



Des Moines Council Society of St. Vincent de Paul

VINCENTIAN VOICE

First Quarter 2015

Dear Friends and Fellow Vincentians,

As we look ahead to the coming year with great expectations and high hopes, it's only appropriate that we look back for a moment at the good works achieved by our conferences and the Des Moines Council during fiscal year 2013-14.

In the last fiscal year, which ended Sept. 30, total charity reached \$810,571 with 11,183 total clients served. The council's Social Services department assisted 10,315 of those clients.

Direct financial assistance for rent, utilities and other needs topped \$139,571 with \$16,134 coming from conferences and \$123,437 coming from the council. Food through Social Services exceeded \$285,400. Clothing and furniture amounted to \$23,641 and \$22,959, respectively.

Our store giveaway efforts -- the free food provided to those in need who visit either SVDP on Sixth or SVDP on 63rd -- grew considerably to top \$338,957 thanks to three factors. The first was a concerted effort to tally the value of those food items. The second was the generosity of donors and an increasing number of contributions from area grocery stores and other businesses. And, the third was the dedication of a growing number of volunteers and staff who pick up those much-needed donations every day of the week.

Our just concluded holiday efforts, including Thanksgiving baskets to families and Operation Santa Claus gifts to children, provided a special meal to so many people and brought Christmas joy to hundreds of children who otherwise would have gone without.

Those results could not have been achieved without the hard work, commitment and compassion of our volunteers and staff. Thank you for all you have done -- and all you will do in the year ahead -- to touch so many

lives right here in greater Des Moines in a positive way.

This year, let's renew our commitment not only to our works of charity but also to sharing the Society's story with our family, friends and fellow parishioners so that they, too, might join us and grow in spirituality through the serving those in need.

Eric Woolson
Executive Director



FOP Walk 2014: Wonderful Weather, Fellowship, Fundraising Success

The Des Moines council held its sixth annual Friends of the Poor Walk Sunday, Sept. 28. With beautiful weather, inviting scenery, and welcoming company, the event was another success.

Approximately 70 people gathered at Pete Crivaro Park in Des Moines to raise awareness for the plight of the poor. Last year's event was even more special than previous walks thanks to President Jim Wachuta's band, The Authority, which pumped up the crowd. Awareness for the event increased with ads in the Catholic Mirror and TV coverage before and after the event.

Between t-shirt sales and pledges, the event raised a total of \$4,873.27. All proceeds will be distributed through the council's social services department and participating

conferences to help cover the costs of rent, utility bills and other needs. The winner of the "Boot Award," which goes each year to the conference that raises the most money, went to St. Elizabeth Seton. The Carlisle conference raised \$1,318.

"The walk continues to become more successful each year through the dedication of so many volunteers. We were blessed to have Moe Kauzlarich of St. Elizabeth Seton in Carlisle as our committee chair again in 2014," Executive Director Eric Woolson said. "The council's employees have been involved in previous walks but a new and very welcome happening was their very active involvement to raise money through a raffle and by encouraging donations. Their contribution was a real difference-maker and is greatly appreciated."

The council extend a big thank you to all of the walk's sponsors, including Fareway, Casey's and Cooney's, as well as the following conferences: All Saints, St. Anthony, Sacred Heart, Christ the King and St. Mary of Nazareth that made this event possible.

Forest Avenue Outreach Orchard to Grow on Former SVdP Lot

What started as a vacant lot donated to the Des Moines Council has turned into a community orchard in the making.

"We certainly appreciated the gift of the lot on the 300 block of Forest Avenue a few years ago, but we just couldn't do anything with it. We'd considered the possibility of a community garden, but our staff didn't really have the time to oversee it," said executive director Eric Woolson. "In the end, we were left with a property that required our guys to mow in the summer and shovel in the winter until Laura Peters, executive director of the Sixth Avenue Corridor, came up with a fantastic win-win idea."

Peters suggested that Woolson contact Ralph Chiodo, who leads the Forest Avenue Outreach ministry. The outreach has a popular community garden and something more.

"I could see right away when I looked up the outreach online that Ralph had some big dreams which included owning land for an orchard someday," Woolson said.

A quick call to Chiodo moved that dream one step closer to reality when Chiodo was told that the council's board had already approved selling the lot to Forest Avenue

Community Outreach for one dollar. The legal paperwork, completed pro bono by an attorney for the outreach, completed the property transfer by late summer.

A Nov. 11 newscast by reporter Andy Fales shared the story with WHO-TV viewers in which Chiodo thanked the Society of St. Vincent de Paul for its generosity. "From the very beginning, I had the vision of a community orchard and it really has fallen into our lap," he said.

The story noted that Kim Dreher, a local commercial real estate consultant who leads Valley Disaster Relief, brought "a small army of men and machines" to clear the lot of numerous trees and shrubs. Iowa State University is going to design the orchard layout and a nursery will donate the fruit trees to be planted this spring.

"The momentum has been incredible. I feel like I'm just riding the surf," Chiodo told Fales. "I have a lot of dreams. Very few of them come true. So, it's a dream come true."

As Fales reported, "It will be years before the trees and vines bear fruit, but for now the promise of this new beginning is enough."

Stores, DMPS Central Campus Set Stage for Spring Fashion Show

The council's retail staff is partnering with Des Moines Public Schools fashion and merchandise instructor Tracy Holland and her students for the Central Campus' annual fashion show. Holland's students will select three clothing items and one accessory to create up-cycled 21st century attire.

