

# Vincentian Charities

Newsletter and Chronicle of Activities  
DIOCESAN COUNCIL--SOCIETY OF ST. VINCENT de PAUL  
*Serving God's Poor in this Community Since 1865*

Diocese of Baton Rouge, Louisiana

Summer Edition

Vol. XIX, No. II



## Uniforms for Kids

Uniforms for Kids is an effort that brings smiles to the faces of thousands of needy children. This year, our uniform efforts are focusing on that brief, precious moment when we hand a set of uniforms to a needy child. The look on each little face is priceless. Their expressions are a combination of gratitude and happiness, but also one of relief. A new uniform means they can begin school with their heads held high, without fear of ridicule and embarrassment. With each uniform we distribute, we are removing another obstacle from the life of a needy child.

That's why St. Vincent de Paul, WAFB, Kean's the Cleaner, Chase, and Moniotte Investments have come together: to save the self-esteem of thousands of needy kids. We are working hard to break the cycle of poverty – one child at a time. Over 350 years ago, St. Vincent de Paul recognized that people working together could make a difference, and that's what it's going to take for us to be successful again this year. Our goal is to help over 12,000 kids by distributing over 24,000 uniforms. With the current economy, we know that's going to be a real challenge.



The demand for uniforms is up, and so are the costs. Everything from shipping to warehousing to processing the uniforms is costing us more money this year. Uniform costs have increased from around \$10.00 to approximately \$12.00 per uniform. Of course, these are high quality uniforms made by name brand manufacturers, clothing that we know will hold up to the wear and tear of active children. We purchase directly from the manufacturer, so we know we are getting top quality merchandise. In addition to the new uniforms we purchase, we also receive thousands of gently used donated uniforms that are then cleaned by Kean's the Cleaner. This also plays a critical role in helping us to be successful in our efforts.

The fact that donations to St. Vincent de Paul are down across the board doesn't change the fact that there is still a critical need for school uniforms. That's why we need your help more than ever. Our goal for this year's campaign is \$223,200. We are confident that we will be



able to raise these dollars in the same way we help needy children – one at a time. Every dollar is critical to the success of this important endeavor. You can make your gift to Uniforms for Kids by sending your contribution to: Uniforms for Kids, P. O. Box 127, Baton Rouge, LA 70821.

## Summer 2010

Through June of 2010, our Dining Room has already served 107,804 meals. This is the highest mid-year meal count we have ever seen, surpassing 2009's all-time mid-year high of 103,309 meals. Our Dining Room statistics are just one indication of the demand we are seeing at all our programs. Our pharmacy continues to provide thousands of life-sustaining prescription medications, filling critical gaps in our local healthcare system. Our shelter and housing facilities are constantly full, and we are seeing a lot of first-time homeless cases. Our Uniforms for Kids effort is also facing a challenging year with so many children needing our help. The number of requests for our Conferences to make home visits is up as well. Everywhere you turn in our organization, there is a growing demand for critical services.



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## St. Vincent and St. Louise – True Beacons of Light



2010 marks the 350<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the deaths of St. Vincent de Paul and St. Louise de Marillac. St. Vincent de Paul, our patron saint, is revered throughout the world for his work with the needy. He answered God's call to become a priest and then spent the rest of his life in dedicated service to God's poor. When you look at what St. Vincent de Paul accomplished in Paris, France, so long ago, you begin to realize what a difference one person can make

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### In this Summer Issue:

- A Summer Recipe from Taste & See
- Prayer Honoring St. Vincent & St. Louise

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As you know, the oil spill crisis in the Gulf is impacting an economy that was already struggling. And so often, it's blue collar and hourly workers – people who are barely making it from one paycheck to the next – that are hit the hardest. For instance, the oil spill will impact the seafood industry, from the fishermen all the way down to the people who peel the shrimp and shuck the oysters; oil rig workers; machinists that manufacture valves; even the people who mop the floors in these places will be impacted. But even before the disaster happened in the Gulf, we were seeing an increase in demand for basic necessities. As the number of blue collar jobs has decreased, the number of people seeking our services has increased. Many of the people who are coming to us have never had to ask for help before. As time goes on, we expect to break a number of service records in our efforts to meet the growing demand.



