

# St. Vincent de Paul

Fall 2012

Volume 7, Issue 3



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## Upcoming Events

### Light the Winter Fires

October 21st,

Sunday, 4-7pm

Rogue Valley Country Club

\$75 per person

### Fall St Vincent Dining Room

#### Dinner Auction

November 10th, Saturday,

Rosary at 5:15pm

Dinner at 6pm

No Pantry Sales Available

## Society of St. Vincent de Paul - Rogue Valley District

### The Backroom: A Morning at St. Vincent de Paul

At 8 a.m. of a warming day, rays stream through the skylights of the long, cavernous backroom of St. Vincent de Paul Thrift Store. A short time later, Nick Koutsouros, Shelter Manager, enters the building, unlocking doors and securing valuables. The schoolhouse trill of the entry bell announces the arrival of Aaron Edinger, a young man in his early 20's, beginning his eight-hour shift in the receiving department. Aaron straightens the desk and lines up the fleet of 19 shopping carts that will be used for sorting and transporting donations. He is a receiver. Instructions affixed to the wall indicate that his first task is to "warmly greet people arriving to donate" and "to thank donor for contribution."

At 8:15 the building is still asleep. Elly Lotscher is in the break area wringing a washrag into of a tub of sudsy water as she scrubs down the lunch table and washes coffee cups. She then mops the floor. On other days she cleans the volunteer's restroom. "I like the mornings best," she explains. "Things are peaceful." The calm, however, will not last.

At 8:30 Beth Lowenback, Friday's



Beth Lowenback, a day manager, begins her shift by presorting clothes.

Day Manager, begins the first clothing presorts. Each piece of clothing will go through three sorts before it is tagged, racked, and put out on the floor by category and size. Rejected items are black-bagged and shipped to the St. Vincent de Paul factory in Eugene for reprocessing. "It's a good system," Beth notes. "It really works well."

The back room is a sorting machine. Of the 24 different sorting departments arrayed along the backroom's length, one fourth of them are related to apparel. Every department has a coordinator, and some have as many as half a dozen helpers. The day manager keeps things moving.

Jeanne Hammond and Susan Miller begin work. On some days, the clothing, foundations, scarves, belts, and shoes

## The Backroom... Continued

see the most activity. On other days work focuses on glass and knickknacks, books, jewelry, or CDs. "Friday is toy day," Jeanne declares.

Fifteen minutes later, music wafts through the sorting area from the electronics departments where Bill Hunt and George Jeddelloh are checking radios and sound systems. They work from a large, immaculate worktable, flanked by trays of tools, parts, and test equipment. Aaron comes into the electronics area with a cart piled high with boom boxes and CD players. All of these will be either checked and priced or culled and sent to Rogue Disposal for recycling.

More volunteers arrive. Connie Conlogue has begun his morning as a receiver, after first dropping off bread from an Ashland bakery to the St. Vincent de Paul dining room.

The backroom is a collective effort on a grand scale. Much of its workforce changes each day, and in the course of a week well over 50 volunteers are engaged here. It is also a mutual support system. On the wall are get-well cards for members who are ill and requests for prayers. Dorothy Walterick, who oversees collectibles, drops off a box of tomatoes from her garden for volunteers to take home. Susan Miller, after two hours of work, leaves to her other volunteer work as a church receptionist, while two co-workers quietly sing "Goodbye, Farewell" from the *Sound of Music*.

At 9:40, Carolyn Dorman begins sorting and tagging  
Continued on page 6

## Letter from the President

Thank you to all our hard working Vincentians present, past and future as well as all our many supporters whether financially, spiritually through thoughts and prayers or both. The work we do is necessary, vital and a blessing to all whom we serve as



well as all of us, the servants. We have had a very fulfilling and productive year. Though our goal always is to feed, clothe, shelter and counsel fewer people due to better economic times, our current local situation has put a strain on every aspect of what we do just by the increased numbers of people and cost of what we do to serve the needy of Jackson County. Thank you so much for all you do make it all possible. With this increase in services, we are always in need of new or returning volunteers. So, if you can volunteer or can encourage others to volunteer, we would be forever grateful.

