

St. Vincent de Paul

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

A Quarterly Newsletter ■ Volume 4, Issue 4

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|----------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Letter from the President - 2 | School Supplies Bring Joy - 5 |
| Volunteer Profile - 2 | Good Things Do Happen - 6 |
| Social Services Goes Hi-Tech - 3 | Support for Magdalene Home - 6 |
| A Departed Friend - 3 | Collectibles Sale - 7 |
| SVDP Hours - 3 | Christmas Dinner/Auction - 7 |
| Signature Event Photos - 4 | Christmas Trees - 8 |



Scheduled Events

- **Nov. 26:** Thanksgiving dinner served by Central Point Presbyterian Church
- **Saturday, Dec. 5:** Dinner / Auction
- **Sunday Dec 13:** Customer Appreciation Sale, noon - 4. Invite to all volunteers, come see how nice the Thrift Store is dressed up for Christmas.
- **Sunday, Dec. 20:** Social Services serves coffee and donuts, 7:30 am and 9:00 am mass at Sacred Heart Church.
- **Dec. 25:** Christmas dinner served.



Editors: Patrick Wilson and Dianne Erickson

First Annual Signature Event... Huge Success!

It was a warm September evening and the hills surrounding Valley View Winery outside Jacksonville were beautiful. (The smoke from nearby fires wasn't too bad in the Applegate Valley.) This was the location chosen for the first annual Signature Event held on September 27. For some time there has been a desire to renew contact with the people who contributed significantly to the success of our Capital Improvement Drive in 2007-2008. This event was designed to reconnect with and thank these dedicated supporters of Saint Vincent de Paul.

The evening included a silent and live auction with many wonderful items up for bid. Some of the more splendid options included one week by the sea at a beautiful beach home in Brookings; a night out for twenty-four poker players at Veranda Park

with each player receiving \$150 to begin the game; a Holiday Reindeer Romp at the Solitis Sleigh and a dinner at Pagnini Poinsetta for sixty people; a one week trip to Maui; and a trip to Rome including a general audience with the Pope.

We also had several raffles: a *Grand Prize Raffle* where the winner had their choice of anything in the live auction before it began; a locked *Treasure Chest Raffle* where fifty keys were sold, the winner walking away with a chest full of wonderful local area wines; and a special ice-breaker raffle called *Heads and Tails* where the last guest standing won a great basket cornucopia of wine, cheese, and treats from *Harry and David*.

A light dinner buffet with wines from *Valley View Winery* awaited the guests when they arrived, and the setting was made particularly



elegant by Ron Dunn who specializes in creating unique settings for events such as these.

The theme for the evening was *Light the Winter Fires* with a focus on generating funds for the many individuals and families suffering because of the dreadful economic climate who are looking toward a bleak winter season. The total revenues from the evening was over \$75,000... a major lifesaver in meeting the needs of the poor and needy SVDP will be called upon to assist in the coming months.

We plan to conduct this event annually and hope to see even greater success (and a little less work) for the event next year. •

See photos on page 4

LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT



Dear fellow volunteers and supporters of St. Vincent's,

It's been quite a year. We've provided

extensive assistance to people in our community who are struggling with the current economic crisis. All with the help and support of our dedicated volunteers, and assisted by many of our friends and benefactors in Jackson County.

We've seen a dramatic rise in the individuals and families turning to us for help...a 30% higher need for rental and utilities assistance. Many people turning to us have never had to ask for help before. This year we provided school supplies to 2,795 children at an expense of \$66,000...\$16,000 more than we spent in 2008.

We've enjoyed continued support from the community. Our Collectibles Sale yielded over \$25,000. Amazing since our revenues were about \$1500 at our first Collectibles Sale some thirteen years ago. And we conducted our first Signature Event in October resulting in nearly \$75,000 in revenue. These results are a tribute to the volunteers who worked so diligently to make it happen.

The dedication and support from so many people who help to bring love and caring to so many in need is heartening. Thanks to all of you for all you do.