Our St. Vincent de Paul group has been around for 145 years, and during those years, we have seen a lot of ups and downs. We responded to critical needs during the Great Depression, and we are doing that now during the current recession. We were around before homes had electricity, and we now receive thousands of calls each year for help with utility bills. Times are tough right now, but, together, our St. Vincent de Paul family will weather the storm. We ask all our supporters to continue to pray for us, to help financially as you are able, and volunteer when you can. Be assured that you are making a difference.

## **True Beacons of Light Continued from page 1**

in the lives of others. He recognized the desperate poverty of his time, but he knew that there was little he could do alone. With God's help, he encouraged others to join in his ministry. He faced struggles in his life, as we all do, and like most of us, he was far from perfect. In fact, history tells us that St. Vincent de Paul referred to himself as a grump. It was only through constant prayer that he was able to overcome that personality flaw. It was God that gave him the strength to accomplish his mission of helping the needy.

St. Vincent de Paul's vision inspired St. Louise de Marillac to get involved with his ministries, so much so that when her husband passed away, she started the Daughters of Charity. Together, St. Vincent de Paul and St. Louise de Marillac changed the world they lived in. If you think your life is sometimes difficult, think about what St. Vincent and St. Louise accomplished without electricity, phones, internet, or modern transportation. They did everything the old fashioned way, with a lot of hard work and long hours. But the sweat equity they put into their work paid huge rewards in human terms.

They both lived long lives that were filled with helping others. Most people don't realize that St. Vincent de Paul was an excellent fund-raiser. He had a gift for encouraging people to see his vision and join in his work. Long before television, he printed a regular news report that was distributed throughout France. This report contained

information about what he was doing and the desperate plight of the needy.

At the Society, that's still a vital part of our mission – getting the word out to others. Poverty is not a pleasant sight, and most of us do not see it up close and personal. But we know it exists all around us, and we want to do what we can to help. When it comes to helping the poor and homeless, we could have no better models than St. Vincent and St. Louise.

Their message makes as much sense today as it did centuries ago. Don't wait for others to address the problems of poverty. The need is still there, and the impact we can make is still remarkable. One person *can* make a difference, and through our actions, we can inspire others to share our vision and join in our efforts.

The prayer below commemorates the 350<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the deaths of St. Vincent and St. Louise. We encourage you to cut this out and join us in saying this prayer for the poor. We also encourage you to watch our Beacons of Light television program, which has a focus on this 350<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Join Sister Joan LaPlace, Deacon Jim Wax, and other guests as they share information about these two saints who served as models of faith in action.

You'll be informed and entertained by the guests and their message. Bishop Robert Muench and several other community leaders will give you a glimpse into how their spiritual lives have been strengthened by following the example of St. Vincent and St. Louise. Come join us on Catholic Life Television Cox Cable 15. Be sure to tune in and catch our next episode. Our weekly schedule is Sunday at 3:00 p.m., Monday at 7:00 p.m., Tuesday at 1:00 p.m., Wednesday at 9:00 p.m. and Saturday at 8:00 p.m.

### **New Prayer for the Jubilee Year honoring the 350th anniversary of the deaths of St. Vincent de Paul and St. Louise de Marillac** <http://famvin.org/anniversary/en/reflection/prayers/prayer>

Lord God Almighty, Father of the poor, you give us the grace to celebrate this year the 350th anniversary of the death of St. Vincent and St. Louise. We thank you for this immense grace. Through their intercession grant that we allow ourselves to be transformed more fully by the Spirit you gave them. May the Spirit of Charity so fill our hearts and minds that our love for our brothers and sisters, who are marginalized and rejected by society, be gentle, attentive, compassionate, pro-active and inventive unto infinity.

