



Vincentian Charities

Newsletter and Chronicle of Activities

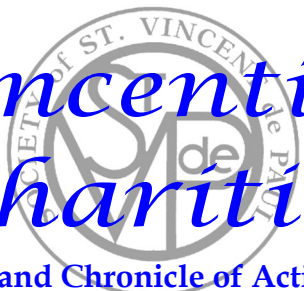
SOCIETY OF ST. VINCENT de PAUL

Louisiana, Capital Region

November 2024 Vol. XXXIII, No. II



Serving God's Poor in our Community Since 1865



From Homelessness to Hope: Join Our Sweet Dreams Efforts

At the Bishop Ott Sweet Dreams Shelter Program, we understand the longing for a cozy bed after a long day—something many take for granted. Unfortunately, for many mothers we serve, this is a harsh reality. The Sweet Dreams Shelter exists to help end the nightmare of homelessness.

This year, the Sweet Dreams initiative is vital for families in need, as demand has reached unprecedented levels in our 158-year history. Many women and children are seeking refuge, with families facing eviction and children sleeping in cars becoming all too common.

The current economic climate affects everyone, but the most vulnerable—especially children—are hit the hardest. As their worlds collapse, basic necessities like shelter and food become uncertain.



Guests at our shelter often express their gratitude, saying, “Thank goodness for the support we receive.” We strive to provide safety, nourishment, and a

temporary home, allowing families to find comfort and joy again. With our support, mothers can turn their nightmares of homelessness into sweet dreams for a brighter future.

You can help us in two impactful ways: pray the Sweet Dreams prayer included in this newsletter, and consider making a financial donation at svdpbr.org or sending a check to P.O. Box 127, Baton Rouge, LA 70821.

Thank you for your compassion and support.



A Warm Thanksgiving for Those in Need

This Thanksgiving, our dedicated volunteers will serve a traditional turkey feast with all the trimmings to hundreds of individuals who may not have much to celebrate. Many face difficult circumstances, living in homes where meals are

often skipped or rationed just to make ends meet. Some don't have a place to call home. But on this special day, everyone will find a warm place to gather and a hearty meal to enjoy.

This year, our volunteers will be hosting the Thanksgiving meal at our Dining Room while also continuing the beloved Holiday Helpers' tradition at the River Center. At times, we are overwhelmed by the number of people who turn to St. Vincent de Paul for nourishment. But these aren't just statistics; they are real individuals with heartfelt stories. They are fighting to survive and depend on the generosity of others during these challenging moments.

We are currently preparing for this important event and are in need of donations, including stuffing mix, canned green beans, canned yams, cakes, pies, white and brown sugar, cinnamon, cranberry sauce, hams, and 2-liter drinks.

The meals we serve are prepared with love and compassion by our volunteers. Your financial support is also crucial in making these meals a reality. Please consider sending your contributions to St. Vincent de Paul's Thanksgiving Efforts, P.O. Box 127, Baton Rouge, LA 70821, or donate online at svdpbr.org.

Thank you for helping us make this Thanksgiving a meaningful and fulfilling experience for those in need.

Remember Us on this National Day of Giving!

Don't forget to give to St. Vincent de Paul on Giving Tuesday – November 29th! There are several different ways you can give on this National Day of Giving, and really help our vital work.

Two great ways to give. One way is that you can give the old-fashioned way, and write a check and send it to: St. Vincent de Paul, P.O. Box 127, Baton Rouge, LA 70821 or go online and give at svdpbr.org.

Another terrific way to give on Giving Tuesday is iGiveCatholic. St. Vincent de Paul has participated in this effort for many years. iGiveCatholic is a national Catholic Giving Day that kicks off the charitable season and brings the community together to give thanks and give back.



#IGIVECATHOLIC
ON GIVING TUESDAY

This day of giving inspires faithful stewards to give to Catholic organizations on

Giving Tuesday, a global day of giving. St. Vincent de Paul's work is built on Christ's message of love for all of God's children, and iGiveCatholic.org is built on that foundation. It's a great way to help with our work.

Whether you give to us via iGiveCatholic or you do it the old-fashioned way, you are making the critical charitable work of St. Vincent de Paul a reality. Your support will feed the hungry, fill a prescription, or provide a place to call home for families in need. Thank you!

Help Us Help Pat!

The Society of St. Vincent de Paul, in partnership with WBRZ-Channel 2, invites you to help put warm smiles on children's faces this winter through Pat's Coats for Kids.



By donating gently used coats, you can make a significant difference for kids in our community, ensuring they stay warm and protected from the cold.

