

VOLUME 6 ISSUE 3 FALL 2018

# FACES *of* HOPE

THE DIFFERENCE YOU'RE MAKING FOR OUR NEIGHBORS IN NEED

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“I WAS SO  
OVERWHELMED ...  
YOU ARE SO  
FULL OF LOVE.”  
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SOCIETY OF ST. VINCENT DE PAUL

... HELPING NEIGHBORS STARTS AT HOME ...

# We belong to each other ...



As many of you know, I was born without arms. Many times I've found myself on the sidelines wanting to belong.

Indeed, don't we all want to feel welcomed and wanted?

Especially, as Christians living in the light of Jesus, we joyfully shout "YES!"

'So in Christ we, though many, form one body, and each member belongs to all the others.'

Romans 12:5

We are all in need; we all need each other.

In the stories unfolding on these pages, we see this beautiful interdependence at work among Vincentian volunteers, neighbors and you.

Having spent decades climbing out of her own spiritual desert,

Toni Jordan reached out to save others with help from our St. Anselm Conference. When her material world fell apart, those same Vincentians — relying on one another — stepped in with love and care to ease that loss, thanks to you. In turn, all our spiritual lives continue to be enriched.

*We learn love by our willingness to belong to others.* By sharing God's wealth of spiritual and physical blessings, we ourselves never grow poor, but are always the richer.

John P. Foppe  
Executive Director

## How Will You Be Remembered?

Millie and Jim Corrigan were so much like you. They had a true compassion for those in need.

Growing up, Millie lived the hardships of a family who struggled financially.

Because of this, Millie and Jim wanted to be remembered for supporting a cause important to them. And so, they decided it was imperative to leave a legacy to others by making a gift in their will to the Society of St. Vincent de Paul.

Will you join Millie and Jim and become a founding member of SVdP's new Legacy Society?

To learn how easy it is to give to SVdP from your will or retirement plan, call Ryan Carney at 314-881-6003 or [ryanc@svdpstl.org](mailto:ryanc@svdpstl.org).



LEGACY  
SOCIETY

# “I Know Exactly Where My Money Goes”



**JOE SOHM GREW UP** seeing the lifelong difference one person can make in the life of another. “Both my parents are teachers,” he says. “My dad has been at St. Mary’s High School for 50 years. I grew up watching that 1-1 impact.”

Joe attended St. Simon Grade School and graduated from St. Mary’s High School in 2001 (we knew you’d want to know). But it was during his college years at St. Louis University that he was first introduced to the Society of St. Vincent de Paul.

“Through SLU’s Service Leadership Program I got connected with the SVdP Conference at the Cathedral Basilica. I’ve been active with them for 15 years.”

As a Compliance Manager for Wells Fargo, Joe’s career is focused on ensuring fiscal responsibility. One of the things he appreciates most about his involvement with the Cathedral Conference is that he is able to see exactly how his time and money are used. He goes on home visits to neighbors in need; he watches their lives changed by the assistance he and fellow Vincentians offer.

“I’ll never forget one mom with five children,” Joe says. “It was winter. Their gas had been turned off. When we showed up, they were all huddled together with blankets in one room with a little space heater. We had to keep our coats on the whole time; the apartment was so cold. It took close to \$1,000 to get the heat turned back on. That one thing filled them with life and gave them hope – they could see a positive future. We stayed in touch and helped that family again during our Christmas program.”

In addition to supporting his own Conference, Joe contributes to the Society’s St. Louis Council through Wells Fargo’s annual workplace campaign.

“I can’t imagine a better place for my money,” he says. “I know exactly how my gifts are used. And when you realize the challenges so many people are living with,

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“When you realize the challenges so many people are living with, and how much thought goes into the life-changing programs the Vincentians run, you realize the impact you’re having. I like that all of what I’m giving goes directly to the people in need.”

Joe Sohm

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*Charity Navigator, the nation’s largest evaluator of charitable organizations, has conferred its highest 4-Star rating upon the Society of St. Vincent de Paul Archdiocesan Council of St. Louis for excellence in financial management, accountability, and transparency.*





# “I was so overwhelmed ... you are so full of love.”

**My husband Jody and I** had been gone less than 20 minutes that evening.

On our way back from taking bread to a woman I care for in a nearby shelter, my phone app started flashing: our fire alarm was going off at home! We arrived home minutes later; the street was blocked off.

Both our house and the vacant house next door were engulfed in flames. We stood helpless; everything we owned was gone.

Four months earlier, we moved into the home we dreamed would be ours one day. A new beginning following years of setbacks.

For over a decade, I was recovering from addiction that began in my early teens. It consumed my life, and I dragged Jody down, too.

I grew up in a stable home. My mom was a nurse; my

father worked for Bi-State. I went to St. Matthew grade school and graduated from Bishop du Bourg High School in 1982. By then, I was already an addict. Drugs ruled my life. My family suffered as I was in and out of jail.

In 2004, my mother passed away. I was in prison but allowed to attend the visitation. It would've killed her to see me like this. I knew I had to change. I vowed to God I would become the woman He intended me to be.

I needed to find my way back to the real Toni, the good student my mom was once so proud of — a good mom, wife and grandmother. And with God's help, I did.

Now, standing in that inferno, I couldn't begin to imagine how we'd put our lives back together.

I work full-time at Let's Start, a nonprofit organization that helped me beginning in the 1990s. They assist women released from prison to re-integrate



They also helped us get caught up on bills that had fallen behind.

I felt their genuine, honest concern. They are just so full of love! I just don't know what we would've done without the St. Anselm gang.

