

St. Vincent de Paul

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

A Quarterly Newsletter ■ Volume 5, Issue 4



Serving lunch, from left: Margaret Reed, Rha Layton, Donna Thelen, John Hacker
In back: Leo Dull



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Upcoming Events

- Thanksgiving Dinner - Nov. 21
Central Point Presbyterian Church
- Christmas Tree Sales Begin - Dec. 3
- Dinner/Auction (Home Visits) - Dec. 4
- Volunteer Retreat - Dec. 11
- Christmas Dinner - Dec. 25

Editors: Patrick Wilson and Dianne Erickson

Feeding the Poor

Every weekday about 7:30 am volunteers start arriving in the kitchen to begin preparing the noon meal. This process is made easier because of the fact we receive a large quantity of prepared food from *The Manor* kitchen that is left over from their regular meal service, enough food to provide two or three daily meals. Also helping is the frequent delivery of pizza, juices, milk products and bakery goods from *Ray's Foods*, *The Gleaners*, *Taco Bell*, *Starbucks*, and *Safeway*, plus fresh produce and vegetables during the summer from local farmers, *Access* and fruit producers in the valley. Because of this generosity, we need to buy fewer groceries and prepare fewer meals from scratch. However, on Thursday and Friday Leo Dull prepares two meals, often spaghetti, meat loaf or chicken,

that are greatly appreciated by diners on those days.

Morning preparations involve eight to ten volunteers laying out the main dish and ensuring enough supporting items are ready; bread is buttered (usually two or three heaping trays), deserts are laid out on trays (as many as five or six trays plus breakfast rolls, if available), plus containers of coffee, juice, ice water, and milk are filled. Salads are created (usually tossed greens but often supplemented by cottage cheese, fresh fruits or fruit cocktail) and pizza laid out for warming, two or three days a week. We serve a very filling meal and try to make certain we do not overdo it resulting in food getting thrown away. There is often a gap between how hungry diners look and how much food chronically

empty stomachs can accommodate. In addition, we need to make other adjustments. Spices are used sparingly because many of our diners have very sensitive stomachs due to a life style that has caused considerable internal problems. The same lifestyle has often wreaked havoc on many dinner's teeth, so things like sliced carrots in salads or a juicy red apple can be a problem.

If time allows, we take a short break just before opening the doors. While we serve from 11 am to 1 pm, we open the doors early, particularly on days when the weather is more severe. Many our folks have no opportunity to eat breakfast so a warm cup of coffee and a day-old sweet roll is a great treat even though the noon meal will soon be available. On a typical

Feeding the Poor, continued on page 8

LETTER FROM THE
PRESIDENT

Dear fellow
volunteers and
supporters of St.
Vincent's in the
Rogue Valley.

This will be my last letter to you through our Council's newsletter marking the completion of my tenure as President. My thank you goes out to all of you volunteers and supporters because through your efforts the needy have been served and in turn our Rogue Valley community is better for it.

I like to think of our Council as simply a group of dedicated individuals focused on the common goal of serving the needy in Jackson County. I feel good about how we've come together to provide the level and variety of meaningful services over these past six years through our all-volunteer staff.

We couldn't have done all of what we did or the way we did it, without the volunteers and support from foundations such as *The Joseph and Frances Naumes Family Foundation, The Carpenter Foundation, The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, the Meyer Memorial Trust* and the *Walker Fund*, just to name a few.

In addition, thanks must go to our business community, and the various Rogue Valley churches and their members for their unflinching support so necessary to help us realize the fulfillment of our mission.

Meet Joni Bruce

Joni Bruce has been volunteering in the *Urban Rest Stop* for over a year. "People who come in for a shower or laundry find this a warm place to visit," she says. "And it's great to be able to go home and know that I've done something for others." This is very different from the work she used to do as a nurse's aide which was very emotionally draining. "I got very tied into my patients and was devastated when they passed away. Here I meet a variety of people who are interesting

and I feel good about being able to give back. It's very uplifting."

Joni worked in a title and escrow company for seven years and also in retail management. She is working on returning to that field when the economy improves. Her partner works in construction but is only able to currently work part time. With winter coming that could even be difficult to maintain. In the meantime, traffic at the *Urban Rest Stop* is definitely increasing. "We are averaging twenty-four to twenty-five people from 8:30 am to 12:00 noon on the two days I work," says Joni, "and people really appreciate the service they receive."