A heartfelt thank you to Pat, who has dedicated the last 36 years to making a difference in the lives of vulnerable children through this program. Together, we respond with compassion and care, keeping children warm during their time of need. Please keep this effort and the children we serve in your thoughts and prayers. To learn more about how you can help, visit wbrz.com.

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 alleviate suffering.
May our actions improve life for those
Displaced or affected by the floods
And reflect your abundant love.
Through Christ our Lord, AMEN.*

*Bishop Ott Sweet Dreams Shelter
For Women and Children
svdpbr.org*

New Team Members at SVDP



We are pleased to announce Austin Lawrence as our new Chief Operating Officer. Austin is a mission-driven professional with a strong track record in enhancing organizational and individual performance. He began his career as the first remote outside sales representative at Lawyer Marketing Services and later spent over five years at Apple. He then became a Team Client Manager at Gartner, partnering with C-level executives to improve operational efficiency. Austin's journey took a pivotal turn when he joined HOPE

Ministries of Baton Rouge as Assistant Director, leading the workforce development program and expanding into marketing and development. Having faced many personal challenges, he possesses deep empathy for those often overlooked by society. His faith has guided him through difficult times, shaping his desire to positively impact others' lives. We look forward to his leadership as we strive to enhance our impact in the community!



St. Vincent de Paul is proud to welcome Dakasha Caulfield Leonard as our new Director of Shelter Programs! With over 20 years of experience, Dakasha's journey has taken her across the globe in support of her husband's military career. She has worked with the United States Army Medical Command in Italy, Germany, and South Korea. Most recently, Dakasha served with the Travis County Health District in Austin, Texas, managing healthcare services for underserved populations. Dakasha's passion for serving vulnerable populations aligns perfectly with our mission at St. Vincent de Paul. She is dedicated to making a meaningful difference in the lives of those experiencing homelessness in our community. Please join us in welcoming Dakasha Leonard as she embarks on this important role, bringing her wealth of knowledge and compassionate leadership to our team!



We are also excited to introduce Josh Lopez as our new Stores Director. With extensive experience in retail leadership, Josh has a proven track record of success. He and his family are dedicated members of the St. John the Evangelist parish. With over 25 years in retail leadership, including four and a half years as store manager for Lowe's, Josh is well-equipped to guide our stores. He also founded the Our Lady of Grace Diaper Bank, reflecting his commitment to supporting families in need. We are delighted to have Josh on board as we continue to grow and better serve our community!



Finally, we welcome Angela Fetters as our new Human Resource Generalist! With over a decade of HR experience across various industries, including gaming, retail, and maritime, Angela brings a comprehensive skill set to our organization. She is SHRM-CP certified and has managed all aspects of human resources as a department of one. Angela has a strong commitment to community service, having co-organized a Christmas celebration for underprivileged children for eight years. A proud member of several HR societies, she is dedicated to fostering a positive work environment and supporting our mission.

Together, these new leaders will strengthen our team and help us fulfill our mission of serving those in need in the Greater Baton Rouge area. Please join us in welcoming Austin, Dakasha, Josh and Angela!

Help Us Keep Hope Alive in our Community!

You may encounter someone on the street with a sign that reads, "Homeless - Need Help," and your reaction might be to offer cash, however, we encourage a different approach. Many individuals experiencing homelessness have lost their jobs, faced disabilities, or lack support from family and friends. Others may be dealing with mental health issues or addiction. What they truly need is a safe place to stay, compassionate support, and an opportunity to rebuild their lives.

For over 158 years, we have been providing a helping hand to those in need, guiding them toward a brighter future.

The St. Vincent de Paul "Hope Card" informs individuals facing homelessness about the services we offer. We invite you to print copies of the Hope Card and keep a few in your pocket or car. Instead of giving cash, our Hope Card connects people to essential resources that can help them transition out of homelessness. We offer warm meals, shelter, and a chance to have a fresh start — all at no cost. Those who truly need these services will be incredibly grateful for your assistance.

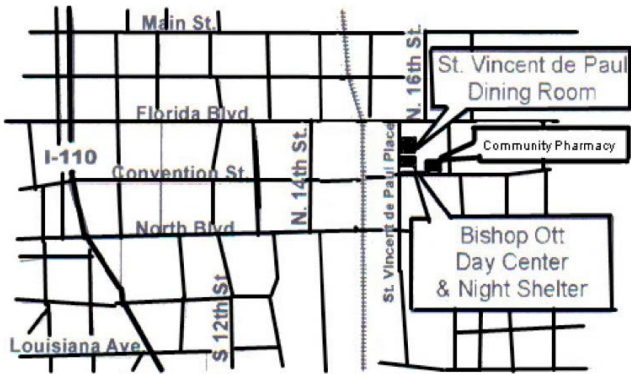
You may want to cut out the card and use it, or you can print as many copies as you like from our website at svdpr.org.

