

## SVdP: Raising our Profile

Frédéric Ozanam was committed to service, fellowship and spirituality. Humility with respect to service was also a key value. Of course, in the 1800's of France, there wasn't a specific reference to not being on local news or Fox TV—nor was it an option. Well, times have changed and our humble approach to service will not change, but we are willing to use another tool to encourage others to join our work—media coverage. In fact, though 19th century France did not have cable channels, Ozanam did say, "Don't make yourself visible, but let others see you." So we are pleased to note that the Champion Guidance Men's Center was recently featured on Fox Sports TV. Video clips will be available by CD shortly.

For later this year, we also have a commitment from an ad agency, Whitty Hannel, to develop materials such as billboards and printed materials. We hope that their creative work will share our timeless message of service, fellowship and spirituality in ways that will grab the attention of harried people who sincerely want to slow down and engage in the world.



## Spring ReBirth in Retail Services

We have spent the winter trimming, pruning and preparing for a spring rebirth of our thrift store operations. In fact, we now call all that we do with respect to those operations, car sales, and potential new earned revenue ventures by a new name – Retail Services. Two current managers, Ray Carney and Cheryl Meyer have been named Retail Services Managers and staff have been reassigned with a focus on developing the Fremont Store as a Hub, reducing costs in the Main Warehouse, improving car sales and offering new products such as a Nonprofit Discount Voucher. Find out more about the voucher at [www.svdp-alameda.org](http://www.svdp-alameda.org).

We have also opened our doors in order to let in the fresh air of new ideas. Two Academy of Art Students, Melissa Winn and Natasha Loncar, have been working on a redesign of our facades. MBA's, from the Stanford Business School Alumni Consulting Team, have begun meeting with us to improve our retail operations. So do check us out through the course of this year as we spring back to better operations. And better yet, shop.

## Ways to Connect in a Busy World: Volunteering, Car Donations, Annual Fund, Special Event, Planned Giving

These are busy times and it can be difficult to engage in the world around you. We offer a few opportunities to consider:

- **Volunteering:** SVdP is an extremely diverse organization and we have an array of opportunities – from working directly with people, to food, to retail, to office work – we can find a way for you to help us, help others. See [www.svdp-alameda.org](http://www.svdp-alameda.org) for listings.
- **Car Donations:** We have moved our car sales to the front of our District Council offices and have begun to sell cars much more quickly. So now the problem is – we need more cars! Please consider donating your vehicle to us.
- **Development Committee and the Annual Fund:** We are just beginning to shape a Committee with a goal of creating a more structured Annual Fund. If you are interested in being part of this effort to improve our sustainability, please begin by signing up for a tour via email at [info@svdp-alameda.org](mailto:info@svdp-alameda.org) and/or make your donation to SVdP Annual Fund 2004 via our website or by check. Call Philip Arca, Executive Director, at (510) 636-4246 if you are interested in being part of the effort.
- **Special Event:** Several special events are on the horizon, including a new event at Club One in May. KISS FM, an old school rhythm and blues radio station will be a co-sponsor. Keep your eye out for more details.
- **Planned Giving:** If you have listed us in your will and/or in some other planned giving instrument, please do inform us. We want to recognize you and we also envision an annual gathering in which generous individuals such as yourself share their story in order to inspire others to think long term about the work of SVdP.

## How to Reach Us

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**Food Donations:** Jerry Ratti (510) 636-4250

**Auto Donations:** Charles McGlothen (510) 636-4245

**Dining Room:** Sr. Mark Sandy (510) 451-7676

**Visitation Center:** Sr. Marion Bill (510) 444-3790

**Men's Center:** Stephen Krank (510) 444-0269

**General Info:** [info@svdp-alameda.org](mailto:info@svdp-alameda.org)

**Website:** [www.svdp-alameda.org](http://www.svdp-alameda.org)



## Strength in Numbers

We all know that Vincentians in our County put their faith into action all year round. In this Easter Season with its promise of new life and hope, Vincentians also give new life and hope to the Society by involving their loved ones. There are generations of Vincentians and "Couples for Vincent" that follow in the footsteps of our founder and his wife, Frédéric and Amélie Ozanam. Some conferences have father and daughter links and many others have "husband and wife teams" that "walk the talk"—faith with works (*James 2:17*).

Brian and Cynthia Ney have been Vincentians at St. Edward's Conference in Newark since 2001. They have a son, Daniel, an 8th grader at St. Edward's School who tags along with them when they visit their "brothers and sisters in Christ". Cynthia says, "we bring



Russ and Norma Sell

more than material supplies, food, and clothing and referral services. We bring our presence, the spirit and love of Frédéric Ozanam." Their work has sparked them to be strong advocates for affordable housing and to work with faith-based organizations like COR (Congregations Organizing for Renewal) and the Catholic Housing Initiative. Marie Stump tells us, "I got involved with SVdP in 1970 at Holy Rosary Church. I worked side by side with Mr. Stuart. We had a project called 'The Truck of Love' and I was the Chairperson. We collected clothes, food and money for the poor people of Buckeye, Arizona. Father Elias used the back of his truck to say the Mass. We made a commitment to these people to help build a chapel. With our hard work and help from other organizations, we collected enough money to build the Chapel. When I moved to Newark, I got involved with the SVdP Conference at St. Edward's Parish." For 10 years, Marie has been one of the Spiritual Advisors and now her friend Pat Grandon has joined her. Pat says, "I started St. Vincent de Paul in 2002. My best friend and co-worker Marie Stump lost her husband and asked me if I would be her partner. By then Marie and I were teaching CCD. Eight times a grandmother and two times a great grandmother, all the things I have done are volunteer. This is how I serve my parish and my brothers and sisters out there."

