



THE VINCENTIAN WAY

The Official Newsletter of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul of Long Island

We Help People...

ISSUE 1 ♦ 2019



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(516) 746-8250

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(631) 858-0380

A MESSAGE FROM TOM ABBATE CEO and Executive Director



Dear Friends,

In recent months, there has been no shortage of news stories highlighting the vast divide that exists in our country. The impact on the most fragile among us - the sick, the elderly, children and the poor is devastating. It calls out for all of us to do better. Our world needs good people to reach out and put their fellow man first.

As Mother Theresa said, "If we have no peace, it is because we have forgotten that we belong to each other."

We see the impact of the injustices faced by so many in our work at the Society of St. Vincent de Paul. Neighbors that find themselves struggling to feed their

families, or provide a warm safe home often face a myriad of obstacles that are not experienced by all members of our communities.

As we enter the season of Lent, we are reminded in a powerful way of the teachings and the suffering of Jesus – both for our salvation. Our Vincentian charism challenges us to see the face of Jesus in those we serve. We are examples to the world to focus on our similarities not our differences.

As Vincentians, we look to the example of our founder, Blessed Frédéric Ozanam, to guide our ministry of helping neighbors in need. Embodying Frédéric Ozanam's attributes is what enables our Society to continue to thrive and serve our neighbors. Who among us will be an "Ozanam for our Time?" Why not all of us?

I wish you and your families a very Happy Easter.

Sincerely yours in the Spirit of St. Vincent de Paul,

Thomas J. Abbate

CEO & Executive Director

DONORS AND PARTNERS

PHIL BOYLE HOLIDAY DRIVE



SVDPLI CEO/Executive Director Tom Abbate and Development Director Joanne Courtien join NY State Senator Phil Boyle (District 4) for his "Tis the Season for Giving" Winter Drive in December.

GIRL SCOUTS SMITTEN MITTENS



The Girl Scouts of Suffolk County participated in a "Smitten Mittens" Valentine's Day drive at their Commack location. Troops across Suffolk County collected mittens, scarves, hats and coats to give to neighbors in need.

MOLTE GRAZIE TO THE SONS & DAUGHTERS OF ITALY



(L to R) Teresa Aprigliano and John Amodeo of the Partner Project; Mark Ventimiglia, Cellini Lodge President; Joanne Courtien, SVDPLI Director of Development

The Society of St. Vincent de Paul Long Island was so grateful to be honored by the Order Sons and Daughters of Italy (OSIA) in New Hyde Park (Cellini Lodge #2206) along with the Partner Project on January 11th. Proceeds from the chapter's Annual Charity Night will go to support the UPLIFT Program of the Nassau North District Council.

Founded in 1905, OSIA is the largest and longest-established national organization for men and women of Italian heritage in the United States, and like SVDPLI, draws from Catholic social teaching to seek the betterment of society at-large.

RAISING FUNDS & AWARENESS

DESTINATION UNKNOWN: A JOURNEY INTO FAITH

On November 8th, SVDPLI had the exciting pleasure of hosting a young adult networking event at Destination Unknown Beer Company (DUBCO) in Bay Shore! Throughout the evening, participants heard from our young adult Vincentians, enjoyed a free beer tasting and played a round of pop culture trivia—complete with SVDP-themed prizes! We had a great turnout and enjoyed sharing our mission and volunteer opportunities with our guests, many of whom expressed interest in becoming more involved with the Society as community partners, advocates and volunteers.



Development Director Joanne Courtien, Development Associate Taelor Nagle, Director of Vincentian Services Terri Zenobio and Development Manager Erin Geier



Peter DiSilvio and Jose Velasquez, Vincentians from St. James Conference (Seaford) spoke to our young adult attendees about their involvement in SVDPLI and encouraged them to do the same.

A RECORD-BREAKING

#GIVING TUESDAY

SVDPLI is proud to announce that on November 27th, we smashed our previous Giving Tuesday record and raised a total of \$13,665 over the course of one day! Following Black Friday and Cyber Monday, Giving Tuesday is a worldwide philanthropic call to remember the true meaning of the holiday season. Thanks to all who donated, including our “Angel Investors” who matched all gifts up to \$6,000, we were able to answer that call! A special thanks to The Howard and Barbara Farkas Foundation, the Al & Peggy DeMatteis Foundation, Dr. & Mrs. John Franco, Mr. John Gatto and two anonymous donors for leading the way as our Angel Investors.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO YOU—CELEBRATE WITH US TOO!



