

VOLUME 6 ISSUE 1 WINTER 2018

FACES *of* HOPE

THE DIFFERENCE YOU'RE MAKING FOR OUR NEIGHBORS IN NEED



BACK HOME
AND BACK
TO GOD



SOCIETY OF ST. VINCENT DE PAUL

... HELPING NEIGHBORS STARTS AT HOME ...

Why Love Comes First



One of my favorite saints is Teresa of Avila who wrote, *“It is love alone that gives worth to all things.”*

In this issue of *Faces of Hope*, I’d like to share with you stories of love revealed in so many ways.

There is the young Florissant couple overcoming numerous

hardships to ensure the best life possible for their twin sons and ailing grandfather ... a busy professional who begins a decade-long charitable commitment ... devoted volunteers unable to ignore the pleas of those who have next to nothing ... a diligent mechanic giving of his time to ensure the safety of thrift store merchandise.

Each of these people, moved by love, is offering something unique.

Just as you do.

It is your love for the people we serve week in and week out that gives worth to this ministry.

Thank you for supporting this far higher aim. It is your support that distinguishes this charity from many, and perhaps most, nonprofit organizations serving the poor.

When we say we want to be the face of Jesus for our neighbors in need, we are saying that our first and most important gift to them is ourselves – present in the moment, embracing that person just as we find them, free of judgment and seeking only to bring healing and hope.

“Your mere presence will touch hearts,” St. Vincent de Paul assures us.

Indeed, love calls us to action.

I thank you for generously responding to this call, over and over again.

John P. Foppe
Executive Director

Honoring Your Generosity

Our patron Saint, Vincent de Paul was called an “apostle of charity” because of his selfless giving in the name of Jesus.

In 2012, the Society of St. Vincent de Paul introduced the “Apostles of Charity” to recognize its annual contributors of \$500 or more.

On its 5th anniversary, membership in the Apostles of Charity is expanding in order to honor other steady givers whose loyal support uphold our work.

SUSTAINER
Donors giving monthly at any level

PARTNER
Donors giving \$500 or more in one year

GUARDIAN
Donors giving for five or more years at any level

Benefits of Membership

- Enrollment in our book of prayers, where donor intentions are remembered during weekly Masses at the Council Office
- Recognition in Annual Report
- Invitations to Special Events
- Guardian Donors receive enrollment in our sister organization, the Association of the Miraculous Medal





SUSTAINER

DONOR SPOTLIGHT

Help and Hope Come Every Month

Lori Kupsky always had a heart for helping the poor.

As a young adult living in Utah, Lori volunteered with various homeless shelters. Her church would sometimes hold a worship service and welcome everyone who showed up for free refreshments.

But in all that time, Lori had never heard of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul.

In the early 2000s, Lori moved back to Missouri to continue her education. “I met my husband, Drew, while at Mizzou. I became Catholic, and we moved to St. Louis in 2006.”

Lori remembers it was at Holy Redeemer Parish that she first heard of the Vincentians. “They had offering envelopes specifically for the St. Vincent de Paul Society.” She went online to learn more about the Society’s work.

“With most charities, it just seems like ‘here’s some food and here’s some clothes’,” she says. “But with St. Vincent de Paul, they’ll take care of so many more aspects of what people need. Their volunteers find other ways to help them. And it’s very well organized. They know how to lift a person up and how to support them through different aspects of their life.”

Lori and Drew decided they wanted to help the Society on a regular basis. “But,” Lori says, “I knew I had a tendency to forget without reminders. So I just set up

a recurring donation every month. Then I would never forget. It was easy and a relief to know I wouldn’t need to remember on my own.”

More and more donors are following the example of Lori and Drew Kupsky. And because of these generous recurring contributors, the Society is able to budget and plan its assistance far more reliably, knowing in advance the value of monthly gifts coming in from its most committed supporters.

“Drew and I don’t know anyone who has ever benefited from our gifts. But by making a monthly gift, I like knowing my small part contributes to the Society’s greater cause.”

And for Lori Kupsky, who has a heart for the poor, that’s most important of all.

Because of their monthly commitment, Lori and Drew Krupsky are Sustainer members of the Society’s Apostles of Charity. See “Honoring Your Generosity” on page 2. If you would like to donate monthly and become a Sustainer please contact Anne Kirwan at 314-881-6024 or annek@svdpstl.org.



Back Home AND Back to God

In early 2016, new homeowners Brittany and Adam Loduca were concerned about finances. Brittany had to take leave of her bank teller job earlier than planned because of medical problems during her pregnancy with twins.

After the twin boys were born, the Loducas spent most evenings at home caring for the babies — and for Brittany’s grandfather who suffers with dementia.

Overall, they were making it and in a good place. Then, the unthinkable happened.

“One afternoon”, Brittany remembers. “I had this feeling that I needed to move them into another room.

About 30 minutes later, a tree from our backyard crashed through the roof, right into the family room where the boys had been sleeping.”

The Loducas were displaced from their home for almost three months. Without family in town to help, they had to move to a hotel. Insurance covered some of the damage, but many other expenses quickly depleted their savings.

By the time they moved back home mid-summer of 2016, bills began falling behind. Then the basement flooded, Adam lost his job and the Loducas’ home was near foreclosure. That’s when Brittany reached out to the Society of St. Vincent de Paul Conference in Florissant.

“Joanne Feckter from St. Sabina came over and met with us. We filled out paperwork. They called later that week saying they could help us with our mortgage. And they brought over diapers and food to help out.”

Most often, SVdP Conferences like St. Sabina partner closely with the St. Louis Council to provide major financial assistance like the Loducas required. It is donor gifts to the St. Louis Council that enable 143 Conferences across 12 counties in Missouri to respond to so many urgent needs.