Len Hebert

Volunteer Profile

Rich Hansen, Grant Writer



Rich and Elizabeth Hansen moved to the Rogue Valley from Houston, Texas in 2003. Rich worked for Shell Oil in public relations, traveling a great deal. He

represented the Shell Foundation in the small communities where Shell was extracting resources for oil, giving back to the community through the foundation. In this position he gained experience in how corporations work with the grant process.

In church one Sunday, a special collection for St. Vincent de Paul caught Rich's attention. It marked the beginning of the Capital Improvement Drive. His attention peaked, he introduced himself to Bill Scheuler, and asked how he could help. Bill introduced him to Len Hebert who was kicking off the capital campaign. Rich worked closely with Len in contacting local businesses and their foundations. At the end of the capital campaign he started working with Dick Handley and Nola Geaney in Social Services on foundation grants.

There is a lot of paperwork in the grant process, part of which is applying for the grants, and when the money is received, writing thank you letters and reports on how the grants are spent. Here is where Elizabeth steps in. Rich knocks out the reports and Elizabeth does the editing. "Elizabeth is my copy editor. She is much better at clarification and grammatical details than I am," says Rich. Elizabeth owned her own public relations business which did contract work with various associations and dealt with community affairs.

Thinking about what he has experienced working at SVDP, Rich mentions an incident that happened when he first came on board. Mike Naumes, who was working on the Capital Improvement Drive, gave him a very valuable tip about asking for money. "You can never ask for too much, always go for more than you think you can get," said Mike. "And it works," says Rich. The key to getting a grant is information...reading their website and noting the priorities they have regarding children, education or their special focus. Then the trick is to write the application to fit their priorities. The chance of getting the grant is greatly enhanced.

For many years the Hansens spent time in this area attending the Shakespeare Festival, visiting Historic Jacksonville, and other local spots. Rich has an aunt in Medford. They have relatives in Oregon and California, and the Rogue Valley was a good half-way point. "Although it seems as we do all the traveling," mentions Elizabeth with a giggle. She also enjoys coming up with brilliant ideas for remodeling, and she refinishes furniture as well.

Rich and Elizabeth would both like to see SVDP get more volunteers, at least some of them younger, to help carry the heavy load. "We're all retired and burnout can be significant," says Rich. "Volunteers are always needed." Rich and Elizabeth are both impressed with the absolute dedication of the volunteers at SVDP. "They are also fun, and easy to work with," stresses Rich. "It's wonderful to feel like you make a difference...make a contribution, and see it come to fruition. And it's easy to represent SVDP to the public and corporations because we are an *all-volunteer* organization. It makes us very unique." •



Socorro Holloway, Nola Geaney, and Jim Rainery of Social Services look over the new software program.

Social Services Goes Hi-Tech

Being a counselor in Social Services is hard work. Listening, really listening to each client, to make certain you hear what the client is saying and what is *really being said*, takes focus and energy. And the parade of hard luck stories and misery related by one client after another is emotionally draining. Given all this, counselors really don't need additional challenges, like having to glean through folders in packed file cabinets to reconstruct the history of each individual or family coming in for help. Yet our manual system has been that kind of 'cross to bear' for our counselors for years. But, no more, beginning October 1st.

Nola Geaney, President of the Conference, assisted by Phil Seoane, her very capable VP, are determined to make certain a new automated system is up and running on that date. The system will enable counselors to bring up a screen with a detailed history once they enter the client's name. On that screen will be information on all the client's visits to SVDP and the assistance provided, plus special issues and concerns that are unique to that client along with other vital data. No more digging through files and rigorously capturing data that was recorded during previous visits. Even determining if multiple clients live at the same address and have already sought rental and utility assistance will be possible. Chris Forsythe, one of the counselors, happily explains, "One of the benefits of the new system will be the ease of finding client histories. The system will be user-friendly and changes can be made right away versus waiting for the interview to end. All counselors can look at the same history on the computer when questions arise." And for those of you who understand the challenges of keeping systems current, we will do away with the old and very difficult DOS system, a system that was nearly impossible to change as needs changed.

