

St. Vincent de Paul

Summer 2015

Volume 10, Issue 2



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Society of St. Vincent de Paul - Rogue Valley District

Light the Winter Fires 2015



By Dennis Mihocko

On October 16th, 2015, the seventh consecutive Light the Winter Fires Fundraiser took place. Like last year, we had a direct appeal free lunch at the ever popular Inn at the Commons where the invitees were treated to introductory words from the emcee, our own Garth Harrington, who followed with the always fun game of "heads and tails", with the winner receiving a lovely gift basket. Garth then introduced our Council President Socorro Holloway, who shared her

passion for who we are, and what we do so well; serving the needy of Jackson County.

In 2010, our Vice President of Grant Writing, Rich Hansen, initiated the St Vincent de Paul Humanitarian Award which is named after its first recipient, Len Hebert. Since then it has been given to Mike and Laura Naumes, Dr Dave Moosman, Jerry and Jeanne Taylor, Al Zon. Rich Hansen announced the 2015 recipient Father Jim Clifford, a dedicated St Vincent volunteer and head of the Office of Mission

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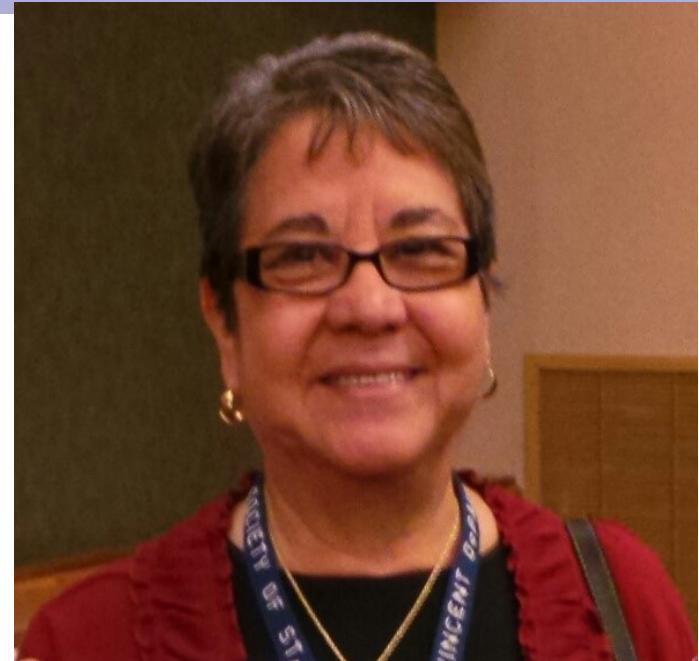
Letter from the President

Dear Vincentian family,

I am on my second year as President of St. Vincent de Paul Council; I cannot believe that my 3 year term will soon come to an end. I have been an SVDP volunteer for 15 years, and it seems that I just started. I enjoy every day I serve. I hope our Lord will allow me to continue my service to the poor for years to come.

When I arrive at the office early in the morning, I am always pleased to see how clean and striking our SVDP buildings are. I am sure you noticed the bright blue band of paint that now enhances our SVDP brand. Thank you Dennis for bringing this idea and making it happen. We are blessed with positive and resourceful SVDP volunteers who are always looking for new ways to better serve our clients and utilize our resources to their greatest extent. Our Social Service Conference has implemented a rental assistance program that is helping clients to obtain housing through rental deposit assistance. Joe Schudawa, President of Social Services took the idea from the Medford block grant CDBG program, and expanded it. Social Service volunteers were specially trained to provide this assistance.

Our Thrift Store has been going beyond normal to maximize their service to the homeless and to help fund the Council's Treasury. Ralph Browning, newly appointed Store Conference President, was warmly welcomed by the volunteers who comprise our Council Board of Directors. Thanks to the many volunteers that helped make our annual Antique and Collectible sale such a great success under the never failing guidance of Karen McNeilly and Dorothy Walterick.



Our Urban Rest Stop also has a great group of volunteers! While their President, Lee and TC Meyers, took an extended vacation, their volunteers provided excellent service to our homeless. SVDP Volunteers always go the extra mile. Good Job!

I had the opportunity to help out in the kitchen and I was given serving instructions by one of our clients. This particular day we served fish and shrimp with white sauce for the fish and red sauce for the shrimp. I did not want to mix the sauces, so I served it in the long well on the side of the tray. The client said, "That's where the silverware is supposed to be" He also asked what river the fish came from. Sorry to say, I did not have an answer. Kitchen volunteers, my hat off to you for all you do.

