

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

Fall Edition

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A Better Tomorrow

Isn't it great to wake up in a comfortable bed, after a good night's sleep and a wonderful dream? This is just one of the many everyday blessings most of us take for granted. Unfortunately, at our Bishop Ott Sweet Dreams Shelter for Women & Children, we constantly hear mothers saying that their lives seem like a bad dream. Homelessness is indeed a nightmare, especially for young children. That's why our Sweet Dreams Shelter is there – to put an end to the nightmare of living on the street.



This year's Sweet Dreams campaign is critical to those we serve, like little Billy in the photo. In St. Vincent de Paul's 145-year history, we have never seen so many women and children seeking help – families that have been evicted, children sleeping with their mothers in cars, or on the street. Recently, a police car drove up to our shelter with a mother and her small children. Their van had been totaled in an accident caused by another driver. Unfortunately, their car was not just transportation – it was also their home.

Challenging economic times – rising costs, layoffs and cut-backs – affect everyone, but the ones that are hardest hit are those that can least afford it. Too often, it's the children, like the little boy in the photo above, that are most severely affected. They don't understand how it happened, but they know their lives have been turned upside down. Their worlds have collapsed, and the adults they trusted to take care of them are struggling with an enemy they have never faced before – homelessness. Basic necessities like home and food are no longer taken for granted.

Thank God, St. Vincent de Paul is here to let them know that someone cares enough about them to provide a home, safety and food until their lives can return to normal.

So many homeless women and children need our help, and this year's Sweet Dream's effort is more important than ever. This year's campaign will generate the critical dollars we need to respond during this economic crisis that so many people are struggling with. In addition to layoffs and workforce reductions, rental costs in our community remain
Continued on page 2; see "A Better Tomorrow"



Bob and Jan Wilson with Chef John Folse and Kathy Bishop at the Annual St. Vincent de Paul Meeting in New Orleans. Chef John Folse did a phenomenal cooking demonstration at the event. We are so blessed to have Chef Folse's continued support of our charitable activities.

Stirring it Up at the

National St. Vincent de Paul Annual Meeting

St. Vincent de Paul in Baton Rouge is recognized nationally for the outstanding work we do because of your support. Other communities across the country are inspired by our special works and the support we receive from you – our St. Vincent de Paul family. It's wonderful to be able to share the good work we do locally with so many people around the country.

At this year's National St. Vincent de Paul meeting, which was held last month in New Orleans, we had a great opportunity to share information about our *Taste & See* cookbook effort. Chef John Folse agreed to take time out of
Continued on page 2; see "Stirring it Up"



Swinging for a Great Cause

This year's golf tournament to benefit the charities of St. Vincent de Paul is a great opportunity to get involved and help one of Baton Rouge's oldest and most important charitable groups. We thank Amedisys for sponsoring this year's event. This year's golf tournament is highlighted by the outstanding support of our honorary chairs: Tommy Martinez, Ascension Parish President; Mayor Melvin "Kip" Holden, East Baton Rouge Parish President; J. Mitchell Ourso, Jr., Iberville Parish President; Mike Grimmer, Livingston Parish President; and Riley "Pee Wee" Berthelot, West Baton Rouge Parish President. They invite you to be a part of this year's tournament.

Continued on page 2; see "Swinging for a Cause"

In this Fall Issue:

-- Vision 150

-- New One-Stop Center for the Homeless Project

A Better Tomorrow Continued from page 1

high, even five years after Hurricane Katrina. Those prices create a tremendous hardship for mothers who are sometimes working two jobs and still can't keep up with rising costs.



There are two ways you can help us turn their nightmares into sweet dreams. You can support this year's Sweet Dreams effort by saying the Sweet Dreams prayer that is included in this newsletter. Cut it out and put it in a special place, but most importantly, make it part of your daily prayer life. You can also support this program financially. Please consider making a contribution and mailing it to P.O. Box 127, Baton Rouge, LA 70821.

We like to refer to our charitable works as "come and see them" programs because you can come by our main charitable campus any day and see our special works in action. Just give Michael Acaldo a call at (225) 383-7837, extension O. If he's not at his desk, ask to speak to Lisa Hubble, and she can schedule a time for you to come by for a tour. Watch us as we turn nightmares into sweet dreams for the most vulnerable people in our community.

Sweet Dreams Prayer

*Lord God, Giver of Life,
Fill us with your Spirit.*

Use our hands to shelter the homeless;

Use our hearts to enable sweet dreams;

Use our voices to end homelessness.

May our actions improve life for others

And reflect your abundant love.

Through Christ our Lord, A.M.E.N.

www.svdpbr.org

Stirring it Up Continued from page 1

his busy schedule to do a cooking demonstration for St. Vincent de Paul's top national leaders. It was fabulous!

