

St. Vincent de Paul

Summer 2012

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Society of St. Vincent de Paul - Rogue Valley District

Thank You and Good Luck to Dianne and Patrick

After almost a decade of volunteer service at SVDP in Medford, Patrick Wilson and wife, Dianne Erickson, have finally answered that irrepressible call for change and adventure...a new, exciting life in Portland, Oregon. They plan to leave on June 9.

"Neither Dianne or I have lived in an urban environment," explained Patrick, when asked for the reason for their departure. "I like the variety in foods and people found in a large city and Dianne, of course, is attracted to the art community."

"The acreage around our home has become harder to manage, so it will be nice to have a manageable yard, and yes, as far as I know, permanent," chimed in Dianne. "But, never say never, I've always wanted to live in Italy."

Background. Patrick, a native of Pennsylvania, was a career military officer for nine years, working primarily in logistics. While in the Army, he lived in Texas, Virginia and Indiana. He also had foreign assignments in Frankfurt, Germany and in South Vietnam. After his Army years, he spent time in Chicago before relocating to the Silicone Valley in California. There, 25 fruitful years passed where he worked with managers and executives developing leadership and management skills and doing organizational development.

Dianne, for her part, was born in Portland, but grew up in Richland, Washington. She then moved to California where she lived



Dianne Erickson (left) and Patrick Wilson (right) receiving awards from St. Vincent de Paul Medford President Dennis Mihocko (center)

for over 30 years. For a while, she worked as a hairstylist. Then, she decided being an entrepreneur was more rewarding and started her own graphics and design/communications business in Silicon Valley.

The Medford Years. The couple came to Medford where they settled in the Jacksonville area.

"The place was Dianne's choice," said Patrick. "She had earlier visited a friend in Jacksonville and fell in love with the place."

After a time, Dianne got her Brokers license and launched into the real estate business. Patrick, on the other hand, had all the free time in the world. He hated being idle and felt the urge to be a part of something meaningful and productive.

"The years had been generous to me and I wanted to give back to the community," he confided.

Thank You and Good Luck... Continued

Finally, the opportunity came. They answered an SVDP notice and began volunteering their time. For a starter, they were given kitchen assignments. Then, they progressed to more challenging opportunities. Patrick took on a quasi-supervisory role in the kitchen and became a member of the SVDP Board

where his past experiences proved invaluable. He later became a part-time Day Manager at the Store, the primary income-generating arm of SVDP.

Meanwhile, Dianne helped in the organization's communicating and marketing activities. She enjoyed doing signs and flyers for the store, appraising artworks for the Collectible Sale, and filling in for Patrick as Day Manager whenever he was unavailable.

With all these activities swirling around, Patrick saw the need for a venue to record and amplify SVDP's varied programs and priorities.

"What better way is there to involve the community and the people who matter than to let them know what SVDP is doing?" Patrick reasoned.

Thus, the SVDP Newsletter came into being. A quarterly publication, the Newsletter serves as a forum of ideas, a record of the accomplishments, and a history of the important activities and milestones of the organization.

Patrick served as editor while Dianne took charge of graphics, laying out each publication and creating a supporting design.

In Gratitude. SVDP thrives on the selfless acts and efforts of its volunteers. It finds strength and sustenance in the generosity in those who believe in charity and sharing. It exists, grows and reaches new heights because there are people who give a part of themselves, who make things happen.

People like Patrick and Dianne.

Written by Bart Buscato

Letter from the President



Our Vincentian family in Medford has been very busy and very productive in our service to the poor and needy. What we do is serve Christ by serving those who come to us for help and encouragement with an all volunteer group of caring people despite age, creed, race and sex. You are all Vincentians in our patron saint's shining example of becoming Christ-like. I thank you all for what you do all the time.