Also, we have several Vincentians who are in need of your thoughts and prayers. Dee Stormberg, Volunteer coordinator, is home and being treated, Charlie Burgess, Pantry President, had surgery and is recovering, Mary Waller of the Kitchen, is recuperating, Mary Anne Hebert is getting better, Sister Barabra Hehr of St Augustine Home Visits is at home. Many others are ill or ailing, so please keep all of them and each other in your prayers constantly. It does a body good, to be prayed for. Thank you again for being the caring and giving family you are to each other. God Bless You Always in all you do,  
Dennis Mihocko

## Light the Winter Fires Dinner Auction Fundraiser

We will be hosting our 4<sup>th</sup> annual dinner auction fundraiser Sunday October 21 4-7pm, again at the Rogue valley Country Club. Last year's event was a fun filled and fund full success, netting over \$45,000. We call it Light the Winter Fires because the winter months can cause an increase in the heating and housing costs on those we serve who are trying to stay out of the cold, wet weather. We will be having another upscale menu with appetizers served before dinner with local wines provided. St Vincent volunteers will be providing entertainment with dance and song and our master of ceremonies and auctioneer will be the incomparable Rosemary and Garth Harrington.

Socializing and an ice breaker game for a nice prize will start off the late afternoon event. Silent auction items will be available this year for those who prefer a quieter form of auction bidding followed later by our excellent and invigorating live auction.

Chances will be on sale for a treasure chest of local wines and also for the choice of any live auction item before the auction starts. Both of these are very popular with event goers. Also, popular with both participants and Vincentians is the paddle bid donation for direct support to help us help others. Last year, the paddle bid of support raised \$18,000 alone.

The cost per person is \$75 or \$600 for a table of eight. Many groups, businesses and friends typically fill tables partially or fully. It is a wonderful event and a fun time for those attending as well as all those who work very hard for months to make it a reality.

I want to thank the committee members who have been working and meeting for many months to

make this event a reality again this year: Len Hebert, Tedde Ridley, Kathy Begley, Rosemary and Garth Harrington, Fran Cox Davis and Dennis Mihocko. Many others have or will be working to bring

everything together especially the few days leading up to Sunday October 21. Many others have donated or will donate auction items to help raise auction dollars. Please keep St Vincent de Paul and all Vincentians and its supporters in your thoughts and prayers so that we will have another fun filled and fund full event this year. Written by Dennis Mihocko

If you want to secure seats or a table, please call 541-772-3828 EXT 5

or visit our website:

[www.stvincentdepaulmedford.info](http://www.stvincentdepaulmedford.info)

## Dave and Pat Moosman Awarded



L to R: County Commissioner John Rachor, Dave and Pat Moosman, Dennis Mihocko, County Commissioner Don Skundrick and County Commissioner Dennis (CW) Smith

Dave and Pat Moosman graciously received the Jackson County Volunteers for the Month of September. We refer to them lovingly as the Dynamic Duo for their many years of service to the needy of Jackson County. Thank you Dave and Pat for having a servant's heart in all you do.

Written by Dennis Mihocko

## **St Francis School Supply Program**

The annual school supply program was a big success this year. Bob, Debbie and Jasmine Christian and Kathy Mohr along with an army of other volunteers, were able to help over 4100 kids from k-12 grades with back packs and various school supplies, they otherwise might have had to do without. For the kids to be able to start the new school year with a positive attitude was made more possible with a brand new back pack, note books, pencils, pens, markers, note paper and binders, and other items they received from this dedicated group of wonderful volunteers.

The grade-specific school supplies were purchased from various vendors and local stores at discounted prices in many instances. This all happened with money raised by the Thrift store from their annual October Collectible sale, grants from a few foundations, a donation from the Fraternal Order of Eagles collected and presented by Eagle member and Vincentian Robert Goodhead and support by our own Council.

Proof of need was verified by showing Oregon Trail card, Oregon Health card, student ID, and sometimes just proof of low income. We serve the students of Jackson County as we serve all the needy but when it was in doubt, the student was still served. This program is organized over the entire year but the summer months are when it all comes together, working toward that first week of August, just prior to the new school year. The week before the actual give away, is one of long hours and many volunteers, to unpack the shipments, organize the items and then bag all the items the students will receive. All this would never happen without the dedication of Bob, Debbie and Jasmine for over seven years and Kathy



**Bob, Debbie and Jasmine Christian and Kathy Mohr**

Mohr at their side for many of those.

Kathy Mohr visited the schools, found out the school supply requirements, gave them letters and flyers to be sent home with students in May so parents were aware of the program before summer started. The TV and newspaper coverage were very helpful as well, in making this a successful year.

My hat is off to Bob, Debbie, Jasmine, Kathy, the pantry staff, especially Charlie, Betty, Ron and Lou, as well as all the volunteers for all the hard work in making this program a stellar event. Thank you all from all of us.