Make us rediscover the audacity of Vincent and Louise, the diligence and sweetness of an ever-renewed love of the poor that may help them change their lives in earnest. Help us make our faith strong and humble in a world that seems so far away from you yet that thirsts so much for you. Make us become a sign of hope for many, as were Vincent and Louise, companions in life.

Grant that we do not back down in the face of difficulties but be ready to dirty our hands in favor of the poor, our masters. Help us learn from them to become your true sons and daughters, worthy heirs of the charisma you have entrusted to Vincent and Louise for the good of the Church and of all humanity. May this jubilee year be for our Vincentian Family a year of grace and conversion, and for those we love a year of many blessings. Amen

# Store Challenges

We are working harder than ever at our St. Vincent de Paul thrift stores. The demand for our services – clothing, furniture and household items – is at an all time high. As most of you know, needy families can get those items free of charge at our stores through a voucher program in collaboration with our St. Vincent de Paul Conferences. Conference members actually go out and make home visits to verify that there is a legitimate need for these items. Then, through a referral process, they send the family to our thrift stores where they are able to get the items they need.

Throughout our country, retailers are struggling, and we are, too. Many of the people that were once paying customers at our stores are now clients who are seeking assistance. To make matters worse, the economy has affected the number of donations we have been receiving in our thrift stores. Many people have put off buying new furniture and other large household items, so those contributions are down.

Because of the economic downturn, we have had to cut back in a number of areas. We continue to give items to the needy free of charge, but we have had to change our pick-up procedures. We still run our trucks and make pick-ups, but we can only pick up furnishings such as couches, tables and chairs. We can no longer afford to have our trucks go to someone's home to pick up a few bags of clothing.

Since it's not feasible for us to do that any longer, we ask you to spread the word that people can take donated items to our church drop boxes or they can drop off donations at any of our thrift stores. Please keep in mind that donations can be dropped off at our thrift stores only during business hours, not after they close. You may be surprised to learn that our garbage disposal costs are up because in some instances, people are dropping off wet clothing or damaged furniture in deplorable condition. They are dropping these items off after hours, because they know we wouldn't accept them. That means that we have to pay to have these items hauled away, or we have to put them in our dumpster, which increases our garbage pick-up costs.

A lot of good supporters have asked us what type of donations we want. We'll take any clothing that is dry and not soiled. Furnishings should be without rips or tears, and not overly soiled. We don't have the staffing or the ability to repair furnishings, so we ask that these items be in good condition and working order. Mattresses must be very clean with no stains. Because of health regulations, we cannot accept any mattresses that are stained or torn.

We ask our supporters to be understanding because we have had to become more selective in the items we can pick up. In today's economy, this is the only way we can remain open. We are also changing the way we process items, as well as our recycling procedures. We know that without change, we cannot survive, not only as a thrift store provider, but also as an organization.

We are going through a difficult time, and we are doing the best we can under challenging circumstances. We ask you

to keep our store program in your thoughts and prayers, and let us know if you have questions or suggestions. Feel free to give us a call at our administrative offices (225-383-7837). Shelia McNemar will be glad to take your call. You can also email us at [smcnemar@svdpbr.com](mailto:smcnemar@svdpbr.com).

We really want to hear from you. We will keep you informed of our ongoing efforts as we continue to modify what we do at our thrift stores in order to be successful in facing the economic realities of today's world.



## *St. Vincent de Paul Charity Golf Tournament*

Mark your calendars for this year's annual golf tournament slated for Monday, October 18<sup>th</sup>. The golf tournament this year will be held at The Oaks at Sherwood. You can register early by going to the St. Vincent de Paul website ([svdpbr.org](http://svdpbr.org)) and clicking on the Charity Golf Tournament tab. More information will be forthcoming on this important event.

## A Summer Recipe from Taste & See

This delicious recipe from our *Taste & See* cookbook is sure to become a favorite. It's a make-ahead dish that takes only minutes to prepare and is the perfect, cool ending to a summer meal. This is delicious by itself, but be sure you try it over a generous scoop of vanilla ice cream as well.