A shining example of service and selflessness among us are Patrick Wilson and his wife, Dianne Erickson. For the last ten years they have served faithfully, effectively and creatively in efforts to improve the lives of those being served. From working in the kitchen, the store, serving on the council board of directors and developing ideas for our benefit, to creating our quarterly newsletter and recreating our website, to raising funds and community awareness of who we are and what we do, Patrick and Dianne have been wonderful examples of our Vincentian spirit of love and compassion. They show us what being a volunteer can be and what it means to give of oneself, or in this case, two selves. They, unfortunately, will be moving to Portland this summer to share their many talents and creativity with big city folk.

I pray they have a good move and enjoy Portland but I, as well as all of you will miss their spirit, charming personalities and servants' hearts. I would also like to take an opportunity to encourage all of you to ask

Letter from the President... Continued

family, friends, church members and neighbors to come and give St Vincent a chance to help them help others. It will make them an example to others as are all of you. We do nothing without us volunteers and we are in need of more of them all the time. Please pray for our mission, for all of us and for Jesus to put service to others on others' hearts. Thank you for being an example to me and to the world.

God Bless You Always in all you do,

Dennis Mihocko



From left to right, Adrian Snyder—US Bank Trust Officer, Dennis Mihocko—SVDP Medford President, Gloria Schell—US Bank Regional Vice President, Rich Hansen—Grant Writing Volunteer

Secrets to Writing Grants

Rich Hansen joined SVDP in 2004, initially helping Len Hebert with the capital campaign. Later, after the campaign had wound down, he began assisting Dick Hanley writing the required reports on our use of foundation grants. Eventually Dick's wife became ill and he had to step back from SVDP so Rich began writing all the reports. One day in 2008 Rich noticed Len working on writing a grant application for the Walker Fund. Rich said, "Why don't you provide me with the numbers and let me write the grant?" As often happens at SVDP, before long Rich was writing all the grants.

We received \$50,000 or more in grants back then. By 2010 SVDP was close to receiving \$200,000 in foundation and government funds and we may top that this year. Basically, we keep finding more foundations to whom we can apply. Because of our all-volunteer structure and our ability to raise significant funds through the Thrift Store, we have been very successful in getting funding from the appropriate foundations. Because of this success, we decided to interview Rich to learn how he performs his magic.

Patrick: "What do you see as the secrets to writing successful grants?"

Rich: "First, you need to thoroughly understand the mission and operation of our St. Vincent's Council and it's Conferences. When I first began writing our grants, I had only a general idea of how we worked. The various Conference Presidents have helped me a lot.

Second, you have to thoroughly understand the mission of the foundation you are applying to. They all have web sites with guidelines, Q&As, etc. It is critical to read these carefully and review their application before proceeding."

Patrick: "What are some of the typical pitfalls grant writers fall into?"

Rich: " Getting in a hurry. Not carefully proofing your spelling, grammar, etc."

Patrick: "What do you do to educate yourself about the grants that are available?"

Rich: " Attend conferences, use directories and ask questions of the foundations who are currently supporting St. Vincent's."

Patrick: "What are the steps that are important to walk through in preparing a grant, getting it approved, etc.?"

Secrets to Grant Writing... Continued

Rich: “ Read the foundation’s web site carefully and follow their instructions. Talk to the relevant Conference President to fully understand their needs and operations. Use key words from the foundation’s web site when completing the grant application. Always send a personal “thank you letter” after receiving a grant. File your reports on time.”

Patrick: “What have been the most important grants for SVDP and why?”

Rich: “ Every single one of them have been important. Based a dollar value, I would say the \$50,000 Walker Fund and \$20,000 City of Medford block grant for Social Services; the \$30,000 City of Ashland block grant for the Home Visit Conference and the \$20,000 Collins Foundation grant for the Council. In addition, last winter we unexpectedly received over \$16,000 from Avista to help pay gas bills. That was a very pleasant surprise.”

Patrick: “What makes some grants particularly difficult to secure and how do you overcome these difficulties?”

Rich: “ The red tape with government block grants drives me nuts. The secret is persistence and patience. Also, don’t be afraid to ask questions. I received lots of help from the housing staff specialists from both Ashland and Medford when I asked questions.”

