

St. Vincent de Paul

Winter/Spring 2017

Volume 11, Issue 1



Inside this issue:

Letter from President	2
Major Gifts	3
Store Improvements	3
The Holiday Season	4
In Memoriam	5
Shelter Renovations	6
Urban Rest Stop and Kitchen	7

Society of St. Vincent de Paul - Rogue Valley District

Food Insecurities Interview

By Kathy Begley

I was recently asked to do an interview with a local TV station. The topic was "Food insecurities in the Rogue Valley...or what are the causes of hunger? As I stood in the pantry, surrounded by cans of food, I couldn't help but wonder why we have so many hungry people and so much food to give away. Hunger in the Valley is not caused by lack of food, but by lack of compassion for our poor and needy brothers and sisters. The economy has made it very difficult to obtain work, and therefore housing. The vacancy rate in Medford is very low and this has caused rents to be high and deposits can be exorbitant. When you spend 50% of your income on housing, it does not leave much for life's necessities, such as food.

Our amazing Kitchen staff manages to serve upwards of 300 people a day. We provide a hot meal Monday through Friday and on Saturdays our LDS church members prepare and serve our guests. Each year we see an increase in the number of meals served daily.

Our Pantry provides grocery bags twice a month; each bag



Kathy Begley, our new Council President, interviewed about Food insecurities in the Rogue Valley

contains a 4 day supply. We also provide emergency food bags to those who ask for food. No-Cook bags are given to the homeless who do not have kitchen facilities. No-Cook bags contain ready to eat items.

There are times that we ask the question, "Are we doing the best we can for the poor and needy?" Our goal is to provide a hand up, not a hand out. During the cold winter months, it is very important that we make every effort to provide for everyone who is hungry.

As Vincentians, we are challenged to go and find the poorest and to share with them the love and blessings that God has shared with us.

Letter from the President

Dear Vincentian Family,

This is my last letter as President of St. Vincent de Paul, Rogue Valley Council, Three years went by like the wind. I want to thank you so very much for the support I received from every one of you during my tenure.

In the beginning of 2016, I reminded the Council members that my 3 years term as President was going to end December 2016. A President Selection committee was formed and started contacting SVDP members.

Kathy Begley, our Administrative Assistant's name came up as a great candidate for the position, she was contacted, and I am pleased to announce that she has gracefully accepted the responsibility of being our new President of St. Vincent de Paul, Rogue Valley Council.

Kathy is well known within our Council. She has served as a URS volunteer, Office Conference President, very active with our Light the Winter Fires annual fundraiser, SVDP photo and videographer, peace and order keeper in our dining room and surroundings, and as our Administrative Assistant, always available to help our Conferences with their needs. She made my job so much easier.

I am not going away, you will see me working wherever I am needed. This year I plan on doing extensive traveling. One of my goals is "Camino de Santiago de Compostela, The French Way" about 900 kilometers from France to Santiago de Compostela, Spain, It will take almost two months of walking but it is doable. I also want to take time to visit my family in Mexico.

December of 2016, I took a trip to Spain and France. While there, I had the opportunity to see a couple of SVDP buildings. I am sharing



Socorro Holloway visiting the birthplace of St Vincent de Paul

these pictures with you.

God is good to us, provides us the means to help our poor. We have the best volunteers doing His work. Let's not forget our Vincentian Challenge: Our streets long and unfriendly, our "friends" often ungrateful, our charity a heavy burden to carry. Our commitment to God: We will keep our gentleness and our smile. The more unattractive they are and the more dirty they are, the more unjust and insulting they are, the more Love we must give them.

The hard work and dedication you put in to your job proves your Vincentian Spirit.

Thank you Friends for all you do.

Sincerely,

Socorro

Shelter Remodel, Dental Visits, Pantry Receive Major Gifts

By Rich Hansen

Fund raising closed the year with a welcome surge of generosity. The shelter remodeling, dental van, Social Services, Urban Rest Stop (URS), and Pantry all received sizable gifts. The Shelter project received \$50,000 from Sacred Heart Catholic Church and \$10,000 from the Oregon Community Foundation. The dental van visit project received \$10,000 from Providence Health & Services, \$10,000 from Asante and \$4,000 from the Greater Medford Rotary.

Banner Bank contributed \$5,470 to the URS, and US Bank gave \$7,000 to the Ashland and Central Point Home Visit Conferences.

