



Spring 2023 NewsFlash

Message from Executive Director, Karen Zengel



Do you have a “drop everything and help” person in your life? That friend who has amazing time management superpowers and can be there in a pinch with a smile on her face? I am fortunate that I have found a few people over the course of my lifetime who have filled this role for me.

But, I try so hard to avoid asking for help. I should be able to figure it out on my own. I should be able to get it done myself. These two sentences generate flashbacks to the toddler years of my children. My husband and I heard “by myself!” so often. I guess I am not so different from a stubborn 3-year-old.

The truth is that we all need help sometimes. Friendship is an essential element of St. Vincent de Paul. Friendship is reciprocal, not unilateral. Friendship means that we can help but also ask for help.

I think of our Vincentians as “drop everything and help” people. Our Vincentians know that many of those we serve struggle to even ask for assistance. As a result, when the call comes in, they are quick to answer, arriving with a smile on their faces and peace and encouragement on their lips. We may not know these neighbors well, but we still extend a hand when a neighbor cries out in need. At our Centennial Mass a few weeks ago, Bishop Iffert described this as spiritual friendship to the poor.

Vincentians also depend on one another for help and support. This happens through sharing our experiences, our feelings, and our encounters with Christ through our service to our neighbors. We offer support and lift each other up in this bond forged through our service. Twinning is a very real example of friendship in action. We’ve heard often that conferences hesitate to ask for additional support when a request extends beyond their means. However, after discussion and prayer, the call for help goes out. And, guess what? The need is met, often within minutes.

All these people become a community of support, by God’s design. They are visible representations of His love – one of many ways to remind us we are never alone. When we need him – and we will – all we need to do is ask for help. And, he’s there. We just need to see him.

Thank you friends for all that you do as we support each other and answer the call to be a friend to our neighbors in need.

Message from Council President, Casey Guilfoyle



Dear Friends,

Two events from the past month of March are etched in my memory as the joyous fruition of “friendship” in our Society. Friendship is one of the three essential elements of our Vincentian Vocation and supports and strengthens the other two elements of service and spirituality.

The first etched memory is sitting in the pews of the “Old Cathedral” in St. Louis. I was in St. Louis for the Mid-Year SVDP National Meeting and enjoyed the short walk from where I was staying. The path, which was close to the famed “Arch”, led to the site of the first Cathedral west of the Mississippi dating back to 1764. What seemed even more special to me was that the very first and oldest chapter of our Society was founded on that spot in 1845. Before going, I did some digging on what this old Cathedral Conference was doing today and discovered that their focus was on the homeless that walked through the church doors. These neighbors are welcomed and invited for a prayer service where Vincentians share the gospel and reflect on Christ’s words and also minister to them with material support. Sitting there celebrating mass with other early risers Vincentians, I felt a deep sense of unity with my fellow Vincentians, past and present, as we all find our own way to answer the call to serve Christ by serving those in need. The physical beauty of that small Cathedral was matched by the beauty of the kinship I felt with an entire legacy of Vincentian friends, past and present.

The second etched memory was formed at another celebration of the Mass just two days later as Vincentians from across the Diocese gathered at Blessed Sacrament Church to celebrate our Centennial with Bishop Iffert. Mother of God, Holy Cross and Blessed Sacrament parishes all founded their St. Vincent Conferences in 1923 and banded together to form a larger network of friends, our Council, that same year. Having worked on the Centennial Committee I had an appreciation for the history of how we evolved in the Diocese and the stories of past “friends” of the Society who dedicated themselves to this special ministry. I knew we had special friends in our ranks that day such as Fr. Reinke, Ed Whitehead, and the Lonnemann sisters, Carol and Andrea. So, as everyone sat in the pews alongside me and we sang together and prayed for our Society, I once again felt the beauty of friendship. Bishop Iffert’s focus on having us as Vincentians rededicate ourselves to the “practice of spiritual friendship with the poor” inspired, uplifted, and energized all present. It’s a mass I want to be etched in my memory as long as possible!

Our network of friends that we speak of in our mission includes this friendship with the poor, it includes the special bond of friendship within our conferences and within our Council, and indeed with Vincentians past and present. It extends as well to our volunteers, our dedicated staff, and our donors. Together, as friends, we will continue this legacy of service and friendship, and build the needed foundation to serve the future needs of our Society.

Easter blessings,
Casey

Conference Spotlight
Mother of God

Founded in 1841 in Covington, KY, Mother of God Church became a staple of the city. On February 2, 1923, a St. Vincent de Paul Conference was established. Now, in 2023, the Mother of God Conference is one of three SVdPNKY parish conferences celebrating a centennial birthday, marking 100 years of serving their neighbors in need.



With such a long-standing history of service, Mother of God Vincentians realize the importance of providing support to the community. Conference President, Gene Mayberry, humbly describes his experience at Mother of God Church.

"We have a very generous parish and volunteer team," says Gene. "We currently have 15 active Vincentians that are always looking for ways to be involved. Many of our Vincentians try to participate in the 'at-large' SVdPNKY activities and they are not hesitant to help outside of our region - like with CAP in Eastern Kentucky. We also have the blessing of experience, with Vincentians like Frances Wolf-Bertling having served for 20 years!"

