

VOLUME 4 ISSUE 3 FALL 2016

FACES *of* HOPE

THE DIFFERENCE YOU'RE MAKING FOR NEIGHBORS IN NEED

"I WAS SCARED"

How your gifts gave this
family help and hope



SOCIETY OF ST. VINCENT DE PAUL

... HELPING NEIGHBORS STARTS AT HOME ...

Stepping Outside Your Giving Comfort Zone



IT IS AN OBLIGATION
FOR US TO
INCONVENIENCE
OURSELVES FOR THE
SERVICE OF THE POOR.

ST. VINCENT DE PAUL

We tend to stay within our comfort zones, even when it comes to giving.

We like to help people who live near us, churches that espouse the same beliefs as we do, and organizations that care about the same causes we do.

In this newsletter, we feature three stories about people who not only *stepped* outside their comfort zones, they ran. And they haven't looked back.

Ken and Mindy Jeffries aren't Catholic and don't live in the city of St. Louis, but they felt called to help SVdP after looking out their office window.

Vincentians, in Chesterfield, an affluent suburb of St. Louis, are deeply committed to helping strangers in one of the poorest, most dangerous zip code in the city. And they do more than write a check or feed the people in that area. They hold their hands in prayer.

And Florinda and Bernabe Cruz Garcia bought their first house for

their family of six. They spent their savings on the house, and when they needed help for an unexpected repair, they didn't feel comfortable asking for help. Because of your generosity, when they stepped outside of their own comfort zone, the funds were there to help, keeping the family in the only home they've known.

As we enter into Advent shortly, look outside your window, like the Jeffries, and see the needs of our neighbors. And then prayerfully consider stepping outside your own giving comfort zone. If you haven't given, please think about doing so. If you have given, please consider giving more. If you usually write a check, check out volunteering. In the words of our Vincentians who serve in the inner-city food pantry, can I get an Amen?

John P. Foppe
Executive Director

Another Way to Help

Look at the way Millie and Jim Corrigan love each other. They spent much of their adult lives single, caring for their elderly parents. When they met later in life and married, they lived frugally, as Millie grew up poor and knew what it was like to go without. When they died within months of each other, they left a very generous donation to the Council of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul, so their legacy would live on long after they were gone.



SAVE THE DATE

Charitable Giving Seminar

Are You Maximizing the Benefits?

Scott Becker, J.D., LL.M.

Tax Manager, RubinBrown LLP

The Lodge in Des Peres

March 2, 2017



Why Ken and Mindy Give



The first thing you see on the website of Stealth Creative, the company Ken and Mindy Jeffries founded, is this sentence: Our goal isn't to be heard, it's to make sure you are. The concept of serving as the voice for those who feel unheard translates into Ken and Mindy's personal life as well.



Ken and his wife Mindy are active in their church, St. John's Lutheran in Ellisville. But when they moved their company to downtown St. Louis, what they saw touched their heart and moved them to action. "Outside our office, you see the homeless and downtrodden and you see how great the need is," said Ken. "And then we received a flier from the Society of St. Vincent de Paul, and we knew that SVdP had the tools and the experience to help those who were right outside our office, and we wanted to be a part of that."

Ken and Mindy met with SVdP's Executive Director, John Foppe, and they were hooked. Said Mindy, "John is someone who clearly has overcome his own adversity and he helped us understand the mission of who SVdP is and what it believes, and we believe the same thing."

Since that meeting, Ken and Mindy have given financially to SVdP, but they have also given of their time and talent. Ken recalls, "At St. John's in Ellisville, we have a group called Christ in Action, which helps those in need. A resident came to us with many challenges, one of which was transportation. Our church worked with a local Conference to get this man a car. He was overwhelmed and praised God. Isn't that really what we are all trying to do as children of God?"

Mindy chimed in, "I think I am helping our neighbors but, in the end, I am changed. God is showing me something that I need to learn and He's doing it through our neighbors in need."



Can I Get an 'AMEN'?

Every Monday at 11:45 a.m., Bob Buck pulls out his Bible and says a prayer. Then, he reads a Scripture passage out loud. "Amen?", he yells enthusiastically. "Amen!" they answer back.

Bob is not a priest or a deacon. He is not in a church when he does this. He's in an alley off of North 18th Street in North St. Louis, and he is surrounded by people who have come to St. Nicholas parish for food. The parish is surrounded by housing projects and, on this day, there was a neighbor who had just gotten out of prison and another who was a veteran. They nervously paced, muttering to themselves, often singing out loud, trying to exorcise the demons from within.

The men who run the food pantry are from the SVdP Conference in Chesterfield, nearly 30 miles away and, some may say, it might as well be halfway around the world. But not Ken Bertha, the coordinator of the food pantry. "You live in the moment and understand you are there to serve people. We are there to make this a positive experience from beginning to end. We serve our neighbors in need pastries and water, and give them a chair while they wait. We always try to create a welcoming environment for them and evangelize as much as possible. We find things like these take the edge off and, as Vincentians, we always have in the back of our mind 'There by the grace of God go I.'"