With sadness, we thanked Debbie and Bob Christian, as they retired from the Pantry Conference, their excellent service is continued by their highly trained volunteers. I pray to our Lord, that one of our Pantry

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Letter from the President... continued

volunteers will step up and take over this ministry.

I admire the Shelter staff, especially Kathy Morgan, Nick Koutsouros and Al Zon, for all they do to manage such a wonderful facility. They had 17 children at one time; just imagine 17 children in such a small space, not including the parents. God Bless you for your patience and service.

Our home visit team conferences, Our Lady of the Mountain and Shepherd of the Valley Church, continue this much needed ministry. It is heartwarming to see the relief on client's face when volunteers arrive at their homes bringing good news of help and prayer.

Christina Wernecke, our Office President just got married to Travis Rider in Hawaii, "Congratulations" to you both. She left specific instructions for all the office volunteers, and it ran like a well-oiled machine.

Our Treasurer's office volunteers are very busy this time of the year. Our fiscal year ended September 30th, so they thank all the conferences for turning in the end of year reports in a timely manner, making their job much easier.

Thank you Alice Cushman, Ann Close, Laura Grosz, your spouses, and the many volunteers that made sure our School Supply give away was a great success. About 3800 children were helped which, I am sure, made a huge impact on the start of the children's school year.

SVDP volunteers and clients enjoy the music played Tuesday and Thursday by Don Zimmerer and Loren Close when they do

their giveaway service in the white metal building. Thank you both.

Don Krolak was greatly missed by the Needy Med's clients. We are glad you are back and thank you for what you do.

As I "Thank You" all for the many services you provide, I think of all the volunteers needed to continue our work. We are losing volunteers due to retirement, illness, having to provide care for a spouse and in some cases, unfortunately, death.

I am asking each one of you to invite a friend, neighbor or family member to join our force. Invite them to work with you or let us give them a SVDP tour. They will see how we affect people's lives and hopefully they will be willing to join us in helping make this difference.

God Bless you,
Socorro

Papal Visit to Philadelphia

by Kathy Morgan

"My most enduring memory from my trip to Philadelphia is the energy and joy of the crowds of people, from around the world, when Pope Francis passed by or arrived. To be one of those people on the parkway gave me the strongest sense of being part of the body of Christ that I have ever experienced," says Lorie Harmon, past President of The Rogue Valley Council of St. Vincent de Paul.

Lorie was joined by three other members of Sacred Heart Parish (Marie Chandler, her daughter Tiffany, and Shelter President Kathy Morgan) on a recent pilgrimage to see the Holy Father. And as an added bonus, they were

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Don Z

By Dennis Mihocko

If you have ever noticed the white metal structure behind the main building at St Vincent on a Tuesday or Thursday, you probably have seen a kind, soft spoken gentleman, and I do mean gentleman, Don Zimmerer. (His name is Zimmerer not just Zimmer like most of us think but he'll go by Don or Don Z and even answer to Don Zimmer). He is the guy to whom people come to get camping gear, furniture, blankets, coats and other things on a social service voucher, to make life's challenges more bearable. He is often there when we need a forklift to move or unload things, solve a problem or fix one. Amid his constant but pleasant sounds of old swing music or early rock and roll, he has been a volunteer at St Vincent since about 2007 when John Geaney was riding the range here at St Vincents and Don has been running the "Shed", as most of us affectionately call it. He is one of the first people you ask for help when something needs fixin' or done.

Don comes by his fix-it mentality naturally because he is a mechanical engineer via University of Texas at Arlington (Go Longhorns). He grew up in Amarillo, Texas but spent most of his career working for Cessna and Eaton Corporation for 35 years moving between Kansas and Minnesota a few times. He went on a Cursillo Retreat (short course in Spanish, a Catholic 4 day event) and he became a team leader for the Kairos program that brought the all Christian version of Cursillo to prisoners.

Don also volunteers at St Rita's Retreat Center in Gold Hill again solving problems,



Don Z with some fix-its in the background.

fixing whatever needs it, cleaning the 67 acres of debris and unwanted vegetation, helping run Cursillo retreats, and helping Fr Stephen Fister in any way he can. Don is a very active member of Sacred Heart Church, the Medford Council of the Knights of Columbus, a faithful participant at the St Vincent Tuesday morning prayer meeting, a diligent member of the Adoration group at Sacred Heart Church, a dedicated husband to Jean and a doting dad and granddad which is what brought them to Oregon in 2005. If Don can help someone with anything, he is always willing and usually able to do so. If you see Don anywhere, but especially out by the shed, shout out a big "Thank you" to him and he'll give you back a pleasant "you're welcome" and probably a blessing, to boot.