Mother of God Vincentians serve in the heart of the Covington community, making their outreach both accessible and welcome. The ministry provides assistance to four senior assisted living centers and two homeless shelters, in addition to making five to six home visits per week.

True to the SVdPNKY mission, showing Christ's love is at the heart of the Mother of God Conference's outreach. For this reason, they are beginning to implement a new outreach for the sick and homebound.

"Just as our fellow Vincentians at other parishes realize, helping is more than financial assistance. It's about listening and understanding, about creating relationships, and letting our friends in need know that there is hope," says Gene.

For this reason, Mother of God Vincentians have begun implementing follow-up calls after home visits. Gene says this is important because, "it not only helps provide another way for Vincentians to become involved in the ministry, but it also provides continued outreach to ensure our neighbors in need realize we're not a one-time ministry. We're here to help and show Christ's love - we're here to serve as the hands of Christ."

Here is just one example of how Mother of God Vincentians serve as the hands of Christ and provide hope to neighbors in need:

Bill and his wife were each recovering from surgery and had fallen behind on rent payments. With both working in the fast food industry and the continued rising costs of living, making up the growing gap between what bills were due and personal funds available to make payments was becoming increasingly difficult. Facing an eviction notice, Bill reached out to Vincentians at Mother of God for help.

After meeting with Bill and his wife, the Vincentians assigned to assess his request realized that the need was in fact great, so they began the process of evaluating what Conference funds were available as well as other ways to assist. In the end, the Mother of God conference was able to secure partial funds and submitted a twinning request from Council, which was granted. They were also able to speak with Bill's landlord and helped Bill and his wife avoid eviction.

This is just one example of how Vincentians at Mother of God helped a neighbor in need. It is also an example that rings true throughout the 30 SVdPNKY parish conferences that support the Northern Kentucky community. If you or anyone you know would like to join us in the walk of faith and holiness through service and become a Vincentian, please reach out to Sister Judith. Her contact information can be found below.

Sister Judith Niewahner, SND
Conference Relations Manager

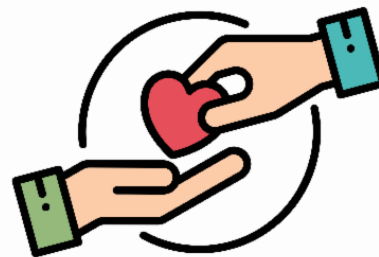
SVDPNKY Impact Summary: October 2022 through March 2023



**Rent & Utility
Assistance**
\$422,000



Food Assistance
\$475,000



**Number Served
with Food**
13,400

Food Donation Drives

Food insecurity is a concern for many of our Northern Kentucky neighbors. An increase in the cost of food, rent, utilities, and other basic needs, and an end to SNAP emergency allotments in February have left many struggling to feed their families. SVdPNKY is partnering with area organizations that both understand and have a passion for fighting hunger in our community.

In April, SVdPNKY is uniting with multiple partners to host food drives. FedEx Ground Hub NOKY is hosting an internal drive with their 1,400 employees to raise both awareness and donations for our food pantries. We are also partnering with the Boone County Sheriff's Office, the Campbell County Sheriff's Office, Campbell County Police Department, Kenton County Police Department, and Covington Police Department to host a food drive that covers three Northern Kentucky counties – Boone, Kenton, and Campbell. This drive that will be open to the public takes place the entire month of April. Donations can be made at any of the following locations:



- **Covington Police Department**, 20th & Madison, Covington, KY
- **Kenton County Police Department**, 11777 Madison Pike, Independence, KY
- **Boone County Sheriff's Office**, 3000 Conrad Lane, Burlington, KY
- **Campbell County Sheriff's Office**, 1098 Monmouth Street, Newport, KY and 8330 W. Main Street, Alexandria, KY
- **Campbell County Police Department**, 8774 Constable Drive, Alexandria, KY

On Saturday, April 22 from 1 pm – 3 pm, we will host the Joshua Palmieri Memorial Food Drive at our Cold Spring Thrift Store, 3970 Alexandria Pike. This food drive is in memory of Joshua Palmieri who was very active in the Campbell County community.

With a 100% increase in the number of families served by our food pantry in the first quarter alone, it is obvious that food provision is approaching an all-time high. Unfortunately, we anticipate that this number will increase as the year moves on, making food drives such as

these an essential service for our neighbors in need. If you would like to join us in the fight against hunger, please stop by one of our area food drives throughout the month of April or [click here to make a financial contribution](#) that will directly benefit the SVdPNKY food pantry. We both appreciate and are blessed by your support and the support of our community partners!

Volunteer Appreciation Week

Volunteer Appreciation Week is April 16-23 and at SVdPNKY we are grateful to be able to serve our neighbors in need alongside many wonderful volunteers.

"Our volunteers serve as the heart for all of the outreach that St. Vincent de Paul provides our community," says Mark Bradley, Volunteer and Vehicle Donation Coordinator for SVdPNKY. "Through their kindness, compassion, and hard work they share their gifts to help those less fortunate, providing hope and support. I am very blessed to have the opportunity to work with so many generous and giving volunteers. They are truly doing God's work."