"As we begin to see clients in October we will access their manual files for the last time," says Nola. "We will enter the needed data from the old files and then shred them." Of course, no one would be surprised to pass the offices at the end of any given day to see a small fire burning in one of the trash cans as the whole staff dances around merrily. Why? That is how glad the staff is to see the old manual system go away. No more spending as much as 15 – 20 minutes working to gain an understanding of a client's history and struggling to locate information that may have been misfiled. Plus, no more purging the files at least once a year to eliminate old client information and make room for more client files because all the cabinets

Hi-Tech, continued on page 8



Betty and Charlie Burgess present Marg Mares with a plaque for Clay's many years of service.

A Departed Friend, Clay Mares

The Pantry lost a dear and dedicated friend in July. Clay Mares who had worked in the Pantry for over fifteen years with his wife Marg, died after another day of service helping prepare for the Friday grocery handout. Betty Burgess said. "Clay was a source of moral support when things got hectic. He was a happy-go-lucky man but he didn't take any crap."

The Pantry crew wanted some way to remember and recognize Clay and had a plaque presented to Marg in August. They will hang the plaque in the Pantry area, possibly over the hand-out window.

"Clay will really be missed," says Betty. "He was a *sweet man*... He really liked his donuts and would always run if the call came to pick them up." •

SVDP Hours

Office (772-3828) & Social Services:

Monday-Friday, 10 - 2

Thrift Store (779-364): Mon-Sat, 10 - 4

Dining Room: Mon-Sat, 11 - 1

Pantry: Last 2 Fridays of each month, 10 - 1

Large furniture pickup available in Medford, Central Point on Mon; Ashland, Talent, Phoenix on Wed; first floor only. Call the store for appt •

First Annual Signature Event Photos



Those who made the Signature Event possible:

Organizing Committee:
 Fran Cox, Dianne Erickson, Rich Hansen, Len Hebert, Karen McNeilly, Kathy Morgan, Laura and Mike Naumes, Sue Naumes, Andrea Reeder, Teddy Ridley, Linda Spencer, Bill Thorndike, Patrick Wilson, and Al Zon

Auctioneer:
 Ron Burgess

Color Commentary:
 Scott Lewis, J.B. Demick, and Pat Patella

Key Supporters:
 Ron Dunn, Donna Patella, Steve Johnson, Garon Lee, Rogue Creamery, Party Place, Harry & David, Sacred Heart School, Saint Mary's School, and Valley View Winery

A Special Thank You to all 230 volunteers at St. Vincent de Paul who give of their time and energy week after week so life is more livable for all who turn to us for support and assistance. •



*Volunteer
Joyce Poston
helps with
giving out
school
supplies.*

School Supplies Bring Joy to Many Kids

Remember what it's like to see young faces light up as they open holiday gifts? Watching those same young faces as they received bags full of school supplies might draw a close second. Given the tough economic times, many families have been struggling. Scraping together the money for kids needing to return to school is well beyond the means of lots of these families. I can recall returning to school fully aware of the difference between the clothes my parents could afford and those worn by many of my friends. But I never had to face the prospect of not having basic supplies...paper, pencils and other items needed to begin class. How much more difficult that would have been! Thanks to the generosity of those who support Saint Vincent de Paul 2,795 kids will return to

school prepared for class and less self conscious of the vast differences that exist between themselves and their more prosperous classmates.

Accordingly, many kids were supplied with a full compliment of school supplies between August 10 and 15. "It was so successful that we barely made it to the end of the day Friday without using up all the bags of materials we had prepared," says Bob Christian. "We spent \$66,000 this year, nearly \$16,000 more than last year. And we saw nearly twenty-five more kids at every grade level than we previously served."

"And we had lots of help," says Debbie, Bob's wife, who works hand-in-hand with him every year to make this such a success. Debbie praised all the folks who stepped in. "We had several people from Sacred Heart church and the Youth Group...like

*Volunteers
Joanne
Berggren and
Vincent
Silais are
poised for the
crowd.*



Jennifer and Christopher Byan. Kathy Hogue, a retired teacher, came with her two thirteen year old twin granddaughters. Chris Forsythe brought her son Alex, and her daughter Hannah, who helped every day. Ray and Karen Gale from Southern Oregon Printing also came by to help in the evening. And, of course, lots of volunteers from the other conferences were there daily, like Ron and Lou Spinass from the Pantry and Irene Vaughn, from the office conference and her family." Of course, Bob and Debbie's daughter, Jasmine, worked every day with energy and joy.

