



# Vincentian Charities

Newsletter and Chronicle of Activities  
SOCIETY OF ST. VINCENT de PAUL  
Louisiana, Capital Region  
Summer Edition 2023 Vol. XXXII, No. II



*Serving God's Poor in our  
Community Since 1865*



*St. Vincent de Paul conference members take a picture with newly elected Eastern St. Vincent de Paul Council President Tony Guagliardo (second from the right) and Baton Rouge Council President Kim Boudreaux.*

## St. Vincent de Paul Making History!

Our entire St. Vincent de Paul family continues to work on our strategic future by growing to meet the needs of our entire service area. We serve a 12-civil parish area which includes: Ascension, Assumption, East Baton Rouge, East Feliciana, Iberville, Livingston, Point Coupee, St. James, St. Helena, Tangipahoa, West Baton Rouge, and West Feliciana parishes.

A service area as large as ours requires a great governance structure that is focused on helping us to be efficient and effective in our mission. Our ongoing strategic planning process calls us to review our governance and management structure to position us to best serve our neighbors in need.

Our Society of St. Vincent de Paul has a rich history of service to our community. The first day Father Delacroix stepped onto St. Joseph's soil in Baton Rouge was December 27, 1865, and that's the birth date of our local Society. Now, 158 years later, Father Delacroix's legacy continues. He inspired many of the laity to get involved with the Society, and his guidance and leadership of our Society for its first 28 years in Baton Rouge was critical to the survival of our organization.

In the 1890's, with the help of the Society, the Brothers of the Sacred Heart founded St. Vincent's Academy, which was named in honor of St. Vincent de Paul and is known today as Catholic High School.

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## Children Are Priceless!

Every year, our Uniforms for Kids project is another chapter in our efforts to give a hand-up to vulnerable children throughout our service area.

It's impossible for a six or nine-year-old child to understand the current economic crisis, but they understand only too well its impact on their families. They hear their parents on the phone asking if the landlord can give them just a few more days. They notice that every meal lately seems to be beans and rice. They see firsthand what it's like to stretch every dollar to the breaking point.



*Nate*

These are not just words. For a child experiencing poverty, this is life. Some children even live in homes that most of us would consider uninhabitable. Others go to bed hungry. All of them long for something better.



*Joshlyn*

One thing all children have in common is that each one of them is PRICELESS! Before coming to us, Nate, Joshlyn, Ashlynn, and Stewart were excited about starting school, but feared the embarrassment of showing up without the proper attire. The humiliating experience of attending school not in uniform can leave an emotional scar that lasts a lifetime. That's why the children are so happy in the pictures in this article, because they know they don't have to go to school without the required uniform.

Our goal for the 2023 Uniforms for Kids campaign is to make that first day of school something every child looks forward to. St. Vincent de Paul and our partners: WAFB-Channel 9, The Greater Baton Rouge State Fair Foundation, The Albemarle Foundation, Sunrise Rotary Club, Our Lady of the Lake Children's Health and First American Bank & Trust – are again working together to meet the overwhelming community need by helping 9,000 children.

What is so rewarding about our efforts is to know that we are **Continued on page 2; see "Children Are Priceless"**



*Pictured above, from left to right, Council President Kim Boudreaux, Rosie Martina, Bishop Michael Duca, and SVDP Board Chair Reginald Brown. See inside special stories about Rosie and Reginald.*

**In this issue - 100 Years Old & Still Going Strong!  
SVDP Store Gets A Wonderful Visit**

## Children Are Priceless! Continued from page 1

preserving the dignity and self-esteem of thousands of children who have already faced too many challenges in their short lives. It is so uplifting to see children in need that haven't given up on life, and are so appreciative of the help. Despite everything, their laughter and joy come easily as they try on their new uniforms.



Stewart



You can help us to make life a little easier for a child in need. Be a visible sign of God's love by extending a helping hand to a needy child. Help them get the education they so desperately need. \$12.00 will purchase one uniform, and we give every child two uniforms. Can you make a contribution of \$24.00 or help even more children with a larger contribution? Help us to make our community a better place for children who desperately need to stay in the classroom. **Join us in helping children like Nate, Joshlyn, Ashlynn and Stewart by sending a financial gift using the form below or by giving online at [svdpbr.org](http://svdpbr.org).** Thank you in advance for your generosity.



Ashlynn

-----Clip and send in-----

### How many children can you help?

- \$ 12 will purchase one uniform
- \$ 24 will provide a child with two uniforms
- \$120 helps 5 kids -- \$1,200 helps 50 kids

☞ **You can also give online at [www.svdpbr.org](http://www.svdpbr.org)**

Yes, I will help! Please find my check for \$ \_\_\_\_\_ enclosed.

My name is \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Please mark the parish where you would like to direct your help.

