

# St. Vincent de Paul

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

A Quarterly Newsletter ■ Volume 5, Issue 1

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## Scheduled Events

- February 13: Volunteer Appreciation Dinner at SVDP
- Feb. 28: Collection at Sacred Heart Church for SVDP Social Services
- March 7: Social Services serves coffee and donuts at Sacred Heart Church
- April 17: Dinner/Auction



Editors: Patrick Wilson and Dianne Erickson

## La Clinica Opens Medical Outreach at St. Vincent de Paul

On December 3, La Clinica conducted its' first free monthly clinic at St Vincent de Paul. The purpose of these clinics is to improve the health of the homeless by providing quality medical and mental health services and referrals. The central focus of the service is to provide a compassionate, confidential and safe environment.

The clinic is the outcome of research done by student nurses from OHSU last year at SVDP. These nurses did extensive research on the health needs of the homeless by administering a comprehensive survey and analyzing the results. It was obvious in reviewing these results that there is a significant need for healthcare support for the homeless in our valley along with a need for the tools and knowledge that the homeless would find it difficult to otherwise acquire. It was



A La Clinica counselor screens a client and her children for medical services.

also determined that significant barriers stood in the way of receiving this kind of care; financial limitations, transportation challenges and distrust of providers being the most central. In addition, it was clear that the largest local audience with these needs could be found at SVDP, where a level of trust had been established with this audience, trust that would facilitate providing these services.

The services that are being offered include blood pressure screening, vision screening, diabetic screening, drug and alcohol screening and referrals, to include referrals for more intensive care at the La Clinica facility. No appointments are necessary and visitors are served on a first come-first serve basis. Staff available include RNs, mental health counselor, interns, intake volunteers and benefit specialists.

Use of the clinic was lighter than expected because it will take a while for word to get out. Initially informational posters were placed around our facility and now word is being sent to the other shelter managers in our area. Both adults and children attended the first clinic and a variety of medical problems were seen. Future clinics will be conducted the second Thursday of

*La Clinica, continued on page 7*

## LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT



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

As I write this, we are deep into the winter

months and that means there are a lot of living challenges present in our Valley for needy families and individuals. During 2009, we provided a level of services that were generally larger in scope than in previous years and given to people that, in many cases, were newly impacted by our soft economy. I, like you, hope and pray, that our economy will see some recovery during 2010, but suspect that whatever recovery comes our way it will be slow at best.

During 2009, our Volunteers donated over 85,000 hours throughout our nine serving Conferences and we continued to serve with all volunteers of about 230. We helped over 18,000 families and individuals with rent, utility and prescription cost relief in our Social Services and Home Visit Conferences. We consumed about \$450,000 in providing those social services, a figure that is almost twice the level for the same type of services during 2008. In addition, we provided; 2,800 sets of school supplies to needy children; free clothing and household items to over 7,900 people; 52,000 hot meals to men, women and children; 12,000 sacks of groceries (including fresh fruit), 3,400 bed nights to people without shelter; free Dental help to almost 200

*Letter, continued on page 6*

## Volunteer Profile

*Meet Jackie Cavanaugh*



In 1998, Jackie Cavanaugh was considering what to do for Lent and, as she says, "I thought to myself, why give something up again this year? Why not

instead give time for something special." So she decided to volunteer during Lent at Saint Vincent de Paul. Well, she got so involved in the experience that she never left.

"I've stayed through thick and thin, mostly because Karen McNeilly (now Store Manager) so inspired me. I watched her deal with so many different things and not become discouraged. She would remind me to just keep my eye on the ball... helping the poor... and just keep moving forward." Jackie worked in all areas of the Store and often just came in and asked where she was most needed.

"I did flowers for awhile, holiday donations and jewelry. On Saturdays I would do whatever I had to do... sort of a Jack of all Trades. The tasks are never ending." Today, Jackie is the Day Manager on Monday, does jewelry for the *Collectibles Sale* with the help of Julie Wiley, and on Saturdays still comes in and freelances, as she calls it. She says, "I'm amazed at the great things people donate and at our dedicated shoppers who keep coming back year-after-year."

