



ST. VINCENT DE PAUL
SOCIETY OF MARIN

InsideView

2024 NEWS

Expressing Gratitude for the Love in our Community

IT IS OFTEN SAID that love is the strongest force in the world. When we look at the outpouring of generosity, compassion, and commitment in our community, it's not difficult to see where the idea comes from.

The steadfast support of our benefactors gives St. Vincent de Paul the ability to aid our most vulnerable neighbors in Marin County. Without such help, many of our less fortunate community members would be left with nothing. There is no better feeling than handing a client keys to their new home or feeding thousands of hungry mouths every single year. We are making a real difference.

When we are able to help those who need it most, one theme runs through every case: **Gratitude**. These are people who are oftentimes at the lowest point in their lives and feel invisible. Many times they have no one to turn to or trust, let alone a dependable housing or financial situation. They are alone and in search of compassion. You have made it so they find the hope they so desperately need in St. Vincent de Paul.

As the client stories and notes of gratitude we've shared in these pages show, love for our community and a spirit of giving live within all of us. No matter how hopeless a situation may seem, our experience tells us there is no case too difficult to solve at St. Vincent de Paul. We are determined to help every single person who seeks our aid for as long as we serve the people of Marin.

Gratitude from those we serve is the fuel that keeps us going. We are eager to take on the next challenge and welcome you to join us in our journey of ending homelessness and hunger in Marin.

Gratitude *noun* /grædə'tud/

1. the quality of being thankful; readiness to show appreciation for and to return kindness. 2. The feeling of appreciation (or similar positive response) by a recipient of another's kindness. This kindness can be gifts, help, favors, or another form of generosity to another person.

You Gave our Community Love

Dear Friends,

Every year since our introduction to Marin in 1946, you have blessed our vulnerable Marin families, children, Veterans, and seniors with love, dignity, and compassion. We are constantly in awe of the steadfast support and outpouring of generosity that our kind benefactors show St. Vincent de Paul. With your partnership, we can confidently continue our critical mission of ending hunger, poverty, and homelessness in Marin County. Thank you for showing our community endless kindness. We are most grateful. **Our work simply would not be possible without you; we are full of gratitude.**

In our work we see those in need of a loving helping hand up every single day, and because of you, we are able to meet people where they are and give them all the hope, encouragement, and resources they need to better their lives. So often, we act as the guardian angels that allow our clients to finally feel like someone is looking out for them, seeing them and hearing them. You have given us this honor. **Thank you for always answering our calls to action.**

As you read on in this newsletter, you will find that our programs are expanding and achieving milestones of which we are incredibly proud. You will hear stories of new beginnings and endless gratitude from our clients, and you will understand why we are so fulfilled doing this important work. **Together we are changing lives.**

We remain committed to ending homelessness in Marin and your kind generosity has allowed us to **house 271 individuals in the last year alone** with the assistance of one or more SVdP safety net programs. This is no small feat. You are getting people off the streets and into warm and safe housing. **Thank you for putting a roof over our community's head and allowing them dignity.**

With your partnership, our SVdP conferences have completed over **1,500 home visits in the past year, helping more than 3,000 people.** Additionally, our 11 incredible conferences distributed more than \$900,000 in financial aid, and almost half was used directly for rental assistance.

We extend our most sincere gratitude to every one of you for being part of the solution to feeding the hungry and housing the homeless and those who are precariously housed. In closing, please read this lovely note from the mother of a client.

"We don't have the money to be big donors, but we thank St. Vincent's for feeding our daughter during her time of need as someone experiencing homelessness."

Gratitude abounding, we thank you for your steadfast support of St. Vincent de Paul Society of Marin.

With gratitude,



Suzanne Swift
President, Board of Directors



Christine Paquette
Executive Director



Kathleen Woodcock
Chief Philanthropy Officer

You have been a refuge for the poor, a refuge for the needy in their distress, a shelter from the storm and a shade from the heat.

— Isaiah 25:4

Finally Arriving Home

THE LAST TIME Monica had a roof over her head she was 17 years old and in her final year of foster care. Now 49 years old, Monica lived for decades as an “anchor-out” in Richardson Bay. This meant she was living on a dilapidated vessel anchored out in the bay, something many locals claim is illegal and poses a threat to safety and the marine environment. **She had nowhere else to go.**

Eventually Monica lost her boat and found herself truly lost. She soon started residing at homeless encampments in Sausalito and Novato when she came onto St. Vincent de Paul’s radar. Monica was initially a decliner of services due to her involvement in previous case management programs in which she struggled to connect and manifest change, causing a deep mistrust in community partners.

Known for our persistence in making sure everyone has access to care, St. Vincent de Paul case managers were able to build a rapport with Monica and assigned her to a female case manager, something we found she was much more comfortable with.

Moving forward, she was assigned as a client under the **Encampment Resolution Program (ERP)**. This program works to resolve encampments in Marin County through intensive case management and help in obtaining permanent supportive housing.

We had her signed up for permanent supportive housing within the first three weeks of engagement.

Monica’s case manager met with her two to three times a week at the homeless encampment she was residing at and continually proved to her that **she could trust SVdP** and accept our resources. Hope was something she finally allowed herself to have.