The Pantry received \$16,198 from the Federal Emergency Management Agency and the Kitchen received \$4,628. In addition, the Pantry received \$2,000 from Catholic Relief Services, \$1,000 from Kohl's and \$5,000 from the Raymond Foundation.

Social Services received nearly \$70,000 during the period, including \$25,000 from the City of Medford's Community Development Block Grants, \$8,333 from the City of Medford's General Fund and \$4,000 from the Medford Water Commission. In addition, Social Services received \$15,000 from the Carrico Family Foundation, \$14,446 from the Ames-Fluhrer Fund of Oregon Community Fund, and \$3,500 from Rogue Community Health for prescription drug purchases.



We received a donation from the estate of Winona Dungey. The check was presented to us by Ernest and Brenda Mingus.

Store Improvements

By William Hunt

Mr. Chris Williams, owner of PACWEST PLUMBING, and also the plumbing contractor for our shelter renovation project, and Chuck Williams, Chris' father and store volunteer, donated and installed a stainless steel sink for the electrical appliance section of the St. Vincent de Paul Thrift Store. The new sink and spray faucet will allow volunteers to more easily clean appliances and equipment. Our thanks and gratitude to PACWEST PLUMBING for their donation and expertise.

The Holiday Season

By Kathy Begley

As the year draws to a close and the weather turns cold, it is the time of year to celebrate our work and the many Volunteers that make it all happen.

This year the First Presbyterian Church prepared and served our Community Thanksgiving dinner. This event kicks off a month of celebrations for our community and volunteers. The Dining room was decorated and transformed to a family restaurant. Over 400 meals, turkey and all the dressings were prepared and served by volunteers from the church. It was another huge success.

By early December we started preparing for our Christmas celebrations: Sunday, December 4th our volunteers were treated to an afternoon of fellowship, food and lots of singing. We played Heads and Tails, had raffle prizes, and basket give aways.

Dennis Mihocko, our facilities manager, was given "2016 Humanitarian of the Year". The award was a very well deserved acknowledgement of the wonderful job Dennis has been doing through doubling the size of the Urban Rest Stop, complete updating of our kitchen and the complete rehabilitation of our family shelter and upgrading it to ADA standards.

I always find it uplifting to be with our volunteers, the true workforce that is always there to help the poorest of God's people. All the volunteers were thanked and praised for their hard work but as has been our custom for several years now, the area of service mentioned for additional



Santa giving out treats during the Christmas dinner.

acknowledgement was the fundraisers. The Thrift Store, led by Manager Karen McNeilly and conference President Ralph Browning and the more than 100 volunteers, raised over \$800,000, and the grant writers Rich Hansen and Phyllis Douglas brought in over \$300,000. The Light the Winter Fires, led by President Socorro Holloway, Executive Assistant Kathy Begley and helped by Fran Cox Davis, brought in an additional \$35,000.

As December progressed, we began gathering all the supplies needed for our Community Christmas Dinner, December 25th. El Molcajete restaurant prepared our meal of excellent traditional Mexican food again this year. We not only provided the meal, but an army of community volunteers took the dinner orders, served the meal and provided a warm and welcoming environment. Wayne & Trish Trefren and their elves were in charge of the toys, which were donated for this occasion. Santa circled the room greeting the children and passing out candy canes.

New Years brings new opportunities and chal-

(Continued on page 10)

In Memoriam

By Dennis Mihocko

As days slide into weeks and weeks to years, St Vincent de Paul continues to try and meet the needs of those we serve. That passage of time also impacts those who serve. Some serve for a short while and others for decades. Some serve for periods of time in between or sporadically. We are all called Vincentians, doing the work Christ called us to do.

Recently, we have lost some long term Vincentians who served so very well for so long. Mary Gulrich was one of the first people to receive our 30 year service pin in 2012. Mary was with St Vincent de Paul since its inception year of 1982, when our founders Lil and Bill Howe started it at Sacred Heart Church. Mary worked in the St Vincent social service office, served as office manager and later was the first to input data into our first computers. She always had a smile and wore such colorful hats. She is missed.

Lou Paxton was another long time Vincentian who served hot meals for many years in our kitchen and was the treasurer of the kitchen conference. She had an indomitable spirit and volunteered into her 90's. She was a shining star to us all and brought joy to so many.

