This past October I notified Dennis Coyne and Norb DeJaco that I would be stepping down as our Executive Director effective September 30, 2017 which ends our current fiscal year.

These past seven years have been such a blessing to me. I’ve gotten to know many of you, our wonderful Vincentians and I’ve been amazed by the little miracles you perform each day for our neighbors needing a little bit of help.

That’s why I have decided to move along. I think we have made a lot of progress in these past seven years getting our organization refocused on the mission of SVdP. We have made a lot of changes from an organizational standpoint and developed new programs and as a result my creativity bucket is running on empty. The Executive Director’s creativity and innovation is so important to a non-profit of our size and it’s time to get some new ideas and new enthusiasm in here so we can continue growing our mission and help even more of our neighbors in need. I could probably coast in this job for a bit but that’s just not who I am and I love this place too much to see it go into cruise control.

We have and will be using this transition time to make some changes organizationally and we have developed a very good search process to ensure that we find the right person to become our next Executive Director. Details on that search process will be forthcoming. Thank you with all of my heart for these past seven years. They have been a true blessing to me just as you all are.

You truly do make a difference in their lives.

I’ve been able to work with our wonderful staff who come to SVdP every day knowing that what they do helps provide the gifts that we can give to those we serve. Our staff is a very wonderful group of people.

I’ve seen our community always provide the gifts we need that helps us...help others...help themselves. They truly make Northern Kentucky a wonderful place to call home.

A big piece of my heart will always be at St. Vincent de Paul. I truly love this place and while it may sound strange, that’s why I have decided to move along. I think we have made a lot of progress in these past seven years getting our organization refocused on the mission of SVdP. We have made a lot of changes from an organizational standpoint and developed new programs and as a result my creativity bucket is running on empty. The Executive Director’s creativity and innovation is so important to a non-profit of our size and it’s time to get some new ideas and new enthusiasm in here so we can continue growing our mission and help even more of our neighbors in need. I could probably coast in this job for a bit but that’s just not who I am and I love this place too much to see it go into cruise control.

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Are you looking for a rewarding way to spend your day? Do you have a desire to give back to your community? Please come join us in the Assistance Office! We are looking for volunteers to help answer phones in the call center and assist in the food pantry. Call Center Hours are Monday thru Friday 10am-2pm. The Erlanger food pantry is open on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 9am-noon. We rely on the continued commitment of volunteers like you to support us in assisting our neighbors in need. All you need to do is call Carolyn at 859-446-7720 or Vicky at 859-446-7721. E-mail Vicky at victoria.peterson@svdpnky.org

Thank you for all you do!
"Council Updates and Treasured Moments"

We started our new Fiscal Year 2017 on October 1st, 2016. A lot occurred in the previous Fiscal Year. One was the passing of the spiritual baton from our wonderful servant leader, Norb DeJaco. For those of you who did not attend the St. Vincent de Paul feast day celebration, Ralph reminded everyone what the Council has accomplished through Norb’s leadership. The list is long: new conferences organized, existing conferences revitalized, district councils created, the implementation of the Client Management System (CMS), accountability/transparency revitalized, the new store in Florence, and spiritual growth. The latter saw Ozanam Orientation and retreats promoted Council wide. This is just the short list of what we honor Norb for. And let’s not forget the contribution of Sally DeJaco. She shared Norb with us for 6 years not only for meetings but many travels away from home. We sincerely thank you Sally!

Back to spirituality... Deacon Mike Lyman is planning for another ‘Ozanam’ orientation session. It will be hosted by the SVdP Conference at St. Thomas in Ft. Thomas on Saturday, “April 22nd 8-3pm. Plans are also in the works for another retreat similar to the one we had last year at the Melbourne retreat center. CMS – we are off to a good start for this Fiscal Year. Margaret Rahn and Jennifer Vocke have led us in the direction that will help us better manage our client data base that will have many benefits for us and the families we serve. St. Barbara went live in March and the remaining conferences came aboard through-out the spring and summer months. Just remember if you experience issues, give them a call and they will assist you. The Council has a software package call “Join Me” that will allow them to see what is on your PC and help guide you to a solution.

As you know, we received the 400 meals from a generous donor. Those were distributed from the St. Barbara parking lot for the 3rd year. Although the weather was very cold, the pick-up was completed in less than one hour thanks to the cooperation from the conferences.

At the December Council meeting, I challenged all the presidents to invite 2 new parishioners to their conference. At the February meeting, we will see how successful we were. This is something each one of should do for the health of our conferences. Planning for the future is the responsibility of us all. I urge you to revitalize your conference continually.