- Parish that needs assistance the most
- |   |  |   |
|---|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Ascension        | <input type="checkbox"/> Iberville     | <input type="checkbox"/> West Baton Rouge |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Assumption       | <input type="checkbox"/> Livingston    | <input type="checkbox"/> West Feliciana   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> East Baton Rouge | <input type="checkbox"/> Pointe Coupee | <input type="checkbox"/> St. Helena       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> East Feliciana   | <input type="checkbox"/> Tangipahoa    | <input type="checkbox"/> St. James        |

Mail to St. Vincent de Paul, P.O. Box 127, Baton Rouge, LA 70821

## Making History! Continued from page 1

The St. Vincent de Paul Conference at St. Joseph's served our community well, and other area churches began to establish Conferences: St. Agnes in 1918, St. Anthony in 1929, Sacred Heart in 1931, and St. Gerard in 1945. Today, there are 25 Conferences in our area serving neighbors in need.

In 1930, the Conferences came together to form our area Council. This was a big step in helping to coordinate service to the poor, and enabled the Society to respond to the needs of our neighbors experiencing hardships during the Great Depression. Our Council structure has served our area well, but has had its limitations in recent years.

Our strategic plan called for us to closely examine our structure. The first thing our Council leadership did was to contact our National Society of St. Vincent de Paul about our current structure. We asked them about best practices and what our next strategic steps should be.

Our National organization strongly urged us to expand from one Council to several. This would strengthen the work of the

Conferences that make home visits to those in need. It would also strengthen our special works – that feed, shelter and provide services to the most vulnerable. Most of all, having several Councils is a proven method of governance at a national and international level.

In the fall of 2022, John Berry, National Society of St. Vincent de Paul President-Elect, visited our local Council to answer the questions about forming multiple Councils. After his visit, our Council voted to adopt a new structure of three District Councils and one Diocesan Council. The District Councils will be in the Northern, Southern and Eastern part of our service area. The western area will be covered by the North and South Districts.

Tony Guaglirado has been elected president of the Eastern District Council. In the coming weeks, the Southern and Northern Districts will hold their first meetings and elections. The Diocesan Council will work with the District Councils to ensure that we are fulfilling our mission of spiritual growth by serving our neighbors in need.

Now, with the challenges that the current economic climate has caused those in need, this new structure will enable us to better serve the vulnerable populations that need our help. Please keep those we serve in your thoughts and prayers during these difficult times.



Pictured from left to right is Chelsea Brown with grandfather Reginald Brown. Chelsea is donating her mother's 1981 Mercedes.

## Car Donations Make A Big Difference

Retired Constable and St. Vincent de Paul Special Works Board Chair Reginald Brown, Sr. accepts the donation of a 1981 Mercedes Benz from his granddaughter Chelsea Brown. Chelsea wanted to remember her mother who recently passed away and her father Reginald Brown, Jr. who the family tragically lost in 2003.

She wanted to turn sadness into hope by supporting her grandfather in his volunteer leadership and work at St. Vincent de Paul. Because of the year and model of the car, Chelsea received several offers to purchase it, but wanted to help the community through St. Vincent de Paul. Chelsea is a counselor for St. Michael the Archangel High School, and works hard to provide guidance and direction to sophomores at the school. We thank Chelsea for her generosity!

At St. Vincent de Paul, we rely on vehicle and boat donations to help us fund critically needed charitable programs. Thanks to the generosity of people throughout our community, these donations of cars, boats, motorcycles, RV's, tractors, riding lawnmowers and jet skis translate into dollars for the services we provide. If you'd like to donate a car, boat or recreational vehicle, give us a call at (225) 383-7837, extension 201, or go online at [svdpbr.org](http://svdpbr.org). When you go online, be sure you go to our local website, [svdpbr.org](http://svdpbr.org).

## St. George St. Vincent de Paul Conference Holds Special Gathering

On July 22<sup>nd</sup>, the St. George SVDP Conference held a special gathering of St. Vincent de Paul Conferences from throughout the Diocese. The event began with Mass, and then gave Conference members the opportunity to meet and share their experiences in growing spiritually while serving our neighbors in need.



The event also gave St. Vincent de Paul members the opportunity to thank God for His blessings to this ministry.



Last year, Conferences made thousands of home visits and helped those in need with over \$1 million in assistance. As you can see from the pictures, the event was a wonderful

opportunity to visit and share time together. A special thanks goes to all of St. George Parish for hosting this event!



*Jeffrey Beamguard, National St. Vincent de Paul Stores Director visits Baton Rouge Store Staff and Volunteer Leadership to bring his expertise to our strategic planning process. Jeffrey is transforming St. Vincent de Paul Stores all over the country.*

## SVDP Stores Gets A Wonderful Visit

As part of our strategic planning, Jeffrey Beamguard, National St. Vincent de Paul Director of Stores, visited us this July to review our operations. Jeffrey runs the National St. Vincent de Paul Store Model in Phoenix, AZ. The National Store Model was put together to showcase best practices in running a thrift store with a mission of charity. He has already provided a report that gives us recommendations for streamlining our thrift stores. We are now working on implementing these strategies to position us for more success in serving our community.

