Special Features

DONOR SPOTLIGHT
Haile Foundation

CONFERENCE SPOTLIGHT
St. Thomas

NEW JOINT CONFERENCE
St. Augustine and St. James

HOLIDAY OUTREACH
Where would we be without our friends? At St. Vincent de Paul, we often talk about that essential element of friendship. The context of “friendship” in the last two years has been very focused on being friends of those in need. This is so important. Our ministry calls us to be and to see the face of Christ for those whom we serve. In fact, Frédéric Ozanam said that our visits to the poor are “at least equally for them as for ourselves, so as to become progressively better friends.”

The other side of friendship within the Society is serving in friendship together – providing support and encouragement to one another. Blessed Frédéric Ozanam once observed that we become closer to friends after sharing an activity with them, such as going for a walk or eating dinner. “But if purely human acts have this power,” he explained, “moral acts have it even more, and if two or three come together to do good, their union will be perfect.”

Since that dreaded COVID-19 virus came onto the scene in March 2020, we’ve been laser focused on doing whatever it took to meet the needs of our struggling neighbors. The depth and breadth of need increased. We became more creative and encouraging in the assistance just to name a few. What is the end of this wonderful vocation. There are so many issues that neighbors in need face, issues range from lack of transportation to affordable housing. Voice of the Poor is about bringing attention to these issues and presenting them to the community and local and state officials, in the hope of bringing about policy change. Vincentians know firsthand what neighbors face through home visits and can advocate for neighbors facing poverty. If you are interested in joining, the next meeting will take place on January 20. Please contact Aaron-Wolfe Bertling at aaronwb@gmail.com to reserve your spot.

In The News

Our Adopt A Family Christmas Program allows families to have a joyful Christmas morning with the help of generous individuals, families, and businesses. We receive calls from families in need who are seeking assistance with Christmas gifts. Our assistance team gathers details like the children’s ages and interests. We then are able to match the family in need with a generous donor who will “adopt” the family and shop from their Christmas wish list. This program provides a tremendous amount of joy for neighbors in need and we are thankful to all of our donors. This year 78 children’s Christmas wish lists were adopted! A special thank you to Target of Newport, iHerb, Newport Healthpoint and the 3rd shift team from DHL for providing gifts. Thank you for being neighbors we can count on this Christmas season.

Vincent’s Angels is a supplemental Christmas Program that we provide to neighbors who have not been “adopted” by a family or community. This program ensures that all moms, dads, grandparents and guardians are able to provide Christmas gifts to their children and grandchildren. We are able to alleviate stress for many deserving families and provide them with a memorable Christmas morning.

Our 14th annual Turkeyfoot Trot on November 20 was a HUGE success with over 800 participants running and walking for a great cause! We were happy to be back in person at Thomas More University with Commonwealth Bank & Trust Company and Payroll Partners as the presenting sponsors. Over $30,000 in proceeds were distributed to the Conferences that participated to help with outreach in their communities. THANK YOU to everyone who participated, sponsored or volunteered this year! We could not do this without your support.

This year we were back for an in-person distribution at Life Learning Center where neighbors hand-picked gifts that they thought their children and grandchildren would enjoy. We had volunteers onsite to help wrap the gifts too. We provided over 500 children with gifts this year thanks to our generous donors and dedicated volunteers!
IN THE NEWS

FOOD, TOY & COAT DRIVES

We would like to thank the many schools that hosted food, toy and coat drives this winter. Thank you for being neighbors we can count on!

For the past several years, an anonymous donor has purchased Christmas meals for families in need. This year 400 meals were distributed to neighbors in need in the community. A special thanks to this generous donor and to our dedicated Vincentian volunteers who delivered these meals to neighbors’ homes.

This act of kindness certainly shows what the Christmas season is all about: GIVING.