Home Visits – Pat Dressman and I recently made a visit to a single mom and her 2 children – ages 10 and 3. She needed food, clothing, and rent assistance…. something we all do. So how was this different? This was a first time visit for the mom who knew nothing about SVdP. Secondly, the 3-year-old was … let’s say a challenge. If she interrupted her mother once, it must have been dozen times. We didn’t care – she was cute. Poor mom was getting exasperated. We marveled at her patience. At the end of the visit, I slipped Pat one of our Thomas Merton prayer cards for the mom. I didn’t think a prayer would be possible given the chaos. Pat was undaunted. There was going to be prayer. The next thing I knew, we were all on the floor holding hands, and Pat was leading a spontaneous prayer for all 5 of us. When we concluded, the 3-year-old said: “Can we do that again?” We all laughed. But it was a special moment. It was the first prayer these two children had ever heard. A good reminder for all of us is the spiritual needs in addition to the material needs of the Home Visit.

Dennis Coyne, President
SVdP Council of No. KY

Change at the Top

Wow! There has been a great deal of change over the past several months. We have a new president elect for SVdP. In October, Dennis Coyne took over as our new President of the Northern Kentucky Council. Our Executive Director, Ralph Bradburn will be leaving in October. And across the spectrum of our council, we have seen many conferences elect new presidents. Change in leadership is an important part of the Vincentian way. It is a part of the Vincentian Pathway called Servant Leadership.

Servant leadership is best defined by Jesus Himself: “Whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be your slave—just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life a ransom for many” (Matthew 20:26–28). In the Christian realm, all leadership should be servant leadership.

Through Servant Leadership, we recognize that it is Jesus Christ himself who leads us in all our decisions. Through prayer, reflection and collaboration we look to the Spirit for guidance in all that we do. All of us are endowed with special gifts, but the source of all is God. We look to use the gifts of each person. But it is God who brings those gifts we offer up in service to Him and to those in need who makes them effective. Over time, our shared leadership is driven by a spirit of cooperation, collaboration, charity, and compassion. It is Christ Centric and inspired by God. As such, we should embrace and welcome such leadership.

Deacon Mike
An Attitude of Gratitude

With the passing of Thanksgiving and the Advent of Christmas we have much for which to be thankful. At St Tim’s we have a rich spiritual tradition of sharing our faith through personal outreach, care and sharing of our time, talent and treasure. We provided 14 Thanksgiving dinners and are scheduled to provide dinner and Christmas presents for an additional 20 families in the coming weeks.

Recent ‘Thanksgiving food’ and ‘coat donations’ not only replenished our diminished food pantry, it assisted several other agencies and provided an abundance of coats to warm our neighbor’s hearts and bodies. The first distribution day was a very chilly Saturday morning and the children positively glowed with excitement at being able to pick out their own winter coats off the racks, just like at the stores, to keep them warm and cuddly all winter. Many thanks from each of them to each of you who donated coats and food.

We are ever thankful for the food, monetary and spiritual support we receive from our parish. It’s critical to our mission of “helping us, help others, help themselves.” Similar to a recent story on the news, one of our Vincentians encountered a 9 year old lad named Nathaniel at one of the local motels who said he was not likely to have Christmas this year because his grandmother was raising him and providing for his room and board and she had fallen on hard times and Santa wouldn’t know where to find him. Many of our families are headed by single moms who are on their own trying to make ends meet without child or family support. And with addiction on the rise, we see ever more grandparents on a fixed income raising their grandchildren during their “golden years.”

In the past six months, our treasury has taken a hit, visiting 114 families, assisting 331 people: providing food, clothing, furniture, housewares, rent and utilities, avoiding numerous utility shut offs and evictions. While resettling families into stable housing is among the most uplifting services we provide, it comes with a high price tag. In addition, recent calls seem to be involved with families who are seriously behind in their bills with few, if any, resources to help them recover. While we have some very generous (sometimes anonymous) contributors, for whom we are very grateful, one of the ways we can continue or even expand our support of local families is to have a consistent, predictable revenue stream of $5, $10, $20 or more a month. Consider that we are your feet, carrying assistance to the needy. We are your hands supporting those in financial distress. We are your voice providing words of faith and encouragement to those who are down on their luck. Our neighbors thank you one and all for your support, encouragement and prayers.

Bill Anderson, President St. Timothy Conference

Coming This Fall!!