"I like to challenge my students by getting them to think outside the box. There is so much that you can do with up-cycled material. Anyone can be creative; they just need an outlet to spark that imagination," she said.

St. Vincent de Paul's Retail Director Jessica Daab hopes this collaboration will influence younger shoppers to explore the stores' two locations. "Most people don't realize that we get a lot of great stuff here, including popular brand names such as Versace. I hope the fashion show will inspire shoppers to get creative. There are so many possibilities within our stores," Daab said.

The Central College's fashion show will be held on April 30 and May 1. The show will open to the public at 7:00 p.m. April 30.

Volunteer Profile: Al Minear

Words can never express the importance of volunteers to the Society's work around the world and right here in Des Moines.

"We couldn't help the people we help or make the home visits we make each month without volunteers," said council president Jim Wachuta. "We appreciate the time each volunteer takes out of their busy schedule and the unique contributions they make. Al Minear is one of those quiet, dedicated volunteers who gives so much of his time and talent."

Minear has been volunteering at SVDP on Sixth for more than six years. He can be found on weekdays testing and repairing donated electrical and electronic items to get them ready for sale.



Al Minear

He was introduced to St. Vincent de Paul through the conference at his own parish, St. Mary of Nazareth, on the north side of Des Moines. He heard through his parish how volunteering at St. Vincent de Paul can help give back to the community. Seeing fellow parishioners volunteer at the Des Moines location, Al became a part of the Vincentian family.

"I find the work very interesting. The variety of appliances that we get here are endless -- from computers, coffee pots, and toasters," he said. Asked why he continues to volunteer, he replied, "I've learned a lot about disadvantages and problems that some people may have. They're up against a lot and I feel like I have a greater appreciation for their problems."

Minear's selfless contributions have not only helped our community, but also our country. He bravely served two years in the Korean Conflict as an Army medic in the Third Infantry. He was recently recognized for his service by joining other Korean veterans on an honor flight to Washington, D.C. "Korea was a very long time ago, over 60 years for me, as I served in 1951. It was a very nice thing for them to do. I felt welcomed both here in Iowa and in Washington, D.C.," Minear said.

Volunteer Opportunities

Volunteers, including Dowling Catholic students in need of service hours, are always welcome at the Society. Council needs include daily office volunteers, store volunteers at 1426 Sixth Avenue and 109 SW 63rd Street and assistance in operating our food pantry on the first and third Tuesday evenings of the month, mentors to guide the HiSET students through the course, babysitters for the children of the HiSET students during class hours and assistance with the annual golf event.

To learn more about volunteering, contact Office Manager Mary Beck (office) or Jessica Daab (store) at 282-8328.

Volunteer's Efforts Recognized with \$1,000 Grant from Wells Fargo

Wells Fargo awarded a \$1,000 grant to the Des Moines council in recognition of Debora Blume, a regular volunteer at the council's twice-monthly evening food pantry. The grant has been used by the food pantry to purchase special items -- notably peanut butter, jelly and tuna -- that cannot be secured through the Food Bank of Iowa.

Contact Us

We welcome your suggestions to improve our services. Feel free to contact us:

President Jim Wachuta: president@svdpdsm.org

Executive Director Eric Woolson:

ewoolson@svdpdsm.org or 282-8328 ext. 12

Office Manager Mary Beck:

secretary@svdpdsm.org 282-8328

Social Services Director Chasity DeMaranville:

socialservices@svdpdsm.org 282-8328, ext. 14

Education Center Coordinator Andrew Gross:

agross@svdpdsm.org 282-8328, ext. 17

Retail Operations Director Jessica Daab:

retaildirector@svdpdsm.org or 282-8328, ext. 11

Donations Always Needed

Retail Operations is hoping to acquire a donated panel van or pickup with cap in good mechanical condition, for daily use. Please contact Eric with any possible opportunities.

SVdP picks up donations Monday through Friday based on a zip-code route. The Des Moines Council is requesting furniture specifically at this time, but all donations are welcomed. For details or to schedule a pick-up, please call us at 282-8328.

Dates to Remember

January 6, 2015	Evening Food Pantry 1426 Sixth Avenue	5:00 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.
January 20, 2015	Evening Food Pantry 1426 Sixth Avenue	5:00 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.
January 22, 2015	Executive Board Meeting 1426 Sixth Avenue	5:30 p.m.
February 1, 2015	Quarterly Breakfast Following: Holy Trinity Catholic Church 2926 Beaver Avenue, Des Moines	8:30 a.m. Mass
February 3, 2015	Evening Food Pantry 1426 Sixth Avenue	5:00 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.
February 17, 2015	Evening Food Pantry 1426 Sixth Avenue	5:00 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.
February 19, 2015	Presidents' Meeting/Executive Board Meeting 1426 Sixth Avenue	5:30 p.m.
March 3, 2015	Evening Food Pantry 1426 Sixth Avenue	5:00 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.
March 17, 2015	Evening Food Pantry 1426 Sixth Avenue	5:00 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.
March 19, 2015	Presidents' Meeting/Executive Board Meeting 1426 Sixth Avenue	5:30 p.m.
April 7, 2015	Evening Food Pantry 1426 Sixth Avenue	5:00 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.
April 19, 2015	Quarterly Breakfast Following: Sacred Heart Catholic Church 1627 Grand Avenue, West Des Moines	8:00 a.m. Mass
April 21, 2015	Evening Food Pantry 1426 Sixth Avenue	5:00 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.
April 23, 2015	Presidents' Meeting/Executive Board Meeting 1426 Sixth Avenue	5:30 p.m.