Written by Dennis Mihocko

## **Free Dental Clinic for Hundreds**

On September 14 and 15, Missions of Mercy, a National volunteer organization, put on a two day free dental clinic for the first 725 people on Friday and the first 596 people on Saturday held at Medford Central High School Gymnasium (Old South). Missions of Mercy, MOM, coordinates volunteer dentists, dental hygienists and assistants, to come together once a year in Oregon, to provide free dental care including root canals, extractions, fillings,

## Free Dental Clinic... Continued

temporary partials called flippers, exams, cleanings and dental hygiene education. Patients were examined, x-rayed and triaged by which procedure is most critical to that particular patient when they require multiple procedures. 1,076 volunteers helped 1,285 patients with 6,015 procedures providing \$742,377.57 worth of treatment.

### Volunteers

Dentists: 122  
 Assistants: 150  
 Hygienists: 101  
 Lab Techs: 15  
 Pharmacy Field: 12  
 Medical Field: 43  
 Students: 23  
 Community: 610

### Procedures

Cleanings: 443  
 X-rays: 1,578  
 Fillings: 932  
 Endo: 38  
 Extractions: 1,255  
 Partial Dentures: 87

I was contacted by local volunteers for Missions of Mercy several months ago and asked to provide water for those waiting in line. Because of our own twice a month dental clinics, and the fact that our volunteer dentists were all going to be at this event, I agreed wholeheartedly. Shortly afterward, the pantry received over 200 cases of bottled water and I was able to get donated ice from Medford Ice Company. We were asked to provide something for snacks due to people being in line for so long, many over night. We received gift cards from Food 4 Less and Safeway, just by asking. People started camping out Thursday afternoon and the gate was opened about 5am Friday to start preparing them for procedures and relief from their dental woes.

We set up shade canopies for our water stations and also for other volunteers checking in patients under the hot sun on Friday and Saturday.



L to R: Medford Councilman Bob Strosser, Susan Burke, Dianne and Dennis Mihocko, and Kelly from MOM

The water and snacks were well used and our volunteers were impressed with the large logistical challenge this whole event seemed to entail. We were able to save \$1400 we would have spent using our own Dental Clinics in September and instead we supported our local dentist and dental volunteers as well as those from other areas and states to serve the dental needs of over 1300 people. MOM can only provide one clinic per year in Oregon and every other year it is in Portland due to their large demographic. The following year it is held in some other area of Oregon. We are not likely to see the clinic again in Medford for at least 4 to 6 years.

I want to thank our volunteers who were able to come and help out: Tedde Ridley and her son Chris, Kathy Tyrholm, Susan Burke, Pat and Murray Dumas and Pauline from our Dental Program, Richard Krueger, Don Zimmerer, Dianne Mihocko (my lovely wife), Bill and Nancy Hunt, Harold Maddox, Maureen Henderson and yours truly, Dennis Mihocko. If I left anyone out please call me and I'll add it to my penance for the week. Thank you all for being part of such a marvelous and caring organization such as St Vincent de Paul, that can join hands with another selfless group to do so much good to so many.

We live in a very generous and caring community.

Written by Dennis Mihocko

## The Backroom ... Continued

toys. "Puzzles are really moving this summer," she explains. "If they smell of smoke or mold we discard them." Surrounded by the games, Karale Farschon is estimating the value of items and pasting down labels. Many items are taken home for preparation by volunteers working evenings in front of their television set. Barbie dolls are sorted and tagged, hair combed; porcelain dolls are cleaned and prepped. Fisher-Price toys are scrubbed down and repackaged. More valuable items will be researched for their Internet value on Craigslist.

At 9:50 Edwina Jenkins and Margie Curry push carts across the sun-glazed parking lot. One is filled with stuffed animals; the other with clothing. "These items," Margie notes, "are good, but not good enough to sell." The two-cart caravan rolls into the already busy dining room where Edwina and Margie transfer the items onto a table, immediately attracting a small crowd of patrons grateful for the free items. It is one of the infrequent moments when volunteers from different sectors of the larger St. Vincent de Paul enterprise see one another.

The backroom has been busy for an hour and a half by the time the overhead loudspeaker crackles into life. "Let us pause for a moment of prayer," a voice prays. "Lord, give us the grace that you bestowed upon your servant St. Vince de Paul, to relinquish the temptation of material things in our effort to minister to the poor. Amen."

A moment later, the two double doors of the Thrift Store open to the public, but the backroom, already working at full speed, barely notices. Donated items in boxes, paper, and plastic bags are being taken in through the back door. Other receivers, Tom Seigfried, Ken Newman, and Jim Hoam, are hard at work.

A cashier's voice on the loud speaker announces: "Good morning customers, don't forget that tomorrow is our Mid-Summer Sale from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., all adult clothing \$1.00 each, children's clothing 50 cents each." Through the day the backroom will be working extra hard to have the clothing racks in the store fully stocked.