We will once again host a one day retreat available to all Vincentians this fall at St. Anne’s Retreat Center in Melbourne, KY. This is a special day designed for the renewal of our Vincentians. We will reflect upon our relationship with God, with the poor and with one another. We will examine the true meaning and implications of servant leadership. Time will be set aside for adoration of the Blessed Sacrament and for participants to spend time in prayer and reflection. We will begin the day with celebration of the Holy Mass. Lunch will be provided. This is a rich and rewarding day for all involved. Mark October 28th on your calendars now. More information will be forthcoming. Those who would like to get registered as quickly as possible just send an email to deaconmikelyman1@gmail.com or for more information you may call Deacon Mike Lyman at 859-806-4440 This retreat day is open to all Vincentians.

Hagedorn Appliances generously donated a large freezer for our Erlanger food pantry. Hagedorn Appliances, who recently celebrated their 75th anniversary is an outstanding company, locally owned, partnering with our mission of “Neighbors helping neighbors”. This donation came at a time of need as our older freezer was in need of replacement. This donation will ensure many will receive meat, poultry and frozen goods for years to come in a fresh, safe and compliant environment; a critical priority for our Society.

Thanks to the magnanimous giving of so many local corporate and individual partners and the selfless giving of time, talent and treasure, we are able to not only help so many in need but also use the gifts God Has provided for each of us in use of His service. (Romans 12:5-8).

We hope you will keep Hagedorn Appliances in mind when choosing local businesses to support. Whether you are in need of service, sales, parts or any other appliance, please stop in to see them at 4432 Dixie Highway in Erlanger.
SO MUCH GOOD...ALL AROUND US  ‘Service in Action’

On December 9th, students from St. Augustine School in Covington participated in the ‘Student Enterprise Program’ by donating their StEP Bucks to the SVdP St. Augustine Conference. Sponsored by UC’s Economics Center, StEP encourages fiscal responsibility among students earning school currency that can be saved, spent at the school store or donated to a charity of their choice. UC provides a 1:1 match for those students who choose to donate. The students have also chosen the St. Augustine Conference to receive their donated funds in 2017.

Another amazing year for food donations for our neighbors in need. Over 10,000 food items were collected for St. Vincent de Paul by Notre Dame Academy and St. Xavier High School.

Due to the generosity of our donors and supporters including Gold Star Chili, Burlington Coat Factory, 1st Call Disaster Services, Kemba Credit union, local fire departments and WLWT News 5, SVdP distributed nearly 1,300 new and gently used coats to our neighbors in need. Despite warmer than normal temperatures in November and December, we had a great turnout by those families who simply cannot afford to buy new winter coats. We are grateful to everyone who dropped off coats and truly appreciate all the volunteers who helped during distribution to make this year’s coat drive successful.

Another great turnout for the 9th annual Turkeyfoot Trot 5k on Saturday, November 12th. Despite a chilly start, hundreds of runners, walkers and volunteers participated to show their support for St. Vincent de Paul and our neighbors in need. The timing of the event couldn’t be more perfect with the holidays fast approaching. So many of those we serve struggle more during this special time of year as they try to give their children a nice holiday.

The proceeds from the event put smiles on many faces just in time for Christmas. Those smiles were there because of the generosity of event sponsors, volunteers, and participants. We are so grateful to all sponsors and a special thanks to the 5K Committee, event emcee John Lomax, all the Vincentians who volunteered, and to our title sponsors Matt Franks—Ken Perry Commercial Group, Munninghoff, Lange & Co. CPAs, St. Elizabeth Physicians and Zimmer Motors.

Some Happy Children!

Vincentians Walk to Help Those in Need

Santa came to meet our Walkers!
Employees working in the Assistance Office are, for the most part, behind the scenes, but are also voices of comfort and help, as well as, support for Vincentians, volunteers and the different programs of Society of St. Vincent de Paul. It is a blessing and a pleasure not only to help those in need, but also to support those who sacrifice their time to do so.

Carolyn Ashcraft Both Carolyn and her husband work for SVdP. Doug works at the Florence store. Carolyn has been with the Assistance Office for 4 years. She feels great satisfaction in being able to help many clients with food, clothing, and other needs. She loves her co-workers. She also enjoys crocheting and making crafts.

Vicki Dinterman worked at the Florence store for about 2 years as a cashier in addition to helping with donations and has been with the Assistance Office for about 3 months. Her skills have her performing a variety of tasks, such as, helping in the transportation department, answering phones and helping volunteers in the call center and working on conference questions, Christmas lists, and the coat drive. Vicki believes that volunteers are the engine that makes SVdP GO because their heart’s desire and drive are in helping others. She feels very positive about the CMS program and how much it will help with accountability and gathering information for the Vincentians and various SVdP programs. Before she came to SVdP she enjoyed working for large corporations, serving in the military, and playing the drums. Her focus is God first, then family, country and sports! She’s a fan of the UK WILDCATS, Denver Broncos, and Peyton Manning.