Our Annual Coat Drive hit the ground running this year with VonLehman as a sponsor and two special coat drives at New Riff Distillery and Crestview Hills Town Center hosted by St. Elizabeth Healthcare. All coats collected were distributed at our three coat distributions at Newport Primary School, Life Learning Center and Cristo Rey Church. We were able to distribute 1,054 coats to neighbors in need.

We would like to thank those who helped us purchase new coats, donated coats at city buildings or fire stations in the community and volunteered at the distributions. Your generosity will help keep many neighbors warm this winter season.

Newly installed Bishop Iffert, Diocese of Covington, came to visit our Erlanger location to learn about how we serve. We appreciate his visit and look forward to more opportunities to partner with the Diocese in the new year. We are happy to have his blessing especially because our parish conferences are how we provide help to so many in need.

Friendship, Fellowship and Faith are why St. Thomas Conference Vincentians love to be a part of St. Vincent de Paul. Their conference, located in Ft. Thomas, has served the community for over 12 years. The conference has significantly grown since its inception. Now there are over 20 members and they have their own food pantry. The members of St. Thomas Conference enjoy getting together twice a month to pray and share ways to better assist their neighbors in need. This year they gathered together for an annual Christmas party where they socialized and laughed while enjoying delicious food. St. Vincent de Paul’s mission is a “network of friends growing in holiness” and St. Thomas does a wonderful job of living out this mission.

This conference has the generous support of parishioners and Father Ross Kelsch, pastor at St. Thomas. This holiday season St. Thomas had a “Jesse Tree”, where parishioners could take a star and shop for neighbors in need. Items they collected included: new sheet and bath towel sets, pots and pans, soap, Christmas cookie baking items and gift cards to Target for parents and grandparents to shop for gifts. All items were arranged in baskets valued from $150 to $375 and will help families and individuals moving into their first apartment. St. Thomas Conference finds that basic necessities like towels and soap are really what families want and need. They also like the baskets to be festive so they included gift cards and treats. The Vincentians delivered the baskets along with all the fixings for Christmas dinner to neighbors in Ft. Thomas and parts of Newport. The Christmas baskets bring joy to the neighbors served, and the personal touch that St. Vincent de Paul Vincentians provide is unmatched. The need in this community is consistent. The neighbors they serve include working low-income families and people with disabilities, especially elderly men and women. They primarily help with food and paper, cleaning and hygiene products. Many neighbors they serve live on a fixed income. Some receive government assistance but that doesn’t include paper, cleaning and hygiene products, which are necessities. One neighbor they visit each month is an elderly man who is unable to drive and can barely get around his own apartment. He has no family help, so St. Thomas steps up and delivers groceries to him twice a month. This is the sad reality for many elderly neighbors in Northern Kentucky.

St. Thomas Conference goes above and beyond to meet the needs in their community. From providing emergency assistance to sending out birthday cards to neighbors they serve, they are making a difference each day. Their goal in the new year is to educate the parishioners about the Society of St. Vincent de Paul and what it means to be a Vincentian. Many know that they help people in need, but the scope of help is unknown. The conference wants the parish to know that they hand-deliver food, provide rent and utility assistance and most importantly provide hope in times of despair. We are grateful for St. Thomas SVdP Conference and all that they do. Without our St. Thomas Conference we wouldn’t have been able to serve so many neighbors in need in the past year. Thank you St. Thomas Conference for being neighbors we can count on!

ST. THOMAS CONFERENCE SPOTLIGHT

We would like to welcome our new joint St. Vincent de Paul conference St. Augustine in Augusta and St. James in Brooksville. As a result, we are now able to serve neighbors in need in Bracken County. The new conference is off to a strong start having hosted their very own coat and food distribution to neighbors in need. We look forward to supporting the conference to support the needs of our neighbors in Bracken County. If you are looking to join the new conference, contact our Conference Relations Coordinator, Sister Judith Newhaher at judith.newhaher@svdpnky.org.

ST. VINCENT CONFERENCE SPOTLIGHT

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We remember and honor these Vincentians that have recently passed away. May their souls rest in heavenly peace.

