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# The Top Hat

The Vincentian Voice of  
The Society of St. Vincent de Paul  
Archdiocesan Council of New Orleans

Vol. 3 Issue 70

May 2017

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We are introducing a new fundraiser for this year's Jazzin on the River Gala! We asked Vincentians and Conference members to let us see their creative skills as we will raffle 51 decorated Top Hats—tickets will be sold for 10.00. 50 Top Hats were distributed throughout the Society and we've already gotten a glimpse of some wonderful creations! The 51st hat to be raffled will be the Merry Widow Hat, designed and graciously donated by renowned boutique owner, Yvonne La Fleur! The hat, that pays tribute to Mother Frances Cabrini, is valued at \$300.00.



The always popular Restaurant Raffle will again take place! Take a chance! For just \$20.00, you could win 10 \$100.00 gift cards to some of the city's most celebrated eateries!



For tickets, contact SVdP conference leadership or call the central office (940-5031, ext. 10)

Just a few sample hats from fellow Vincentians !

## THE TOP HAT....

Is a publication for the Society of St. Vincent de Paul and it's designed to inform its communities of past, present and future services and events. The Society of St. Vincent de Paul is a Catholic lay organization that offers service to the needy in the tradition of its founder, Blessed Frederic Ozanam and its patron, St. Vincent de Paul.



2017 Gala Ticket Prices have been **REDUCED!**

- \$75.00 : Adults: 40 +
- \$50.00: Adults 21-39
- \$25.00: Youth 20 and under

The 2017 event invite flyer can be found on our website, or can be emailed to you from the central office

## ***Ann Arbor Thrift Store Needs Your Help-***

A devastating fire at the SVDP Thrift Store in Ann Arbor, Michigan on May 10th. The store is located in a historic building at 1001 Broadway in Ann Arbor. The fire occurred during the early morning hours and thankfully, no one was injured. The building was devastated and the store will be out of business for several months. Thus the Vincentian activities that the store provided to help the poor in Ann Arbor will not get done until the store is back up and running. To minimize this loss, the store is asking for donations to help them through this tough period.

Anyone looking to send donation checks can sent to:

**St, Thomas the Apostle Church  
530 Elizabeth Street  
Ann Arbor, MI 48104**

### **FOCUS ON GOOD SHEPHERD CONFERENCE**

Submitted by: Sr. Teresa Daly, DOC

*“WE MUST BE SATISFIED WITH MAKING THE BEST USE OF THE FEW TALENTS GOD HAS GIVEN US WITHOUT TROUBLING OURSELVES ABOUT HAVING GREATER OR MORE EXTENSIVE ONES.”*

*(Vincent DePaul: Coste VII: P. 531)*

I have had the privilege of visiting the Good Shepherd Conference this past week.

Here is what is happening on Napoleon Avenue these days:

They make BLESSING BAGS. These are bags that can be given to people on the streets. They include a bottle of water; breakfast bar; package of crackers; prayer card; and other items that are needed by these people living on the streets. After Masses on a weekend these bags are sold to the Parishioners for .50 a piece. Parishioners, who may buy these items at the grocery store to give to people in poverty, put these in their cars and give them out as they meet people in poverty on our city Streets.

The Conference sells over 200 bags each weekend.

**This is a great BEST PRACTICE.**

It is a fundraiser for the Conference and it encourages the people of the parish to join our Vincentians in the call to serve those in poverty.

### **ALSO AT GOOD SHEPHERD:**

This Conference has many members with many gifts. They have a quarterly gathering where they invite those living in poverty whom they have helped. They come together with a Conference Member who is an Attorney; one who has financial expertise; a representative from Unity Housing and others who have special talents.

These people give a general presentation to the group. Then anyone who wants to can have some consultation time with any of these people. If more time is needed an appointment or home visit can be set up.

This is a great way of putting our gifts at the service of those living in poverty.

This is another great BEST PRACTICE.

If you want more info on either one of these Best Practices please Conference President Laura Finnegan at:

[laura.finnegan@Lcmchealth.org](mailto:laura.finnegan@Lcmchealth.org)

If your Conference has a Best Practice you would like to share please e mail it to Sister Teresa at [Teresa.daly@doc.org](mailto:Teresa.daly@doc.org)  
cell phone at 314-608-2449.

You too could be featured in the Top Hat!

***Annual Report Data Review—How we've assisted those in need in the fiscal year-***

What have we been up to?

A review of data from Fiscal-Year 2014-2015 Annual Reports submitted online through the U.S. Council's national database reveals Vincentians of the metro New Orleans area have significantly impacted the lives of many underprivileged citizens. Data analyzed was from three Districts and one Conference from the fourth District.

Available data reveals at least 18,690 people were served (East Jeff. - 8,330, Westbank – 7193, Wash/St. Tamm. – 3000). And that this occurred in the course of 4,991 visits (27% in the home, hospital, or eldercare facility and 73% elsewhere – most likely the parish office). Vincentians are to be commended for their service to our community! Thank You!

Somewhat disturbing, though, is that only 27% of our visits with the disadvantaged occurs in their home; especially since we claim to be different from other social-service-type agencies, because Vincentians have “personal one-on-one encounters with the poor”.

