

The Quarterly Informer

July, 2019
Volume XI, Issue 2-3

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 3rd Quarter 2018-2019 Financial and Activity Report

There was no second quarter newsletter, so financial comparisons will be made fiscal third quarter 2019 to third quarter 2018; hopefully, confusion will be kept to a minimum.

During the three months, April through June, 2019 revenues totaled \$24,731; of this amount \$13,537 was contributed to the St. Vincent de Paul Society (SVdP) by Our Lady of the Mountains (OLM) parishioners, with the remainder coming from the Community Thrift Store and Big Canoe Chapel. For the same period last year, total contributions were \$23,975 with \$11,010 being contributed by OLM parishioners.

Direct Aid spending for the current period totaled \$26,352 compared to prior year's \$29,853. Less housing/rental support in the current period is the primary contributor to this difference. Spending for the period breaks down as follows: \$11,262 for housing (\$14,220 last year); \$10,717 for utilities (\$10,781 last year); \$1,292 for transportation related items, and \$3,080 for other spending related to medical, food and funeral expenses. Surplus funds were utilized to cover the spending that exceeded receipts during the period.

During the period OLM/SVdP volunteers met with 80 clients helping a total of 169 people. This compares closely to the 82 clients and 170 people helped during the same period last year.

Kroger cards at \$25 and \$50 each were purchased for a total of \$500. Kroger cards are used to meet the immediate needs for food and/or gas. Clients are always encouraged to utilize the CARES food pantry and food stamps (SNAP) and save cash to meet utility, rent and other financial needs.

There are many obstacles that make it difficult for some Pickens County residents to sustain an independent life style including lack of public transportation, limited affordable housing, and a lengthy time period to obtain disability assistance. Vincentians do their best to point clients in a direction that can help them move toward self-sufficiency.

Sadly but rarely, that can only be offering the phone number of the Cartersville Shelter or providing a means to update a resume and find a job if a client's income is nonexistent.

As always, we are grateful to OLM parishioners for their generous donations, the OLM Men's Club, the Community Thrift Store, Big Canoe Benevolence, and so many others who support the good works done by our conference. Finally, we thank our many Vincentians who make all of these good works happen.

KROGER REWARDS

If you are a Kroger shopper, a portion of what you spend can be donated to your favorite charity. Hopefully, that favorite charity is the Society of St. Vincent de Paul at Our Lady of the Mountains Catholic Church. Please sign on to the internet and go to krogercommunityrewards.com to see how you can donate and enhance the works of the Society in Pickens County. You will need your Kroger Plus card. Our organization number is SJ891.

OLM SVdP CONFERENCE WELCOMES OUR NEW MEMBERS

Our Conference announces two new members, Pat Kohler and Reg Sisler. Pat and Reg are participating in our weekly client intakes, meeting our clients, and helping provide assistance and referrals as needed. We are grateful for their service and look forward to them being a part of our group for years to come. Welcome Pat and Reg!!!

JOIN THE SOCIETY OF ST. VINCENT DE PAUL AT OLM

The Society at OLM always seeks volunteers/members. In addition to providing help for the poor, the Society also promotes spirituality and friendship among its members. Adults new to OLM can quickly meet and get to know a very good group of people, as well as serve the community. Find out more by picking up a SVdP brochure in the Narthex, attending the monthly business meeting on the second Tuesday of the month, or dropping in at an every Wednesday Client Intake. Or just call 706-692-7604 and ask that someone return your call and tell you more about our conference. No experience is required and we provide training. Currently, our greatest need is for someone to access the SVdP phone line each day for a week and respond to the calls. This task could easily be handled by someone with a part time job, a disabled person who is home bound, or a stay at home parent.

An experienced phone responder will help new volunteers understand how to access the phone line, contact the callers, and respond to the needs of the callers. Most of the time, the callers will be asked to attend the next Wednesday client intake where assistance can be provided. However, depending on the situation, a caller may require a home visit or be denied help, if help has been recently provided or there are other reasons for denial. New volunteers will be helped by experienced Vincentians, as needed. Phone responders will be assigned to a one week period each month, based on his/her availability.

Other volunteer opportunities at OLM include weekly intake client interviews, home visits, and various administrative duties.

Please consider this a personal invitation to be a part of a group that practices its faith by serving the poor and disadvantaged in our community.

FAMILY UPLIFT PROGRAM

The Family Uplift Program provides participants the opportunity to improve their job skills thereby enhancing the ability to be self-sufficient. Program participants generally enroll in a course of study at a technical college or accredited program in the Jasper area. What they need, and could never achieve on their own, is financial assistance with their living expenses (rent, utilities, transportation, child care, etc.) over the course of their education.

To participate, candidates must have a GED or high school diploma, and must be eligible for the HOPE scholarship and Pell Grant. Enrollees must maintain a B average throughout the program. Students enter into a formal agreement with SVdP, outlining the specific details of the program including the time period, parameters of the program, the amount of financial assistance to be given each month, and the mentoring process to be followed. A Vincentian will be assigned as the student's mentor. Students are required to contact their mentors once a week and meet in person once each month to go over their budget, progress, and discuss any concerns they might have. Failure to comply with the terms of the agreement, results in termination from the program.

As stated, the intent of the program is to help a family attain self-sufficiency. Possible candidates for the program should call the SVdP phone line, 706-692-7604 and ask that someone call them back regarding the Family Uplift Program.

HELPING THE HOMELESS IN PICKENS COUNTY

Up to a year ago, our SVdP Conference did not frequently hear of families that were homeless. They existed, but either found family or friends to temporarily stay with or spent all their funds on hotels with their homeless status not evident. In the last six months, numerous clients have called the SVdP phone line or visited at client intakes to

express their homeless condition. Additionally, we have seen people holding signs or pulling a wagon holding all their possessions. These are heart wrenching experiences that so frequently do not have an answer.

Pickens County is not unique regarding homeless families. Each day, the national news reports areas of the country that are experiencing serious homeless conditions. One answer is to provide housing for the homeless. On the surface this sounds like an answer, but most of the time the solution is much more complicated. Families must have a sustainable life plan that includes more than a roof over their heads.

In Pickens County, affordable housing is very limited. Rents have been increasing and the number of available apartments is limited. The Jasper Housing Authority (subsidized housing) is full, with a waiting list over a year.

So what, as Vincentians, can we do? Sometimes we can prevent a family from becoming homeless in the first place. We can help with rent to avoid eviction. We can advise and refer clients to other sources of help. If car repairs are needed so that a household member can continue to get to work, assistance can be provided for that. Helping families find jobs or improve their job status can also prevent families from becoming homeless. We might also be able to refer families to the limited number of transitional housing facilities that exist. There is no easy answer.

REMEMBER THE SOCIETY AT OLM

Parishioners and friends of the SVdP Society can provide significant financial support by remembering the Society through memorials and including the Society in Wills. As always, your prayers are most welcome for the success of the Society and for all who are served by SVdP.

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.