

BOUNTY of DONATIONS

Give Clients a Fresh Start

Students attending 11 Catholic elementary and high schools in Alameda and Contra Costa counties collected four months worth of soap, shampoo, lotions, and other personal hygiene items for clients of the Champion Guidance and Visitation centers in Oakland.

The donations were collected as part of the Fresh Start program, which aimed to provide men and women with their own “baggie” of travel-size personal hygiene products (such as the kind you get at hotels) to use at one of the St. Vincent de Paul centers and then take with them for later.

“The outpouring of support and the volume of the donations was truly awe-inspiring,” says Volunteer Manager Rebecca Jewell, who directed the project.

In addition to collecting donations, many students created cards, wrote notes, or copied Bible verses and included these words of encouragement in the bags of supplies. Most schools also donated large bottles of lotion, shampoo, and the like, many of which were included in holiday packages for needy families.



Students help pack donations for clients of the Champion Guidance and Visitation Centers in Oakland.

Participating schools included: Salesian High School, Our Lady of Grace, School of the Madeleine, St. Leander, St. Bede, St. Edward, St. Joseph, St. David of Wales, St. Elizabeth, and a CCD group from St. Albert in Alameda.

The outpouring of support and the volume of the donations was truly awe-inspiring

How to Reach Us

District Council Office: (510) 638-7600

Philip Arca, Executive Director
(510) 636-4246 • parca@svdp-alameda.org

Inga Lewis, Executive Assistant to E.D.
(510) 636-4247 • ilewis@svdp-alameda.org

Lu Cuevas, Director of Conferences/Vincentian Life
(510) 568-6123 • lcuevas@svdp-alameda.org

Kelli Zenn, Director of Communications
(510) 636-4242 • kzenn@svdp-alameda.org

Christine Comella, Director of Development
ccomella@svdp-alameda.org

Rebecca Jewell, Volunteer Manager
ccomella@svdp-alameda.org

Food Donations: Jerry Ratti (510) 636-4250

Auto Donations: Charles McGlothen (510) 636-4245

Dining Room: Ron Smith (510) 451-7676

Visitation Center: Sr. Marion Bill (510) 444-3790

Men's Center: Stephen Krank (510) 444-0269

General Info: info@svdp-alameda.org

Website: www.svdp-alameda.org

THE VINCENTIAN QUARTERLY

News from the St. Vincent de Paul of Alameda County

VOL. XXVIII NO. 1 • Winter 2005

www.svdp-alameda.org

GIVING TIME and Getting Much More in Return



Rich Nivens' “career” as a Society of St. Vincent de Paul volunteer began in 1988, when he signed up to oversee Bundle Sunday at St. Teresa's Parish in Oakland. Over the years, his work has extended far beyond his local conference to include the Free Dining Room and, most especially, the Champion Men's Center, whose work and mission he has taken to heart. And although

many staff members and other volunteers see Nivens as something of a guardian angel, the Oakland native makes it clear that he gets just as much as he gives through his many volunteer efforts.

“I get a real spiritual lift by working at the men's center and the dining room,” says Nivens. “I've met such marvelous people as they go through some difficult times in their lives,” he adds. “I can't think of anything I'd rather do than what I do now.”

Since his retirement in 1999, Nivens has steadily increased his involvement in St. Vincent de Paul activities. He began working on the men's center project when it was “just an idea,” says manager Steve Krank, who describes Nivens as the center's greatest friend and advocate.

“What sets Rich apart is his unwavering support for what we're doing,” says Krank. He notes that as the men's center has added new services, such as the Champion Workforce program, which aims to provide clients with workforce

training and employment opportunities, Nivens has provided both practical and moral support. Case in point: In an effort to jumpstart the Workforce program Nivens enlisted the assistance of others in the St. Teresa conference and purchased a commercial steam carpet cleaning machine. He even arranged to have someone come to the Men's Center and train the Workforce participants in how to use the equipment.

Nivens, for his part, describes the Champion Workforce as an “important next step” for the men's center. Through his work with the St. Vincent de Paul Society, he adds, he has come to realize that emergency services are vital, but they're not enough. “We need housing. We need jobs,” says Nivens, “if we're going to break the cycle so many people find themselves in.”

A big part of breaking the cycle is giving clients hope and encouragement, says Krank, noting that Nivens has become a role model in this important area. “Rich really is big on giving recognition,” says Krank. Whether it's recognizing recent graduates of The Bread Project or acknowledging individual successes of clients, “Rich has developed very personal relationships with the clients,” says Krank. “For him, it's about giving support one-on-one.”