Patrick: “Have you learned some particularly important lessons for achieving success in grant writing?”

Rich: “ The best advice I ever received was to aim high, ask for more money than you think you can get.”

Patrick: “What are some of the tricks in writing grants?”

Rich: “ I think careful research, both reading and listening, is critical. But another key tool is the computer word processor. Many of the applications ask the same questions and you can reuse good answers. However, when you do that you must proof you answer carefully and make sure you have the right foundation name in your application. Forgetting to proof that can be very embarrassing.”

Patrick: “Anything else you would like to add?”

Rich: “ Representing St. Vincent’s is an honor. The foundations are most impressed that we are an all-volunteer organization that pays no salaries. They also respect the fact that we can raise a large percentage of our funds internally through the Thrift Store, fund raisers, etc.”

Written by Patrick Wilson

Summer Celebration! July 14th Dinner and Auction

Doors open at 5pm, rosary at 5:15, social till 6pm, dinner, raffle and auction follow

St.Vincent de Paul Fundraiser to Benefit the School Supplies Program.

Contact SVDP office for more information

Sisters Provide Welcomed Help

We now have two nuns from the Dominican Sisters of Adina, Michigan working with our Social Services Conference, Sister Barbara Hehr and Sister Lorraine Brennan.

Sister Lorraine entered the order when she was eighteen continuing a tradition set by two aunts, who had joined the order, and a uncle who had become a priest. "Having Dominicans over to the house and seeing their happiness certainly was a strong influence on me," says sister Lorraine. She has been a nun now for 58 years. Sister has taught in numerous areas of the United States.

Sister Barbara is originally from Chicago and has been a nun for sixty one years. She says, "The sisters who taught me had such a great love for teaching children that it had a lasting impact on me and I have had tremendous opportunities to teach." She has taught in Arizona, South Carolina (before integration occurred), South Central Los Angeles and the poorest sections of Detroit, as well as Los Vegas for a very long time. One of the schools in Detroit had 350 black children and one white child. I have loved every assignment."

The sisters decided to come out of retirement to work at SVDP. Sister Lorraine says, "I still have energy, but less of it." She came to SVDP, indicated her interest, went on some home visits and liked them. "I still had energy and wanted to do something for the poor." She started doing home visits with the Saint Augustine (Central Point) Conference soon thereafter. Sister Barbara has been assisting as a counselor in the Social Services Conference. She says, "Being a counselor is basically the same as doing home visits. You get the same kind of requests.

I was interested in the sister's perception of the work they are doing here in Jackson County. Sister Barbara says, "Well we have more time to visit so people can open up a little. I find them very respectful and work has been just a joy." At the same time, Sister Barbara said, "I was surprised by the conditions some people are enduring. Some go months without electricity, people often living without heat. Many of them live in very poor rural

conditions because of the fear of having to deal with landlords. In addition, the breakdown of the family has been overwhelming. In one home we visited they didn't even have a table to eat at."

Sister Barbara praised the Social Service staff, saying, "They have been very helpful and accommodating." Sister Lorraine concluded by saying, "As long as we can keep up our energy, we will serve the people of God and treat each person respectfully." Written by Patrick Wilson

Keeping Track of Loved Ones

Len Hebert, Kitchen President, recently told me a story that typifies some of the unusual situations we can experience at SVDP.

"Several years ago, an elderly supporter of St. Vincent's stopped in at our Kitchen facility. Wanting to help, he asked if there was something that we needed built or repaired. We told him that we could use some repairs to our kitchen door to keep the bugs from coming into the kitchen.

We did not get any real commitment from him, except he said he would see what he could do. To our surprise, after a few days he came back in and said he was ready to replace the door. He had with him his tools and a new door that he had purchased, made to the exact size needed. He then began to replace the door causing us to be concerned whether he was physically able to do the work needed. We informed him that he did not have to do the work and we could get one of volunteers to put in the door.