Did you know that in 2018, Facebook users raised \$300 million for causes they care about? The world's largest social media network has transformed itself into one of the easiest ways to give back, and there's no better way of doing that than by donating your birthday!

Two weeks prior your birthday, Facebook will automatically prompt you to start a fundraiser for one of 750,000 available nonprofit organizations. Creating the fundraiser is as simple as selecting "Society of St. Vincent de Paul in the Diocese of Rockville Centre" as your beneficiary, setting a monetary goal, and sharing

your post with friends and family. Donors can input their credit card info directly into Facebook's secure system, or pay through PayPal. And Facebook waives all processing fees on donations—meaning that 100% of the funds raised by you and your peers go straight to causes you care about!

For questions, or for help setting up a Facebook birthday fundraiser, please call us at 516-822-3132 or contact Erin Geier at egeier@svdpli.org.

BLI SHOE-PER BOWL



SVDPLI was so fortunate to participate in 106.1 BLI's "Shoe-per Bowl" party on January 30th! As an alternative to Super Bowl Sunday, BLI hosts this annual "ladies' night" at the Stereo Garden in Patchogue, complete with food, raffles and a musical half-time show. Attendees were encouraged to donate new or gently-used shoes, which were later donated to our thrift stores. An enormous thank you to 106.1 BLI for including us in this exciting event!



"ROUND UP FOR CHANGE" At Our Thrift Stores

The next time you're headed to the checkout at our Huntington or Garden City Park thrift stores, you may be asked to round your total to the nearest dollar. Although it may seem like such a simple act, you'll become one of the many customers donating spare change to SVDPLI's programming. In the end, your small act of selflessness, along with our other shoppers, will yield huge results for our neighbors in need!

RAISING FUNDS & AWARENESS

COME 'DRIVE OUT POVERTY' WITH US!

SAVE THE DATE
SOCIETY OF ST. VINCENT DE PAUL LONG ISLAND

16th Annual Golf Classic

May 13th, 2019
Tam O'Shanter Club

Contact for more information
(516-822-3132)

Help 'Drive' Out Poverty

Join us on **Monday, May 13th** for our 16th Annual Golf Classic at Tam O'Shanter Club in Brookville, NY. This year, SVDPLI will be celebrating two honorees who embody the values of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul: "Volunteers of the Year" Mary and Jack McCaffery and "Business Partner of the Year" HUB Truck Rental Corp.

As always, the Golf Classic will feature a fun day of golf, complete with lunch on the green, cocktails, dinner, a silent auction and raffle prizes. All proceeds will aid us in our mission of helping those struggling with poverty here on Long Island.

To register, visit www.svdpli.org/annual-golf-classic, or contact Erin Geier at 516-822-3132 or egeier@svdpli.org.

JOIN US FOR THE 'TOUCH-A-TRUCK'

WBAB 106.1 BLI
102.3 LONG ISLAND

TOUCH-A-TRUCK
Family Health Fair

SATURDAY MAY 4TH
10 AM - 3 PM
(RAIN DATE: SATURDAY, MAY 11TH)

AT NYC LIVE, HOME OF THE
NASSAU VETERANS MEMORIAL COLISEUM
IN UNIONDALE

ADMISSION IS FREE!

YOU AND YOUR KIDS CAN GET UP-CLOSE TO UNIQUE
AND ONE-OF-A-KIND VEHICLES AND BIG TRUCKS!

ATTENDEES ARE ENCOURAGED
TO BRING GENTLY-USED CHILDREN'S
CLOTHING TO BENEFIT THE SOCIETY OF
ST. VINCENT DE PAUL OF LONG ISLAND

MORE INFO AT WBAB.COM AND WBLI.COM

On **Saturday May 4th** from 10 AM- 3 PM, we'll be participating at the WBAB & BLI Touch-A-Truck Family Health Fair at NYC Live, Home of the Nassau Veterans Memorial Coliseum. This event offers Long Island families an exciting chance to speak with a myriad of healthcare providers, and kids have the opportunity to sit and take photos in big rigs, fire and rescue trucks, police and military vehicles and construction equipment. Admission is free, but attendees are encouraged to bring donations of gently-used children's clothing to benefit SVDPLI. Grab your children and grandchildren and join us for a day of springtime family fun!