Mark sat down with several of our volunteers - Norb DeJaco, Joe Perny, and Tom Kennedy - and asked them what role volunteering has played in their lives.

Why do you volunteer for St. Vincent de Paul?

Norb: I have been volunteering for the Society of St. Vincent de Paul for 28 years. Doing so has provided the 'perfect opportunity to put your faith into action.'

Joe: It is a rewarding experience, helping people both through volunteering in the pantry as well as the call center. Sometimes it is the simple things that we assist our clients with that bring them happiness. He recognizes the difficulties that many of our clients are facing and SVdPNKY provides them with hope through personal interactions that make a difference in their lives.

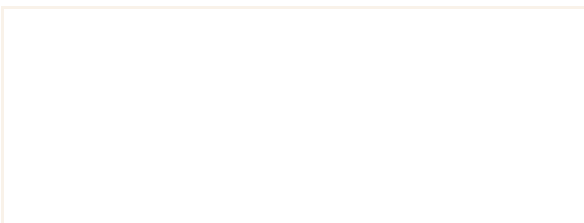
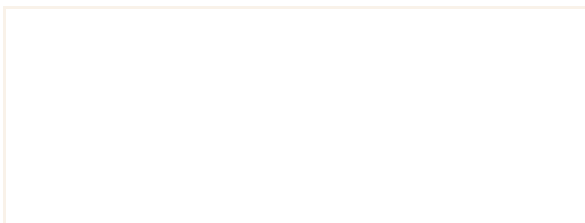
Tom: I have always been aware of SVdPNKY and the good that we do for our community. My Mom and Dad set a good example by helping others and sharing with me the need to always give back and assist those in need. I have served in both our call center as well as our pantry and enjoy the opportunity to assist our neighbors. It's a fulfilling and rewarding experience doing God's work.

What does St. Vincent de Paul mean to you?

Norb: As we strive for holiness and live out God's word, SVdPNKY enables us to do charitable acts for others and our community. Volunteering can be tough at times, but in the end, it is very rewarding in its own way and provides a sense of satisfaction. SVdPNKY is a place where we can do some good for the love of God.

Joe: SVdPNKY is a place that makes a difference in the lives of others. There was a pantry client whom I assisted frequently that had recently not been coming in. One day I ran into the client at a local grocery store where she was now employed and doing well. She was able to sustain her needs and did not need the pantry assistance. It was such a pleasure to see her and it was such a rewarding experience. To know that SVdPNKY had truly helped her gave me great happiness!

Tom: While there are many saints who provide inspiration and prayerful guidance to our daily lives, the legacy and works of St. Vincent de Paul are ongoing and shared daily through our ministry as we help to enrich the lives of others.





Norb DeJaco



Tom Kennedy

Ozanam Training

On Saturday, March 25, 2023, Vincentians participated in Ozanam Orientation. Ozanam Orientation is an existing program that introduces new Vincentians to our heritage and reacquaints existing Vincentians with our mission and values.

This first orientation of the year was hosted in the Blessed Sacrament Parish Center.

Deacon Mike Lyman (Council Spiritual Advisor), Dennis Coyne (Council Second Vice President), and Ken Jump (member of St. Pius Parish) presented to the 43 Vincentians who gathered in fellowship to learn more about the Society.



Mark your calendars for the next orientation which will be held on Saturday, June 3, 2023 at St. Barbara from 8am to 3pm.

News and Events

Centennial Celebration and 100th Birthday Bash Bourbon Raffle

On Saturday, March 18, 2023, Mother of God, Blessed Sacrament, and Holy Cross Parish Conferences, as well as the Council of SVdPNKY, celebrated 100 years of serving our neighbors in

need.

Mass was held at Blessed Sacrament Church and was led by Bishop Iffert with a reception that followed in the Blessed Sacrament Undercroft. It was a wonderful evening of faith, fellowship, and celebration as Vincentians from across the area were reminded of the importance and history of the ministry.



Hunger Walk & 5k Run

REGISTER ONLINE AT cincinnati.hungerwalk.org

Join us on Monday, May 29 at 9:00 a.m. at the 20th Annual Hunger Walk & 5k Run! There will be a post-walk/run celebration with live music and food in Smale Park!

Click here to join our SVdPNKY team. If you cannot make it and would like to donate, **click here**.

For every person who signs up to join the Hunger Walk as part of our team, or who donates on our behalf, SVdPNKY pantries will receive a credit to purchase significantly discounted food from the Free Store Food Bank. The Free Store has become an important partner in ensuring we can keep our pantries well stocked.



MONDAY, MAY 29, 2023 | THE BANKS, CINCINNATI, OH

Summer Breeze Reminder

Our seasonal program, Summer Breeze is set to begin on June 1 this year and will run through August. Neighbors in need of a fan or AC unit can call our Assistance Phone Line at 859-341-3219, Monday through Friday, between the hours of 10 a.m. and 2 p.m.



LIKE AND FOLLOW US! CLICK THE ICONS BELOW TO BE DIRECTED TO OUR SOCIAL MEDIA PAGES.