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Don Z... continued

I would also mention that Don has had by-pass surgery in recent years and he came back to us like gang busters after only a short while off.

To quote Don, “I have a great job. All I do is give stuff away.” And I would add that he can fix the unfixable, usually. Thanks Don for who you are and what you do for so many for so long.

Papal Visit... continued

invited to attend a private Mass celebrated by Archbishop Sample and Bishop Liam Cary.

The foursome traveled with a group from the Diocese of Baker last month to witness the extraordinary charisma of Pope Francis.

The crowds were huge, the security was intense, the waits were long, but the four agree that every obstacle was worth the wait.

“Our Holy Father, Pope Francis’ appearance at the Festival of Families on Saturday and the Papal Mass on Sunday were a high point of our pilgrimage. Just being in the presence of this very holy man,” Marie Chandler says.

“I was blessed to share this pilgrimage with my daughter Tiffany. When I first heard of the Meeting for Families, I thought what better person to go with than someone who is currently raising the “future of our Church”, Marie says. “Tiffany and her husband Allen have blessed us with six of our eight grandchildren”.

Marie says she was disappointed not to receive communion, but she did get in for the



Kathy Morgan, Bishop Liam Cary, and Lori Harmon

final blessing and was philosophical about being held at the security checkpoint.

Pope Francis was on the final leg of a tour that included visits to Washington D.C., Cuba, New York City and Philadelphia. In Philly, the Pope was there to honor the World Conference on Families. But he did more than that; much more.

His entire visit reflected the tenets of Vincentian Spirituality; seeking out the homeless, prisoners and marginalized members of society. His homilies and speeches always reflected his concern for the poor. He made many unplanned visits to seek the forgotten. And when he was in the Pope mobile, the Secret Service did not stop him from reaching out to the crowd or even leaving the vehicle to embrace the sick, the children and others.

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Papal Visit... continued

"Like happiness, holiness is always tied to little gestures," he says.

But to those in attendance, his presence in the City of Brotherly Love was much more than a little gesture. At times it had the feel of a rock concert. And, yet, the sacredness of the occasion was omnipresent.

The crowd was raucous when waiting for the Pope mobile on Saturday and Sunday. And when he drove by, the celebration was louder than any Super Bowl. Yet, when it came time for Sunday Mass, the masses became silent in anticipation of the Eucharistic Celebration. The hundreds of thousands in attendance went from screaming shouts of joy at his arrival to a prayerful stance that illustrates the sacredness of the moment.

Most saw the pope on the Jumbotron screens, but the fact that they were there and in his presence was more than enough, much more. And even though thousands were turned away from the Mass, they were able to attend the Saturday celebration with His Holiness. It featured the Philadelphia Harmonic Symphony and choir, Aretha Franklin, Andrea Bocelli and a host of other celebrities.

But none outshines His Holiness, who was relaxed, joking and speaking off-the-cuff. Every homily, speech or visit ended with the same words from this humble man: "Pray for me. Don't forget."

Throughout the city, and especially when the pope was near, the four Sacred Heart pilgrims commented on a sense of incongruity. There was the pope representing

peace, love and holiness. Yet there were snipers on the buildings overlooking the setting, National Guard, Federal Marshalls, Secret Service, bomb-sniffing dogs, the FBI, SWAT teams and helicopters flying overhead at regular intervals.

Still, nothing could detract from the essence of the papal visit.

Walking to the restaurant after the Mass, there was a full eclipse of the moon. It almost seemed to be a sign that darkness is overcome by light. That is something the pope reiterated during his brief visit. And his most memorable words?

"With Christ as the center or your life, you will never be disappointed." Amen.

Meyer Memorial Trust Report

By Rich Hansen

The Rogue Valley Council of St. Vincent de Paul received \$19,482 from the Meyer Memorial Trust on Feb. 19, 2015. This formally kick-started the remodeling and expansion of our Urban Rest Stop that was originally budgeted for \$21,462. This unique facility provides the homeless with a safe, clean place to meet some of their most basic needs – an opportunity to shower, launder their clothes, brush their teeth, shave, etc.