We sold a lot of cookbooks, and many individuals expressed an interest in doing something similar in their areas. A number of groups wanted a supply of cookbooks to sell in their communities. Everyone agreed that *Taste & See* is an excellent cookbook. Of course, it's excellent – Chef Folse has a whole chapter, and the rest are great recipes that you, our St. Vincent de Paul supporters, sent in. So many people at the National meeting said, "I'm doing all my Christmas shopping today," and then got a *Taste & See* cookbook for everybody on their list. In addition to being there with St. Vincent de Paul members from around the country, we were able to share the successes we have had locally. With your help, we are making a real difference in our community and throughout our country.

If you haven't gotten your cookbook yet, keep in mind that St. Vincent de Paul supporters are entitled to a special discounted purchase price of \$15.00 per copy. We do this in honor of your support, and we thank you for helping us to make our cookbook such an outstanding success. To get your copy, call Lisa Hubble at 383-7837, ext. 204.

Swinging for a Great Cause Continued from page 1

With the current economic crisis and the overwhelming number of people that St. Vincent de Paul helps throughout the area, these parish presidents recognized an opportunity to step forward and support the tournament while encouraging others to get involved. The tournament is a critical effort that will help us to provide food, shelter, school uniforms, and so much more, to the needy of our community. We need your help more than ever.

This year's tournament will be at The Oaks at Sherwood. We encourage you to consider sponsoring or playing in this year's event. You don't have to be a golfer to help. Consider making a contribution. 100% of financial contributions will go directly to the good work of St. Vincent de Paul, so consider supporting this effort and join these outstanding community leaders in making a real difference. See the registration form below or go online to register at www.svdpbr.org.

Registration Form (or online at www.svdpbr.org)

Sponsor or Player Name _____

Address _____

Phone Number _____

Sponsorship Levels (Please check all that apply.)

_____ Corporate Sponsorship – \$3000.00
(includes two 4-member teams and top public relations billing)

_____ Associate Sponsorship – \$1000.00
(includes one 4-member team and public relations)

_____ Golf Team & Hole Sponsor – \$600.00

_____ Golf Team – \$500.00

_____ Hole Sponsor – \$125.00

_____ Individual Player – \$125.00

Amount Enclosed _____

I am unable to play, but want to contribute \$_____ to the event.

Please make check payable to St. Vincent de Paul and mail with this form to: P. O. Box 127, Baton Rouge, LA 70821

**St. Vincent de Paul
Community Report**

In our last Vincentian Charities newsletter, we reported that our Dining

Room, Shelter & Housing facilities, Community Pharmacy and other special works projects were seeing the effects of our struggling economy. That trend has continued as we work hard to serve those most in need.

The St. Vincent de Paul Dining Room is on a record setting track this year in serving meals to the needy. We are the number one meal provider to the needy in our community. That's right – we serve more meals than all the other local soup kitchens combined. This year, we expect to serve around 220,000 meals – which will be an all-time high.

Denise Spears, our Dining Room Director, is a master at stretching a tight food budget. A typical meal might include red beans and rice from the Food Bank with sausage that we purchased, seasoned and cooked to perfection by our small staff and volunteers; a crisp green salad with lettuce and tomatoes donated by a local grocery store; bread and dessert donated by local bakeries. As you can see, we rely on food and financial donations to provide tasty, nutritious meals.

Nothing is wasted, and by 11:30 every day, our kitchen crew has somehow managed to use whatever we have on hand to create another culinary miracle. You can't help but think of the loaves and fishes in the Bible.

If someone is searching for a community safety net, they find it at our Dining Room. We ensure that no one in our community has to go without a hot meal, and we do that on a shoestring budget. Currently, the financial cost for a meal is about \$1.00. How's that for stretching a tight budget?

Our Shelter is also a safety net for the homeless. If you recall, last winter was a bitterly cold and wet one. Since then, our shelters have been full. We usually get a break when the temperature begins to warm up, but this year, we have continued to stay very full. We have also had a large number of families coming to us with eviction notices.

We all see the *Homeless-Will Work for Food* signs on the side of the road, especially during this time of year. St. Vincent de Paul is there to help the truly homeless, to help people who are really willing to work for food. That's one of our shelter program requirements – everyone has chores, which ensures that our shelter and housing facilities are neat and clean places to live. This is a critical part of our emphasis on responsibility and accountability.

Our thrift stores are also seeing the impact of the economy. We continue to be overwhelmed by the number of requests for clothing, furniture and household items. In addition, our sales to the general public are down. Those sales are essential in helping us to fund our store activities, as well as the other charitable activities we provide to the needy. Your support of this program is critical, and we encourage you to drop off your donations at one of our stores. If you have any suggestions on how we can improve our operations, please don't hesitate to call Shelia McNemar at our offices at (225) 383-7837, extension 206. Or send her an email at smcnemar@svdpbr.com.

