

VOLUME 6 ISSUE 2 SUMMER 2018

FACES *of* HOPE

THE DIFFERENCE YOU'RE MAKING FOR OUR NEIGHBORS IN NEED

—
You Opened
Your Heart so
Robert can
Help Others
—



SOCIETY OF ST. VINCENT DE PAUL

... HELPING NEIGHBORS STARTS AT HOME ...

Help Others...And Help Yourself



If I asked you to picture who is helped by your gift to the Society of St. Vincent de Paul, what image comes to mind? A family living in squalid conditions ... someone down on their luck with nowhere to turn ... neighbors who have lost everything in a disaster ... ?

Yes, those would all be good examples.

But someone else is also helped – you and me. Our primary mission at the Society of St. Vincent de Paul is growth in holiness – so as you store up spiritual treasures of your own – you are helped by your gift. Indeed, when we help others we help ourselves.

In addition, your gift helps *our volunteer Vincentians* in their work across 140 parishes of the Archdiocese in St. Louis. And it serves *all people who see your giving and are inspired to greater selflessness in their own lives ...* like Robert (see page 4) who is overcoming his pain of the past by reaching out to others

Thank you for doing so much eternal good as you help the temporal needs of others. You are their face of Jesus!

John P. Foppe
Executive Director

You Can Make a Difference Every Single Month

BECOME A
SUSTAINER



\$10/MONTH

Fills a prescription



\$25/MONTH

Provides a child with school clothes



\$50/MONTH

Helps a food pantry feed a family for a week



\$100/MONTH

Pays a utility bill



\$200/MONTH

Provides a child with a bed

Benefits of monthly giving:

Automatic – You don't have to remember to write and mail a check every month.

Allottable – You can budget the amount.

Affordable – You can break a larger gift into smaller amounts.

To learn more about how the Apostle of Charity Giving Society recognizes you, visit our website at www.svdpstl.org/Donate. To become a Monthly Sustainer, contact Claire Bove at claireb@svdpstl.org or 314-881-6035.

How One Couple's Less Is More

DONOR SPOTLIGHT



Couples celebrate wedding anniversaries in many ways... a nice dinner out or a weekend away.

The Zlatics, ten years ago, gave themselves a unique anniversary gift. They made a decision to start regularly supporting the Society of St. Vincent de Paul. Joe is now a professor at Lindenwood University and Monaca is full-time mother of three.

“Yes,” Monaca remembers. “That was our present to ourselves. So, every October near our anniversary, that’s what we do.”

The Zlatics say helping the poor has always been important to their family. Monaca grew up a Presbyterian. As a young adult, she was active with Sunshine Ministries, the emergency shelter for homeless men located in downtown St. Louis. After joining the Catholic Church, Monaca was interested in continuing to contribute to faith-based ministries. She learned about the work of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul from a family friend, Vincentian Father Ray Van Dorpe. “Father Ray has always shepherded me and helped me to understand the Society’s unique mission.”

Joe’s charitable spirit is greatly influenced by his past work as a criminologist and probation officer. “I saw the root of crime. I saw how so many people’s challenges stem from poverty and from need. It’s easy to judge, but it isn’t as easy to reach out and do something about it.” The Society of St. Vincent de Paul is meeting those needs.

“We’ve been given so much,” Monaca explains. “As a mother, I want to make sure our children understand that we need to help others less fortunate. But the reality is people in need are all around us, and the Society is helping those people every day. We are glad to be in a position to help.”

“We’ve been given so much. As a mother, I want to make sure our children understand that we need to help others less fortunate.”

Monaca Zlatic

Monaca and Joe are grateful for the difference their efforts are making in their children’s lives. This past Lent, seven-year-old Sophia chose for her “Act of Kindness” that the family should take food to a local food pantry. She organized the effort, and everyone made bags with Easter candy and Cheez-It crackers. “Even Sam spoke up that he wanted to help homeless people – he’s only three and I don’t think he knows what that really even means,” Monaca says.

“You hear the saying ‘less is more.’ I like to think that doing with less will make me ‘more’ inside.”



YOU OPENED YOUR HEART So Robert Can Help Others

Sentenced to five years in prison, Robert Strong had time to take a good, long look at his life. “I thought about all I’d lost. People I thought were friends really hurt me. I was filled with anger.”

But not long after, the thought came to Robert: you can’t lie to the Lord. “And I said, ‘Lord, if you forgive me, I’ll serve you.’”

One night, the warden unexpectedly opened Robert’s cell door. “You’re a free man.” A judge had just shortened his sentence in accord with a new law. On that cold December night in 2015, Robert began anew. He wasted no time in beginning to fulfill the promise he made to God.

Robert formed Prodigal House Ministry. He and a team of six volunteers preach the Good News on the streets of St. Louis, especially in and around the Wellston area where he grew up.

“We go to the places where there is prostitution, violence, addiction and a lot of ex-offenders. We talk to anyone who’s ready to listen about

sin and repentance and salvation. Especially the kids, we try to show them the way.” The ministry collects food and each week delivers it directly to homeless people across the area.

But then Robert’s van broke down; he chalked it up to Satan.

Robert had no money to make repairs. The ministry has no income, and Robert’s sole support is a disability check for an on-the-job injury he sustained years ago. He needs every penny just to pay his bills and put food on the table for his family.

Hearing that the Society of St. Vincent de Paul might be able to



help, Robert called the Holy Redeemer Conference near his apartment in Webster Groves.

The Conference was eager to help. Partnering with SVdP's St. Louis Council and Combs Tire and Auto Service, they were able to provide the needed repairs to Robert's 1999 GMC work van (see page 6). Conference members visited Robert and his son in their home, working as a team to coordinate all the details of the repairs.