We sincerely apologize for any omissions or spelling errors.

Thank you to all who chose to honor and remember friends, family and loved ones by gifts to St. Vincent de Paul.

The lack of affordable housing is an ongoing crisis across the country and is very visible in our own community.

The volume of families and individuals who call our call center requesting help to find housing has been on the rise since March of 2021. In response to this growing need, we established a new program called the Homeless Assistance Program (HAP). Last fiscal year, we spent just under $25,000 to provide shelter to those without a place to lay their heads. In just the past 10 weeks, we have provided 116 nights of shelter to 90 people, with half of them being children. We prioritize assistance to those who have children in their care. HAP provides a three night stay to neighbors in need at hotels in the community. These few nights provide a warm, safe place where people without a home can establish a connection with local housing providers to help them find long term shelter and eventually permanent housing. We also provide individuals and families with laundry money and sundries, hygiene products and food for their stay. Bus tokens are available for those without transportation so that they can travel to appointments with our housing partners.

The National Low Income Housing Coalition report that 80% of American’s use over 30% of their income on rent alone. When you factor in food, car insurance, medical emergencies or health issues and basic necessities like soap and toilet paper, many just can’t afford to pay rent after all the other expenses. As a result, they have to resort to living in their car, in a shelter or just finding somewhere safe on the streets to lay their head. We find that many individuals who find themselves homeless are the elderly who are unable to work and their Social Security check each month just doesn’t cover all their expenses.

Affordable housing in our community is becoming less accessible so many have to resort to hotel or shelter living. We are working to provide this unique assistance program because of the generosity of our donors as well as a recent $20,000 grant from The R.C. Durr Foundation. We believe that HAP has a positive impact that provides some relief so that these neighbors can focus on finding a permanent home.

The Haile Foundation was pleased to assist SVdP NKY by funding programs that help those in our community who are struggling to make ends meet. We support them in their effort to dedicate more resources to provide emergency rent and utility assistance to those who need it most,” commented Chris Bochenek, Vice President - Administration and Senior Program Manager. We are grateful for the continued support of the Haile Foundation and SVdP NKY conferences for their Sydney Sweet Dreams Foundation grants for the SY, or Sweet Dreams Bed Program under the Human Services umbrella. This program provides beds to youth, the elderly, and those with disabilities, with the majority of beds going to children. Their gift provided beds for 178 children in NKY last year.

Their ongoing generosity also includes support of the Haile Foundation’s housing and homelessness initiatives in the community. These few nights provide a warm, safe place where people without a home can establish a connection with local housing providers to help them find long term shelter and eventually permanent housing. We also provide individuals and families with laundry money and sundries, hygiene products and food for their stay. Bus tokens are available for those without transportation so that they can travel to appointments with our housing partners.

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The Haile Foundation’s most recent gift of $30,000 will fund rent and utilities assistance through the SVdP NKY Conferences. “The Haile Foundation is pleased to assist SVdP NKY by funding programs that help those in our community who are struggling to make ends meet. We support them in their effort to dedicate more resources to provide emergency rent and utility assistance to those who need it most,” commented Chris Bochenek, Vice President - Administration and Senior Program Manager. We are grateful for the continued support of the Haile Foundation and SVdP NKY conferences for their Sydney Sweet Dreams Foundation grants for the SY, or Sweet Dreams Bed Program under the Human Services umbrella. This program provides beds to youth, the elderly, and those with disabilities, with the majority of beds going to children. Their gift provided beds for 178 children in NKY last year.

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Save the date! Creative Compassion: A night of Art for our Neighbors in Need will be on Thursday, March 31 at Drees Pavilion in Devou Park. If you know an artist in your life who may be interested in participating in this unique opportunity, please have them visit www.svdpnky.org for more information.

We are still looking for corporate sponsors for this event. Please visit our website or reach out to Lou Settle for more information at lou.settle@svdpnky.org if your business would like to sponsor. We hope you will join us for this fun night out!