

The Quarterly Informer

January, 2020
Volume XIII, Issue 1

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...Matt 25

OUR LADY OF THE MOUNTAINS CONFERENCE FINANCIAL AND ACTIVITY REPORT—First Quarter 2019-20 ... The 2019-20 fiscal year began October 1st, 2019. During the first quarter, OLM Society members met with 116 clients helping a total of 265 people, similar to last year.

Revenues for the period totaled \$47,859 compared to \$55,424 last year. Most of the difference is attributed to a \$10,000 family grant in last year's total. Donations from OLM parishioners comprised \$33,326 with most of the remainder coming from the quarterly Community Thrift Store grant and funds raised for the children's Christmas celebrations. (See related articles.)

Spending for the period was \$52,388, (last year \$39,552). **Direct-aid** spending (helping the needy) was \$35,376 compared to last year's \$32,552. Housing/rent amounted to \$15,059 (last year \$13,179), utilities were \$16,678 (last year \$13,445), with the remaining direct-aid spending going for transportation-related expenses, food (Kroger cards), and miscellaneous. Mortgage/rent/temporary housing assistance was slightly higher than last year. Those seeking assistance have limited income (low or no disability income, lack of education, or other income limitations) rather than those who are working and able to meet most spending needs. Many of those seeking help are on the brink of homelessness.

Spending for Family Uplift and the Children's Christmas programs comprised most of the remaining spending. **Family Uplift** had 3 participants and spending totaled \$5,731 compared to \$818 last year for one participant. Rental assistance represents \$4,080 of the total. See details on the **Children's Christmas Programs** spending (\$7,123) in the following related articles.

The remaining spending covered phone, supplies, and solidarity payments to the Georgia Council for services provided including the computer systems that maintain required record keeping and reporting.

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 Society of St. Vincent de Paul. 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.

10th ANNUAL MATCHING GIFT PROGRAM... Consistent with last year, this year's matching gift period began November 1st and continued through Christmas, 2019. The total amount collected during this period was \$21,344.50. Along with the match by our anonymous donor of \$7,500, the total is \$28,844.50. Words cannot express our appreciation to those who donated to the match, and our special thanks go to the anonymous donor. This matching effort has made it possible to help so many of Pickens County's most needy.

CHRISTMAS CELEBRATIONS FOR PICKENS COUNTY CHILDREN... Last year to extend the joy of Christmas, Our Lady of the Mountains Conference of SVdP included the children of the Fathers at Timothy House, some children at Boys and Girls Club, and some children at Prevent Child Abuse-Pickens along with the children at Head Start. 2019 marks the 21st year for the Head Start Christmas party and the second year for the extended organizations. A short summary of each celebration follows.

2019 HEAD START CHRISTMAS PARTY... The 21st annual Head Start Christmas Party was held on Friday, December 20, at Mt. Calvary Baptist Church near the Head Start school. Government guidelines prohibited the Head Start School from making any reference to Christ, Christmas or Santa. Therefore, it has become necessary to think outside the box in order to keep Christ and Santa (St. Nick) in Christmas. Fortunately, OLM's SVdP was able to team up with Mt. Calvary to continue this event which is the highlight of the Christmas Season for many of the children. This was a true Christmas Party with all the blessings that come with the Season. There were 107 boys and girls who met with Santa and received a bag filled with gifts including hats, gloves, socks, coloring books, reading books, crayons, pencils, flash cards, glue

sticks, bubbles, jump rope/football, an ornament and a toy. A special touch was added with freshly baked cookies provided by the OLM Women's Guild. The event was filled with smiles, hugs and joyful tears from the children, Vincentians, members of Mt. Calvary, and very appreciative parents. Our thanks to all donors who made this event possible. Also, special thanks to Cathy Tucker, OLM's SVdP Conference President who organized the event and was supported by so many SVdP volunteers. A special thanks goes to all of them.

CELEBRATING THE JOY OF CHRISTMAS WITH OTHER CHILDREN....

For the second year OLM's SVdP has been able to provide a joyous Christmas to many other children in Pickens County. 66 older children associated with Boys and Girls Club, Prevent Child Abuse—Pickens, and the children of Fathers at Timothy House were given a unique gift from their "wish lists". These 66 children had not been included in any of the other various Christmas programs available in Pickens County. The families of these older children were very grateful for the gifts. Our thanks go to Georgia Dann Neel who organized and led this event. She was supported by a number of Vincentians who helped with the shopping and delivery of gifts. Sincere thanks to all of them.

FUND RAISING AND RELATED EFFORTS....

Celebrations such as those noted above are not possible without funding. Funds for the Christmas parties are raised and kept separate from all other St. Vincent de Paul funds.

A special collection from OLM parishioners was made for this purpose. Additionally, donations from 56 local businesses and individuals allowed us to fully fund the Head Start event and to have sufficient funds to extend the program to the other groups described above. A total of \$8,787 in cash and donated gift items was collected. The total cost of the gifts was \$7,257. The difference in funds is carried over for next year's celebrations. Thanks to Georgia Dann Neel for visiting and soliciting 72 Pickens County businesses. A half page ad ran in the Pickens Progress on January 30, 2020, thanking the local merchants and other donors for their support. Numerous hours were spent and many miles traveled by SVdP volunteers in purchasing and distributing gifts.

A very special thank you goes to Margy Lohman for her help in obtaining wish lists from the local children's clubs and for helping to distribute the gifts.

ST. VINCENT de PAUL SOCIETY NEEDS YOU....

The OLM Conference continues to need volunteers. We are especially in need of volunteers

to respond to client phone calls. Generally, this is a one-week assignment each month, whereby the SVdP phone line is accessed, the recording is listened to, and the phone responder (volunteer) returns the client's call to determine the need and how to proceed. When practical, the client is asked to come to the next intake for further assistance. If the situation requires more immediate attention, such as a home visit, other steps are taken. New volunteers will be trained by an experienced phone responder, providing all the necessary details. If you are interested in becoming a part of the St. Vincent de Paul Society at OLM, please attend our monthly meeting held on the second Tuesday of each month at 4:00 p.m. in the Fr. Dennis Hall in the Rome Room.

FAMILY UPLIFT UPDATE... Currently there are members from three families (one per family) participating in the Family Uplift Program offered by the OLM Conference. The Uplift Program has changed the lives of struggling families who need help in improving their job skills or in furthering their education. This provides the skills needed to obtain jobs with higher pay. Typical candidates are single parents who cannot afford to return to school nor pay for additional training. The candidate must be eligible for the Pell Grant and HOPE scholarship, be willing to contribute some financial help, and be willing to enroll and complete a course of study at a nearby technical school or college. The Uplift program is intended to fill the financial gap that prevents someone from improving their job skills because they cannot afford the cost of additional education and training. Participants in the program meet with a mentor who provides assistance in achieving desired goals.

Please call the SVdP phone line (706-692-7604) and leave a message expressing your interest in the Family Uplift Program.

PLEASE CONTINUE TO SUPPORT THE SOCIETY.... Mail donations to:

St. Vincent de Paul Society
Our Lady of the Mountains Conference
1908 Waleska Highway 108
Jasper, Georgia 30143