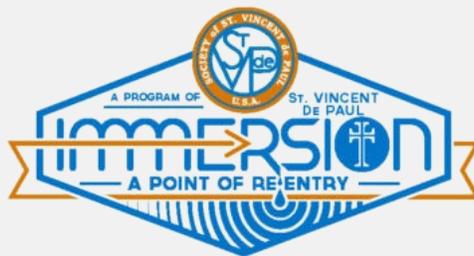




# NEWSLETTER

— FEBRUARY 2023 —



Our Immersion Reentry program is increasing the number of clients we are serving. We continue to offer the DOT written (knowledge) test to clients at 6th Ave. and Army Post Rd. This has been a great service as the Iowa DOT is usually backed up 4-6 weeks for appointments. It removes anxiety and allows participants to secure their license much sooner. We have been blessed with many donations specific to Immersion clients by the Iowa Law Enforcement Academy, Home Builders Association of Des Moines, and the New Hope Assembly of God Church in Urbandale. Our conference room was overflowing with these donations, and we have been able to help more clients than ever with their basic needs. If you are on the south side, please stop into our Immersion offices as we have received artwork from clients to show their appreciation for what we do. We have also benefitted from the Ft. Des Moines Residential Facility, and Kingdom Living clients coming to help enroll others in the program or assist with duties in the retail area and backroom.

# THE PRESIDENT'S CORNER

February 17, 2023

Lewis Carroll, author of Alice's Adventures in Wonderland, once wrote, "If you don't know where you are going, any road will get you there." The point is, we all need to set goals in our lives and determine the milestones that will help us achieve them.

The leadership team at the Des Moines Council of St. Vincent de Paul has set specific goals for the coming years that align us with our strategic plan. Our executive committee and our Conference presidents have accepted these goals as our opportunity to promote our mission of "Helping Others Help Themselves".

## **Promote Active Conferences**

The key to St. Vincent de Paul's success is our local parish based conferences. Strong conferences can support local people who seek assistance. They do this by offering individuals and families emotional support and financial assistance. But they don't stand alone. Many times, when a conference comes upon a financial need that exceeds their ability to help, they team up with other conferences in order to assist. The district council helps in these "twinning" efforts. Conferences are also the backbone for supplying volunteers in our stores, food pantries, and social programs. In that way they support the larger Des Moines community.

Organizations are often compared to a chain. Some links of the chain are stronger than others. Without strong Conferences St. Vincent de Paul would become just another agency providing needed services in our community. In order to strengthen the ties between the District Council and the Conferences I will continue my efforts to attend meetings of each of the conferences and their pastor to see what the District can do to help them and what the Conference can do to help the District. Additionally, we recently hired an individual to serve as a liaison between the District and the Conferences. Our goal is to help strengthen each of the conferences and explore the possibility of starting new conferences at parishes in the area.

## **Ensure the Sustainability of our Mission**

We do great work at St. Vincent de Paul. That great work comes from many volunteers and dedicated staff. Not all, but much of what we do requires funding. By the Grace of God, we have been very fortunate in recent years to have obtained numerous grants that together with our store revenue have sustained us. We opened a new store in Windsor Heights in order to add to our business revenue. All of our stores have been setting sales records helping to support our mission.

Our sustainability should not, however, rely on grants that may not materialize in the coming years. We have adequate reserves for a rainy day, but we also have substantial debt. We need to retire a significant amount of that debt and develop new business activities that add to our bottom line. We also need more volunteers in order to alleviate the need for additional paid staff. We will be working on these issues in the months ahead.

## **Continue to Strengthen Our Brand**

Last year, over 32,000 individuals were served with programming, continued education, food, clothing, and financial assistance. Our 1000 volunteers donated over 23,000 hours of time, over 125,000 customers were able to access affordable goods in our stores, and over \$1.5 million of charity was provided in the last fiscal year. Yet, St. Vincent de Paul remains relatively unknown not only in our community, but in our Catholic parishes as well. It is time to let the public and our parishes know of the good work that we are doing, not to pat ourselves on the back, but to strengthen our organization so that we can assist more people in need.

We have begun an effort to develop a marketing campaign to raise the level of awareness of St. Vincent de Paul. We will approach this campaign with the mindset of feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, providing shelter for the homeless, and visiting the imprisoned. With that as our guide, we can find success.

I began this article with a quote. Here is another credited to Yogi Berra, "If you don't know where you are going, you might wind up somewhere else." Together we can find a path forward to become a stronger advocate for the poor. I hope Yogi would approve. More importantly, I hope Jesus approves.