### *Taste & See - Easy Fruit Salad*

- 21 oz. can peach pie filling
- 20 oz. can pineapple chunks, drained
- 15 oz. can mandarin oranges, drained
- 10 oz. pkg. frozen strawberries, thawed and drained
- 4 bananas, sliced

Place the pie filling in a bowl. Fold in the pineapple, oranges, strawberries and bananas. Chill, covered, for 4 to 5 hours.

During the months of July and August, proceeds from the sale of our cookbooks will go toward our Uniforms for Kids program. As a special gift to you – our St. Vincent de Paul supporters – we are giving you an opportunity to buy our cookbook at a special price during this time.

Because of your generous support, there is no limit, so now is a good time to buy extra copies as gifts for friends and family. Each cookbook sold helps us to raise critical dollars for children in need of a basic school uniform. Just fill out the form below or give us a call at (225) 383-7837, ext. 204.

### *Order Your Taste & See Cookbook!*

Please send me a copy of the *Taste & See* cookbook at \$15.00, plus shipping and handling of \$3.99 for a total of \$18.99. (To order more than one copy or to pick up your book to avoid shipping costs, call us at (225) 383-7837, ext. O.)

My check for \$ \_\_\_\_\_ is enclosed.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Mail your order to St. Vincent de Paul, P.O. Box 127, Baton Rouge, LA 70821-0127 or call us at (225) 383-7837.

## **A RECESSION MEANS DIFFICULT DAYS AHEAD**

Our volunteers and staff are hustling and bustling like never before in an ongoing effort to meet the growing demand for our services. In my 21 years with St. Vincent de Paul, I've never seen such a high level of need for life's basic necessities. Obviously, the economy has affected us, just as it has so many other individuals, businesses and organizations. For the first time in many years, I feel as if St. Vincent de Paul is struggling just to meet the need, and barely doing so.

We're constantly looking for ways to reduce costs, but it's hard to trim fat when there's not a lot of fat to begin with. At a staff level, every staff member performs multiple functions. For example, I am the executive and key administrator for St. Vincent de Paul, but I'm also the public relations spokesperson, grant writer, personnel director – and the list could go on and on.

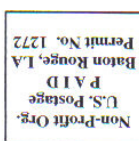
Thank God we have dedicated volunteers who play a critical role in all our programs. Their commitment is invaluable when the need is so great. Volunteers at our dining room, pharmacy, shelters and stores save us tens of thousands of dollars each year that would otherwise have to go toward salaries. Our St. Vincent de Paul Conference volunteers visit homes where the level of poverty is sometimes frightening. It's hard to believe that such living conditions exist here in our community. So many people are going to bed hungry, some can't afford to fill their prescriptions, while others don't know where they will sleep tonight.

Obviously, the temperature isn't the only thing that's rising. What's the solution? Well, ultimately, the solution is what St. Vincent de Paul does every day. We come together as a community to reach out to our needy neighbors. We follow the model set by St. Vincent de Paul over 350 years ago, by recognizing a need and responding to it. At St. Vincent de Paul, there is no red tape and no bureaucracy – just common sense approaches to everyday problems. We take a dollar and do a lot. With every volunteer hour, we accomplish wonders. And it all translates into lives being touched by the compassionate hand of God.

We need your help more than ever before. While the demand for our services has increased, the number of donations we are receiving is down. For the first time in more than 20 years, our thrift stores are losing money. There are difficult days ahead, and we will have to make some difficult decisions. But you have our promise that we will continue to do whatever is necessary to serve as many people as we can with the resources we are blessed with.

We pray that God will bless you and your family during these challenging times. We also pray that the crisis in the Gulf will soon be resolved. Please join us in remembering those who lost their lives, others who have lost their jobs, and those who are working hard to clean up the Gulf.

**-- Michael J. Acaldo, President & CEO, St. Vincent de Paul Charities**



Address Service Requested

*Society of St. Vincent de Paul*  
*P. O. Box 127*  
*Baton Rouge, LA 70821-0127*