Reflecting on the work of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul and his nearly 20 years with the organization, Nivens has one wish: that more people could witness first-hand the work the organization is doing to help those in need throughout Alameda County.

“Too many people don't really know the bigger picture,” says Nivens, “We need to help people to understand what giving and participating in a charitable organization really is.”

Breakfast to Benefit Society of St. Vincent de Paul

Friends of the St. Vincent de Paul Society of Alameda County are invited to attend a fundraising breakfast in the spring. Invitations will be mailed out soon for this inaugural event, during which attendees will have the opportunity to meet a soon-to-be-announced celebrity guest host and learn about how contributions of cash, securities, or other appreciated assets can help further the works of the St. Vincent de Paul Society. For more information about the Friends of St. Vincent breakfast or to obtain information about the tax advantages of charitable giving, contact Executive Director Philip Arca at parca@svdp-alameda.org or (510) 636-4246.

St. Vincent de Paul stores

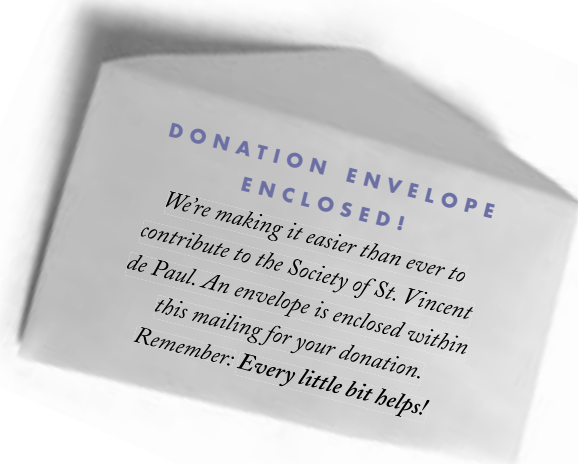
Alameda
2315 Lincoln Ave.
(510) 865-1109
Manager: Leah

Fremont
3777 Decoto Road
(510) 792-3711
Manager: Beth

Livermore
1817 W. 2nd St.
(925) 455-1104
Manager: Margaret

Oakland (East)
9235 San Leandro St.
(510) 636-4252
Manager: Anastacia

Oakland (Downtown)
2272 San Pablo Ave
(510) 834-4647
Manager: Aida





president's message

by Vaughn Donahue, President

As we move into 2005, New Year's resolutions are on the minds of many. These resolutions include thoughts of hope, and prayers for Christ's peace and guidance. Maybe one of your resolutions is to become more involved in the community or donate to a charitable organization. If so, there are many opportunities within the Society for you to "help us help others."

If you would like to donate your time or talent in 2005, please consider joining one of our many committees. Committees range from working with the staff at the Free Dining Room, distributing food at our Food Locker, or interacting with the men and women at our Champion Guidance and Visitation Centers.

In this Quarterly you will find the Annual Report for 2004. As you review the report, you will learn more about the magnitude of our work, and perhaps identify programs or projects that you can join and help us continue to provide needed services in our community.

If you would like to learn more about our activities, please call Lu Cuevas, Director of Conferences and Vincentian Life at (510) 568-6123. She will be happy to take you on a guided tour of our downtown facilities. To discuss other ways in which you can help, contact Philip Arca, Executive Director at (510) 636-4246.

Please keep the Society in your prayers, and may God continue to bless us all this year.

VOLUNTEERS Are the Life-Blood of St. Vincent de Paul Society

Whatever your interests, experience, and availability, the St. Vincent de Paul Society of Alameda County has a volunteer opportunity for you. As we settle in to 2005, that's the message Volunteer Manager Rebecca Jewell wants to send to individuals throughout the county interested in supporting the many vital services the Society provides to needy men, women, and children.

"An organization like ours has such diverse needs that we can utilize the skills of everyone," says Jewell. "And everyone can do what they love and are good at."

In addition to one-time and ongoing volunteer opportunities at the Free Dining Room, and the Visitation and Champion Guidance centers, there are a wide-variety of short- and long-term projects that would benefit from volunteer support. Individual opportunities include: researching grants and conducting property assessments, teaching computer literacy, or working on the District Council's Web site. Groups are also welcome to sign up for a single-day or ongoing projects.

Besides providing much-needed services, volunteers save the District Council tens of thousands of dollars each year in money that would otherwise be spent on staff positions. In 2004 alone, volunteers donated roughly 47,000 hours of their time.

"You can write a business plan or read a book to a young child. You can fold clothes or serve a meal," says Jewell. The opportunities are limitless – and the need is great.