In Christ,

**Bill Ehm**

District Council President

# SAVE THE DATE!

## 2023 CHIP IN FORE CHARITY

### 2023 FIGHT FOOD INSECURITY FUNDRAISER



It's that time of year again to gear up for our annual Fight Food Insecurity Golf Fundraiser.

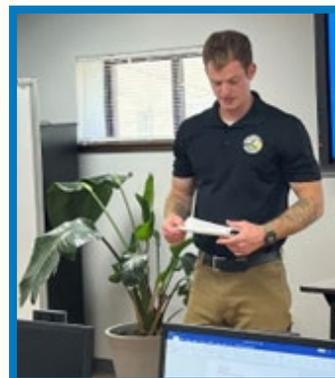
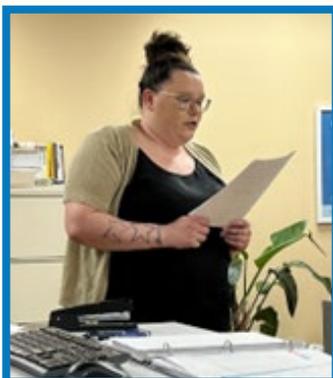
Please plan on joining us on Thursday, May 25 at Copper Creek Golf Club. We will have a shotgun

start at 10:00 a.m. Last year we had a sold out event, so register early to secure your spot. AND the best this is that registration is still only \$150. There are many sponsorship opportunities to help support this event. Please contact Randi Radosevich at [resourcedirector@svdpdsm.org](mailto:resourcedirector@svdpdsm.org) for more information.

Although 2022 continued to be a challenge, we were able to provide over \$1.5 million of charitable services to more than 35,000 clients.

This would not have been possible without the support of people like you.





The goal of the Back2Work (B2W) Program is to help unemployed or underemployed individuals work their way toward self-sufficiency using a wholistic learning approach. Through classroom learning, internships, and individualized case management individuals will be ready to be successful in the workplace as well as the other components of their life. The ultimate hope of the B2W program is self-sufficiency for our clients, thereby fulfilling the primary mission of St. Vincent de Paul.

Back2Work has been a program at St. Vincent de Paul Des Moines for five years. It has had great success partnering clients of the program with businesses and helping them achieve employment at a living wage. There have been 18 classes of the Back2Work program that have occurred over the course of the five years. The Back2Work Program was created in Des Moines and has now been replicated at 10 other SVdP's nationwide. SVDP in Des Moines is currently working with two additional SVdP locations to help them place the B2W Program in their respective areas.

Following each classroom experience, participants will either complete an internship or proceed to direct employment depending on their individualized career plan. If participants complete a four-week internship, they are putting into practice what was taught during the classroom experience. If they choose direct employment, they continue to meet with the classroom facilitator and give progress updates. The pictures below show some of our recent Cohort participants presenting in during the classroom experience.

Data is collected for up to one year following the program. Data shows that in two of the groups since in-person B2W restarted, all the participants that completed class are now employed at a livable wage. Long-term data shows a strong completion rate of the participants that enrolled into the class, as well as a majority of participants maintaining employment for a significant period of time following the classroom portion of B2W.

During the year of 2022 a total of 6 Cohorts of B2W were held. The most recent Cohort had seven individuals successfully completed the classroom portion. Of the seven, 5 are employed with our employee partners, one is completing her internship and has a job offer and one is starting her internship! The program continues to have great outcomes and successful participants who are able to become self-sufficient.

Our Employer Council also met this summer and were able to get a look into some of our successes that have completed the Back2Work Program. The pictures below show two of our successes' sharing with the Employer Council their journeys and how the SVdP Programs helped them become self-sufficient

# ST. VINCENT DE PAUL FOOD PANTRIES

St. Vincent de Paul Des Moines has two food pantries that both sit in what is called a “food desert.” The definition of a food dessert is an urban area in which it is difficult to buy affordable or good -quality fresh food.

Between both locations, clients have access to food 6 days a week. On average, each pantry serves 15 or more households a day. Clients can receive food, clothing, personal hygiene or household items that they are in need of at absolutely no cost to them.

The need for serving individuals in need of food only continues to grow. On average between our two pantries, we serve over 1000 individuals a month. As the need for assistance increases so does the cost of food. We are grateful for the Conferences that continue to support our pantries monetarily on a monthly basis. We are also grateful for the Conference members who donate eggs, and continually make the bread runs on a weekly basis, as well as volunteer in our pantries. We could not do it without all of you!