She likes knowing how much Saint Vincent de Paul does to help meet the needs of the people in this valley, particularly those who are struggling. And she is proud of how so many volunteers are dedicated to making all this happen.

Jackie says, "Working at St Vincent is my way of making a direct response to the Lord's request to reach out to our fellow human beings." When I ask Jackie about her hobbies, she said, "My family is my hobby, I guess. I have four children and ten grandchildren. Three of our children and their families live right here in Medford so I spend lots of time with them."

Jackie grew up in Southern California, went to a Catholic girl's high school, attended college for a time in the Midwest and then worked for the airlines. "I loved traveling, particularly all over Europe, and pursued my interest in art for a time."

She met her husband, Ralph, briefly when she was going to high school with his sister and didn't meet him again for ten years. "At that next meeting all the bells and whistles went off and we've been married for 42 years."

Jackie continues to love working at SVDP. She likes collecting antique dishes and never fails to find lots of lovely things in the Store, particularly at the yearly *Collectible Sale*. "This is the greatest guilt free shopping there is, every penny helps someone somewhere." •

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## SVDP Hours

Office (772-3828) & Social Services:

Monday-Friday, 10 - 2

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

Dining Room: Mon-Sat, 11 - 1

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

La Clinica: 2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday's, 10:30 - 1:30

Dental Van: Feb. 19, Mar. 26, April 9

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



## Lennie's Coat

*If anyone... takes away your shirt, let him have your coat also. —Matthew 5:40*

Lennie was big. I first noticed his massive, lumpy presence when he came in from the drizzly, 30-degree weather dressed in a gray t-shirt and shorts. Amidst the bustle of our "Keep Christ in Christmas" sales, I had forgotten about him – until he reappeared at my cash register a half hour later. At the time I was working with Samantha, my fellow cashier, taking in money: cash, check, or credit card. That afternoon I was also handling vouchers, the green sheets allowing needy customers to purchase clothing at no cost. Vouchers were slow work.

Lenny's voucher had barely been used, and he should have had a good day shopping under normal circumstances. "But you just have to watch out for the X's," I warned. At St. Vincent de Paul Thrift Store an 'X' marked onto a price tag denotes high value, high yield merchandise, intended for cash sale. Any customer with a voucher is entitled to hefty amount clothing – as long as an item is not marked with an X.

"Nothing fits," Lennie said as he handed me a pair of oversized corduroy pants. "This one has an X," I replied as I took the offending item from Lennie's hands and set it aside. "Nothing fits," Lenny repeated. I pretended not to notice. Each passing minute saw the number of customers in the store growing, and Samantha was now working feverishly to serve a lengthening line of shoppers. With Lennie, however, the process was going to be slow indeed.

Taking items from his shopping cart, I rang up a yellow sleeveless sweatshirt and a pair of heavy socks. Then Lenny handed me a tent-like creation of brass zippers, heavy buttons and expanses of rough-surfaced brown leather. The huge coat with its \$25 price tag overflowed the counter. It was marked with an X. Hauling the offending item away I suggested to Lennie that he go back and find another coat – one without an X. "Nothing fits," he said. I acknowledged that in cold weather, our coat supply could get a little slim. But, there was always hope. "Come back tomorrow or the next day," I said, as outside the store window the rain continued to fall. "I need a coat," he replied.

I stared into his doleful saucer-like eyes and knew he had a point. "We are going to get you a coat." I said. "Stay put, I will be back in a second."

*Lennie's Coat, continued on page 5*

## The Naumes Family

The Naumes family and their Company, Naumes Inc., one of the primary pear growers and fruit distributors in our area, added to their generous support to our Council during 2009. The Naumes family have been, and continue to be, one of the more significant supporters of our Council's recent Capital Program, our recent September 27<sup>th</sup> fund raising event, and our ongoing service providing costs. There is no question, that if it wasn't for Mike, Laura, Sue, Sister Mary Pat, Cynthia, Joe and Sean Naumes and The Joseph and Frances Naumes Family Foundation, St. Vincent's ability to update and expand our physical plant and to meet the increasing demand for helping the needy in our area would be significantly reduced.

