, socks, hygiene items, apples, and a special toy that had been purchased during the year for this occasion. Girls also received a bow for their hair, donated by a local business.

On Thursday, December 21st, we went over to the Tate Head Start School to celebrate with Santa and the children. The children, 55 boys and 52 girls, took turns talking to Santa, had their picture taken with him, and then received their gift bag. Watching the children's eyes light up and seeing their happiness makes the effort so worthwhile, knowing that this is such a highlight of the Christmas Season for each of them.

As you know, the Head Start Christmas Party is not possible without funding. The Society raises these funds separately from all other Society funding. We have a special collection at OLM, plus obtain contributions from 56 local businesses and individuals. Special thanks to Georgia Dann Neel who worked numerous hours and travelled many miles to bring success to this effort. After the event, we ran an ad in the *Pickens County Progress* thanking all business donors. We thank everyone who helped us make the Party such a great success!

MONEY, PROGRAMS, AND PRAYERS

Poverty has existed from the beginning of time. The Bible tells us that "the poor will always be with us." Yet, society strives to solve the problem. Federal, state, and local programs exist to help the physically and mentally disabled who often struggle in poverty. Tax dollars support many programs which are supplemented by private charitable agencies to help those who may be in poverty due to circumstances beyond their control.

However, with all these programs and the financial support provided, many continue to live in poverty,

making little progress to escape. In addition, the scarcity of affordable housing in Pickens and nearby counties results in homelessness, making the escape even more hopeless.

So, if programs do not help those in poverty and monetary support does not solve the problem, what is the answer? The last place we often look for a solution is PRAYER. Realizing that God's will be done, we must pray that those who live in poverty will seek the Lord's help and guidance in their daily lives, that they are open to that guidance, and that they try, with their whole hearts and souls, to follow the Lord's will. *We should all do the same, regardless of our monetary position!*

Please pray for the poor.

DIFFICULT CLIENT CASES

Most of the assistance the Society provides to needy families is to meet a shortfall in family income due to unforeseen or uncontrollable events. When practical, the Society will assist a client family up to four months to help them get over a financial difficulty and get stabilized. In recent months, we have encountered situations that have no quick, or even long-term, solutions. Following are a couple of these situations.

- Two mothers called, one with two children and the other with three, both stating they were becoming homeless (we initially confused these two cases and thought they were one and the same, but discovered they were not). Their husbands had abandoned their families and had left for parts unknown. There was no other family to help. One of the mothers had a job, but could not prove to the apartment manager that she had income from the last two years, which was required. Then, of course, there is the lack of affordable housing in Pickens County. So, limited or no income and no available housing presented an unsolvable problem.
- A single mother with a young adult disabled daughter needed major financial help with rent, utility bills, and other unpaid bills totaling over \$2,000. The mother is employed with a good job, but has been off the job for several months due to surgery; her doctor will not release her to go back to work. Currently, there is no income, though the mother has been "promised" that her job is still there. Had the mother's illness not occurred, life would have gone on and the family would have been self sufficient.

Cases like these not only require significant financial support, but continued guidance and counseling that members of the Society are not qualified to do. In addition, clients have to be willing to do what is necessary to stabilize their situation, which so many cannot or will not do.

When these situations arise, as Vincentians, we must be reminded that we can only do the best we can and leave the rest to God.

WE NEED HOME VISIT VOLUNTEERS!

The Society is always in need of volunteers, especially for home visits. Due to the few home visit volunteers at OLM, most of the client contacts are by way of each Wednesday's Client Intake in the Parish Hall where clients are interviewed, needs determined, and assistance provided. However, the preferred method of providing assistance is through a home visit. Home visits tell us so much more about the client and how we might be able to provide the best possible assistance.

For example, a home visit might reveal lack of suitable beds/bedding for children; the family can be referred to the Community Thrift Store to meet this need. Once on a home visit, a Society volunteer opened the refrigerator door and found there was no food; food was provided. Numerous examples can be cited that demonstrate how a home visit can help the Society more completely aid those in need.

Home visits are usually made Monday through Friday during the daytime. New home visit volunteers are always accompanied by an experienced Vincentian who will lead the interview. The process for home visits is detailed in the Society's *Members Guide Book*. If interested, please attend the monthly Society meeting in the Parish Hall Library on the second Tuesday of each month at 4:30 p.m.

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.