His response was that he wanted to not only purchase the door for us, but also to personally install the door. It seems that he had an estranged son who had been lost to a drugged and troubled state of life for several years. While his homeless and troubled son was in his estranged state, he would come into St. Vincent's for lunch

Save This Date - October 21st, 2012

Late Afternoon

**St. Vincent de Paul Fourth Annual
Fundraiser to Benefit the Needy at
Rogue Valley Country Club. Contact
SVDP office for more information**

Visit us on the web:

www.stvincentdepaulmedford.info

**Find the latest information on what is
happening at St Vincent de Paul in
Medford.**

Volunteers are always Welcome!

**Help out for just a couple of hours a
week**

**Contact SVDP office for more
information**

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

**Email de137e@q.com to receive the 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:

Patrick Wilson, Dianne Erickson, Bart Buscato, and Michael Morgan

Keeping Track of Loved Ones... Continued

and other services. During this period of several years, the only way the father could determine if his son was alive and being taken care of was to park in the rear of our parking lot and observe his son from a distance. In essence, the son was being cared for by our Council in ways that the father could not, because of the son's chosen state of estrangement. The father added that he was donating this door and labor to St. Vincent's to repay us for helping his son in the ways we did and allowing him, through his observations, to gain some comfort that his son was alive and being fed.

This replacement donation was a father's form of thanking us for the work we did."

Written by Patrick Wilson



Kathy Begley

Kathy Begley - New Office Conference President

I first noticed Kathy about six months ago. She stood out because she always had a big smile and a friendly, outgoing demeanor. She worked in the front office managing the front desk and helping out with administration. When I interviewed Kathy recently, in conjunction with her new position as President of the Office Conference, I soon learned where that bright smile grew from.

Kathy moved to Medford in 2005 when her husband became seriously ill with Parkinson's and to Eagle Point in 2006 to be closer to her family. Kathy and her husband were friends of Socorro Holloway, President of Social Services, and were soon encouraged to volunteer at SVDP. Her husband worked in the kitchen for a brief period before his health precluded him continuing.

Kathy is the ideal kind of person to work in the office where we first interact with many of the people who come to us for help. Some of these people are scared and nervous, because of having to ask for help, sometimes for the first time in their lives. Others can be angry and aggressive, because of the discomfort of their reduced economic situation. Regardless, Kathy greets them with a smile and assists them to begin the process of rebuilding. She says, "I'm glad they have a place to go for help. And we have so many different services to offer." Kathy's glow comes from the fact she really likes people, both other volunteers and the guests we serve. She said to me, "Every day I leave SVDP I know I have helped people. Because of this I call this," 'The job of joy.'

Because of her positive attitude and work habits, it wasn't long before Irene Vaughn, the President of the Office Conference, noticed her and saw she had greater promise. Irene had to find a replacement since her term was coming to an end. She told Kathy she went home and prayed on the decision and realized Kathy was the right pick for President. Because Kathy hates to say "no," the outcome was pretty fixed.

In addition to working as Office President, Kathy also spends one day a week at the Urban Rest Stop. She likes that job too. "It is an opportunity to work closely, one-on-one with people...To get to know them better. This has enabled me to put a better face on the homeless and to appreciate how disenfranchised many of them feel. Because of that, a smile and a little warmth is really appreciated." Kathy also confided to me it doesn't hurt that being single with three young children and having little income during a long period of her life helps her understand a lot of what the people coming to us are experiencing.

Kathy's advice to other newcomers to SVDP is, "Just jump in and enjoy it. This is a great opportunity to help others who are less well off...to operate as a Christian."

Written by Patrick Wilson

Local Mormon Church is Key Partner for St.Vincents

Many of our volunteers and some of our guests probably don't realize that our Saturday meal for the homeless is served by the Mormon Church of Central Point. This support has certainly been a welcomed relief. Getting enough volunteers is always a challenge and prior to the Mormons coming to us to ask if they could work with us to assist the needy, we were only serving noon meals Monday to Friday. It is because of this partnership that we were interested in learning more about what else the Mormon Central Point church is doing to support the poor and needy in the valley...Where else our missions intersect? An interview with the President of the Central Point church, Kelly Thompson, provided valuable insight.