She has lived in Medford for the past thirteen years after growing up in L.A. and then traveling around the West coast for about thirteen years. Joni's mom and sister live in Grants Pass so her immediate family is close by.

Besides doing community work, which she has done for many years, she loves to run and be around friends and family. Obviously SVDP has become just another part of that family. Welcome aboard Joni. •

I will miss the almost daily interactions with the people who make up our Council and, in turn, reach out to help the needy. However, with Dennis Mihocko coming in as our new President, the Council and needy people will be in good hands. I plan to occupy the position of Past President and Board Member next year. I also plan to be a volunteer member of our Kitchen/Dining Conference going forward.

I sincerely thank all of you and look forward to our continuing interactions.

God Bless you,

Len Hebert

Donating funds is easy and quick using our [Donate](#) button on the website using PayPal or a credit card. Go to our website and click on [How to Help](#). Remember, our organization is the ONLY all-volunteer charity in the Rogue Valley. www.stvincentdepaul.info



Fall Collectibles Sale

Every year many of us look forward to fall, as well as to our *Collectibles Sale* which draws the largest gathering of any event held at St. Vincent de Paul during the year. In spite of a down economy, we made a little over \$20,000 this year, just slightly more than last year's proceeds. This was impressive because we had fewer large dollar items available for sale.

Preparation to make this event a success is ongoing during the year. Our receivers have to be vigilant watching for potential collectibles and Dorothy Walterick, our "Queen of Collectibles," makes certain all items received are sorted and stored, spending as many as fifteen hours each week doing so. This year Karen Mc Neilly, Store Manager, and her staff conducted a 50% sale for several days and a \$2 clothing bag sale to clear out as many items from the retail area as possible. The store closed the day before the big sale to allow adequate time for setting up the store, which engaged the hands of forty or more of our volunteers.

Karen says, "We were paying special attention making certain this event was well advertised. The School Supplies conference relies on the proceeds of this sale for seed money for their work and the sale serves as an introductory experience for many who've never been to Saint Vincent de Paul before. Our work is certainly paying off, because increasingly people are aware of this annual fall event."

The Knights of Columbus from *Shepherd of the Valley* in Central Point, as always, assisted us with the large amount of car traffic. Besides all the folks that helped make the event such a success, we have several people who have been our core group work group every year since the sale began: Dorothy and Don Walterick, Jackie Cavanaugh, Bob and Jeannie Hammer, Dee Dee Metz, Bill and Nancy Hunt, Pat McNeilly, Mary Jo Rees, Rosie and Pete Bedingfield, Aileen Sutton, and Nancy Dollarhide. thanks to the *Wild River Brewery* for letting our volunteers park in their lot.

If you have valuable collectibles hidden away around your home, think about pulling them out during the coming months so we can make the next *Collectibles Sale* another smashing success. •

Full Color Newsletter - See in full color at www.stvincentdepaul.info. Email de137e@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 and include you full name(s). You'll receive days before it arrives by mail. **If you already did this, please send again as email crash erased all the addresses.** •

August Social Services Dinner / Auction

Social Services held their annual dinner / auction August 7, but the results weren't very promising. Total receipts for the auction were \$2,647. This was about 40% less than what we make on most auctions. The number attending the auction was down about 30%, which partially explains the lower revenues. The Pantry sales were particularly low because they had only a fraction of the items to sell due to the business challenges currently being experienced by *Harry and David*. Longer term it is not clear what we will be receiving from them for future auctions. We brought the total funds for the event to \$10,000 by adding some of the '09 *Light the Winter Fires* proceeds.

Regarding the dinner / auctions: A small group of volunteers has been setting up these events for the past several years and the number is being depleted by retirements. The group remaining is getting very small and would like to see some new faces begin carrying this load. Volunteers need to be able to put in extra hours about once each quarter and several consecutive hours the day before and the day of the event. If you're interested, please contact Al Zon. •



Guests enjoying refreshments at their table.



Trying a key in the Treasure Chest lock.

Signature Event A Huge Success!

