

THE SOCIETY OF ST. VINCENT DE PAUL • ST. TIMOTHY CONFERENCE

A Servant's ♥ Heart

CELEBRATING SERVICE, COMPASSION & GOD'S LOVE • MARCH 2023



SVdP Celebrates 20 Years!

HUMBLE BEGINNINGS

In spring of 2003, Father Gerald Weymes called upon his congregation to establish a St. Vincent de Paul (SVdP) conference at St. Timothy; to share his vision of spreading God's mercy toward neighbors in need. The first charter meeting convened on April 12, 2003 with Mary Carter presiding. Today, two of our founding members still serve.

FOOD PANTRY

A shed was designated for a SVdP food pantry on church property and opened its doors in November of 2003, with only three people showing up for food. Today, we serve over 100 families each month!

HELPLINE/CASE MANAGEMENT

The SVdP helpline (800-873-0613) was established to handle requests for food and financial assistance. Home visits, a hallmark of SVdP, offer financial support, friendship and prayers. Today, we serve Centreville, Chantilly, Clifton, and parts of Fairfax and Herndon. SVdP also aids communities in Arizona, West Virginia, and the West Indies.

KEY ACCOMPLISHMENTS 2003-2023

Computerized database system and document storage, incorporation as a 501(c)(3), annual Friends of the Poor Walk, Thanksgiving and Christmas baskets, food pantry operations even throughout Covid, critical support of those seniors displaced by the Forest Glen Community fire, dual English/Spanish helpline, cost-free newsletter and a first-time county food grant. Today, we continue to serve our neighbors as Christ has called.

"St. Vincent de Paul Society has been a great blessing. They are demonstrating the love and mercy of Christ in action. They have brought joy and comfort when we needed it the most. They were there for my family when we needed it the most. I'm so grateful for the support. It's a critical ministry touching hearts and lives in the name of God. We will be forever grateful." —A Neighbor



"Make it a practice to judge persons and things **in the most favorable light at all times and under all circumstances.**"

—St. Vincent de Paul



If you need help:
1-800-873-0613

General SVDP information:
Sandy svdp.st.timz@gmail.com
Food Pantry Information:
Peggy proberts8@cox.net
To Volunteer:
Vivienne cammras@gmail.com



Please use this QR-Code to donate to SVdP at St. Timothy's

Living in Chaos—A Story of Hope

Aditi contacted SVdP for help with a storage bill. She was homeless, as a result of domestic violence, and worried that the storage company might take possession of her belongings, for falling behind in payments. Several SVdP members met with her to offer help.

When we met Aditi, she was attractive and neatly dressed; yet there was a deep weariness about her. She was born and raised in India and had come to the U.S. as a teen; later marrying an abusive husband. After reporting the abuse, she did not find any support in the court system, as hoped for. Now divorced, she was living in a hotel with her son and mother, without a car or a steady job. Aditi was estranged from her family, for her conversion to Christianity, and yet her faith prevailed. We talked about her financial situation and their plans to move to Florida. Surprisingly, Aditi was heavily engaged in advocacy efforts for legislation, in support of victims of domestic violence, in spite of her own struggles. She had firmly embraced the inseparable roles of living on the edge and fighting for justice;



Photo by Anderson Rian on Unsplash

demonstrating great hope in the midst of chaos. We saw her unique situation as another compelling reason to help and parted with a promise to figure out how we could help. After careful deliberation, our SVdP conference spearheaded a joint effort with other SVdP conferences. The pooling of resources among various SVdP conferences is referred to as bundling, and has become a common practice among conferences in close proximity to each other. By bundling, we were

able to cover all of Aditi's financial needs, and a few private donations helped get them on their way to Florida. "Your faithful donations blessed us to depart Virginia for Florida to begin a new chapter away from our abuser," Aditi shared.

In Florida, Aditi connected with a local SVdP to get started. "We have witnessed so many provisions, from a believer at a rental car discounting our rental vehicle, to a Hindu hotel owner pardoning our hotel bill," shared Aditi. Then her mother became gravely ill. "During my mother's sudden illness, we witnessed Jesus' provisions directly towards my mother in numerous ways," said Aditi. A Hindu person led them to a hospital which opened doors to a hospice center and a funeral home. All expenses were graciously pardoned, due to their circumstances. "All this took place as if Jesus had declared that He was directly taking care of my mother, and my son, and I could grieve, while celebrating her life peacefully," said Aditi. Then a little miracle occurred. Her mother's ashes were transported to India, "to bring her back to her home and her family."

Post-Pandemic Woes

One would think that now that the pandemic has "passed," families would be experiencing less need of financial assistance. Unfortunately, this is not the case. The St. Vincent de Paul helpline at St. Timothy's, and other helplines across the diocese, are receiving an even higher volume of calls for assistance, especially for rent, food and utilities. The SVdP helpline receives an average of 100 calls per month. Inflation has impacted us all, but the amount owed by families for rent, has, in many cases, doubled, tripled or more.

This perfect storm was created by several factors: (1) during the pandemic, many people faced the loss of a job, or a loss of hours, causing severe hardships with paying rent; (2) the process of evictions was temporarily halted but later compounded; and (3) although government assistance was available, many landlords did not avail themselves of this help. Fast forward to today, and we are now seeing families who are struggling with tens of thousands in back rent with fewer resources in the community to help. Added to this, the moratorium on evictions was lifted in 2021 and as of December 2022, there were 510 monthly eviction filings in Fairfax County (source: www.lscstracker.org/virginia/fairfax). Given this bleak situation, we are appealing to you for help, as we continue to help others get back on their feet.



