

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 2018-2019 Financial and Activity Report

The 2018-19 fiscal year began October 1st, 2018. During the first quarter, OLM Society members met with 91 clients, helping a total of 213 people. This is down from 111 clients and 286 people for the same period last year. The favorable economy with more employment opportunities supports this change. Though there were fewer clients, spending for mortgage/rent was near the same amount as last year, primarily due to increasing monthly rental costs.

Revenues for the period totaled \$55,424, compared to \$52,026 last year. The increase does not reflect the \$7,500 matching gift that was deposited in January, 2019. Other significant donations included a \$10,000 grant from a family foundation, Community Thrift Store Grant, Big Canoe Chapel Benevolence Grant, the impact of individual donors, and OLM organizations making the matching contribution extremely effective (see related article). Also included are donations made by local businesses for the Head Start Christmas Party and other special Christmas programs (see related article).

Total spending for the period was \$39,552 (last year \$42,069). Direct aid to clients was \$32,888 (last year \$34,175). Mortgage/rent amounted to \$13,179, utilities were \$13,445, with transportation, food, operating expenses, and payment to SVdP of Georgia Council making up the balance for direct aid spending. Children's Christmas program gift spending was \$5,846 for the period. Family Uplift spending amounted to \$818, with only one participant currently in the program.

As always, we are so grateful for our anonymous matching gift donor, OLM parishioners, the OLM Parish Organizations, the Community Thrift Store Grant, Big Canoe Chapel Benevolence, and so many others who support the good works done by the St. Vincent de Paul Society. Special thanks to Fr. 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.

NINTH ANNUAL MATCHING GIFT PROGRAM

This year's Matching Gift Program began November 1st and ran through Christmas. The total amount collected

during the period was \$35,692. Along with the match by our anonymous donor of \$7,500, the total is \$43,192. This is up from last year's \$33,525. Thanks to our anonymous donor, the matching gift program continues for the ninth year, setting yet another record in matching donations. In addition to our gratitude to the anonymous donor, we thank all who helped set this record.

2018 HEAD START CHRISTMAS PARTY

The 20th annual Head Start Christmas Party was scheduled for December 20th. Gifts were purchased for 107 boys and girls. SVdP members assembled individual Christmas bags for each child. At the last minute, Cathy Tucker, SVdP volunteer and event coordinator, was informed by Head Start administration that a Christmas celebration could no longer be held that included a Santa Claus and celebration of the Christmas holiday. Rather, gifts could be brought and given to each child by someone (not Santa) in celebration of the *Winter Holiday*. The explanation given was that the new program director for Ninth District Head Start, out of Gainesville, would be strictly enforcing the program policies this year. The reason SVdP has been providing this program for the past 20 years is to bring joy to children during the Christmas season. SVdP also provides the children with hats, gloves, socks, books, and other beneficial educational items that they would otherwise be lacking. For many of these children, these may be the only gifts they receive. The gifts purchased for this year's event were still delivered to the school for their distribution to the children, but we did not attend the event, given the change.

Gift giving is a Christmas tradition, not a holiday season tradition. Funding for the Christmas Party is provided by a specific collection at OLM and from local businesses for the express purpose of providing Santa Claus, appropriate gifts, and a celebration of Christmas for these young Head Start students. SVdP is searching for a way to still provide this much needed service without denying the fact that this is a Christmas event in which Christ and St. Nicholas (Santa Claus) are at the center.

CHRISTMAS PROGRAMS FUND RAISING

Christmas Celebrations for children are not possible without funding. Funds for the annual Head Start party are raised separate from all other St. Vincent de Paul funding. A special collection from OLM parishioners was made for this purpose. Additionally, contributions from 61 local business-

es and individuals allowed us to fully fund the event, with enough funds left over to extend the program to other groups as discussed below. Special thanks to Georgia Dann Neel for her numerous hours and miles traveled to bring our local fundraising efforts to success.

EXTENDED CHRISTMAS JOY

Thanks to the successful fund raising efforts discussed above, we were able to extend our Christmas program to other children who might also have been forgotten. Working with the leadership at Prevent Child Abuse Pickens (PCAP), Society members at OLM were able to provide happiness and Christmas joy to children of Timothy House participants, selected Boys and Girls Club members, as well as children known to PCAP who otherwise were too old to be eligible for the Giving Tree Program. As a result, 62 boys and girls were each provided one specific Christmas gift they had requested.

Thanks to all OLM Vincentians who volunteered to make our children's Christmas programs a success. A total of \$7,571 was spent on these programs to benefit 169 children. Numerous volunteer hours and miles were spent shopping for gift items and delivering them. Finally, an ad was placed in the Pickens Progress thanking all donors for their support of these programs.

A RECENT HOME VISIT

Many situations are so difficult that a permanent resolution may not be possible. Sometimes all the Society can do is give hope, prayer, and comfort to the client.

A recent home visit resulting from a call to the emergency phone line disclosed the power had been shut off due to non-payment. The head of household has COPD (lung disease) and her 47 year old adult son has a heart condition. The Vincentians visited a dark, cold, run-down home filled with clutter. With the aid of a flashlight and candles, the required paperwork was completed. The power company was contacted and with the help of a Vincentian, the power company agreed to restore the power if the past due amount and a "deposit" were promised. By the next morning, the power was restored.

The household receives a small social security payment each month and manages to get by with some financial support from two adult grandsons, who by no means have high paying jobs. With the illness and minimal financial means, their future looks bleak. As Vincentians, we can provide referral to other possible sources of assistance, offer prayer and hope that the future will be brighter than it currently is.

MONEY, PROGRAMS, AND PRAYER

Poverty has existed from the beginning of time. The Bible informs us that "the poor will always be with us." Yet, society strives to "solve" the issue of poverty. Federal, state, and local programs exist to help the physically and

mentally disabled who often struggle in poverty. Others may be in poverty due to circumstances or events, often beyond their control. Tax dollars support many programs and these programs are supplemented by private agencies supported by the generosity of so many.

However, with all of these programs and the financial support provided, many continue in poverty making little progress in escaping. The scarcity of affordable housing in Pickens County, and throughout the country, exacerbates the homelessness problem making the escape even harder.

So, if governmental programs do not help those in poverty, and monetary support does not solve the problem, what is the answer? The Saint Vincent de Paul Society provides help and hope. We meet personally with each family and let them know we care, but we also can provide prayer. It seems the last place we often look for our solution is prayer. Realizing that God's will be done, we must pray that the Holy Spirit will instill a route out of poverty to those ready, willing, and able to follow this route.

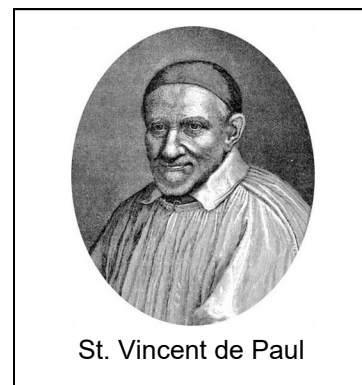
Please pray for the poor.

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.