Also, we need to inform you all that our beloved Dr Dave Moosman passed away January 4, 2017. Most of you will know him since he was a giant of a man, soft spoken, less than average height, a very learned person and one of the most spiritual people we have ever known. Dave started the St Augustine Home Visitation Conference at Shepherd of the Valley Church in the mid 90's. He started the St Anthony Shelter Conference in an old



Dave Moosman. Well done good and faithful Vincentian servants.

truck repair shop where our Thrift store now is. He started the Urban Rest Stop, our shower and laundry in 2008, which is now the St Francis of Assisi Conference. He did work in the kitchen, which came in handy when Dave's wife, Pat started a Turkey Dinner here at St Vincent, the Sunday before Thanksgiving many, many years ago. Fr Jim Clifford shared this story Pat told him. Pat said "that on their first date, Dave took her to St. Vincent de Paul to fill grocery bags for the poor. She not only never forgot it, but that experience also was the foundation of their life together in service. Since that "first date" Pat has developed a wonderful ministry to the poor and needy in her own right."

Dave was, appropriately, our Spiritual Advisor and a member of the Council

(Continued on page 6)

In Memoriam... continued

Board of Directors for most of his 23 plus years as a Vincentian. He was an MD for close to 50 years and chose St Vincent de Paul to continue his service to mankind upon his retirement. Along with all that, he took communion to homebound Catholics, especially those at a care facility for veterans. He did most of his St Vincent activities simultaneously, especially with Pat, whether home visitations or running the Urban Rest Stop. When Dave and Pat were selected as Jackson County Volunteer of the Month in August 2012, we referred to them as the Dynamic Duo and they continued to inspire us all. Later in 2012, Dave received the St Vincent de Paul Len Hebert Humanitarian award for 2012. He was so touched by the tribute that words escaped him as tears filled his eyes. Dave and Pat have been a living example of Christian love and action. Our love and prayers go out to Pat and the family with confidence that Dave is praying for us all. Well done good and faithful Vincentian servants.

Shelter President Kathy Morgan
and Nick Koutsouros, Shelter Manager, in
the newly remodeled shelter kitchen

Shelter Renovations

By Kathy Morgan

“Home is where you go to find solace from the ever changing chaos, to find love within the confines of a heartless world...”

— Kendal Rob

The shelter may only be a temporary place for the homeless to live. But St. Vincent de Paul believes in making it more than a shelter; they want to make it a home.

After more than a decade of service, the St. Anthony Family Shelter was in dire need of repair and upgrades. The Council decided to go ahead with a remodel in 2016. The improvements include all new flooring and paint, a larger kitchen that is not only American with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliant but also boasts an additional stove. New vents and an updated heating and air-conditioning system also are included in the project. Dennis Mihocko chose JB Steel Inc./Batzer Construction to lead the way. “They have been doing our construction for years, we





Looking through the old URS into the new section of the URS

Urban Rest Stop and Kitchen Remodel

By Dennis Mihocko

The Urban Rest Stop (URS) re-opened Monday Oct 24, 2016 with much anticipation and rave reviews. The completion of the URS expansion more than doubled the size of the shower and laundry facility run by President Lee Meyers and Vice Pres-

ident TC Meyers, the Tremendous Two-some. It was quite a feat to manage all of the construction and still remain open, except for a few weeks prior to the grand reopening. With several infrastructure items having to be updated, due to our continued increase in facility usage, delays to the start of the expansion construction were accepted grudgingly. When the foundation was finally poured and cement block walls started going up, we realized that the project was under way.

Plans for the expansion were drawn up in 2012 by Doug Snyder when the project was first deemed potentially necessary. In 2014, TC and Lee Meyers conceived a plan to change the existing 2 showers into three by remodeling that area and moving the washing machines into the lobby/reception room where the dryers were already. This unleashed its own set of challenges as any renovation project can. The plumbing demanded the most attention with

Shelter Renovations... continued

trust them and they do a good job,” says Mihocko, Facilities Manager. JB Steel has done lots of jobs for St. Vincent’s including the Urban Rest Stop and kitchen. “I wanted to have continuity and know that the job would be done right,” he says.