HOPE CARD

St. Vincent de Paul wants to help you!

<p>St. Vincent de Paul Dining Room</p> <p>Serving hot meals daily from 11:30 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. 220 St. Vincent de Paul Place</p>	<p>Bishop Ott Sweet Dreams Shelter</p> <p>Homeless services, including night shelter. 1623 Convention (men, women, children & families)</p>	<p>SVDP Pharmacy</p> <p>Providing prescription assistance. 1647 Convention St (225) 383-7450</p>
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Call us at (225) 383-7837 for more information. All services are free.



Save on Your Taxes and Help St. Vincent de Paul

Did you know that if you're 70½ years old or older, you can donate directly from your taxable IRA to St. Vincent de Paul without incurring any income tax on the amount? This transfer won't count as taxable income, nor will it provide a tax deduction, making it advantageous even if you don't itemize your deductions. Additionally, if you haven't yet taken your required minimum distribution for the year, your IRA charitable rollover can fulfill all or part of that obligation. If your spouse is also 70½ or older, they too can contribute from their taxable IRA. For more information, on this type of contribution, contact your tax or financial advisor.

Donor Advised Funds Are A Great Way to Give

If you have a Donor Advised Fund, we invite you to consider making a gift to the Society of St. Vincent de Paul. Your Donor Advised Fund offers a simple and effective way to make a meaningful impact in the lives of those in need in our community. By designating St. Vincent de Paul as a beneficiary, you can continue to spread love and kindness, helping us keep hope alive during these challenging times.

If you have any questions about making a gift through your Donor Advised Fund or about a previous donation, please reach out to financial or tax advisor.

Three Easy Steps to Donate to St. Vincent de Paul

- 1. Recommend a Grant:** Suggest a grant from your Donor Advised Fund to St. Vincent de Paul to support our mission of assisting our neighbors in need.
- 2. Make Your Recommendation:** Log into your Donor Advised Fund account or contact your account representative. There are over 1,000 fund sponsors nationwide, including organizations such as the Baton Rouge Area Foundation, Fidelity, and Schwab.
- 3. Complete the Donation:** After logging in, enter our EIN (Tax ID #) in the charity section to make your contribution.

EIN (Tax ID #): 72-0646911

Legal Title: Particular Council of St. Vincent de Paul of Baton Rouge, Louisiana

Mailing Address: P.O. Box 127, Baton Rouge, LA 70821-0127

Thank you for considering a gift that can transform lives!

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

Non-Profit Org.
U.S. Postage
P A I D
Baton Rouge, LA
Permit No. 1272

† *Embracing New Beginnings*

Dear Friends and Supporters,

As many of you know, in September our former CEO of 35 years, Michael Acaldo, transitioned into the national SVDP CEO position and is no longer in Baton Rouge. While we will certainly miss Michael, we look ahead with optimism. Thanksgiving is just around the corner and our team is preparing for one of our busiest seasons. We're gearing up for our annual Thanksgiving meal, providing a hot meal and a welcoming place to gather and give thanks on Thanksgiving Day.

We are also proud to announce the successful completion of our collaboration with WBRZ "2 The Pantry" at the end of September. This partnership has enabled us to extend our reach and provide even more support to those in need. Together, we can ensure that no one in our community goes hungry.

In addition, we're thrilled to welcome new members to the St. Vincent de Paul team! Please join us in welcoming our new Chief Operating Officer, Austin Lowrance; Director of Shelter Programs, Dakasha Leonard; Stores Director, Josh Lopez; and our new Human Resource Generalist, Angela Fetters. Their fresh perspectives and passion will undoubtedly enhance our efforts and help us continue to serve our community effectively.

As we navigate this transition and embrace the upcoming season of gratitude, we remain committed to our mission and excited about the journey ahead. Thank you for your continued support and dedication to St. Vincent de Paul.

-- Cheryl Cochran, Interim CEO, St. Vincent de Paul Charities

Donate Your Vehicle to St. Vincent de Paul!

At St. Vincent de Paul, we depend on donations of vehicles and boats to support our essential charitable programs. Thanks to the kindness of community members, contributions of cars, boats, motorcycles, RVs, tractors, riding lawnmowers, and jet skis turn into funds for the services we offer. If you're interested in donating a car, boat, or recreational vehicle, please call us at (225) 383-7837, extension 204, or visit our website at svdpbr.org.