A very special "Thank You" to our generous parishioners for supporting the SVdP Holiday Food Drive! We appreciate all the blue bags that were filled and returned, making our pantry neighbors' holidays a little more special!

First-Time Food Grant Recipient

Our SVdP food pantry just received a grant through the Fairfax County Food Access Grant Program for \$25,000! This program is intended to aid the community in recovering from the Covid-19 pandemic and help to eliminate food insecurity in our communities. SVdP spent \$60,387 in 2022 for pantry items, in addition to the donations received from the box in the church. The grant funds will support our pantry to purchase food, with a provision to reflect cultural, religious, and situational needs. As a recipient, we also benefit from networking with other local food providers; sharing lessons learned and innovative ways to better serve our neighbors.



On the Road to Recovery



Photo by Wesley Tingey on Unsplash

Perhaps you know someone who is battling an addiction to drugs or alcohol and pray for their recovery. SVdP engages with individuals on this journey, who are involved in treatment and need a supportive living environment to sustain their recovery. Oxford Houses, self-help recovery housing, meet this pressing need and research shows that they are working. One study at De Paul University found an 87% recovery rate among 897 residents in 219 Oxford Houses around the country. There are 160 Oxford Houses in Virginia, with an average rent of \$135 per week; all managed by Debbie Robinson, Senior Outreach Coordinator. Robinson attended a recent SVdP meeting to share her

own recovery story in an Oxford House from 2007-09. SVdP helps individuals in recovery to manage temporary setbacks, on a person-to-person basis. One Oxford House resident's car broke down and the \$900 repair bill left him \$300 short in rent, which we covered. Another woman, recovering from a 5-year bout with alcoholism after her husband left, was helped with her initial security deposit. We have witnessed their strong determination to put their lives back together and have been drawn into God's plan. We share in the joy of a mother in recovery, who is finally able to take care of her two children again!

OXFORD HOUSE FACTS

Avg. Age of Residents	38.1 yrs.
Avg. Length of Stay	9.5 mo.
Residents Working	83.2%
Avg. Monthly Earnings	\$2,145
Prior Homelessness	71.1%
Prior Jail	85.2%
Avg. Jail Time	7 mo.
Never Married	58.9%
Veterans	12%

Resident profile as of Sept. 30, 2021, based on OHI surveys of 10,209 residents in 18 states, plus house reports in 27 states.



St. Clare Provides Comfort

Just in time for advent and the season of giving, the Knights of Columbus at St. Clare of Assisi Catholic Church in Clifton, donated thirty brand new children's coats for SVdP to distribute to families over the holidays. The colorful coats from Macy's came with hoods and an extra cap! Since 2016, the Knights of St. Clare have provided SVdP with monetary donations from their Thanksgiving funds. Since 2020, they have been donating new coats. SVdP caseworkers have enjoyed delivering these warm coats to children each year and delighting their parents, who are so grateful! We look forward to continuing this wonderful mission with the Knights of St. Clare.

St. Vincent de Paul Food Pantry Partners with Scouts



The boy and girl scout groups of St. Timothy Parish have a tradition of conducting their own "Scouting for Food" food drive to help stock the St. Vincent de Paul Food Pantry in preparation for the high demand over the holiday months of November and December. Glennys Warsocki, Committee Chair for Troop 7369, reported that in November, Boy Scout Troop 7369 and Cub Scout Pack 146 collected a whopping 6,626 pounds of food. Pantry volunteers were very happy to have OVER 3 TONS of food added to the pantry in time for the holidays!

Peggy Roberts, pantry manager, added that the scouts drop off bags in their neighborhoods and then pick up food on Saturday morning,

the weekend before the pantry distribution. The scouts sort the food and help stock the pantry shelves. The boy scouts collected enough food for the Pantry to last for three months. Their efforts helped us serve a total of 419 families in November and December!

The American Heritage Girls Troop VA1148 also donated homemade cookies in December, while the Challenge Girls Club donated candy canes and handmade Christmas notes for our neighbors in December. They also helped with packing the holiday bags.

Our sincere thanks to everyone! It couldn't happen without this level of support! The Food Pantry is open the third Saturday of each month from 9-11 am in the bus barn area.

HOW WE HELPED OUR NEIGHBORS

Aug. 2022 through Jan 2023

Utility Bills	\$ 47,281
Rent/Mortgage	\$ 40,416
Food Assistance	\$ 38,147
Car Payment/Repair	\$ 7,441
Other SVdP Support	\$ 7,570
TOTAL	\$ 140,854



FOOD PANTRY

Number of Families Helped

August '22	135
September '22	136
October '22	115
November '22	203
December '22	216
January '23	117

For a list of needed pantry items to donate, see the bulletin.

A Beautiful Sign



Thanks to an anonymous donor, we have a brand new sign for the Food Pantry!



FIGHT HUNGER WITH US!

St. Timothy Catholic Church Food Pantry has been selected to receive \$1 from every Bloomin' 4 Good bouquet sold during the month of March 2023 located at: Giant Food, 14125 Saint Germain Drive, Centreville VA