What meant a lot was that they could've handled a lot over the phone or just mailed a check. But the people at St. Vincent de Paul want to meet you and get to know you. They want to pray with you. It doesn't matter where you live, and they never ask how you got in this position. They are just there to help.

In June, we moved into a new, permanent home in North St. Louis. A lot of neighbors have lived there a long time. It's a nice street and feels homey and wonderful.

My SVdP gang ... they are angels, angels in a time of need. I love them for who they are and what they do, and thank God they are here for anyone who needs help.

*Toni Jordan is in her 14th year of sobriety. She is a certified alcohol drug counselor and recovery support specialist in Missouri. Toni has been recognized with several advocacy awards and she serves on numerous social service advisory bodies. She is the proud mother of five beautiful daughters, four grandchildren, and is a devoted wife to her loving husband Jody for 20 years.*

## When you lose everything, even the smallest things mean so much.

into their communities. Through Let's Start, I had been collaborating with members of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul's St. Anselm Conference. They are always ready to step in with love and kindness to help our clients in need.

When they heard about our loss, they called right away. "Don't worry, Toni," Miss Edie said to me. "We're going to help you with whatever you need."

I was overwhelmed with what they did for us, our daughter and four-year-old grandson who live with us. We were given vouchers for bedding, towels, sheets, clothing and furniture. When you lose everything, even the smallest things mean so much. They knew just what we needed even before we thought to ask. Food or a fan, or household basics.





## ST. ANSELM VINCENTIANS

# “PUT ON THE LOVE”



Eddie Varley was her father’s primary caregiver for ten years. “After my dad passed away in 2004,” Edie says, “I was looking for another way to be ‘inconvenienced’ out of love.”

That way turned out to be joining the St. Anselm Parish Conference of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul.

“To go into the homes of people asking for help was humbling, gratifying and impactful. I realized this mission is about putting on the love with compassion and mercy.”

The parish’s 80 or so active members echo Edie’s sentiment as they draw closer to God by serving families in dire need. Prior to becoming Vincentians, many had never been to a distressed neighborhood like those they now visit regularly; they had helped solely through financial support.

R.B. Clark III is one such member.

“I used to write a check. But I admired the parishioners who were doing the home visits. They were so faith-oriented and so compassionate. I wanted to give it a shot.”

R.B. discovered that the people he visited lacked material things; but spiritually, they were very rich. “So, when I looked at the enormous blessings I’ve been given compared with how little they had ... I thought, If they have this great



faith, it should be a ‘slam dunk’ for me!”

Also drawing him closer to God was realizing how he had much in common with the neighbors he served. What they needed most was what we all need: someone to listen, someone to care. “And you

“...I admired the parishioners who were doing the home visits. They were so faith-oriented and so compassionate. I wanted to give it a shot.”

R.B. Clark III

can’t serve with compassion if you are being judgmental. Our Conference members helped me learn that. They have helped my faith grow.”

Eddie is grateful, too, for the ministry’s intangible rewards for members. “You can’t help but feel blessed in this mission of mercy,” she says. Pointing to the strong partnerships the St. Anselm Conference has with the St. Louis Council allows St. Anselm to provide ongoing help. She is also happy to be able to truly help change lives. “We can do much more to enable neighbors in need to begin anew.”

Eddie, R.B., and the Conference members meet every Saturday morning. They pray for those they serve and for those who enable them to serve. Eddie points to their inspiration: “St. Vincent de Paul left us the mission—to represent God’s goodness in the eyes of the poor. It is our donors who make it possible for us to seek out those neighbors who are forgotten, who are suffering, who are in need, and to bring them God’s love. It takes all of us together to be a visible sign of Christ’s love.”

St. Anselm Conference members meet weekly following the Saturday 7:30 am Mass and Rosary. After fellowship and prayer, home visit teams load their vehicles with groceries, cleaning supplies, fans, donated books and toys for kids and hygiene items, lovingly prepared by other volunteers.



## 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

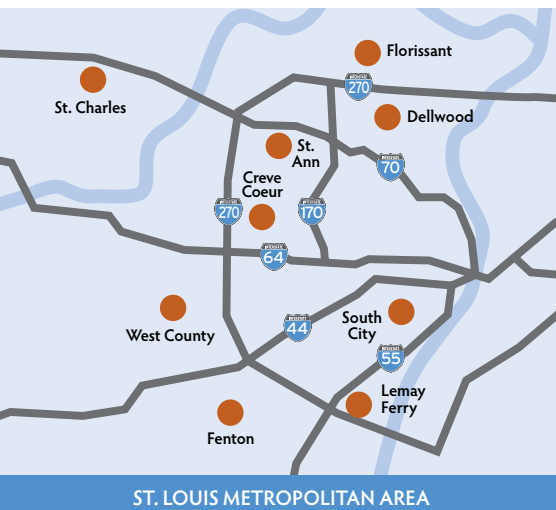
1 Paddock Hills Shopping Ctr.  
Florissant, MO 63033

### South City

4928 Christy Blvd.  
St. Louis, MO 63116

### West County

13986 Manchester Rd.  
Ballwin, MO 63011



# Thank You for Supporting Our Thrift Stores

Thanks to your generosity in donating to a St. Vincent de Paul Thrift store, many are able to experience the joy of finding a special treasure: clothing, furniture, jewelry, home accessories and holiday décor. It was your donations that set this beautiful thanksgiving table!

Thank you for donating and shopping at our stores – it's another way you help our Neighbors in Need.



## 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.

Store manager Lynn Maurice loves to decorate with festive finds at the Florissant store.