Our stores provide more than just a place where customers can purchase items at bargain basement prices; any revenues produced by our stores are put back into our programs to assist those in need. Most importantly, individuals and families in need get items at no cost after a home visit is made by a St. Vincent de Paul Conference.

You too can help our stores by donating items of clothing, shoes and furniture. To donate to our stores, visit our website at [svdpcb.org](http://svdpcb.org) or call (225) 267-4483.



**Tune into St. Vincent de Paul's Beacons of Light TV Show!** See Al Davis' story on an upcoming Beacons of Light Show airing on Cox Catholic Life Channel 15. Our show provides viewers a great opportunity to see St. Vincent de Paul in action.

In this year's series, we continue to celebrate the importance of our ministry to those we are blessed to serve. Our schedule on Cox 15 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. Shows are also available at [Catholiclifetv.org](http://Catholiclifetv.org) or on Roku - Catholic Life Television. What makes a show great? Our fantastic guests! Our show focuses on how St. Vincent de Paul keeps hope alive in our community!

## 100 Years Old & Going Strong!



Long time member and St. Vincent de Paul Top Hat Hall of Fame Recipient Rosie Martina just turned 100! Rosie's fountain of youth is based on his commitment to his faith and his continued volunteer work to help the poor through St. Vincent de Paul.

In 1982 Rosie was among volunteers who founded the first St. Vincent de Paul

Dining Room which originally opened in a shotgun house on South 21<sup>st</sup> Street, and only served 20 to 50 people a day. Today the Dining Room is in its third location at 222 St. Vincent de Paul Place and serves over 200 to 500 meals a day at lunchtime and an equal amount of brown bag suppers. Last year over 255,000 meals were served.

Rosie has many fond memories of the early days of the St. Vincent de Paul Dining Room. He and his beloved wife, Laura, worked side by side serving the poor and homeless at the Dining Room for many years.

Rosie has been active in his local St. Jude St. Vincent de Paul Conference Ministry. St. Jude St. Vincent de Paul does a great job of serving the poor. In the early days of that effort, Rosie and Laura began with a food pantry in their garage. Rosie's daughter Patricia recalls, "We gave up our garage." Rosie and Laura's children have always supported their countless hours of volunteerism and even help Rosie make food pick-ups.

Yes, even at 100 Rosie continues to make food pick-ups and coordinates a small army of volunteers (named Rosie's Army) who also pick up donated food from local supermarkets, bakeries, and restaurants. St. Vincent de Paul recognizes and thanks Rosie for his many decades of volunteer leadership and services. Happy Birthday, Rosie!

*Society of St. Vincent de Paul*

*P. O. Box 127*

*Baton Rouge, LA 70821-0127*

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## *Life on the Edge*

We're well into another long hot summer and, for some people, that means life on the edge: vacations that include the fearful excitement of whitewater rafting, rock climbing, or surfing the highest waves. But for others, it can mean living with the fear of hunger

or homelessness and worrying that the next electric bill will be even higher than the last. When you're living in poverty, rising rent and utility costs can be catastrophic. It is living on the edge of survival.

Growing up poor is so difficult and no child should ever have to go hungry. When school is not in session, whether it's for the weekend or summer break, children in poor homes can no longer rely on the school cafeteria for a well-balanced meal. Fortunately, the St. Vincent de Paul Dining Room and our St. Gerard meal site is here for them and their families. Our Dining Room serves a hot lunch and brown bag supper every day. Last year, we served over 255,000 meals.

The summer months are especially difficult for homeless individuals and families. When temperatures soar, the risk of heat exhaustion is very real. Can you imagine being evicted from your home with nowhere to go? That's what is happening to a growing number of individuals and families, and we are here for them. Our Bishop Ott Shelter provides much more than a bed and a way to escape the heat. We have opened up more space to get people off the street during these extreme heat advisories. Last year, we provided over 26,000 guest nights of shelter, as well as job assistance, training, and counseling. We're offering second chances, a path to self-sufficiency, and hope for a better future.

Thousands of people turn to St. Vincent de Paul every month, praying that we can help them in their time of need whether it's to get a hot meal, a comfortable bed, a school uniform or a prescription filled.

On behalf of low-income individuals and families, the homeless, elderly, and forgotten; on behalf of every person who turns to us in desperation, we thank you for your support and ask you to keep St. Vincent de Paul and the needy we serve in your thoughts and prayers.

-- *Michael J. Acaldo, President & CEO*