We opened this facility in 2009. It has been successful beyond our wildest dreams. In fact, in that short period we have worn out our two showers so that they were leaking

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Meyer Memorial Trust... continued

and becoming unusable. The goal of the project was to replace the two worn-out fiberglass showers with three sturdier marble units. We retained the toilet and utility sink, although we moved them slightly. We added two bathroom sinks with mirrors for shaving, grooming, brushing teeth, etc. and added a second utility sink. We also added a floor drain and epoxy (non-skid) flooring, because as you might imagine, the floors can get very wet. Finally, we added a third efficient top-loading washing machine and a pair of heavy-duty stackable dryers so that we now have a total of six dryers.

Work began in late May and took longer than we had planned. The facility reopened in late July. While we were shut down we and our clients found how very few alternatives are available in Medford for our type of facility. The Men's Gospel Mission is the only real alternative. They have 7-8 showers, but most are leaking so they actually only have 2-3 workable showers. Technically, the Women's Mission showers are only available to clients in their rehab programs. However, they lifted this restriction during our construction. ACCESS has a mobile shower facility based in Ashland. During our construction they brought in to Medford on Fridays. Now, ACCESS and some local partners are considering purchasing a second mobile shower facility to base in Medford.

Originally we have hoped to remove the interior stairwell to provide more room to wait, fold clothes, etc. As the contractors took a closer look, they found that the stairwell had to stay. So, with all the added equipment, our facility is very crowded. We plan a

second expansion in the summer of 2016 to double the footprint of the facility. We are currently fund raising for the \$150,000 project. This year's project cost nearly \$50,000, considerably more than our original \$21,462 estimate. St. Vincent provided the additional funding out of specially ear-marked reserves. As the work progressed we recognized the need for many elements that were not in the plan, i.e. – floor drain, non-skid flooring, bathroom sinks and mirrors, an additional utility sink, improved ventilation, etc. We are glad we added these features.

Both the St. Vincent's staff and our clients are thrilled with the new and improved Urban Rest Stop. We are indebted to the Meyer Memorial. You were truly the catalyst to make this happen.

Volunteer Picnic

By Dennis Mihocko and Diane Johnson

Let us raise a glass of lemonade (something stronger if you wish) to all those Vincentians who braved the sizzling summer temperatures of Sunday, June 6th to partake of the food, fun, and frivolity of the annual SVDP volunteer picnic. This year the picnic was held at the Twin Creek Park in Central Point with the games and festivities surpassed only by the food and beverage and desserts and food. Did I mention the food was great as well?

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Light the Winter Fires... continued and Spiritual Care at providence Hospital. Fr Jim, an Augustinian Order Priest, served as pastor at Shepherd of the Valley Catholic Church for over 15 years during which time the Home Visitation St Augustine Conference of St Vincent de Paul was started. These conference volunteers go to those who cannot come to us to provide service to the needy of Medford, Phoenix, Central Point and northern Jackson County. Medford City Council member Daniel Bunn read a proclamation declaring September 16, 2015, Father Jim Clifford Day for his service to the needy and marginalized everywhere he goes, but especially in Jackson County. Father Jim gave his humble and gracious thanks for this recognition and then President Socorro asked him to bless the food and us all, which he did very eloquently.

Garth continued to award door prize baskets to lucky recipients while the attendees enjoyed their excellent lunch. Garth next introduced a video tour of St Vincent de Paul "More than just a Thrift Store" conducted by our Council Executive Assistant Kathy Begley as she so deftly does. Kathy is a talented videographer who produces slide shows and videos of St Vincent de Paul by telling our story of service and caring.

Garth prompted the invited guests to show their appreciation for their "free lunch" and their support for what we do to help those in need who come to us or who we go to visit. Those who attended must have been very supportive for they collectively gave over \$30,000 which will be used to help



Fr Jim Clifford

expand our Urban Rest Stop (URS) where homeless and needy people come to shower and do laundry. Unfortunately such services are rare and therefore much in demand which has required us to seek the funds for the expansion. I might add that we recently remodeled the exiting Urban Rest Stop which was completed July 21 of 2015 and increased our showers from two to three, washing machines from two to three and dryers from five to six. As soon as we re-opened, the numbers of showers and laundry loads were up substantially which has now committed St Vincent de Paul to expedite the expansion of the Urban Rest Stop that will add an ADA approved shower and restroom, another regular shower, another washing machine and two more dryers. The \$30,000 raised at the luncheon will help us toward our goal of \$150,000 for the URS expansion.