For more information about volunteering with the Society of St. Vincent de Paul of Alameda County, visit our Web site, <http://www.svdp-alameda.org/Volunteer.htm>, call (510) 636-4253, or email us volunteer@svdp-alameda.org.

BOARD of TRUSTEES

- | | |
|---|--|
| Vaughn Donahue, President
<i>St. Leander, San Leandro</i> | Peggy Doherty
<i>St. Basil the Great, Vallejo</i> |
| Gary Flinders, 1st Vice President
<i>Assumption, Oakland</i> | Ed Frakes
<i>Corpus Christi, Fremont</i> |
| Frank Whitman, 2nd Vice President
<i>St. Lawrence O'Toole, Oakland</i> | Bill Giammona
<i>Transfiguration, Castro Valley</i> |
| Bernie Murray, Secretary
<i>St. Albert, Alameda</i> | Richard Nivens
<i>St. Theresa, Oakland</i> |
| Ross Cadenasso, Treasurer
<i>Corpus Christi, Piedmont</i> | Dave Nolan
<i>Oakland Free Dining Room</i> |
| Don Boufford
<i>St. Stephen, Walnut Creek</i> | Richard Oakman
<i>St. Joachim, Hayward</i> |
| Nelson DeBasa
<i>St. Joseph Basilica, Alameda</i> | Donna Watson
<i>St. Albert, Alameda</i> |



THE VINCENTIAN QUARTERLY

The Vincentian Quarterly is published four times a year by The Society of St. Vincent de Paul of Alameda County. We are a nonprofit charitable organization dedicated to helping the hungry, the needy and others less fortunate than ourselves. We do this by helping them with food, temporary lodging, clothing, furniture and providing employment in our facilities, to make their lives a little easier. We carefully protect the dignity of every person we encounter through our work. Our funding comes from donations of used clothing, and household goods, furniture, food and financial contributions.



Corpus Christi Concert Benefits VISITATION CENTER

Nearly 100 people enjoyed an evening of music and community in November to benefit the Visitation Center's services to needy women and children. Janét Sullivan-Whitaker, music ministry director at Corpus Christi Church in Piedmont, was the featured performer and Mistress of Ceremony for the first-ever event.

The concert and an accompanying raffle raised nearly \$1900 for the Visitation Center, which provides clothing and infant supplies as well as a warm shower, laundry facilities, and a wide-variety of referral services to an average of 60 women and their children each day.

Although the vast majority of Visitation Center funding comes from the District Council, as the number of clients has grown, so, too, has the need to expand funding sources. "Every year the number of women served has grown," says Sister Marion Bill, manager of the daytime drop-in center, noting that the center had approximately 25,000 visits during the fiscal year that ended September 30 -- or roughly 10,000 more than two years ago.

Lori Arnold, a member of the Visitation Center committee and of the Corpus Christi conference, spearheaded the event, which also featured a personal testimony from Lillie Haskins, one of the many women served by the Center.

Oakland's Homeless Get Their DAY in COURT

Alameda County's first "Homeless Court" was held in October at the Champion Guidance Center, providing 40 clients the opportunity to clear old tickets and warrants and take an important step towards getting their lives back on track.

This innovative program originated more than a decade ago in San Diego and is being implemented in Alameda County under the direction of Judge Gordon Baranco, with the help of the St. Vincent de Paul Society, the Berkeley Food and Housing Project, and others.



A second session of "Homeless Court" was held in December and a third session is scheduled for February 15. Before appearing in court, participants work with staff from participating provider organizations and a public defender to evaluate their case and to review their efforts to turn their lives around. This information, along with a letter of support from staff, is presented to the judge during the court session.

"The idea is that it's good for the county and good for the people it serves," says Men's Center Manager Steve Krank, who is overseeing the council's role in the project. Too often, says Krank, men get caught in a vicious cycle when they're out on the street. Outstanding warrants for minor offenses, like jaywalking or carrying an open container, can be baggage that stands in the way of their efforts to start over.

This all-voluntary program is successfully breaking the cycle of hopelessness and giving many Men's Center clients a true second lease on life.



Dining Room Says Good-Bye to Sr. Kathleen

Sr. Kathleen Powers, longtime volunteer coordinator for the Free Dining Room, was reassigned in December after close to two years of service. The staff thanks her for her commitment and support and extends its best wishes as she assumes her new position in Alaska.

Shawna Vila, an administrative assistant with the Free Dining room, has been promoted to volunteer coordinator.

In other Dining Room news, Felicia Bock recently donated a much-needed ice machine to the facility. Her generosity will be greatly appreciated throughout the year.