Daniel Harrington has worked with the Assistance Office since June of 2016. Daniel works in the call center (on the phone, as well as, helping volunteers with calls and CMS) and in the community connecting with local businesses and corporations, developing partnerships and awareness of the great programs and services SVdP provides for our community. Knowing he has been able to help others in need and make a difference in their lives, even if it is just for one person, is very important to him in his Catholic faith.

Sharon Hatfield Lester joined the Advancement/Assistance Office in July of 2016. She has enjoyed getting to know the staff and volunteers and knowing her job helps make serving those in need possible. Her passion outside of SVdP is helping women by volunteering as Director for “Journey to Be Center for Women’s Ministries of NKY”, a ministry that offers peer counseling, support groups, book studies and other programs for women at no cost. Her passions are writing, traveling and spending time with her family.

Victoria Peterson has worked in the call center for almost 3 years. She began as a volunteer and values what she has learned about SVdP from the clients as well as from a volunteer’s perspective. She feels her co-workers are like family and loves working with them. Prior to SVdP she pursued her passion for helping people in social work with the Kenton County DCBS. She loves her job at SVdP because she can see the impact we have on the people we serve. Vicky spends most of her time focusing on her three children and enjoys crocheting.

Margaret Rahn has been working as the CMS Project Facilitator since November, 2015. She enjoys reading, spending time with friends and family, and meaningful work. She especially enjoys the quiet moments of the day when there is time to pause and simply breathe. She considers those moments, gifts. Margaret is gracious and kind to strangers as well as those she works with.

Jennifer Vocke has been an employee for SVdP since September, 2015. She began in the call center and is now using her skills with CMS Support. Jennifer values her faith above all else and describes her experience with the Vincentians as a beautiful and precious time of sharing the faith and serving those in need which is descriptive of the foundation of St. Vincent de Paul and the Vincentians.
Moreover, beyond having been raised in the milieu of “moving large quintessential Catholic family.) can’t help but learn something about sharing forged in the fire of a Conference. (One raised in a family with twelve siblings, after all, As Divine Providence would have it, a lifetime member of the par- the “usual suspects” of the Conference members, upon expiration the usual inside “arm twisting” and soul few resources to do it with Like most volunteer organizations with lots of work to do, and too our neighbors in the Northern Kentucky area! the process of helping to alleviate some very personal human dus operandi fit the Diocesan computerized record model, while in membership, and making the transition of their conference’s mo- ‘food pantry’ in the basement of the St. Cecilia School, increasing SVdP. During that time, they succeeded, inter alia, in establishing a-her/deliveryman for a major player in the national transportation business, and Susan’s position as a key account manager for another large corporate entity. To make a long story short, their “labor of love” in the Society’s form of volunteerism turned out to be a variation of part-time, charitable, employment to the tune of approximately twenty hours a week for a period of those six year, until the clock of re- quired administrative retirement regulations caught up with them, necessitating their stepping down from their official positions in SVdP. During that time, they succeeded, inter alia, in establishing a ‘food pantry’ in the basement of the St. Cecilia School, increasing membership, and making the transition of their conference’s mo- dus operandi fit the Diocesan computerized record model, while in the process of helping to alleviate some very personal human suffering in the geographically large Independence vicinity. To their credit they accomplished this while trying to be cognizant of the spiritual dimension of their mission. Like most volunteer organizations with lots of work to do, and too few resources to do it with—especially the two-legged variety— the usual inside “arm twisting” and soul-searching began among the “usual suspects” of the Conference members, upon expiration of their offices, as we discerned a replacement for the Chisenhalls. As Divine Providence would have it, a lifetime member of the par- ish, Dan Miller, stepped forward to assume the presidency of the Conference. (One raised in a family with twelve siblings, after all, can’t help but learn something about sharing forged in the fire of a large quintessential Catholic family.) Moreover, beyond having been raised in the milieu of “moving over” and “giving up in increasingly larger fractions” in the com- promises negotiated of necessity in a large family, Dan certainly inherited the pedigree for membership in the Society of St. Vin- cent de Paul. You see, his parents ‘had their hands wet’ in the business of extra-familial charity for a long time, despite, or prob- ably—even more properly on account of what I like to refer to as a thing called: “good heart”. His father, Edward, not a rich man and certainly not one without something else to do-served as one of the founding members of St. Cecilia parish’s SVDP’s con- ference on or about January 25, 1959. The “Application for Aggre- gation” of even date bears the notation that he was the first sec- retary of the “Council Of The Conference” at his parish. And folks, let it be here and now known, if indeed it’s not already part of the oral Conference’s informal history, that Dan’s mother, Marietta, wasn’t known as the “Pizza Lady” for nothing. The fact is, even in her older years when the ravages of age and ill health, the wear and tear of mothering a large family, and the continued difficulty of “gettin to the meetins” tend to catch up with a gal, she’s still doing what she can for the disadvantaged. Even if it’s only writing birthday cards and “sending up the prayers” for the average, more active poverty warriors—at least one of which shares her genetic code and the magnanimity that may have come with it. Indeed, it was in recogni- tion of such selflessness that Bishop Foys recently bestowed on Marietta an award for meritorious service in and to the Society. And so, I now return to the rhetorical question posed at the in- ception of this little story about a small piece of the living love of the eternal Christ alive in Independence today. I’ll speculate that, at least in my humble opinion, the virtue of Charity, the existence of which is readily observable, even by the wicked, and perenni- ally preaches in the Catholic Church, is ultimately attributable to “Good Heart” as modeled in the family that Jesus always intend- ed each of us to have. Dan and his wife, Mary, are and have been for years serving their community as an assistant Fire Chief and EMT respectively at the Piner/Fiskburg Fire Department. As they add to their re- sume’s their additional positions in the Society, I like to think that I speak for all of us at St. Cecelia parish when I wish Dan, a man of readily apparent physical strength, and Mary, his “best friend”, an extended period of effective and satisfying service to our neighbors in the Northern Kentucky area!