For more than 35 years, the Ascension Conference has stocked and staffed the food pantry, and organized



food drives in their parish. This week, the Vincentians are also giving away vouchers for a winter coat at the St. Vincent de Paul Thrift Store on Christy in South St. Louis, funded by donations like yours. And they go one step further. They work with companies willing to make weekly product donations like Red Lobster, St. Louis Bread Company, McArthur's Bakery, Dierbergs, Schnucks, Longhorn Steakhouse, Olive Garden, Auntie Anne's, Cheesecake Factory, Pizza Hut, and the St. Louis Area Food Bank. They also purchase product to supplement their needs from Aldi, Shop n' Save and Dollar Tree. Much of the food from the restaurants was prepared just the day before, and the bakery, fresh fruit and deli items might be like those sitting in your fridge for just a few days.

Anyone within some of the poorest zip codes can come once a month, so the pantry can serve as many

eat. One man said since he had been coming to the food pantry, he had gone to see his doctor and began working on managing his diabetes. He has since lost weight, his numbers look good, and he is planning to go back to work soon. And he politely declined an offer of a fresh pie.

Pat Smith, photographed below, lives several blocks away and comes every few months when her food stamps are cut off. And she buys into the Vincentian concept of helping our neighbors in need, even when she is in need. "The food I am given I give to my family, my sister's family and I often share with my neighbors. I don't take advantage and I only come when I really need to. It's awesome."

If there is any food left over after everyone has been served, the Ascension Vincentians freeze it or donate it to Sts. Peter and Paul Homeless Shelter or St. Patrick

"YOU LIVE IN THE MOMENT AND UNDERSTAND YOU ARE THERE TO SERVE PEOPLE."

different neighbors as it can. On any given week, they serve more than 100 individuals who probably represent about 60 families. Each family received approximately 56 pounds of food. Unlike most food pantries that hand out bags filled with pre-selected food, this food pantry allows neighbors to shop and choose what they want to

Center. And, just this month, St. Nicholas will begin its own St. Vincent de Paul Conference, which will focus on home visits and helping neighbors with rent, utility assistance, medication and other needs. Said Bertha, "We are called to see the face of Christ in our neighbor and this is how we do it." Amen? Amen!



ASCENSION SVDP FOOD PANTRY AT ST. NICHOLAS PARISH IN 2015





“I WAS SCARED”

How your gifts gave this family help and hope

Bernabe and Florinda Garcia had just bought their first house. It’s a modest house in South St. Louis, but it allowed their four children, aged 16, 11, 9, 7 at the time, to have their own rooms and a yard in which to play. The Garcias used their savings to buy the house, which quickly filled with the laughter of their children and the smell of Florinda’s wonderful cooking.

Six months after buying the house, there was a heavy rain and water began dripping down from the ceiling. Florinda was working at the St. Anthony of Padua SVdP food pantry and told Sister Connie Probst, OSF, about the leak. Said Sister Connie, “I didn’t know anything about ceilings or home repair, but I do know when someone needs help. And the Garcias needed help.”

Sister had worked with some Vincentians at the Queen of All Saints Conference who had done home



“I DIDN’T KNOW ANYTHING ABOUT CEILING OR HOME REPAIR, BUT I DO KNOW WHEN SOMEONE NEEDS HELP. AND THE GARCIAS NEEDED HELP.”

repairs, so she asked them to take a look at the Garcia home. The problem, it turned out, was a cracked chimney.

“I was scared,” said Florinda. “We were told the longer we would put off the repair, the worse the damage would get. Both my husband and I work, but we didn’t have any extra money to pay for the repair. And winter was coming, so we really needed to make the repairs before it got cold.”

The Garcias, with help from both Conferences, started looking for a contractor. “I was astonished,” said Sister Connie. “Many of the contractors we talked to said they would not do work in the zip code where the Garcia’s live.” The Conferences worked together and found a contractor who appreciated doing small jobs and was happy to have the work. Because of the support from donors like you, the Council office and the



Conferences could pay for the \$1500 in repairs, provide money that needed to go to the children’s Catholic schools for tuition, food and clothing.

“When we see the face of Christ in each other, we begin to build a relationship with each other. We are all now friends with each other and the Garcia family,” said Sister Connie. “There is a myth out there that the poor don’t share, and I can tell you that the poor share better than most.”

In fact, in addition to the jobs both Florinda and her husband hold, Florinda is also helping the St. Anthony of Padua Conference teach an energy assistance class in Spanish.

“I love my house,” said Florinda. “The kids are happy, my husband and I are happy and we are so grateful for the help of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul.”

Thrift Store Locations

Dellwood

10052 W. Florissant Ave.
St. Louis, MO 63136
(314) 881-6045

Fenton

625 Gravois Rd.
Fenton, MO 63026
(314) 881-6041

Lemay Ferry

3924 Lemay Ferry Rd.
St. Louis, MO 63125
(314) 881-6046

St. Ann

10585 St. Charles Rock Rd.
St. Ann, MO 63074
(314) 881-6032

St. Charles

1069 Regency Parkway
St. Charles, MO 63303
(314) 881-6047

South City

4928 Christy Blvd.
St. Louis, MO 63116
(314) 881-6043

West County

13986 Manchester Rd.
Ballwin, MO 63011
(314) 881-6034



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.



Looking Good...Helping Neighbors

By donating or shopping at St. Vincent de Paul Thrift Stores, you are helping our neighbors in need keep their utilities on, pay their rent, or buy needed medication. Our Thrift Stores help fund our many programs that help those experiencing hardship in our community. Thank you for donating your good, usable clothes to our stores!



Thanks to the Ballwin store for providing the clothes.