Stated on page 23 in the 2007 publication of the Manual of the Society – Conference - Home Visits section, is the following:

“From the Society's beginning, the central and most basic activity of Conferences has been the visitation of the needy in their homes. This is the clearest symbol of our Vincentian charism, which dictates the highest respect for the dignity of the poor. It symbolizes our Vincentian commitment to reach out to the needy, rather than require them to report to an outside service site. In the home, needy persons feel most free to confide their stories of struggle. In that family setting, Vincentians are asked to listen, offer humble advice, and render assistance. (Rule: Part I, Articles 1.2 and 1.7; Part III, Section 8).”

“In the modern world, there are certain situations when a home visit is not possible or advisable – for example, those involving homelessness, battering, or safety. Nevertheless, Vincentians should never excuse themselves lightly or regularly from the tradition of home visitation. Even when assistance is given in an emergency from the parish or other service site, Vincentians should follow up with a home visit.”

If your Conference is not doing home visits, perhaps it is time to re-assess the reason why and to strive to be more compliant with the standards of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul. Please remember, your Vincentian leadership is here to help. If you have any questions or concerns, please reach out to you conference/district leadership, Council President Alan Demma or Society Executive Director, Deacon Rudy Rayfield.

*Submitted by Sandy Norman  
Board Council Secretary*

# TAMPA HERE WE COME!

**NEW ORLEANS VINCENTIANS ARE COMING YOUR WAY!  
JOIN US ON THE PARTY BUS!**

**Save the date: August 29 – September 2**



**Half the fun of going to the convention is the bus ride. Make new friends, hang out with old friends, dine together on the road, share Vincentian stories, and so much more. Bring your beads, handkerchief and umbrella for the second line!**

**Let's show them how to party in Tampa, Florida – NEW ORLEANS STYLE**

**Leave the hassle of flying behind! Your seat will be guaranteed, no removal due to over booking, no extra suitcase fees, no TSA line. We have two bus drivers who will drive us to Tampa in a day.**

**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION & COST WILL BE PROVIDED UPON RECEIPT FROM  
NATIONAL**

**If interested in attending, contact the Central Office—504-940-5031, ext. 10**

**LET'S FILL THIS BUS!**

SEVEN PRINCIPLES OF THE CATHOLIC SOCIAL TEACHINGS

The seven principles of Catholic Social Teachings form the basis for all Christian activities and more specifically, Social Justice.

Though the information on Catholic Social Teachings available through many resources, what we will present monthly came from the

Saint Vincent de Paul United States National Council website: www.svdpusa.org. As you review the monthly blurb, ask yourself how they relate to you and the manner in which you live out your Vincentian vocation. Is there room for improvement?

<p><b>Life and Dignity of the Human Person</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The human person is central, the clearest reflection of God among us.</li> <li>• Each person possesses a basic dignity that comes from God, no from race or gender, age or economic status.</li> <li>• The test of every institution or policy is whether it enhances or threatens human life and human dignity.</li> <li>• We believe people are more important than things</li> </ul>	<p><b>1. Life and Dignity of the Human Person</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do I respect the life and dignity of every human person from conception through natural death?</li> <li>• Do I recognize the face of Christ reflected in all others around me whatever their race, class, age or abilities?</li> <li>• Do I work to protect the dignity of others when it is being threatened?</li> <li>• Am I committed to both protecting human life and to ensuring that every human being is able to live in dignity?</li> </ul>
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We will be sharing more vocational teachings in future editions of the Top Hat

Another ALC School Year Comes to a Close

**To recap the 2016/2017 Adult Learning Center School year:**

55 students registered for the school year:

Currently enrolled:

25 for the morning class (15 returning, and 10 new students)

9 for the evening class ( 4 returning and 5 new students)

14 have not attended for more than 2 months and have been dropped from the program

1 student relocated

6 ??? students received high school equivalency diplomas and have graduated from the program\*

5 students completed a book and advanced to the next level of study during the month of May.

3 students took the TABE (Test of Adult Basic Education) test and improved their score.

To date, 30 students have improved test scores.

*HiSET/GED results and graduation updates will be featured in the next Top Hat.*



AND NOTES...

**Society of St. Vincent de Paul  
Archdiocesan Council of New Orleans**

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**It's Election Time again.** This time we select a Southeast Region Vice President who will represent us on the National Board of Directors under the National President. Vice President's (VP) terms coincide with that of the National President, and is not renewable.

Our Southeast Region Vice President will be elected, by us, via a vote of all Active Vincentians in the Southeast Region. Each Archdiocesan Council (ADC) has one vote. The candidate receiving a majority of votes of all ADCs will be the new Southeastern VP.

We have two excellent candidates nominated and approved for VP in Southeast Region.

The two candidates are:

- Morgan Jellett**, District Council President, Huntsville, Alabama
- Marvin Ropert**, Past Diocesan Council President, St. Petersburg, Florida

An Election Package has already been sent out to the Conferences.

The Election Process is as follows:  
Each Conference President will conduct a very prayerful secret ballot of his Active Membership.

By June 9th that selection will be sent to  
Archdiocesan Council President Alan Demma  
P.O Box 792880  
New Orleans, La. 70179-2880

**MARK THE ENVELOPE: "VP BALLOT"**

The Council President will count our Conference ballots and send one vote to the Southeastern Regional Election Committee.

**Please see that your Conference conducts its Southeastern Regional Vice Presidential Election and gets it to President Alan Demma by June 9th.**



**SAVE the DATE!**

The Annual Jazzin' on the River Fundraising Gala will be held on **July 8, 2017**



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