Mormons in all of the sixteen different wards in Jackson County are encouraged to fast two days a month. The personal savings resulting from this fast is then contributed to the Bishop's Storehouse. The Storehouse is the central repository for providing food, rental assistance and other basic necessities to the needy in this area, regardless of their faith. The expectation is that these needs are temporary and that those seeking assistance are working to become self reliant and will eventually be able to support themselves. Like the other support groups in the valley, they have seen a significant surge in people needing assistance over the past several years but are currently seeing some leveling off of these demands.

Like our Social Services Conference, the Mormons also do home visits. These are conducted by men from the church going out in pairs to meet with parents to determine how the church can support their needs and to encourage them to develop a plan to move out of their current straights. During the recent recession they have come across a fair number of people who have fallen on hard times for the first time. Many of these people have a difficult time asking for assistance and need a reassuring offer.

To further assist people to move to a better place,



their church provides employment training, like how to write a resume and interview effectively. SVDP has offered their classes to people coming to our facility in the past. Their employment centers also work with the needy to help them locate jobs in the local marketplace.

Not just relying on volunteers, the church has an expectation that all members of their congregation will engage in some kind of community outreach. Church members are expected to seek out a calling... A specific area in which to serve. To allow church members to broaden their perspective, assignments are rotated periodically. The belief is that, "We serve and are blessed through other people," said Kelly. But even more uplifting was when Kelly told me his religion is a practical religion followed by the quote he recited, "I'd rather see a sermon than hear one any day."

We are lucky to have these kind of partners working with us.

Written by Patrick Wilson

Just Working to be a Good Cashier

On Mondays when I work at the store I almost always find Yoshi Pehl out policing the parking lot around the store. Later she vacuums the front of the store, cleans the fountains and makes certain the sock bins are stocked. One day I asked her why she attended to all these areas before starting her day as a cashier and she said, "I need to do it. I want it to look tidy."

Yoshi has been a cashier the entire 15 years she has been at the Store so I decided to ask her more about her job. She told me she makes it a point to greet every customer and to be cheerful. I ask her if she treated voucher holders the same way and she said, "Yes, of course. Maybe someday they will be paying customers." When I asked why the special energy for each customer, she said, "I want them to come back again. I often ask them about their personal life, especially if they are an older person and may be lonely."

Since I knew that many cashiers can get frustrated with voucher holders, I was especially interested in how Yoshi dealt with them. She told me, "They can be hard. Some come with attitudes and sometimes we (cashiers) also have attitudes. They can be a struggle to work for, particularly when their clothes or phone or items they do buy with their personal money, indicate they do have money. It makes me wonder. Do they really need a voucher? Sometimes they seem to want everything. I find my reaction can get colder. About one or two out of ten can be a problem. I am not a Christian, but I seek to remain pleasant. I smile and seek to provide extra special help, like clothes for the kids. I have a very rough time handling men who are really dirty and smelly and reeking of alcohol. Still I remain very business-like. If things get really ugly, I may ask somebody else to step in for me. One of the worst situations was one day when I saw a male customer leave with a very puffy looking sweatshirt, like there was something underneath. He returned shortly later with the shirt looking normal. I wanted to say something but I couldn't."

"I feel really good when I have a pleasant little conversation with a customer. When I smile and provide good service. It makes me happy and I hope they tell other people about the service they got." I ended by asking Yoshi what one change she would like to see in the store. She said she would wish for all volunteers to better understand all aspects of the store and to pitch in any time they saw a need.