Our pharmacy continues its good work, filling prescriptions for people who have nowhere else to turn. Although healthcare reform legislation has been passed, little or nothing goes into effect for years to come, which means that the need for our pharmacy will continue for many years. One of the biggest challenges we face is getting the word out that although healthcare reform has been passed, our pharmacy is needed more than ever. Layoffs, the Gulf oil spill, rising costs and the economy in general are affecting the number of people coming through our doors. We ask you to keep all these programs and the people who need these services in your thoughts and prayers.

An Investment with Heavenly Dividends



St. Vincent de Paul would like to thank you for investing in our work. Your investment of prayer, volunteer time and financial resources is what makes us such an outstanding charity for those who come to us in search of the most basic essentials. You *are* St. Vincent de Paul, and we thank you for playing such an important role in providing services to our community's most vulnerable citizens. Your volunteerism and financial contributions mean that we can

feed the hungry, provide shelter and services to the homeless, fill prescriptions for the needy, and do so much for so many in our community. We sincerely thank you for those contributions, and we ask you to consider another investment, one with long-term implications.

With changes to the tax estate laws scheduled for January, it's more critical than ever to make sure that your estate plans are in order. Currently, there is no death tax, however, on January 1st, that will change. It's important for you to have the guidance of an estate planner to ensure that your assets go where you want them to. As you go through your estate planning process, we ask you to keep St. Vincent de Paul and our charitable works in mind. Please consider investing in the *League of Angels*, St. Vincent de Paul's designation for individuals who remember us in their estate planning. Whether it's a will, a charitable remainder trust, or an insurance policy, your gift helps to ensure that our work will continue for many years to come.

We encourage you to join the League today. It's easy! Just contact Michael Acaldo at macaldo@svdpbr.com or by phone at (225) 383-7837, extension O. Providing a copy of how St. Vincent de Paul is remembered in your estate planning will help us in acknowledging your support. Your gift will also inspire others to join the League. It's a wonderful way to make sure that your values live on forever.

New One-Stop Center for the Homeless Project Under Way

The Capital Area Alliance for the Homeless (CAAH) and the Society of St. Vincent de Paul have joined together in a collaborative project – a One-Stop Center for the Homeless, which will provide one central location where homeless people can go for a variety of needs. The Center will provide a place for more than 30 member agencies of the CAAH to provide services so that homeless individuals and families don't have to go from one place to another for services. Whether it's St. Vincent de Paul, Volunteers of America, Catholic Charities, or other great charities in our community, people can access those at one location. The One-Stop Center will be strategically located on Convention St. across from our main charitable campus.

Because of the collaborative nature of this project, the One-Stop will not duplicate any services currently provided by St. Vincent de Paul. The Center will also include 36 apartments that will provide permanent housing to the homeless with disabilities or mental illness – hard to house populations. The project is funded through tax housing credits through the Louisiana Housing Finance Agency. St. Vincent de Paul provided the property on which the Center is being built, and the CAAH will operate the Center on a day-to-day basis.

We are thrilled to be a part of such an important partnership where we will be making a difference in the lives of so many people in need. Our work with this new community initiative will position us for success in making sure that the homeless receive all the resources they need to get their lives back on track. We will keep you informed of the progress of this important community effort.

Searching for Answers

Recently, one of my twin daughters, said, “Dad, you have a lot of gray hair on one side. You need to comb it differently so you can’t see it.” She then told me about a commercial she had seen on TV called *Just for Men* that could help me with that

problem. I couldn’t help but laugh.

I’m not sure what’s causing all the gray hairs, but I suspect it’s mostly just the passing years. I can’t believe I’ve been with St. Vincent de Paul for 21 years! I might be able to blame a few of them on stress. At one time or another, everyone has worries and anxiety, whether it’s about global issues, budgets, family members or work. Some of my gray hairs may have been caused by my work, but like most people these days, I’m grateful to have a job. I see people every day who are out of work and out of money – now that’s stress!

When I start to worry about how we’ll come up with the resources to fund a feeding or housing program, or some other service that is essential to someone’s survival, that’s where faith comes in – faith that God will provide. I know that He is with us during difficult times, when it’s hard to see the light at the end of the tunnel. I also know that for the poor and homeless, we can be the bright light of hope.

Now, I would be less than honest if I didn’t tell you that sometimes people come to us with an attitude or an “entitlement” philosophy. But we are not here to enable anyone to gamble, continue an alcohol or drug habit – whatever the case may be – and we clearly let everyone know that we want to give them a hand-up, not a hand-out. We want to help every individual to be the best they can be.

Our organization serves as family and friends for people who have no one else to turn to, and we thank you for being a member of the St. Vincent de Paul family. It’s your support – prayers, volunteerism and financial contributions – that enables us to provide services that are needed now more than ever. My 21st year with St. Vincent has certainly been the most challenging.

At St. Vincent de Paul, we are called to see the face of Christ in each person we serve. What’s just as important is that they see His face in us. God has the answer to problems that are much more important than a few gray hairs, and we are a part of the answer. We are His representatives, doing His work, for His neediest children. I can’t thank you enough for sharing our concerns for the poor and for your support of our efforts. -- **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