Did you know that the Society of St. Vincent de Paul Long Island is also on Instagram? Follow us for a sneak peek into our events, thrift stores and more! Get inspired by our posts that show you how we take an ordinary item or piece of clothing and turn it into something new and modern. Learn about our upcoming events before anyone else. Check out what happens behind the scenes during our toy and clothing drives! You can even post your own photos living in the spirit of St. Vincent de Paul by using our hashtag: #SVDPLI for a chance to be featured on our page!

A DAY ON, NOT A DAY OFF...



Twenty-six students took this motto of the Corporation for National Community Service seriously on Monday, January 21st and participated in our Diocesan Council's Annual Martin Luther King Jr. Day of Service Retreat. Centered around the topic of "Moral Heroes", the students looked at the qualities of a hero and how reflective each of those were to the call to holiness by Pope Francis, eventually identifying Jesus Christ as the true Hero to emulate. Students were engaged in experiential activities, different forms of prayer, and a service project. After taking the Be Kind, Be Fearless pledge, they decorated rocks with inspirational sayings and planned who/where they might distribute them to as part of the Kindness Rocks Project.

ST. JOHN'S UNIVERSITY HOSTS A POVERTY SIMULATION

The Poverty Simulation—a special event that encouraged several St. John's University students to examine the complex issue of increasing awareness and encouraging action on behalf of those who are poor.

Almost fifty students from St. John's University chose to participate in the formation event facilitated by Diocesan Council staff, Paula Migliore and Terri Zenobio, on Thursday, February 21st as part of the ongoing collaboration between SVDPLI and St. John's University Campus Ministry and a shared commitment to promote Vincentian values.

The hour-long event, with each fifteen minutes representing a week, gave students an opportunity to accept roles as low-income family members and experience what it is like to struggle with real life issues such as paying rent, seeking employment, getting children to school and buying food. Other SJU faculty and staff acted as community representatives, with whom participants had to interact to get bills paid or to seek assistance.

In the valuable debriefing period following the role-playing hour, everyone involved had the opportunity to react to their experience of the exercise. This exchange captured feelings from frustration and stress about the difficulties they faced, to admiration and respect for their survival and coping skills needed to survive amidst these challenges. The comments were incredibly insightful and deeply expressive of students and staff alike, who were both prayerful and reflective.

The Poverty Simulation was originally developed as a learning tool by the Reform Organization of Welfare (ROW-EL) Education Association, a Missouri organization of people with low incomes and their allies working together to inform the larger community about the inadequacies and injustices of the welfare system. It sought to move citizens beyond compassion to an active commitment to work toward social justice.

This exercise proved to be a powerful experience that challenged perceptions, changed perspectives and strengthened many students' resolve to not only try to understand more deeply how much time and energy it takes for families to survive day to day but also try to identify ways they could make an impact on these families through service.

All those involved left that evening encouraged that these young adults will carry the Vincentian spirit of helping those in need forward in years to come. Paula Migliore indicated, "I didn't know what kind of seeds were being planted when I was there <at SJU> participating in a Hunger Banquet or serving at Soup Kitchens, but we want them to understand that their diploma will be different because they are graduating from a Vincentian university. It leaves me with renewed hope." And now Paula is an instrumental contributor to our Diocesan Council!

CONFERENCE HAPPENINGS

EPIPHANY DAY OF PRAYER & REFLECTION

Pope Francis' Call to Holiness was the theme Msgr. Jerry Ringenback, our Diocesan Council Spiritual Advisor, chose to focus on for the Epiphany Day of Prayer & Reflection, which took place at St. Thomas More parish in Hauppauge, NY, on Wednesday, January 9, 2019.

This annual event held jointly for almost 200 SVDP Conference members as well as Parish Social Ministers and their core volunteers, not only celebrates all of their efforts on behalf of neighbors in need, especially through the holidays, but also offers them a day to consider how they are all impacted by this service as well.

