

GOOD SAMARITAN

St. Vincent de Paul | Louisville

www.svdplou.org

March | 2012

A Child's Kindness

Merideth, 8, could not get the elderly man out of her mind.

The little girl had come to St. Vincent de Paul for the first time in late December. She and her classmates, from a small town in northern Kentucky, took a field trip to Louisville to sing Christmas carols to clients eating a meal in our Open Hand Kitchen.

Merideth also gave away blankets she'd collected for the homeless. But by the time the last man in line finally got his turn to choose a blanket, the supply had run out.

"She was so upset," Merideth's mother, Melissa, explained. For days and weeks afterwards, the little girl worried about the man who did not get a blanket that day.

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On the Ground



By Ed Wnorowski

This first tier—the front line—rests with the 48 St. Vincent de Paul conferences. This parish-based initiative has nearly 2,500 volunteers intervening on behalf of more than 50,000 individuals and families in need of help in our community.

Last year the conferences were able to bring to bear nearly \$1 million in cash and \$400,000 of in-kind donations to address the urgent needs of these households.

These efforts have kept countless local families from facing the unforgiving reality of homelessness and the uncertainty of life in the shelters or the streets.

The second line of defense in our mission to help the poor is the St. Vincent de Paul campus. Again, through your generosity, we are able to offer limited relief to those families and individuals who have fallen through that first-tier “safety net” of the St. Vincent de Paul’s conferences.

Through the efforts of our staff and the more than 2,400 people who volunteered on our campus last year, we provided shelter to more than 380 individuals in our homeless shelter and supportive housing programs.

Additionally, we served more than 100,000 hot, free meals in our Open Hand Kitchen.

Sustenance and a clean safe place to sleep are things we often take for granted. For those needing our help, those things mean everything.

While the scope of the problem is sizeable, with your generous and ongoing support, we continue to make significant strides in addressing poverty, hunger and homelessness in Louisville, Central Kentucky and Southern Indiana.

Thank you.

Ed Wnorowski is executive director of St. Vincent de Paul | Louisville.

In several of my recent columns I have discussed how the scope of poverty and homelessness has grown during this recessionary period.

Unfortunately, even as we have seen a recovery in stock portfolio values, employment has not rebounded as quickly.

Once an individual’s unemployment benefits have expired, as is the case with many of the people we serve, they are no longer included in the unemployment statistic.

Thus, it is highly likely that unemployment is significantly underreported.

The bottom line is that there is no indication that the need of the individuals and families we serve is on the decline.

While finances and resources have been extremely challenged, we are fortunate to report that through your donations of both money and time we have been in the position to offer at least some relief to those seeking help.

As many of you know, St. Vincent de Paul in Louisville is blessed with what is best described as the ability to provide resources and relief on two distinct but integrated levels. Both of these relief resources are dependent on your support in the form of Money and Time.

Meet Brandi Scott

We’re pleased to announce that Brandi Scott has joined the SVDP staff. She has been hired as our new Grants Manager.

Welcome, Brandi!

Age: 26

Education: Masters of Public Administration from the University of Louisville, BA in Government from Morehead State University



Previous Job: Grants Coordinator with Louisville Metro Government Department of Community Services and Revitalization

Hometown: Pikeville, KY

Hobbies/Interests: Cooking, concerts, camping

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Volunteers Are Honored at Vincentians Induction Ceremony

Tom Phillips, Linda Gottbrath and David Griffey were honored for their volunteer efforts at a ceremony last month at St. Raphael the Archangel Catholic Church.

Phillips received the Top Hat Award, the highest honor presented by SVDP's Conference Affairs Committee. He was chosen for his diligence in making home visits and for improving efficiency in meeting client needs.

Phillips is active in many forms of outreach. For instance, at Christmas he delivers gifts to needy families in Cumberland County. President of the Holy Trinity Conference for the past six years, he leads the emergency assistance committee and has implemented twinning programs, both in Louisville and Belize.

Linda Gottbrath was presented with the St. Vincent Award for her nonjudgmental and supportive service to people in need. Gottbrath makes 15 to 20 home visits each week and visits clients in nursing homes. At SVDP, Gottbrath volunteers monthly in the Open Hand Kitchen. She has helped at the Santa Shop, is an active member of the annual Friends of the Poor Walk committee, and she helps fill the Thrift Store truck when it is at St. Rita's. In addition, she delivers food baskets at Christmas and serves as secretary and treasurer at SVDP conference meetings.

David Griffey won the Ozanam Medallion, which is awarded annually to someone who serves as a Vincentian role model and who also inspires the broader faith community.

Griffey's volunteer work includes delivering boxes of food to shut-ins, helping at our Market Street Thrift Store, serving meals in the Open Hand Kitchen, and organizing a quarterly movie night with refreshments at our men's homeless shelter.

Seventy-two dedicated individuals were inducted as new Vincentians. Jim Carrico and Ed Wnorowski, SVDP's board chair and executive director, respectively, presented

each of those present with certificates. The Vincentians, or volunteers, make home visits to families and individuals in need, offering support and encouragement as well as financial aid and referrals.