Mark A. Bergman, Vincentian St. Cecilia Conference
Pope Francis is challenging us to be the face of God in the world by seeing the face of God in the person we least expect to see it, including the person in the mirror.

We cannot thank Duke Energy and its employees enough for showing up in full force to help out at Florence and Erlanger on Monday, January 16th. In addition to cleaning, organizing and straightening, both locations received $1,000 donations from Duke Energy. What a great belated Christmas gift!

One great way to support our thrift stores and emergency voucher programs—which provide FREE clothing, furniture, and household items to those in need—is to arrange a “Bundle Event.” We deliver a truck to your location; your volunteers distribute tax receipts and pack the trailer; we pick up the trailer early the next week. We make it easy for you to help us help others! Items most needed are small appliances—especially microwaves and coffee makers; kitchen and household items such as pots and pans, china and silverware, figurines, and jewelry; furniture including kitchen and dining tables and chairs, sofas, recliners, living room chairs, and dressers. In general, all donated items should be gently used, clean, and in working condition. Remember, quality donations help keep our thrift stores running and actively supporting our mission! To learn more or schedule, please call 859-341-3212 Ext. 2.

It’s Time to Renew Your Kroger Community Rewards to Support Your St. Vincent Council or Conference! Beginning April 1st, all Community Rewards must be renewed at Kroger (or sign up if you haven’t already).

**How does this work?** A portion of what you spend at Kroger comes back to St. Vincent de Paul. It costs you nothing but still helps St. Vincent provide basic necessities to our neighbors in need.

**How do I enroll my Kroger card?** Sign in or create a new account at [www.krogercommunityrewards.com](http://www.krogercommunityrewards.com) There is an option available on the website to search participating nonprofits and the corresponding five digit NPO number. Select your local Conference by clicking on the circle to the left of the Conference name. In the event your local Conference is not listed you can choose to support the Society of St. Vincent de Paul - Northern Kentucky. The number is 10288.

**Make sure to save your changes!** We appreciate your support of St. Vincent de Paul!
Forecasting another ‘warm and humid’ Summer

With the above average temperatures this winter it seems like summer will be here before you know it. At St. Vincent we are already planning for the heat and humidity of summer. The Summer Breeze program operates from May 1st through September. During this time, we find many in our community at risk from the heat and humidity. Many that fall into this risk category are the those who have life-threatening medical conditions such as COPD, asthma and lung cancer. Each year, we hear so many heartbreaking stories. Through the Summer Breeze Program, we provide fans to our neighbors needing help to cope with the Northern Kentucky summer heat and humidity. We also provide room air conditioner units to those with a documented medical condition requiring them to have air conditioning.

In 2016, St. Vincent de Paul distributed 113 air conditioners to the medically fragile in Northern Kentucky and 174 fans to our neighbors in need. We are the only organization in Northern Kentucky offering a heat relief program and many times the need is greater than our available resources. We could not offer this program without the financial assistance of donors and foundations.

You can help give relief to those suffering with terminal and acute pulmonary illnesses by donating to the Summer Breeze program. St. Vincent is in need of donations of fans, air conditioners and/or financial assistance to help purchase them. Please visit www.svdpnky.org to donate.