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Saint Vincent de Paul Conference, Saint John Neumann Parish, Canton, Michigan.

1st Quarterly Report Update, - January 1, 2013.- March 31, 2012

“What does love look like? It has the hands to help others. It has the feet to hasten to the poor and needy. It has eyes to see misery and want. It has the ears to hear the sighs and sorrows of men. That is what love looks like.”

~Saint Augustine



Hello Fellow Parishioners,

We, the members of the Saint Vincent de Paul Conference are part of the Christian Service efforts at SJN have just finished our first quarter of service in 2013. We have had a very active group expanding to 26 members joining as full or associate members. We are an all volunteer group supported by the church with meeting space and endorsement from the parish priest, Fr. Ron Richards. The committee has been lead since Sept. 2011 by Lorraine and Don Zaksek, (President and Treasure), and Gerry Gutkowski. (Vice President), and Daniel Faoro (Secretary). We have been blessed to be lead in Prayer by Deacon Pat (Spiritual advisor) at the start and close of our meetings.

We serve the poor after providing a thorough background check, a review of personal finances and financial budgeting, and assist them in procuring the social service benefits they are entitled to. Since Jan. 1, 2013 we have provided \$15,161 in support to respond to 99 persons receiving assistance from families/individuals to prevent evictions, termination of utility services, meet medical needs, and provide emergency car repair, and food / household needs. In addition to the clothes and other donations to the SVdP store we receive the generous support from parishioners and outreach efforts, “Top Hat Sundays”, and other parish fund raisers.

We participated in local SVdP training sessions and continuing education sessions to understand and assist those we serve by making them aware of social service benefits and aid for utility payment and foreclosure prevention assistance .

New Systemic Change Program: We are being encouraged to understand the families and individuals we serve and the deeper causes that impact the poor; divorce, substance abuse, low income positions, lack of access to health care expensive habits, and budgeting issues. Transportation access is a major problem to people we support. We participated in a new collaboration with United Way and the Metro West Area SVdP conferences to provide support for auto repair and we are looking for ride share and reduced rate cab fare programs and possible support with public transportation bus services. We are participating with other SVdP conferences to better understand how we can serve the homeless in the area . Our members have attended numerous training sessions in the Detroit area to become familiar with skills to serve area residents, learn how to help families apply for social service programs, and state and federal assistance programs for the poor.

On April 20 and 21, 2013 before and after masses we will collect clothing and appliances for our “Bundle Days event”. Look for the script program registration information handouts on the tables in the entry hall of the church. We are registered for the Kroger Community Rewards Program, Holiday Market “eScrip” and for the Meijer’s scrip program and we’ll have a registration drive and gift card sale on April 26th, and 27th, 2013 after masses.

Our information and web site is managed by Matt Dame, it can be found at our web site, http://www.stjohnneumann.us/st_vincent_depaul.html. We meet at 7.00PM on the second Monday evening of the month in the SJN Elizabeth Seaton room. We look forward to new members at varying levels and ability, full, associate, and our youth group. Thank you for your continued support. Those interested in being members call the Parish office (734) 455-5910 and leave a message for Lorraine Zaksek with your name and phone number.

Two portraits of those we serve, their real names were withheld. We continue to work with them , pray for and learn from them how to better serve God through the poor and in the spirit of Christ.



John is an older man who is now unemployed and once had a high income position. He now suffers from a significant health problem and is basically disabled. He has family responsibilities and cares for two older children as well. We assisted him in paying bills for utilities and he must now look for other forms of federal and state assistance and may need to relocate to a rent assisted housing complex.



Sally is an older woman with three grown children and was abused by her husband and turned to alcohol and has help from a shelter organization. She has gone through a substance abuse program. We provided rent assistance and spoke to her landlord and she appears to be making progress with her personal finances.

Thank you for your support of the poor in the name of Christ,

Saint Vincent de Paul Conference Members.