The added process for the Familys' helping St. Vincent's help the needy, is associated with their starting a program titled "Donate Fruit" during the last part of 2009. This program involves the company donating one pound of fresh fruit for every pound of fruit sold. The "Donate Fruit" program can be reached at [www.naumesfruitgifts.com](http://www.naumesfruitgifts.com). The donated fruit is distributed to charitable agencies, like St. Vincent's, as sales take place. So far, St. Vincent's has received, and given to the needy, in excess of 10,800 pounds of fresh fruit from the program. Providing good fresh fruit to needy families and individuals has always been a challenge for our Council, and the Naumes Inc. program helps us meet that challenge in ways that was not possible before. A heartfelt thanks goes out to this special family and company. •



## Serving Christmas Dinner

Many of us enjoy sharing our good fortune on Christmas day by helping to serve others during the St. Vincent de Paul traditional Christmas dinner. This is the one time that the less fortunate are shown to a table and waited on by our volunteer staff. We find out what they want from our menu, which included turkey, dressing, mashed potatoes, gravy, vegetables and dessert. We serve them their drinks and dessert when they're done with the main meal, and even give them a take home meal if they ask (there's almost always enough food).

Many of the younger volunteers handed out trays of pumpkin bread and cookies as well. Small candy canes were in supply for the children. Someone brought in sacks of toys for the back table, mostly stuffed animals, which were quickly gone.

The pantry was open and those needing warm clothes such as a jacket, heavy sweatshirt, knit cap and gloves, were given what they needed. We also had wrapped gifts for the children who attended. We always have many volunteers who come to help, many times a



whole family. It becomes a tradition to do something for others at Christmas. But we don't have enough volunteers for the rest of the year. Please consider volunteering more than one day. If you can't do it every week, we'll find something on a more limited basis or for special events. Call Linda Spencer (she's really nice and is in the office on Thursdays) and she will find a job you can do that would help others who are in need of your friendly face and caring hands. Linda's number is 541-865-3682, give her a call and see if you can help our all-volunteer organization.

A big THANK YOU to those of you who did help out this year! •



Photos:

Top of page: Guests at the Christmas dinner.

Right column: Second shift of volunteer food servers at the Christmas dinner.

Above: Servers, kitchen, and support volunteers at the Christmas dinner.

## Christmas Dinner / Auction

On December 5, the St. Vincent de Paul Annual Dinner / Auction was held in the dining room of SVDP. The proceeds of \$5826 went to the Ashland and Central Point Home Visits Conferences. Thank you to all who joined in the fun and purchased from the auction. Join us for the next dinner / auction on Saturday, April 17. •



*Lennie's Coat, continued from page 3*

Abandoning my cash register I dashed up a side aisle to the storage room prepared to discuss the situation with the back room staff. St. Vincent's was not going to fail Lenny. Not today. Not in this weather. Lennie would have a coat. There are few finer, more exacting people than the veteran sorters and pricers who prepare merchandise for sale at St. Vincent de Paul. Confronting them, I needed only to act with confidence, and strike quickly. I was offered a sweater, half dozen sweaters: all too small. We must do better, I declared: "I need a coat." There was a whole rack of coats – all were marked with X's. Someone suggested that my man should check the coats on the floor. "Nothing fits," I assured them. Time was passing. On the large security monitor overhead I could see Samantha frantically working her register in the face of a growing line.

"Look at this one," I said, plucking the rack the largest coat I could find from the rack. "It has a stain across the front!" Buttressing my case, I assured them that Dennis, the store manager, would approve this give-away if he were here. Absolutely. I would tell Dennis when I next saw him: Scout's honor. Without waiting for a reply, I pulled the heavy parka off the rack and charged back into the store where in front of my cash

register stood the man mountain. He had put on his sleeveless yellow vest that squeeze around his torso like an undersize glove.