Doing it right cost the Council roughly \$120,000. But St. Vincent’s did get some big help. Rich Hansen acquired a \$50,000 grant from Sacred Heart Church. And the Oregon Community Foundation gave an unsolicited \$10,000. The family shelter also purchased new bunk beds for the facility which sleeps up to 44 people.

The timing of the remodel gave the community some pause. The shelter closed Dec. 5 and remained unoccupied during Christmas. Damien Mann, a reporter for the Mail Tribune, said he had inquiries about why the shelter chose that time to shut down.

This led to a newspaper story and coverage

(Continued on page 8)

(Continued on page 9)

Shelter Renovations... continued

by the three major TV stations in the valley. “There never is a good time to be down,” says Kathy Morgan, President of the shelter. “But our figures show that this is slowest time of the year.” That’s because a lot of guests go to stay with their families or friends during the holiday season. And the vision of making a shelter an inviting place remains. “Although we are basically an institution, our aim is not to give an institutional look,” says Al Zon, Vice President. “We are welcoming people whose lives are chaotic with the hope of giving them a place of peace.”



Above: Santa greeting some of our younger guests
Left: Christmas Dinner always draws a nice crowd to eat and celebrate with.

Ralph Browning, Thrift Store Conference President





URS and Kitchen... continued

concrete having to be cut to accommodate sewer line placement and additional water lines run for the washer relocation and replacement of shower enclosures. The remodeled URS re-opened late July of 2015 and it became apparent that the reception area was doubly crowded with space being taken by the 3 washing machines and clothes folding tables. This need for additional space helped re-launch the desire for a URS expansion. By December 2015 the idea started becoming a reformulated plan. After months of back and forth, deciding to add another 60 square feet of building, delays for various reasons, the expansion project sputtered to a greatly awaited start with the demolition of pavement and concrete where the expansion building is now.

Nadine, Wednesday kitchen coordinator, and Scott, Friday cook, in the kitchen with new stainless steel and new flooring.

There are now 4 regular showers, an ADA shower and restroom, a regular restroom, 6 washers, 12 dryers and room for clothes and towels to be folded. The second floor now has more storage space than before despite an expansive air and heating system which required additional exhaust and replacement air equipment to make up for all the air exhausted by 12 dryers and 7 exhaust fans.

Though reaching a capacity of 60 showers per day was deemed unlikely to happen in the near future, it has already occurred more than once since re-opening. To say that those using the new expanded facility, as well as those volunteers who operate it, are glad for the improvements would definitely be an

(Continued on page 10)

URS and Kitchen Remodel... continued

understatement. They all seem pleased that our community was so supportive of the needed changes, and they wonder how things were accomplished so well before. Bigger is not always better, but in this case, it definitely applies. Thank you to all those who helped make the expansion happen, especially Providence Health & Service, Oregon Community Foundation, Collins Foundation, Ben B Cheney Foundation, Catholic Charities, many individual donors, JB Steel Construction, Curtius Huntley Plumbing, Precision Electric, Metal Masters, Pacific Fire Protection, many other building trade companies, and Lee and TC Meyers. You all made a big difference in so many lives. God Bless You All Always.



The URS' Tremendous Twosome, T.C. and Lee Meyers

Holiday Seasons... continued

lenges, but we are ready to serve in any way we can. If you already volunteer, may God bless you extra in the New Year. If you have ever considered volunteering, please give us a call. We would love to give you a tour and have you join in the good work that we do for the poor and needy of Jackson County! May the New Year be filled with God's love and grace, and may you be blessed with health and happiness always.



El Molcajete Restaurant crew, here during the 2017 Volunteer Appreciation Luncheon, graciously fed the masses during the Holiday Season!



**Volunteers play “Heads or Tails”
during the Volunteer Christmas
Dinner**

**Right: Santa spreading cheer and
good will to all at the Christmas
Dinner.**

**Below: Volunteers gather
together for fun, food, and
friendship.**



Society of St. Vincent de Paul

2424 N Pacific Highway
Medford, OR 97501

Phone: 541-772-3828
E-mail: vincent@mind.net
Website: www.stvincentdepaulmedford.info



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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, 8am—1pm,
At the Urban Rest Stop

Dental - Monday, 8am—1pm,
At the Urban Rest Stop

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

Newsletter Editors/Design:

Dennis Mihocko, Kathy Begley, Rich Hansen, Socorro Holloway and Michael Morgan