Fr. Jerry engaged the audience with humor and humility and provided several “nuggets” for people to take home and think and pray more about. He had suggested that a layperson give witness to her personal faith journey to complement his remarks. Mary Freidman, one of the founding members of the Conference at St. Thomas More, beautifully shared how moments of holiness throughout her life led her to become an active Vincentian.

The next day, one Parish Social Minister wrote, “Fr. Jerry was a perfect choice of speakers; he is such a gentle, humble man and I was inspired by his words and felt affirmed that I am holy and chosen by God. Listening to his words reminded me again how much I appreciate our clients and their presence in my life. I am changed by knowing them and cherish our sacred time together. To be mindful of this is a gift. Mary’s witness was straight from her heart and illustrated a life lived in faith, connection and action. It helped me reflect on how many holy moments are in my own life and the connections to so many people throughout my life who have brought me to this holiness.”

FOCUS ON A VINCENTIAN: JOHN GATTO



John Gatto is a person who wears many hats: volunteer, veteran, teacher, father, grandfather, and perhaps most clearly—a friend. At the Society of St. Vincent de Paul Long Island, where he has been a Vincentian for more than 40 years, it is not uncommon to receive an impromptu phone call or visit from John, always with the same cheerful demeanor and enthusiasm for sharing his Conference’s latest news.

Raised by a single mother in Brooklyn, John attributes his compassion for those in need to his childhood. “We had very little,” says John, “but even then, my mother shared everything she had.”

It is that same philanthropic spirit that John uses at St. Matthew (Dix Hills), where he taught religion classes for 30 years, and has remained a staple at Conference meetings since the early 1970s. As a former Conference president and current spiritual reader, John was among the first recipients of the Saint Agnes Medal of Service in 2007. Most recently, he was recognized by Rev. Robert Hewes with the new “John Gatto Room” at St. Matthew’s Parish.

But John’s generosity extends far beyond his parish boundaries. His late wife introduced him to Temple Beth Torah in Melville, where he is still involved with interfaith activities today. He has also spent time volunteering with Campus Ministries, Catholic Charities’ Regina Maternity Services Program and Talbot House.

Throughout his career, John surmises that he has spoken at over 75 of the 133 Catholic parishes on Long Island, and prides himself on never reading from a script. “Your heartfelt experiences are what you share—not words on paper,” John says. Despite all this, John still remains incredibly humble. Very often, he looks back on his life and ponders, “*What did I really do that was so exceptional?*” But when he reads the many thank-you letters he has amassed over the years from people he has helped—from friends, to neighbors in need, to priests and parishioners—he is reminded of the difference he makes. Reflecting on his time with SVDPLI, John’s advice to other Vincentians is to be understanding and tolerant, and never to pre-judge a situation before doing a home visit. His motto is a simple and powerful one; **“Love is only good when it is given away, or else it has no value.”**

A NEIGHBOR'S STORY: IN THEIR OWN WORDS

Earlier this year, our Vincentians at St. Francis Cabrini (Coram) assisted a family at risk of losing their home. As they continue to take the steps necessary to get back on their feet, they shared their experience and gratitude to the Vincentians who helped them:

"To the people who have given my family a second chance:

I have been searching far and wide to find the words to express my gratitude...and in truth, nothing I could come up with would ever suffice. No words could do my feelings justice. My heart is overwhelmed with love and while I've thanked God a billion and one times for this opportunity, it's time I thank all of you.

When my husband began to realize his job was falling apart, the concept of losing our home became very real. I gave birth to a precious baby girl this January, and nothing was more terrifying than not having a roof to put over her head. We prayed for the strength to get through, we prayed for the knowledge to know what to do next. We prayed for love and guidance. We prayed for work. And while months passed with what appeared to be no answer, we continued to pray. After numerous phone calls and desperate pleas for help, I called a number for rental assistance in Suffolk County, only to find that they no longer had the means to help. But the woman I spoke with gave me a glimpse of hope—a distant, shimmering light in the midst of darkness. She told me to try reaching out to St. Vincent de Paul.