For both Thanksgiving and Christmas, we worked with Capitol City Produce who gave us free produce to help serve over 2000 individuals in our Hope for the Holiday baskets. We also served in our pantries, with the help of the Polk County Supervisors, 300 families with Fareway gift cards to help defray their grocery costs.

December was a busy month with the Hope for the Holidays Christmas baskets. We can't thank Ryan Doty and his DMPD team enough for all their help at both Thanksgiving and Christmas time dividing the produce for the Conferences. We can't thank them for their continued HELP!



## VOLUNTEERS

St. Vincent de Paul has AMAZING Volunteers that support our mission daily. We couldn't do what we do without them. A volunteer onboarding is held once a month for anyone who is interested in learning more about volunteering. You can volunteer an hour a week or 40 whatever you want! Currently we have over 120 volunteers that helps between our three locations. For more information on volunteering feel free to contact Holly Dommer at [back2work@svdpdsm.org](mailto:back2work@svdpdsm.org).



## NEW STAFF

My name is Laurie Ready and I am very excited to serve as the Vincentian Services Liaison to the St. Vincent de Paul Conferences in the Des Moines area. I recently moved back to Des Moines from Dubuque where I was the SVDP Director of Retail Services (thrift store manager). My husband Bob and I wanted to be near the 3 of our 4 sons and their families that live here. Our son Scott and his family live in Memphis. As the liaison, I will be supporting the conferences. The conferences are really the heart of SVDP and we want them to be healthy and strong.



LAURIE READY

My job as the liaison will be to:

- Build a relationship with each conference president and its members.
- Provide marketing material.
- Provide up to date information.
- Share activity ideas from all Conferences.
- Provide a direct line of support to the conference president.
- Provide educational/formational resources/Training (Manuals, Ozanam Orientation, Home Visit training etc.)
- Help create a plan to re-energize conferences that need a boost.
- Help conferences recruit new members and get support from their parish. This would be done by providing information to parishioners about the SVDP organization, invite them to get involved by joining the SVDP conference, volunteering, monetary support and other ways they can be involved.

---

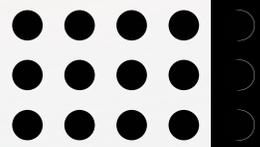
# THRIFT STORE NEWS

Time fly's when you're having fun sorting through so many wonderful donations. Our three locations are bouncing back from a great holiday season. It's time to stop back in our stores, if you haven't already, to shop, donate and volunteer. Great way to overcome the winter blues.

Did you know.....it has almost been a year since we opened our new location! Can you believe it? March 17th, 2023, is the one-year anniversary of the 801 73rd street location. Stay tuned for special anniversary specials we will run in stores to celebrate SVdP coming to Windsor Heights.

When you visit next be sure to check out a few key areas where we have lowered some prices to an everyday great value.

This would include Shoes, Handbags, Accessories, Media, and several more categories. We are always working hard to put out great product at affordable prices for you and your family. Keep in mind our Vinny's tote bag to save every day and our Vinny's Rewards Card.





## SPRING FLING

To melt away your winter woes, we are gearing up for a spring fling day. Be sure to mark your calendar to stop into one of our three locations March 6th, 2023. This celebration of spring event will be from 9am to 2pm at each store. It will showcase new easter, spring apparel and spring decor. We will have various fun giveaways each hour and refreshments, while they last. We hope to see you there,

## CHICAGO MATTRESS SALE

A great way to feel rejuvenated is a good night's sleep. We can help with that! We continue to stock three styles of mattresses with varying comfort levels. **February and March we are taking 10% off all bed pricing.**



## DONATIONS

We need your help!

Our locations have done really well selling your great donations. So well, we need more! Our stores could really use your help stocking us up on:

HOME FURNISHINGS, such as, decorative figurines, candle holders, vases, florals, signs decorative platters.

FURNITURE AND MEN'S CLOTHING

Thank you in advance for your donation.

**Schedule a pickup by calling 515-282-8327 prompt # 1 or visit [svdpdsm.org](http://svdpdsm.org).**

## VOLUNTEERING

Do you have just a couple spare hours in a random day? or week? Nothing pressing to do during that time? We would love to have you part of our team of volunteers. Any time given impacts our mission and helps our stores. Onboarding times can be determined by calling 515-282-8327 ext. 150

**THANK YOU ALL FOR YOUR ONGOING SUPPORT OF ALL OUR LOCATIONS. THE MORE WE SUCCEED IN OUR STORES, THE MORE SUCCESS WE HAVE IN HELPING THE COMMUNITY**