Russ and Norma Sell became Vincentians in the summer of 1988. As a child, Norma remembers seeing a car park outside her house and two men getting out and carrying bags of groceries up the front steps. Twice that month they returned.

When Norma and Russ' youngest son turned 16 and their two oldest children were in college, Russ and Norma decided it was time to do more work for their church—St. Edward's. Norma wanted to return to SVdP the help her parents received. They soon learned that being a Vincentian is not an easy vocation. Russ and Norma began serving Newark's community but now also help at SVdP's Free Dining Center in Downtown Oakland, the Veteran's Hospital in Livermore, support the Tri-City Deanery in Southern Alameda County and presently are on the Planning Committee for Project Love.

Their children, on occasion, have assisted on their calls. They, too, have compassion for the less fortunate. In fact, extended family and friends, knowing of their ministry, have also engaged in serving the less fortunate.

## Furniture Assembly Day: BUILDING the FUTURE

On Saturday, January 31, 2004, an eclectic group of people came together in a cold warehouse to assemble some eclectic furniture – chairs, tables, and – uh odd-shaped tables. It may not sound that exciting, but it was one of those tangible, literally hands on projects with real benefits for all involved.



It helped build fellowship amongst Board Members, guys from the Champion Guidance Center for Men, young adults and even younger adults—teenagers. And for all involved there was a strong sense of accomplishment. And also important in these tough economic times—this work had financial impact. These chairs were donated to the Society by a local furniture dealer and are already flying out of our stores.

It must be said that some were more puzzled than others by the chair assembly, but all were willing to give it a go. Don't worry, we won't name names. Thanks to dedicated, hard-working and good-humored volunteers we were able to assemble 176 chairs and 88 tables on Furniture Assembly Volunteer Day.

## Saint Vincent de Paul stores

**Alameda**  
2315 Lincoln Ave.  
(510) 865-1109  
Manager: Aida

**Fremont**  
3777 Decoto Road  
(510) 792-3711  
Manager: Beth

**Livermore**  
1817 W. 2nd St.  
(925) 455-1104  
Manager: Margaret

**Oakland (East)**  
9235 San Leandro St.  
(510) 636-4252  
Manager: Leab

**Oakland (Downtown)**  
2272 San Pablo Ave  
(510) 834-4647  
Manager: Mary



# president's message

by Vaughn Donahue, President

As we approach spring and Easter, we look forward to new life. Last week we were visited by Terry Wilson, President of Western Region of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul, and his wife. In addition to the good fortune of their fellowship, the timing of their visit opens reflections on where we are and where we are going at the District Council as this year moves forward.

Even though this has been a difficult year financially and has brought hardships and staff changes, Terry brought us positive thoughts to keep in mind.

He talked about not losing sight of the fact that a big piece of our mission is to help people help themselves every much as providing emergency care. This year we have not had to reduce any programs but have expanded each of our major programs, in order to help others help themselves.

Terry reminds us that we need to look forward to this Easter season remembering that as long as we are about Jesus' work, everything we need will be there.

My message is just this, "everything we need will be there." And of course, I wish a very Happy and Blessed Easter Season to all!

## Vincentian Family Day BRIDGES the BAY

Approximately twenty members of our Conferences gathered with two hundred other members of the Vincentian Family throughout the Bay Area on February 6 at Church of the Visitation in San Francisco. We shared the evening event with representatives from the Congregation of the Missions, Daughters of Charity, Ladies of Charity and the Society of St. Vincent de Paul. It was a great evening for spirituality and fellowship—and bonding across the Bay.



## WE'RE COOKING: Spiritual Advisors Formation and Workshops

According to the experts, here's the secret recipe for a successful meeting: start with a meaningful topic (e.g. Vincentian Spirituality), add a dynamic speaker whose faith is grounded in Vincentian Spirituality (i.e. Father Pedro), and top off with the fellowship of caring and dedicated Vincentians. What you wind up with is a group of spiritually renewed and enriched Vincentians who have a clearer understanding of their vocation. This is exactly what occurred on November 15, 2003 at the Formation Session for Spiritual Advisors led by Father Pedro Villarroya, CM, our Western Region Spiritual Advisor. The aim of the session was to give an overview of what Vincentian Spirituality is and what role the Spiritual Advisor plays in keeping Vincentians grounded.