Back in June a small group of volunteers began meeting every two weeks for several hours to plan our second annual "signature event," *Light the Winter Fires*, for our major donors. This event is conducted to accomplish a number of critical outcomes:

- Maintain ongoing contact with this vital group of supporters.
- Raise a substantial amount of funds to help support the work of our different conferences.
- Increase awareness of our work in the community.

Last year we brought in about \$50,000 and this year about \$30,000. Realizing these kinds of funds at an event like this is unbelievable in this valley. Many non-profits have yearly signature events and are happy if they can raise \$10,000.

This year's event was held at the Bingham Knoll conference center in Jacksonville. Bingham Knoll is the campus created by the Ashland Group, a local investment firm that bought the old Cascade Christian School and are making major improvements to the property. The event was held in the old school gym which is now a resplendent ballroom for events such as this. Many of our guests commented on how beautiful and impressive the setting was. The effect created was made all the more impressive by

the work of Ron Dunn from *On the Side*. Ron is a well know local event planner and his decorations and enhancements made the room vibrate with a fall foliage theme.

A number of activities were conducted at the event to generate funds. Grand prize raffle tickets were sold for \$100 each and the winner chose any item they desired from the many treasures being auctioned in the live auction later that evening. Thanks to the efforts of Dave Moosman, we raffled off keys for \$30 a piece to two treasure chest of select local wines. The two people with the keys that opened these chests were the winners. Before the dinner began we also sold \$10 tickets to participate in the exciting *rock, scissors, paper* group exercise.

Dinner, like the rest of the evening's events, was spectacular with food stations for roasted pork and tri-tip, a delicious cheese and fruit table, and a third station with a luscious selection of salads. Local wines were provided in a hosted bar and with the meal.

After dinner a special award was presented to Len Hebert, our outgoing President, recognizing him as *Humanitarian of the Year*. The award was presented by Medford's mayor, Gary Wheeler, along with a proclamation, and a plaque which

will be displayed in our offices during the coming year.

Several things were done to increase attendee awareness of the work of Saint Vincent de Paul in Jackson County. Invitations to the event included a handout describing the work of each of our conferences. Place mats were displayed on the tables that summarized the work of each conference along with representative photos. On the walls around the banquet room were large photographs, taken by Jackie Seus, depicting volunteers supporting our clients and clients receiving our services. To top off the impact, a short interview of two of our Social Services counselors, Socorro Holloway and Phil Horner, was conducted by Patrick Wilson, event coordinator, during which they spoke about the kinds of people we serve and the services we provide. Dramatic details were provided of four of our recent clients. Even though this was done just after dinner, their comments and descriptions had the full attention of all of our guests.

The finale of the evening was the live auction. Our auctioneer, Chris Caldwell, assisted by volunteers, and commentators Rose and Garth Harrington kept the guests fully engaged. Auction items included:

Special Event, continued on page 7



Serving the homeless often means going where they camp.

Pictured here:

Dave Hill, Beth Hill, and Debbie Weske

Camp Site Home Visit

Alice Nagel and I (Charlotte Dorsey) were the “on duty” volunteers at *Our Lady of the Mountain Conference* when we received a telephone message requesting we visit a family living at a campground near Ashland. This conference serves the less fortunate primarily through home visits.

When we arrived at the park we met Denise, Warren and their baby daughter Felicia all living in a secondhand two-person tent. We all sat on a nearby park bench and began to collect the family’s story. They had traveled to Oregon on a Greyhound bus, carefully bringing the minimum belongings that they expected they would need, and that would meet the limiting bus weight requirements. This restricted them to basic clothing for the family and the core needs for the baby. We learned that their primary motivation for coming to Oregon was the promise of a building maintenance job for Warren. This was particularly good news because they had just been evicted from a foreclosed rental property without any advance notice.

Like many small children in a strange situation, Felicia was fidgety. She needed to be held by her father while Denise located a cloth to clean coffee that Felicia

had spilled on herself and her father. In spite of this mishap, it soon became apparent that this young family was healthy, energetic and hopeful, as well as free of any addictions that so often seem to plague people found in these situations.

Alice and I listened carefully to the couple’s story, using the skills all volunteers are expected to use. As always, we were mindful that what needs to be understood often lies just beneath what is being said. The couple told a lengthy and heartfelt story. It felt like we were interviewing a modern day Grapes of Wrath family. Unfortunately, the building maintenance job had been given to another person so the discussion focused on potential jobs plus rental possibilities. At the end of the first visit the couple indicated they could use some food and diapers which we retrieved from the trunk of Alice’s car. *United Way* had already paid for two weeks of camping space.

