



Society of St. Vincent de Paul of Alameda County

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**Making a List and Checking it Twice for 500 Needy Families:
Low-Income Moms & Kids Hit Hard by Economy**

Media Advisory
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(Please call to make arrangements for any interviews or photos)

More than 300 poor families will receive Christmas baskets this week in West Oakland, with 200 more families on a waiting list. The Society of St. Vincent de Paul is presenting gift baskets with children's clothing, toys and grocery gift cards to very low-income families. More than 500 families signed up this year for baskets from the SVdP Visitation Center for Women and Children. Families have been scheduled to receive baskets throughout the week. The Society hopes to provide baskets for the 200 families who are on the waiting list by next week.

The SVdP Visitation Center for Women and Children is a daytime, drop-in center for homeless and low-income women and their children. Located in West Oakland, the Visitation Center provides free programs and services that improve the quality of life for women and children living in poverty.

Opened in 1991, the Visitation Center receives more than 20,000 visits per year. All of the women who come to the Visitation Center are low-income, and many of them are marginally housed or homeless. The services offered to guests include:

- Hot showers and hygiene kits
- Laundry facilities
- Distribution of women's and children's clothing
- Distribution of diapers and formula for infants
- Free on-site medical clinic
- Access to computers
- Food vouchers
- Holiday gifts for children
- Help desk providing referrals to housing, drug and alcohol rehabilitation programs, and crisis intervention services

St. Vincent de Paul's Oakland Community Center is also home to the Free Dining Room, serving about 1000 hot meals daily to those in need. The campus feature two Daytime drop-in centers (Champion Guidance Center for Men, Visitation Center for Women and Children) along with other services to provide a path forward to those living in poverty:

- Job training through the Kitchen of Champions and the Champion Work Force.
- A computer lab with training and open time.
- Classes and groups (tailoring, English conversation, Bible study, Job Club).
- Health clinic in partnership with Alameda County Health Care for the Homeless.
- Mental health counseling in partnership with Catholic Charities.
- Legal services in partnership with Homeless Action Center.
- Substance abuse recovery services in partnership with Narcotics Anonymous.
- Referral services to housing and crisis intervention providers
- Intake for the Alameda County Homeless Court program.