Outside the receiving door, the sun glares down on the pavement and a woman unloads her car. "This is the second load of things I have brought in," she explains. "I still have several closets to go." She and thousands of others make the backroom and the Thrift Store possible. The loudspeaker requests: "Could we have some help on the floor with some furniture." Tom Seigfried and Ken Newman grab a dolly and disappear into the store. A few minutes later a large sofa rolls through the backroom to the loading dock, followed by a settee held overhead. Volunteers step aside as it passes.

At 11:00 Karen McNeilly, store manager, attacks the incoming items. Clothing flies from shopping carts, into separate heaps of men's, women's, and children's clothing. Karen is checking for broken zippers. Nearby, twin washing machines, watched over by Margie Curry, are churning out the first of the four batches of clothing that will be washed today.

## The Backroom... Continued

At each step of the sorting, more defective items are culled. A piece of clothing will not be put out for sale if it is stained, torn, or has “pilling” (fuzz) on its front.

Outside the temperature is climbing to 105 degrees. The electronics department is checking another CD player and the sultry sounds of “Summertime” drift through the air.

The backroom is a marvel of organized space and time. White tee shirts are bundled into ragbags for painters. Unsalable items are set aside for donations to other groups such as public schools, the Lions’ Club Hearing Program, or for the Southern Oregon Historical Society’s Scarecrow Festival. There is a storage space for everything from batteries to shoe laces. In August, sorters are already segregating items for Christmas sales. Other seasonal items are bundled up and moved to the warehouse for longer-term storage.

In the unloading area, more pickups and SUV’s back in. A notice prominently posted on the door explains, “Volunteers may reject all or part of your donation for quality concerns, content, or warehouse limitations.” Not everyone is pleased. A balding man, dripping sweat, is complaining loudly that the receiving has rejected his twelve-year old television center. Re-entering the store, Aaron Edinger shrugs. “We can’t accept junky items that won’t sell,” he notes.

Throughout the morning, sorters and labelers periodically disappear into the adjacent store, rolling

out racks of freshly labeled clothing, or carrying out tubs of merchandise. Each sorting area maintains a section of the Thrift Store. The heaviest lifting is performed by the receivers who move donated furniture onto the store floor, working with the day manager to make sure prices are affixed to each item. Now and then a cashier appears in the backroom returning a tub of clothes hangers recovered from items that have just been sold. The loudspeaker interrupts: “Could some one open a display case for a customer, thank you.” Someone always steps from her sorting tasks and heads out to the floor to assist. In emergencies, backroom volunteers also help bag merchandise at the check out counter.

It is noon and some volunteers prepare to leave when their afternoon replacement arrives. Others pause for their lunch. As they eat their sandwiches and enjoy a short respite from work, volumes of merchandise continue to roll to the sorting tables. Half of a day of the six-day week is over.

The backroom is an enterprise of many hands. In the big picture of St. Vincent de Paul activities, the effort of these volunteers is perhaps the most invisible and unsung. But the service rendered is immense.

Because of the collaborative efforts of the workers and community donors, the store will earn \$2000 that day. In an irreplaceable way, the backroom and all those who contribute to its work, wonderfully fulfill the mission of St. Vincent de Paul.

Written by Larry Mullaly

## **Society of St. Vincent de Paul**

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### **SVDP Hours**

#### **Office & Social Services**

541-772-3828

Monday—Friday, 10 - 2

#### **Thrift Store**

541-779-3648

Monday—Saturday, 10 - 4

#### **Dining Room**

Monday—Saturday, 11 - 1

#### **Pantry**

Last two Fridays of each month, 10 - 1

#### **Medical Clinica**

In the Urban Rest Stop, 2nd and 4th Thursdays, 1-6pm

#### **Dental Van**

Call office for hours, 541-772-3828, ext 6

#### **Large furniture pickup**

Call store to schedule, first floor only

### **Full Color Newsletter**

See the newsletter in full color at  
[stvincentdepaulmedford.info](http://stvincentdepaulmedford.info)

Email [stvincentmedford@gmail.com](mailto:stvincentmedford@gmail.com) for full color newsletter as a pdf file in your email instead of being sent by snail mail. Please put "SVDP newsletter" in the email subject line and include your full name(s). You'll receive it days before it arrives by mail, and save printing and shipping costs to SVDP.

**Special Thanks to Dianne Erickson and Patrick Wilson for all they have done for SVDP. Good Luck In Portland!**

#### **Newsletter Editors/Design:**

Dennis Mihocko, Larry Mullaly, and Jennifer and Michael Morgan