We referred the couple to *ACCESS* for assistance with a rental deposit and first month’s rent. However, in a few days the weather soon turned ugly. It started raining and the nights became quite cold. In addition, a trip to Ashland was a twelve mile walk round trip. It was apparent it would be better

for the family if they could move indoors, and be closer to job resources. We subsequently secured motel space for them in Medford near SVDP. Within a week, a very affordable clean apartment was located on a main bus line. *ACCESS* paid the deposit and first month’s rent. A few days after moving in, the family celebrated Felicia’s first birthday. Now they are focused on securing jobs so they can become self sufficient.

If you’ve met Alice and me you understand our dedication to helping. I’ve been doing home visits for eleven years, and Alice for seven. It brings us great joy to do this work. We felt deeply committed to this young family from the very first home visit. We clearly understood many of their needs and saw many of the challenges ahead. We’ve kept the family in our prayers, did additional visits as needed, and assist them along their way. It has been clear all along that things were going to work out for them. We’ve been doing home visits long enough to see the patterns and witness the frequent miracles.

We both see doing home visits as a calling, a vocation. •

Article written by Charlotte Dorsey



Local Foundations Key to Our Financial Support

St. Vincent de Paul and its Conferences operate with an annual budget of more than \$1 million. Over half of these funds are generated in-house by our Thrift Store revenues, while another \$200,000 comes from foundation and government grants. Individual contributions, including the annual *"Light the Winter Fires"* gala and area church support, round out our major sources of funds. "This diversification of sources of funds strategy helps our Council secure the monies we need to operate in a more predictable manner," explains Council President Len Hebert. Social Services, School Supplies, and Home Visitation Conferences as well as the Dental Program all benefit from these supplemental funds.

"Most of our foundation grants come from Southern Oregon family foundations," says Rich Hansen, who coordinates this fund raising effort for St. Vincent's. "There are a variety of statewide or local foundations willing to assist our mission of helping the less fortunate." Through attending seminars, searching the internet and word-of-mouth, Hansen has built a list of likely supporters. "We identify which area each foundation specializes in, such as helping children, health care or homelessness, and write our grant application accordingly," he says.

In the past, the Rogue Valley Council avoided government grants because of red tape and record keeping. However, this year we did secure a \$30,000 federal housing grant through the City of Ashland. We also got \$3,000 from the Medford Water Commission to help defray utility bills in Social Services, and \$25,000 from the Federal Emergency Management Administration to augment the Pantry.

Although St. Vincent's has been applying for grant monies for many years, it really peaked several years ago during the \$3 million capital campaign and included major national and regional groups like *Bill & Melinda Gates*, *Paul Allen* and *Naumes Family Foundations* and the *Meyer Memorial Trust*.

"The other thing we learned during the capital campaign is that we shouldn't be shy about asking for larger amounts," Hansen continues. "Since then we have expanded the circle of foundations we work with and the amount each gives us."

The fact that St. Vincent's is an all-volunteer organization is a large plus when asking for financial support. Volunteerism probably saves St. Vincent's over \$500,000 annually in salaries, benefits, and assures our supporters that their funds are going to support the needy. "The foundations want to know that you are a prudent financial manager and when they learn we are all-volunteer they seem to appreciate it," says Hebert. "It's also a huge plus that we generate over half of our annual financial needs internally through the Thrift Store. It matters that we aren't totally dependent on outside support."

In the last few years St. Vincent's has received new or expanded support from numerous groups, including the *West Family Foundation* and the *Cheney Family Foundation* in Jacksonville; the *Greater Medford and District Rotary Clubs*; *US Bank*, *Collins* and *PGE Foundations* in Portland; and the *Cow Creek Umpqua Indian Foundation* from Roseburg. Right now, Hansen is working with Kathy Morgan to obtain funds to expand the dental program.

"Occasionally we are turned down," Hansen laments. "It's usually because a foundation's key mission and ours don't totally mesh. So we've learned to read the guidelines carefully and fit our next application more precisely into their interest area."