Yoshi says, when I started we had a very tiny store. Everybody was nice and pleasant. Now, everybody is getting older. We need more young people to support our mission." Written by Patrick Wilson

Wrestling with the Devil

Jeannie was the fifth child in her family. Both of her parents were alcoholics so she pretty much ran wild, using her horse to escape home for long periods of time. Looking for a group to fit in with, she was attracted to the rough and tumble life of cowboys and cowgirls. Soon she was spending most of her free time with them. Because most of them drank, she joined in with them at an early age. Initially drinking was only on weekends but over time it became an everyday occurrence. By the age of twenty five Jeannie realized she was an alcoholic. As the drinking escalated, her life started falling apart. It was difficult keeping a job. Because of this she could not always pay her rent so she lived with her drinking buddies off and on. And as things spiraled down and her primary friends were drinkers, the drinking was reinforced and rewarded. After fifteen years of a fairly turbulent life and a failed marriage, Jeannie found herself homeless.

She would quit drinking for short periods of time but would soon return to the bottle, telling herself, "I can handle this." Finally she found herself in the hospital with a serious hernia, the DTs and a dangerously accelerated heart rate. She looked around the hospital room and asked herself, "How the hell did I get here?" She had pretty much lost everything, including her children and family. She realized she was killing

Wrestling with the Devil... Continued

herself and needed to make dramatic changes. She had been homeless for five years, living on friend's and relative's couches, in recovery houses and, sometimes, in jails. Luckily, many of her friends had stuck by her so she had a reliable support base if she needed it.

She began attending AA meetings regularly and putting her life back together. She realized she was getting older and that she was tired of the self abuse. Most importantly, she realized she was not helpless. She looked at the families around her and saw that family wasn't a practical option if she continued drinking. So on the one hand she reminded herself of what she had lost and was missing and on the other hand she repeatedly held up the damage she had done to herself. "You have lost everything, and almost your life!" She regretted the separation from her loved ones and not being able to be there for them when they had faced struggles. As she made the long slog out of the mess she had created, she found that she could still get support from the friends that had stuck by her and that other folks who were facing the same demons could also help.

During her years of homelessness, she had stayed at the Homeless Shelter at SVDP several times and was heartened that Al Zon (President of the Homeless Conference) and Nick Koutssouros (Shelter Manager) believed in her and were willing to give her a second chance. It also helped that she believed in herself and could generate significant confidence and pride as she overcame obstacles and built little successes. "I was grateful for every day I spent sober and for the good things that came my way, including the support from Al and Nick."

She developed a set of mantras to pull her along, "Believe in yourself. Keep the commitment you make. Do your best. Save toward the future. I'm a good person."

And she praised herself for her incremental successes. She also allowed herself to rely on the people important to her...her sister, her best friend, Rachel and her sponsor. "These people love me no matter what."... Another mantra.

It has been a difficult and delicate climb, but she was willing to ask for help, recognize her successes, and be her best coach and cheerleader.

Written by Patrick Wilson



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Late Afternoon

St. Vincent de Paul Fourth Annual Fundraiser to Benefit the Needy at Rogue Valley Country Club. Contact SVDP office for more information

New Truck for SVDP Medford

St. Vincent de Paul (SVDP) Medford recently purchased a 2006 Isuzu box truck from the Mid-Willamete Valley Council of SVDP. Bought at a greatly discounted price, the truck has an 18-foot cargo box, providing ample space for hauling and delivery services.

“We bought the truck at a bargain and it will certainly be of great use to us,” said Dennis Mihocko, President of SVDP Medford. Presently, SVDP Medford has only two aging trucks to serve its expanding needs and services, a 2001 and a 1997 Ford box truck.

Charlie Burgess, president of the Pantry Conference (which will have full control of the new truck daily operation), is very much appreciative of this new acquisition. He hopes the new truck will have more productive years ahead and will ease up the workloads heaped on the older trucks.

Hopefully, all these will result in less truck breakdowns, translating into lesser maintenance expenses and better service.

Written by Bart Buscato



Ron Spinas (left) and Charlie Burgess (right)

Wish to contribute to the Newsletter?

Have an idea for a future article?

Know a superstar volunteer we should showcase?

Contact SVDP office for more information on how you can help.

Society of St. Vincent de Paul

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Call store to schedule, first floor only

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Email de137e@q.com to receive the 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:

Patrick Wilson, Dianne Erickson, Bart Buscato, and Michael Morgan