"It was clear from watching the young faces that the kids were glad to be receiving this help," says Debbie. The most frequently heard comment was, "You don't know how much this helps," followed by "We would have to do without other needs to buy these things." •

Hi-Tech, continued from page 1

are full again. As Mindy Sakraida, one of the counselors said as she passed by, "I don't understand the new system yet but it *has* to be better."

So Nola and Phil are busily planning for how to get all the counselors fully trained. "For some who have had considerable computer experience, this will be

fairly easy and time efficient; for others, who have limited or no exposure, it could take six to eight hour long sessions to gain proficiency," says Phil. "But my counselors are dedicated beavers and they will master this challenge just like all the other ones that are thrown their way." As Socorro Holloway, another

counselor says, "The majority of us are looking forward to the new system. A few are afraid of the challenge, but we have a great team and will succeed by helping each other." Efficiency and a better use of time will be our reward as we automate how our office systems work and begin to ensure they serve versus master us. •



Good Things Do Happen to Good People

Sometimes it is easy to lose sight of the fact that many of the people we help are working mightily to make it on their own. But because local wages are often low, many families can easily find themselves stretched beyond their means. This is the case of a Hispanic family Alice Nagel and Charlotte Dorsey (from the Ashland Conference) have been working with over the last six years. Saint Vincent de Paul has been called upon to help this family periodically with rental and utility assistance, furniture and groceries and, in the course of working with the family, Alice and Charlotte have also built an endearing friendship.

"This is an extremely hard working and conscientious family," stresses Charlotte. "They work in the vineyards during the growing season and seek out other jobs to see them through the year. In spite of the fact they have four young children, the mother also works at

several jobs." The family consists of one boy age three months, and three girls...nine, ten and fourteen. They live in a small enclave near Talent that is mostly populated by other Hispanic families.

What some people may not know is even when you are dedicated to helping, it is hard to connect with many of the Hispanic families in our area. There is often a strong distrust of strangers as well as a strong sense of pride. "Because of our relationship with this family and their influence in this Talent community, they have often been critical in connecting us with families needing assistance and even serving as interpreters. They bring us in contact with families we often would not be able to help. This family is an important conduit for reaching families needing assistance," says Charlotte.

"Because of our close relationship with the family, we are often invited to Birthdays and other important

events. Recently, we were honored to attend the birth celebration for the family's new son. Because their home is a small very old trailer, most celebrations tend to be held in a local park. It looks like this might change.

"Recently the family asked us to help them complete the application to acquire a home through *Habitat for Humanity*. And the family was able to get on the list for a home, which will become available in October. This means a lot to this family. They have done much of the labor to build the home and will finally have a comfortable space to live together. Because the home is in Medford, we will miss our close contact with the family but hope we can see them periodically."

It is rewarding to see hard working families secure substantial help that can make such a difference in their lives. •

Support for Magdalene Home

For a long time Bill Hunt has been a key contributor in the Thrift Store repair shop, but like many of our volunteers his charity doesn't have limits. Recently, he pitched in and installed refurbished cabinets in the Magdalene Home kitchen.

Originally Don Nadeau, Central Point Knights, was doing the work but a family emergency required him to go to California. Bill stepped in and soon found a one day job stretch into a several week undertaking. The work involved removing the like-new

cabinets from a donor's home, modifying them, and then installing them in the Magdalene kitchen. Bill's expertise along with the committed support of Knight Richard Krueger, made the final product a work of art, as well as a work of love. •



Large crowds and long lines were the norm at the Thirteenth Annual Collectibles Sale, where antique and vintage bargains were to be found.

Volunteers Marge Meyer and Fran Hill grab a bite to eat while getting the store ready for the Collectibles Sale.



Thirteenth Annual Collectibles Sale

Once again, the SVDP Thrift Store was transformed into a shopper's delight! Antique and vintage items filled the shelves and wonderful old furniture sat in the front area awaiting new owners. We had more items than ever but still plenty of room for people to shop. And the lines were long in the morning, but tapered off during the afternoon.