I spoke to a man named Robert, who immediately made me feel comfortable enough to speak of my misfortune, and he told me he wanted to help. I can't even begin to describe the moment he told me he would try to help us. I remember holding back tears, and trying to remain calm on the phone. I wasn't sure if he'd be able to help, and I had no idea how long it would take or how much he could even provide. But none of that mattered. God was reminding me that I was not alone, and that someone somewhere cared enough about me and my family—complete strangers—to want to try.

I am eternally grateful, and I have tears in my eyes as I write this. I know that while I've been speaking to one person all along, there are so many of you working hard to help people who can't afford food or a home. I've been in the process of losing mine, and thanks to all of you, we have a second chance—a chance to resurface from the deep waters we've been drowning in. Thank you for all that you do for me and so many others. You are saving lives in more ways than you probably understand.

One day when I get back on my feet, I will pay this forward, and donate to help the next family in need."

THANK YOU DONORS & SUPPORTERS

OCTOBER 2018 - JANUARY 2019

The generosity of private and public funders is essential to the Society of St. Vincent de Paul as it fulfills its commitment as an international organization of Catholic laymen and women who seek in a spirit of justice and charity to help the poor, the needy and the disadvantaged through practical works of charity.

\$5,000 and Over:

SVDPUSA
Catholic Health Services

\$1,000 and Over:

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Mr. and Mrs. John M. Lokay Jr.
Bill Jennings
Mr. and Mrs. Michael E. DeMarco
Mr. Louis G. Sollecito
Mr. and Mrs. John Sweeney
Mr. Al Messina
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Mrs. Helen Campa
St. James Conference Seaford
St. Ignatius Loyola Conference*
United Way of Long Island
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Al & Peggy DeMatteis Family Foundation
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Mr. and Mrs. John J. Howard
The Howard and Barbara Farkas Foundation
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St. Anthony's Conference*
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* *Anthony House Donation*

MAKE IT MONTHLY!



The ACT (Affecting Change Together) Program includes a core group of donors that have pledged to give a specific amount on a monthly basis. It is the most efficient and easy way to help our neighbors in need, and it provides SVDPLI with steady, reliable support necessary to advance our cause. Donations are automatically withdrawn from a bank account or credit card on the 15th of every month, and the amount can be adjusted at any time.

Find out how to become an ACT Monthly donor today!
Visit svdpli.org/get-involved/donate/act-program.

ACT Monthly Donors Affecting Change Together.

The following donors have made a commitment to give a scheduled amount to the Society on a monthly basis.

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Anthony Tabone
Martin G. Tall
John Kevin Mulvey
Peter Bartholomew
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William "Billy" Fowler
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Thomas McCoy
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Daniel Finch
Dianne Jackman

TRIBUTE GIFTS

OCTOBER 2018 - SEPTEMBER 2019

We express our deepest sympathy to the family and friends of the following people in whose memory the Society of St. Vincent de Paul received contributions.

Bob
John
Christy A. Addamo
Jason Arnold
Jeanne Barbato
Vincent Ferrer Barron, Jr.
Roger Baumann
Judi Blake
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Diane Zavacki
Anne Zimmer
George Zitzmann

IN MEMORY OF DECEASED VINCENTIANS

Eternal rest grant unto them, O Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon them. May the souls of the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace. Amen.

Jean Vandenburg

St. Mary of the Isle, Long Beach

Tom Dolan

St. Anthony, Oceanside

John D. Vargus

Holy Spirit, New Hyde Park

John Crivaro (Ret.)

Nassau County Manager, Garden City Store

Dates to Remember

April 7th- Young Adult Service Retreat (Ages 18-39)

May 4th- BLI Touch-a-Truck event

May 5th- Annual Communion Breakfast

May 13th- 16th Annual Golf Classic

June 13th- Friends of the Poor Walk/Run Kickoff

Sept. 28th- 11th Annual Friends of the Poor Walk/Run



Society of St. Vincent de Paul
 249 Broadway
 Bethpage, New York 11714

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SUMMARY OF SERVICE



HOME VISITS
 6,003



Volunteer Hours
 119,217

OUR MISSION

A network of friends,
 inspired by Gospel values,
 growing in holiness and building
 a more just world
 through personal relationships
 with and service to people in need.



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