Father Pedro noted that what truly sets us apart as Vincentians is that we bring the "good news" of our Lord directly to the poor in their homes. Father reminded us that to nurture our vocation, we need to insure that all our actions are grounded in Vincentian spirituality. This is "the rock foundation" that allows us not only to do the work that we are doing but is also our path to spiritual development.

On February 21, 2004, thirty-one Vincentians gathered with Fr. Jayson Landeza, Spiritual Advisor for the District Council, to explore the spirituality and charism of St. Vincent de Paul and Frédéric Ozanam. This half-day workshop was dedicated to furthering the training and discernment process of Spiritual Advisors. There were 13 Conferences represented that day.

## Dining Room, Food Locker and "FOOD INSECURE"

The Food Locker and Dining Room are special places where people from all walks of life can share in the preparation and dining of a meal. Job titles, portfolios and labels do not mean much here.

So there has not been much of a stir with a new term, "food insecure". Food insecure is the new term for describing someone that is hungry. And according to the County of Alameda, nearly 21% or 53,000 adults are food insecure. Obviously, this number is not inclusive as kids are not factored in, and we know we have many hungry children.

Other data from the County notes:

- The 2000 Census estimates are that in 1999, 13.8% of children under 18 lived in poverty with 10.1% of those 18 and over also experiencing that difficulty.
- The estimated number of homeless in Alameda County on any given night might be from 6,000 to 12,000. There are more than 1,200 men registered at the Champion Guidance Center for Men.

So, the data tells the same old story. There are many people in pain and distress. No matter what names you use, hunger and poverty and dignity are issues that SVdP is committed to addressing.

## Oakland St. Vincent de Paul / Rotary #3 Doctors Clinic Opens

Homeless men, women and children in downtown Oakland now have a new resource for medical care. Dr. Thomas Schmitz and Dr. John Flaningam, both long time volunteers of the SVdP Free Dining Room, noticed an overwhelming need for medical services and teamed up with Rotary International to aid Oakland's indigent. The clinic has just begun and is open every other Friday. Five to ten men are seen each session. It is filling a huge gap in the medical safety net and is an amazing example of volunteer effort.

It should be noted that this time the "doctors were following the nurses' orders" as the provision of medical services at the Dining Room all began with volunteer nurses. In March 2001, a small but dedicated volunteer staff opened the Oakland St. Vincent de Paul Nurse Run Clinic to address the need. The current staff includes public health nurses Kathy Ahoy and Rose Luey, nurses Fr. Tim Godfrey, SJ and Janet Waring, ancillary volunteers Ying Li and Samuel Merritt College Nursing Instructor Joan Bard. They started in a small room next to the Chapel off the courtyard of the Dining Room. All the services, which include blood pressure testing, medication review, counseling, nutritional information, general health education, HIV testing infant and childhood immunizations are given free.

## Visitation Center ACTIVITIES

Every Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday, from 10 am to 12 noon, the children's play area of the Visitation Center is filled with the laughter, noise (and sometimes tears) of the children of women attending the ESL classes offered at the Center. The Center offers child supervision during these class hours so that the women can be free to learn and practice their English speaking skills.

Anne Hamilton, a teacher from the Oakland Adult School, began teaching these classes in March 2003. The classes, which are supported by CBET, Community Based English Tutoring, have enrolled more than sixty women since they began and have a solid core of about twenty students who come regularly each day. The classes offer the women an opportunity to study English and also to learn basic survival skills—how to deal with family situations, school issues and community interactions. For example, they learn the vocabulary they will need for visits to the doctor or meetings with school personnel. Perhaps most important is the sense of community and mutual support that has developed among the women. The staff at the Center has noticed a marked improvement in the language skills of the women participating in the class and the great ease they show in their dealings with others.

Anne Hamilton recently remarked that the group has really become an extended family. During a recent discussion focused on the meaning of love, one of the students commented, "Love is sincerity, respect, compassion and understanding." Anne, who has been a teacher in public schools for more than 11 years, says that the enthusiasm of these women is a constant inspiration to her.

## Dining Room Service and Serving for All

At the St. Vincent de Paul Free Dining Room, there have been some new additions to our volunteer contingent.

On Sundays, four or five young men from a program called Bridges have come to help prepare a meal. The boys live in a group home and come with their Activities Director. Each has his own story as to why he is living in a group home setting, but all have one thing in common: each of them has been removed from his home because his parents are unable to give him the love and care he needs. These young men attend regular public high schools and have committed no crimes. These Bridges volunteers come to help at the Dining Room as a reward for their behavior and performance in their group home.



## THE VINCENTIAN QUARTERLY

The Vincentian Quarterly is published four times a year by The Society of St. Vincent de Paul of Alameda County. We are a nonprofit charitable organization dedicated to helping the hungry, the needy and others less fortunate than ourselves. We do this by helping them with food, temporary lodging, clothing, furniture and providing employment in our facilities, to make their lives a little easier. We carefully protect the dignity of every person we encounter through our work. Our funding comes from donations of used clothing, and household goods, furniture, food and financial contributions.

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