Samantha broke away from here register to ask me to talk to a lady. I ignored her. I was on a mission. "Here Lennie," I said triumphantly holding up the pile of fluff and nylon. "Look what I found. Try it on for size." The effort that followed was painful to watch as Lenny sought to close the zipper across his large stomach. The sleeves stopped half way up his bulging forearms and the shoulder seams crowded his neck. "Larry," Samantha said in earnest, "you really need to talk to this lady." Standing across from Samantha was a small, white haired woman with a Visa card in hand. "It doesn't fit," I could hear Lennie saying. "Can I help you ma'am," I inquired. "I would like to pay for his leather coat," she said quietly. "His twenty-five dollar leather coat?" I said, dotting the *i*'s and crossing the *t*'s. "Yes."

Meanwhile, Lenny, unaware of what was transpiring, struggled to extricate himself from the too-small parka. I slotted the woman's card through the credit machine typing in the magic number 25. "I don't want anything else today," she said as I returned the card. Turning around, I picked up the heavy coat and shoved it back

across the counter. "You can have it, no problem," I told him. "No problem."

So it was that Lennie, otherwise unnamed, came into the St. Vincent de Paul store one day and departed with a magnificent brown leather coat. Christians believe that Love, in its truest sense, came into the world in a stable on Christmas day. As I watched Lennie trudge off under a dripping pewter sky, the unexpected generosity of a stranger convinced me that there is still a Christ in Christmas. •

*Written by Larry Mullaly  
November 27, 2009*

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## Can You Help?

**We need more people with Larry's determination in helping our homeless and those in need.**

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



## We Lose a Dear Friend

**Virgil Jenkins**, a long serving and dedicated volunteer at Saint Vincent de Paul, left us on January 3, 2010. Virgil was a dear and gentle man, a dedicated partner to his wife, Edwina, and a continuous source of support to his family and friends. When I asked people who knew him to provide input for this article, *Kathy Morgan*, a close friend of Virgil and Edwina, provided this piece. I think it captures the man and his lovely relationship to his partner, Edwina...

"Virgil was a man who loved his family and his home. He and Edwina built their log house over a ten year period. They cut the trees down (250 logs); debarking them using a hand tool, did the blueprints and built the entire structure with the help of their daughters and some friends. The house was definitely Virgil's pride and joy. Two weeks before he died, he was showing me how they constructed it. A ten year project that resulted in a dream home.

The main joy in his life was Edwina. When he knew he was dying, he looked at me and said: "I don't worry about myself, I worry about Edwina." He told me that he spotted her on the school bus when she was 18 and knew she was the woman for him. She had the cutest tush he ever saw.

They were married for almost sixty years and in that time, the home they built was open to all. They raised their grandson. He came to them as a young child. Their daughters lived there off and on throughout their adult lives. (One is living there now). They even had their granddaughter and great granddaughter live with them for a couple of years. Neither one of them ever had to face empty nest syndrome.

"Edwina is the person who led Virgil to St. Vincent de Paul. Edwina began volunteering in the early eighties when Lil Howe was just getting started. Although Virgil was working full time at the VA Dom,

he would take nights off to go with Edwina and supervise the homeless who were actually staying in Sacred Heart Church. He spent two years as President of St. Vincent de Paul. He also helped organize and head the renovation of the old diesel garage on the Harmon property into a homeless shelter.

My funniest story about Virgil happened five years ago. I took Edwina to the Lady of Guadeloupe Mass at the Expo. Some kids were smoking pot under the bleachers. Edwina noticed the smell and thought someone was barbecuing. The next day Virgil came to me with a very serious and angry look on his face. He asked: Were you smoking marijuana with my wife last night? Seems she came home with the fumes on her. Boy, did I laugh! But that was Virgil, always looking out for the love of his life.