Vincenian volunteer Rick Peterson recalls that "Robert just couldn't get over that anybody would help him out this much. I think at some level he didn't feel worthy. He said more than once, 'I just don't know how I could ever repay you.'"

For Rick, the spiritually enriching rewards of seeing Robert's deep faith at work on the streets has been a definite repayment. "Through Robert, I've gained more than I've given. He's doing God's work. It's been very moving to learn his story, to see his dedication in filling that van every week and getting food to people in need. Robert's my friend. I see the face of Jesus in him. And I want him to be able to see the face of Jesus in me."

For Robert Strong, every day is a challenge. Raising his teenage son, supporting his family, dealing with physical disability, and working to save the lost isn't easy. But, walking in the light of faith and saying YES to the Lord, he knows our all-loving God will provide.



"Through Robert,
I've gained more than
I've given. He's doing
God's work."

– Rick Peterson



SVdP CAR REPAIR PROGRAM PARTNERSHIPS DRIVEN BY YOU!

“IF YOU ARE IN A POSITION TO HELP PEOPLE who are down and out, whether financially or with time, I believe you need to do what you can,” says Scott Combs. “You never know who needs help. A lot of people may not seem in need; but behind the scenes, they may have lost a job, could be sick, or facing mental health issues. I am so glad I am able to help.”

Scott owns Combs Tire and Auto Service Center, the Kirkwood business his parents started in 1985. “I see

a lot of people who live around here who are a little bit down on their luck. They need a break – not just for their auto, but for their life.”

When Scott Combs was asked to partner with the Society of St. Vincent de Paul’s Car Repair program, he didn’t hesitate in saying “YES.” In fact, he called it a “no-brainer.”

Combs Tire and Auto Service Center is one of several St. Louis-area partners key to the Society’s Car Repair

Program, providing philanthropic rates on parts and labor to keep vehicles in working condition for Neighbors in Need. The Society of St. Vincent de Paul is deeply appreciative for these very special car repair partners.

Combs' shop fixes an average of three to five cars each month for Neighbors in Need served through nearby SVdP Conferences. The Conference and the St. Louis Council share the cost of the repair. Scott credits his service managers Patrick, John and Kylie for making the process run seamlessly. "They work with Carquest, another SVdP partner that provides discounted auto parts. The service managers are exceptional when talking to the client about what's wrong and what we can do," Combs says.

"A lot of people are so vulnerable," Combs adds. "They're already behind the eight-ball. If they can get an honest answer on what it will take to fix their auto, that's good for everyone. Unfortunately, sometimes the answer is that the car isn't worth fixing. That's always the hardest phone call we have to make."

Combs recently fixed Robert Strong's older model van (see page 4). Strong uses the van to deliver food to the homeless each week. Like every client he assists, Combs says Strong has been very, very appreciative of the mechanics' contribution.

"We are very blessed. We should give back," says Combs of his service.

"I see a lot of people who live around here who are a little bit down on their luck. They need a break – not just for their auto, but for their life."

Scott Combs



Thrift Store Locations

Dellwood

10052 W. Florissant Ave.
St. Louis, MO 63136

Lemay Ferry

3924 Lemay Ferry Rd.
St. Louis, MO 63125

Creve Coeur

11015 Olive Boulevard
Creve Coeur, MO 63141

St. Ann

10585 St. Charles Rock Rd.
St. Ann, MO 63074

Fenton

625 Gravois Rd.
Fenton, MO 63026

St. Charles

1069 Regency Parkway
St. Charles, MO 63303

Florissant

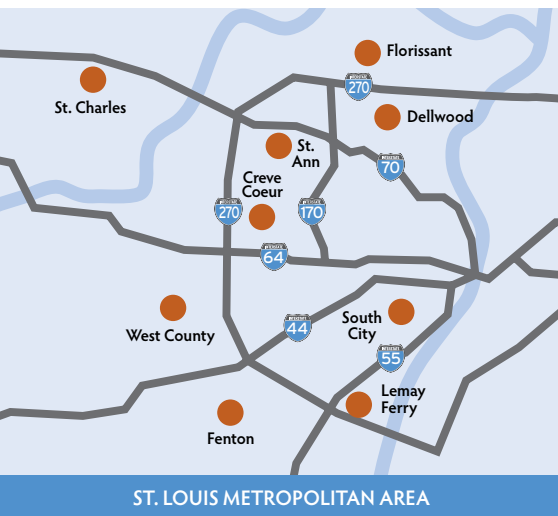
1 Paddock Hills Shopping Ctr.
Florissant, MO 63033

South City

4928 Christy Blvd.
St. Louis, MO 63116

West County

13986 Manchester Rd.
Ballwin, MO 63011



You made it happen

It's your donations that have made our ninth area St. Vincent de Paul thrift store a reality. The new store in Creve Coeur celebrated its opening with a store blessing and ribbon cutting on June 12. Because of you, our stores provided more than \$1 million in goods for our Neighbors In Need last year. Remember, you can donate your usable clothes and household goods at each of our Thrift Stores. Call 314-881-6006 to schedule furniture pick-ups.



SOCIETY OF ST. VINCENT DE PAUL ARCHDIOCESAN COUNCIL OF ST. LOUIS

... HELPING NEIGHBORS STARTS AT HOME ...

Society of St. Vincent de Paul
Archdiocesan Council of St. Louis
1310 Papin Street
Saint Louis, MO 63103
(314) 881-6000 • svdpst.org

Our Mission

A Catholic lay organization, joining women and men together to grow spiritually by offering person-to-person service to those who are needy and suffering.