"The stories of the daily struggles of those who come to us for help never get easier to hear or less challenging to serve," Wnorowski said. "We are here today to say thank you for all that you have done and will continue to do."



Jim Carrico (third from left), with top volunteers Tom Phillips, Linda Gottbrath, and David Griffey.

The new Vincentians vowed to seek to grow in their personal holiness by serving the poor of God with their fellow Vincentians; to be open to the differences in cultural and socioeconomic situations; and to strive to be nonjudgmental when working with clients. *We welcome these new Vincentians:*

Holy Family (Louisville): Theresa Dahl. **Holy Spirit:** James Heleringer. **Holy Trinity:** Paul Pendell and Richie Sullivan. **St. Agnes:** Susie Tougher. **St. Bernadette:** Joe Butler, David Schardein, and Sandra Schardein. **St. Dominic:** Tammy Darland, Todd Darland, Clara Logsdon, Jim Logsdon, Mike Railey, Julia Spalding, and Joe Yates. **St. Gabriel:** Leslie Allen, Robert DeMarco, Patricia Eppinghoff, Mike Fitzmayer, and Jill McLaughlin.

St. Ignatius: Rose Mary Corbett, Kevin Doty, Sheryl Edelen, Elizabeth Hobby, Shirley Spalding, Paul Vissing, and Joan Young. **St. Lawrence:** Denise Ruffrea and Debbie Yates. **St. Martha:** Don Clark, Jack Gumbel, Kay Gunderson, Don Meyer, and Bob Straub. **St. Peter the Apostle:** Larry Boone, Gil Gritton, John Jones, Carrie Zacone, and Tony Zacone.

Guardian Angels: Stephanie Simpson, Jackie Steinemann, and Joe Steinemann. **St. Patrick:** Rosie Allocco, Carol Clair, Joe Clements, JoAnn Haner, Deacon Scott Haner, Ken Hummel, Linda Hummel, Bonnie Marx, Brian O'Dea, Ann Pigneri, Rocco Pigneri, Blake Westhoff, and Julie Westhoff. **St. Paul:** Rod Barber, Deacon Charles Beckmann, Sharon Croucher, Gary Fowler, Bob Mudd, Jeanette Padgett, Randy Padgett, Chris Pinkerton, and Tom Zoeller. **St. Raphael:** Chris Chase, Bob Meyer, John Mudd, John Raque, Scott Raque, Steve Sternberg, Mary Varga, and Paul Wilson.

* *SEE MORE photos from this event:* www.svdplou.org

Plan Ahead:

April 18-21

SVDP Mid-Year Meeting
Hilton at the Ball Park
St. Louis, Missouri

* For more information, contact Donna Young at (502) 301-8688

May 9

SVDP Louisville Council Meeting and Mass
Location: TBA

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What would he do? Would he be cold? Who would help him?

She wanted to try again. She begged her parents to bring her back to St. Vincent de Paul as soon as possible.

They agreed. Merideth set out a cardboard box, painted it purple, and put the words "Merideth's Mission" on it. People in their congregation responded with quilts and comforters for her to bring back to St. Vincent de Paul.

On a cold and drizzly recent Saturday morning, Merideth and her family arrived at the Open Hand Kitchen. Minutes before lunch service began, they set up their donated blankets on a table. Then they eagerly waited for clients to arrive. Would they see the man who had been in Meredith's thoughts and prayers all these weeks?

One by one, as people finished eating their lunch, they approached the table piled high with blankets. Merideth helped each person pick out an item. The shy, soft-spoken little girl seemed happy to have helped so many people, even as she tried to accept the fact that she might never see the man again.

As the room emptied out and volunteers from St. Edward parish began wiping down tables and sweeping the floor, an older, white-haired gentleman sitting alone at a corner table caught the 8-year-old's eye:

It was him.

Overjoyed, Merideth and her parents respectfully approached the man and offered him their best embroidered quilt and a hand-knitted blanket. The man, whose name is James, smiled and blushed when the child gave him a gentle hug, as her proud parents looked on. Alone, in his 70s and in ill health, James thanked the family for their kindness.



The experience has so inspired Merideth and her family that they are already planning their next outreach effort for St. Vincent de Paul.

Hunger Challenge Ends in April

It's that time of year again, when donations to St. Vincent de Paul can go farther in our efforts to fight hunger among people in need.

For the 15th consecutive year, Alan Shawn Feinstein will divide \$1 million among hunger-fighting agencies such as ours nationwide, in an effort to boost fundraising efforts for the organizations in March and April.



Your donations of cash, checks, and food items (valued at \$1 per item or pound) or pledges made exclusively through this challenge will count toward the Feinstein challenge. These donations or pledges must be received by St. Vincent de Paul between March 1 and April 30, 2012.

The Feinstein Foundation's past spring fundraisers have raised more than \$1.25 billion for some 2,000 agencies nationwide. To help us receive matching funds through this effort, contact Kathi Johnson at (502) 301-8695; kjohnson@svdplou.org.

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