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Light the Winter Fires... continued

The festivities were concluded by the announcement of the raffle prize winners and closing remarks by Socorro Holloway, Len Hebert and Dennis Mihocko. The stellar event was the culmination of months of work by a dedicated group of Vincentian ladies including Fran Davis Cox, Tedde Ridley, Susan Burke, Kathy Begley , Rosemary Harrington and led by Socorro Holloway and inspired by Len Hebert. Thank you all for all you did, do and will continue to do.

Volunteer Picnic... continued

The opportunity to socialize with each other, away from the work and service we provide so expertly, only occurs a few times each year, but many Vincentians take advantage of these chances to gather together.

Diane Johnson was again our gracious hostess and she said "a huge thank you to Bob and Jeanne Hammer family, Judy Virzi, Diane Oliver, Joannie Chun, Roy and Sheryl Meeds, the Christian family, Ralph Browning, Bob Hernandez, Nancy Grimes, Sarah and Susan and their families and all those I have not mentioned who were kind enough to stay and help with cleanup, we are grateful for you!"

All the games were awesome! Hawaiian theme trivia, the water balloon volleyball, the best Hawaiian dressed, and everybody's favorite: BINGO! Lots and lots of great, fun prizes! Including nice bottles of good wine (thank you Gaille Schmidt and Food 4 Less).

Thank you to all the Volunteers who came (about 110'ish) and made it fun! It was great to meet fellow Vincentians from Grants Pass

and Ashland. What a great group of beautiful people who love serving our Lord!

I am so grateful to be a part of it all! Hope to see you all next year!

Blessings Sista Di (Diane Johnson)"

I definitely could not have said it any better, especially not with such enthusiasm. Diane, you rock. Thank you for always making it happen.

Summer Fundraising

By Phyllis Douglas

This summer we received several generous grants. Our Social Services Conference was awarded \$14,064 from the Ames-Fluhrer Charitable Trust of the Oregon Community Foundation (OCF), \$5,000 from the Anna May Family Fund, \$7,500 from the Herbert A. Templeton Foundation, and \$15,000 from the Carrico Family Foundation.

We conducted our Back-to-School Supply Program with help from the Autzen Foundation in the amount of \$5,000 and we received \$19,000 from the Christian Charities Golf Tournament to help with the expansion of our Urban Rest Stop. We continue to work with Ben B. Chaney Foundation, Collins Foundation, Providence Foundation and OCF to provide financing for this project.

The City of Ashland granted the Ashland Home Visit team \$20,000 and US Bancorp awarded \$5,000 to be used for Central Point and Ashland Home Visits.

A Big thank you to all our supporters including foundations, direct donors and our wonderful volunteers.

Chici Geraldine Cutting

By Dennis Mihocko

We gave a loving farewell and celebrated the inspiring life of Geraldine “Chici “ Cutting during the viewing and rosary on Sunday followed by a Mass at Our Lady of the Mountain Catholic Church on Monday October 5, 2015. Chici is loved and cherished by her daughter Korina and sons Kurt and Kevin, her grandchildren Luke, Emily, Sam, Amanda, Thomas, Kassandra and Kenzie and siblings Maralee, Terry and Jane. She is revered and admired by her many friends and especially by all the St Vincent de Paul volunteers who have been impacted by her service to the needy of Jackson County particularly those in Ashland and Talent. Her determined and undeniable persistence in being the hands of Christ was balanced by her infectious laugh and constant smile. Of the seven years Chici was a Vincentian, she served three years as Our Lady of the Mountain Conference President, which is when I got to know Chici better. I can say she served with grace and love and unified a group of Christ minded volunteers who served their fellow humans with love and respect. Chici’s gallant fight against the ravages of cancer did not diminish her concern for others nor her joy for life. Though we will continue to serve as the Christ ask, we will do so with an ache in our hearts because Chici has gone home. Please pray for us, Chici, for you know how much we need it. Thank you for being you.



Chici Geraldine Cutting



Light the Winter Fires Photos



Rich Hansen and other donors



Donors enjoying the food



Father Ken of Sacred Heart in Medford and Joyce Marks

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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

La Clinica

**Medical - Monday, 9am—1pm,
warehouse in rear parking lot**
**Dental - Every Thursday, 1-6pm,
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