Brittany and Adam were overwhelmed by the generosity that allowed them to keep their home.

“I remember coming into our room that night and just crying. We were so humbled and thankful. Honestly, if it wasn’t for St. Vincent de Paul, we would’ve had to find a different place to live. We had been in a bit of a religious slump before, questioning our faith; but when they helped, it brought us back to God and centered our lives more around God. We are so thankful.”

Joanne and the Conference members continue to check on the family and keep them in prayer. Over the holidays, they provided the family a Christmas basket filled with food, gift cards and a few extras for the twins.

Meanwhile, this young family continues to push ahead. In December, Adam completed training for the U.S. National Guard and hopes to enroll in the police academy with a long-term goal to work for the FBI.

And in addition to being a full-time mom, Brittany is pursuing a degree in special education.

“Our journey is definitely still going,” Brittany says. “But, we are so blessed to be able to get back on our feet! Someday we want to give back to others. I want all the donors to know that even though you may not be able to see where your money is going or who it’s helping, know that your gift is a blessing to families like ours. Your gift gave us faith when we were at rock bottom ... it was that boost, the assurance that everything would be okay.”

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- Brittany Loduca





Recently, a woman called St. Sabina Parish in Florissant for help with a prescription copay of \$20. “She works almost full-time,” Conference President Elizabeth (Lisa) Haynes said, “but the retail store limits her to 36 hours a week, and so she receives no benefits. She does receive \$14 per month in food stamps.”

CONFERENCE SPOTLIGHT:
**Serving the Mission
is Contagious at St. Sabina
in North County!**

“This Neighbor in Need started crying when we said we would be able to help,” Lisa added. “And when the Conference also gave her a Schnucks gift card to help stock her empty refrigerator . . . Well, you would have thought we brought the entire store to her! She was just so grateful, and it was an incredible feeling.”

Lisa remembers a call from another struggling family. The mother spent several hours a day walking and taking a bus to get to and from work. Even selling furniture and other household articles left them short; the mother began to lose hope. The St. Sabina Conference stepped in with funding to restore utilities and offer some household food and basics. The woman

The extraordinary energy, friendship and passion at work at the Conference is contagious! It is so evident they live out SVdP’s three pillars of Spirituality, Friendship and Service.

St. Sabina celebrated its first anniversary as an SVdP Conference this past September. Lisa says their relationship with SVdP has taken their parish’s charitable efforts to a whole new level. Partnering with SVdP allowed the Conference to help families with large needs including mortgage payments. Lisa recalls 28 calls coming in during the first few days of the Conference’s existence. We were amazed at the number of calls for help. It made us realize how many people needed the basics . . . things

“I truly believe there is NOT a more important mission than this one.”

- Lisa Haynes



told Lisa, “If it hadn’t been for you all – honestly, I don’t know what I would’ve done. I was ready to commit suicide. I felt like a failure for letting my family down. I’d never had to ask help from anyone before.” Since then, the mother has been able to get a better job and Lisa says, “she is a totally transformed person because of what God has done in her life.”

As one of the most vibrant and growing charities at work in our region, the Society of St. Vincent de Paul continues to work year after year through parishes to reach more people. Visit a St. Sabina’s regular SVdP meeting and it doesn’t feel so regular at all.

I had never in my life needed to worry about – food, clothes, a bed.” Since then, they have helped hundreds of individuals and families.

The members of the St. Sabina Conference say that it is they who receive far more by giving than the people they are serving. Lisa shares, “I truly believe there is NOT a more important mission than this one. Our Vincentians touch so many lives in so many ways. But it is, by far, more OUR blessing than it could be anyone else’s. We truly do see the face of Christ in our Neighbors in Need, and I pray they see the face of Christ in us.”

Thrift Store Locations

Dellwood

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

St. Ann

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

Fenton

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

St. Charles

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

Florissant

1 Paddock Hills Shopping Ctr.
Florissant, MO 63033
(314) 881-6097

South City

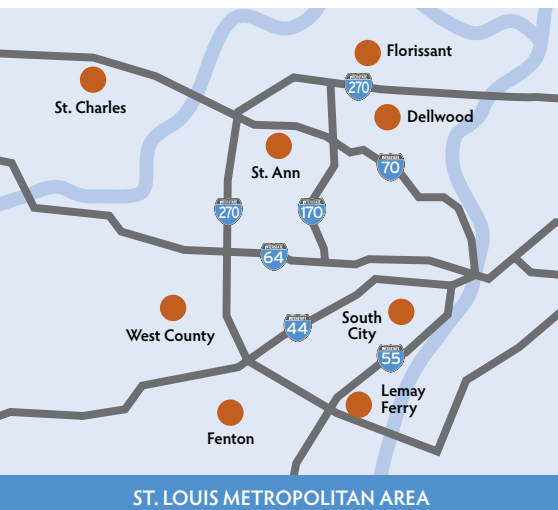
4928 Christy Blvd.
St. Louis, MO 63116
(314) 881-6043

Lemay Ferry

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

West County

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



Don't Worry – We've Checked It Out!

SVdP Thrift Store customers can shop with peace of mind when purchasing an appliance or lamp. Before any electrical item is placed for sale, a volunteer handyman checks it over to be sure it is in working condition and free of any obvious defects (frayed cord, broken wire, etc.) that might pose a safety hazard. Here, our volunteer Art Willen from the Fenton Thrift Store tests out a donated audio speaker. We're grateful for our volunteers dedicated to ensuring that our Thrift Store shoppers enjoy a worry-free purchase every time!



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.