Thanks to everyone who worked on making this a successful sale; our own volunteers, those from other conferences; and to many of the volunteers from Blessed Anna Maria conference for all their hard work throughout the weekend. Special thanks to Dorothy Walterick "the collectible lady" for her hard work throughout the year getting the majority of things ready, mended, researched and priced. This is Dorothy's thirteenth year working on the sale. "The most frustrating part is polishing the silver," says Dorothy.

Also, special mention to DeeDee Metes, Jackie Cavanaugh, Julie Wiley, Dianne Rynne, Nancy Dollarhide, Jeanne Hammer, Dianne Erickson, Pat McNeilly, and to those who mended furniture for all the many hours of prep time they put in to get their special merchandise ready for the sale. "We're also grateful once again for the help of the Knights of Columbus from Shepherd of the Valley Church," comments Karen McNeilly, store manager, "for traffic control, set-up and clean-up help."

Store receipts from the day of sale and the next three days of store receipts go to benefit the School Supplies Conference which hands out school supplies to needy children every August. The proceeds of the sale totaled \$25,867, even though attendance was down about 20% due to the economy and probably a little bit due to the rainy weather.

Collectibles will continue to be out in the store until all are sold, so we encourage everyone to come shop. •

Volunteers...

Remember to do your Christmas shopping at our thrift store. We have wrap, cards, decorations, new and lightly used gifts. Proceeds go to the Council and are used for all Conferences.

Full Color Newsletter

See the newsletter in full color at www.stvincentdepaul.info. Email Dianne at de137@q.com to receive the newsletter as a .pdf file in your email instead of being sent snail mail. Please put "SVDP newsletter" in the email subject line. •

Can You Help?

St. Vincent de Paul is staffed solely by volunteers of many faiths. We have no paid staff. All profits go directly to help those in need. We are looking for cashiers to work in the Thrift Store in three hour shifts, a driver for pick up and deliveries, cook's helpers, book keepers and other positions, depending on your skills. Join our core of helpers so we can continue to help others. Contact Volunteer Coordinator Linda Spencer for more information, 541-865-3682. •



Christmas Dinner / Auction

On December 5, join your friends at the St. Vincent de Paul Annual Dinner / Auction. Held in the dining room of SVDP, the menu will be turkey and dressing with all the fixings. Tickets will be on sale on November 1. Proceeds go to the Ashland and Central Point Home Visits Conferences.

Call the office for more information and to purchase tickets, 772-3828. •

Keep Christ in Christmas 2009



St. Vincent de Paul's holiday outreach goes into high gear this winter in a joint venture with the Central Point Knights of Columbus aimed at providing food and clothing for the poor and needy. The *Keep Christ in Christmas* program is focused on raising public awareness that SVDP is an ideal one-stop shopping place to meet family Christmas needs while serving the poor and needy.

The Knights of Columbus fraternal organization is America's largest Catholic men's service group. In 2008, the Knights of Columbus nationwide contributed more than \$150,000 million dollars to charity through their fundraising efforts. At least a dozen knight's from the Shepherd of the Valley Church Council in Central Point regularly volunteer at St. Vincent de Paul.

Christmas tree sales with the Knights began during the wet winter of 2003, when knights were invited to partner in what had previously been a St. Vince de Paul effort. A hut heated by propane tanks was fabricated in a corner of what was then the Harmon House storeroom and trees were sold from the often-muddy parking lot.

This past year the *Keep Christ in Christmas* program was initiated as a closely coordinated effort involving the Thrift Store, the December Auction, and the Furniture Warehouse. "The goal," Knight Ralph Browning explains, "is to integrate all these activities in peoples' minds." The presence of Christmas trees, the coordinated holiday lighting on both buildings, and the window artwork on the store work together to remind the public to make St. Vincent de Paul a stop on their holiday rounds. The unifying of all these efforts is that the love of God made present in a lowly Bethlehem stable necessarily involves concern for the poor and needy.

Christmas trees of Noble, Fraser, and Douglas firs will be on sale December 4, through December 20, from 5 to 8 pm weekdays, and 9 am to 8 pm on weekends. • (Pre-order your tree by calling 664-2079.)

Written by Larry Mullaly

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