Most foundations have an established application procedure with specified attachments, deadlines, etc. On the other hand, some others do not accept unsolicited applications. They prescreen whom they will donate to. Examples where we have been fortunate to receive support include the *Naumes Family Foundation*, *Ames-Fluhrer Charitable Fund* and *Raskob Foundation*. •

Article written by Rich Hansen



More Students Than Ever Gain From Our Generosity

We saw many young smiling faces this year as we handed out school supplies to 3,115 students, over 400 more students than last year. In spite of this increase, we were able to bring costs down. In 2009, we spent \$61,000 and this year we spent \$59,000. The lower cost was largely a function of not giving scientific calculators to the upper grades. The schools we support recommended this change.

Many people helped to make the week long handout successful. Some ten to twelve students and thirty adults volunteered to help with the process. In addition, forty volunteers from our other conferences provided a hand. Debbie and Bob Christian who manage this event stressed that they really appreciated all the help they received, emphasizing that several volunteers really extended themselves

working most of the five days; Rene Vaughn, Joanne Bergren, Mary Gulrich, Ron and Lou Spinias. Bob indicated that having two evening handout sessions was particularly helpful allowing another 400 some student's access to this benefit because their parents work during the day.

Funds from this event are raised from the annual Thrift Store Collectibles sale, a dinner/auction for the School Supplies Conference, allocations from the SVDP Council, and a grant from Cow Creek for \$7,500. A focus for next year will be to see how we can coordinate our efforts with the other groups providing the same kind of support to the valley. We believe there may be as many as twelve to fifteen different agencies distributing school supplies at the beginning of the school year. •

Special Event, continued from page 4

a trip for two to Rome to visit the Pope, tickets to see the Ducks in this year's bowl engagement, a week at *Sun River Resort*, a \$2000 business advertising package, and a special spa package for some lucky woman.

Along with all of this, guests were provided with a special donation envelope that allowed them to make a contribution to the conference of their choice. As of this writing all of these envelopes may not yet be received so our total dollar proceeds for the event could rise even higher.



Besides the people already mentioned in this article, special thanks go to Len Hebert, Dennis Mihocko, Fran Davis-Cox, Tedde Ridley, Al Zon, Dianne Erickson, Irene Vaughn, Nick Koutssuros, Andrea Reeded, Mike and Sue Namus, Rose Barnum, and the students who served appetizers from St. Mary's and South Medford High School, for making this event possible. •

Photo: Len receiving award from Medford Mayor Gary Wheeler

SVDP Hours

Office (772-3828) & Social Services:

Monday-Friday, 10 - 2

Thrift Store (779-3648):

Mon-Sat, 10 - 4

Dining Room: Mon-Sat, 11 - 1

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

La Clinica: 2nd Thursday's, 10:30 - 1:30

Dental Van: December 3

Large furniture pickup available in Medford, Central Point on Monday; Ashland, Talent, Phoenix on Thursday; first floor only. Call the store to schedule. •

Feeding the Poor, continued from page 1

day we serve about 200 people although we serve significantly fewer early in the month and somewhat more late in the month, when all funds such as disability have run out.

With easily over 100 dinners in the building at one time it can get very loud although there are a number of people who prefer to sit quietly alone. At least half of our guests are regulars and a friendly banter normally occurs between many of the volunteers and these folks. While it is infrequent, minor disturbances do sometimes occur, usually the product of festering conflicts developed on the street or because somebody infringes too far into another dinner's personal space or zone of comfort.

About 12:45 volunteers begin to clean the kitchen and dining room. This can easily take another fifteen to thirty minutes. The objective is to thoroughly clean all food preparation and serving areas and to ensure all food products are properly stored. When this is conscientiously done, it makes life so much easier for the next shift. With a totally different crew each day it's hard to get everybody conditioned about where items are stored and some days we need to have several treasure hunts to locate every thing needed. One time the special donation can disappeared for several days because it had been stored in a new and "unique" location.



Ultimately, it is nothing short of a small miracle that we function so well. Could

you imagine six different families using the same kitchen each day of the week (LDS serves the noon meal on Saturdays), never seeing or talking with each other on a regular basis and still being able to provide food for 200 people daily? I can't imagine running a restaurant with an entirely different staff each day.

Thanks to all those volunteers who make the noon meals a pleasant service to our poor and hungry. •

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