I have never seen a man more devoted to his wife and family than Virgil Jenkins." •

*Letter, continued from page 2*

individuals, and gave free showers and laundry facilities to about 200 individuals. We could not have served at those levels without the continuing support from Church Parishioners, Charitable Foundations, Naumes Inc., Greater Medford Rotary, and

donations in kind from such sources as the Rogue Valley Manor, Red Lobster, Pizza Hut, Ray's Markets, Costco, Hubbards Hardware, Medford Fabrication, Curtis-Huntley Plumbing, Mr. Rooter and Bi-Mart, to name a few. In addition, there are many families and individuals that

provide very generous support on a regular basis.

Thank you very much to all of you and God Bless you.

Len Hebert



## Urban Rest Stop Makes Life More Bearable

Have you ever thought about what it's like to live in your car or on the street, particularly during the winter months? I know what it's like to live outdoors. Many of us did that for extended times in the military. Of course, most often we were fairly well clothed and fed even if it wasn't the most exciting food. But I'm talking about staying outside month after month with limited shelter of any kind. The part that is most difficult for me to consider is not being able to bathe or shower... how that feels and what it does to your personal sense of identity. How difficult is it to feel good, when you know how bad you smell and see the impact on those you pass on the street? This is the life of many of the people who come to us for assistance.

Saint Vincent de Paul now provides a measure of relief to those people who are living in the worst of conditions in our valley. We have an 'Urban Rest Stop' that provides shower and laundry facilities four mornings a week.

This idea came as a result of Dave Moosman's involvement in the Homeless Task Force for Jackson County. While working with that group, he learned about a facility in Seattle that had been created to provide these services for the

homeless. The idea appealed to him and he brought it to our Council for consideration. As luck would have it, we were also rebuilding our facility at that time and were able to create the shell for such a service. We later added space for a sizable waiting area. Today this facility is available to the homeless and transient in our area as well as individuals and families who have no capacity to do laundry.

The biggest surprise, according to Dave, has been how much the service is appreciated by those who use it, as well as the positive impact on their demeanor. "People just walk a little taller after they've taken a good shower and have clean clothes," says Dave. "An added feature of running a service like this is the fact that volunteers have a better opportunity to get to know the people who use the facility. You learn a little something about what brought them to this point in life and how they think about things. Many of our volunteers don't usually have that chance."

While this facility cost very little to operate and relies heavily on the six to eight volunteers who staff it, it certainly is returning sizable human dividends. •

*La Clinica, continued from page 1*



each month from 10:30 to 1:30 in our Shelter. La Clinica also hopes to provide tetanus, pneumonia and, possibly, influenza vaccinations in the future.

David Dismuke, Community Outreach Coordinator for La Clinica commented, "I was impressed by how much time and effort the OHSU student nurses and the SVSP staff put into planning the first clinic. It was incredible to see the melding of the minds and resources and greatly appreciated at La Clinica." •

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## Full Color Newsletter

See the newsletter in full color at [www.stvincentdepaul.info](http://www.stvincentdepaul.info).

Email Dianne at [de137@q.com](mailto:de137@q.com) to receive the newsletter as a .pdf file in your email instead of being sent snail mail. Please put "SVDP newsletter" in the email subject line. You'll receive it weeks before it arrives by mail. •

# Reaching Out to Bring Joy and Support to Others

## Thanksgiving Day –

The Presbyterian Church of Central Point provided a traditional Thanksgiving day dinner to over 400 guests.

## Grocery Giveaway –

Charlie and Betty Burgess and their volunteers in the pantry provided 861 bags of groceries to 646 households in December.

## Christmas Tree Sales –

The Knights of Columbus sold over 270 Christmas trees on the SVDP lot and provided 50% of their revenue, \$1470, to St. Vincent de Paul. Thanks to everyone who purchased a tree.



Marsha Phillips, who volunteers in the office, serves Christmas dinner. (See page 4)

## Christmas Store Sales –

The Thrift Store staff worked for several weeks to prepare Christmas items for sale. Their efforts resulted in \$42,000 on Christmas items alone from mid-October through Dec 31. Low cost gifts and festive decorations went to many valley customers to enjoy for the holiday season.

## Holiday Haircuts –

Several volunteers from local beauty parlors continue to provide monthly haircuts to those desiring them.

A big THANK YOU to all the volunteers who made these events happen! •

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