Something clicked and Monica was suddenly determined to engage with our program to secure a Section 8 Housing Voucher. The process of leaving the encampment was slow and steady but SVdP was able to house her in a hotel for 90 days as we waited for her voucher to process to **get her in stable and safe housing as soon as possible**. This helped Monica stabilize, save money, and separate herself from the trauma of living in a homeless encampment as a single woman.

Today Monica has been in permanent supportive housing for seven months and her transformation is astounding. Walking up to her beautiful apartment, you immediately know it’s her home as she is always singing as you walk to her front door, excited to greet her guests. Monica has waited a lifetime to finally find a home to call her own and is truly content for the first time. **You did this for Monica. Thank you.**



Photo Credit: Lookstudio

Together we are Changing Lives

WHILE IT MAY SEEM like a convenient cliché, it is the honest truth that the work of St. Vincent de Paul wouldn't be possible without the outpouring of love, support, and compassion from our gracious benefactors.

With the aid of your generosity, SVdP **serves more than 8,000 individuals, families, older adults, and Veterans every single year.** To express our gratitude, we would like to share the stories of several clients who have had their lives changed thanks to you.

Cate was an ambitious young woman who wanted to go back to school. In a dire financial situation and without reliable housing, she turned to St. Vincent de Paul who helped her find a stable place to live so she could focus on chasing her dreams. She now works full-time for a social services agency.

Kasey was a young woman in recovery. With the

support of St. Vincent de Paul, she was able to stay sober, find full-time employment, and receive aid from SVdP to move into a safe environment where she could be near her support network.

Mason was a young man who was sleeping in his car and working overnight shifts as a security guard. Unfortunately, his car was repossessed and he found himself without shelter. St. Vincent de Paul stepped in and got him a place of his own where he could start a new chapter in life.

Steve and Isabelle had recently suffered a job loss, and consequently were forced to live in their car and in places not meant for human habitation with their two children. In search for resources, Steve came across our **Help Desk Program**, the only one of its kind in Marin providing walk-up housing search assistance and direct client aid. They were recommended for **SVdP's Rapid Rehousing Program**,



a system that quickly engages with those newly experiencing homelessness to restore them back to stable housing and prevent their entry into crowded shelters or housing programs.

Thanks to their determination to give their children a bright future and with the aid of SVdP, they were able to secure housing within a month of working with us.

Gloria and her young daughter fled their home country of Cuba with the hopes of a better future in the United States. She was starting at square one with a limited English speaking capability, no ready source of employment, and a child to provide for. SVdP was able to step in and secure them with resources and a stable place to call home.

James is a single father who came to SVdP in the hope of finding a place to call home for him and his son. As he was homeless, James was unable to keep his son and he was subsequently sent to live with other family members. With the aid of SVdP, James is working full-time and lives in permanent supportive housing and is able to keep his son with him. He no longer has to worry about where they will spend the night.

Julio came to our Help Desk Program in search of aid to move out of his car and into stable housing. With a long history of alcoholism, Julio was at a point where he was ready to turn his life around and have a safe place to call home. Thanks to the help of SVdP, Julio was able to join our Sober Living Environment Program, find employment and get back on his feet. He is now working full-time and lives in permanent supportive housing where he has been able to start fresh just like he always wanted.

Georgia is a young woman who experienced years of domestic violence and finally escaped only to find herself unsure on how to function alone. The first time living on her own, St. Vincent de Paul was able to step in and provide her with a support network and give her the resources she needed to get employed and find stability in functioning as an individual with freedom.

All of these people have started a new chapter in their lives thanks to you. Your generosity makes it possible for St. Vincent de Paul to say “yes” more often than “no” to clients and get them the aid they so desperately need. **We are so grateful.**

Every time you donate to St. Vincent de Paul, you are helping real people in our community that are grateful beyond words. At SVdP, we know that homelessness doesn't define a person. It can happen to anyone, and for this reason we are dedicated to ensuring our community will always have a safe space to turn to in their moment of need. **You are helping us changing lives. Thank you.**

Please enjoy the below drawing and note that came to us in the mail from the child of a former client.

Gratitude is everywhere we look.



Translation of letter: Thank you St. Vincent de Paul for the help for my family, from people with a huge heart.

Encouraging Involvement in our Community

JUDITH IS DEDICATED to serving our community. She has been deeply involved with public service for much of her life and has also encouraged her children and fellow community members to follow in her footsteps.

A physician at UCSF and mother of four, Judith has always felt that service and thinking about the wellbeing of others is critical in shaping the best version of ourselves. With her children in school, she first got involved in making toiletry kits, Christmas bag gifts, and lunches through their required service hours.

"I think it's really important to instill those values in our children of how they can help and what they can do for other people," Judith said.



When the pandemic shut everything down in early 2020, Judith found herself looking for ways she could immediately help the less fortunate in our community. She found her answer in St. Vincent de Paul.

Familiar with our organization through past volunteer work in SVdP's Free Dining Room, Judith knew that we would need extra hands in feeding our population during lockdown. In response, she began making bagged lunches for our hungry neighbors.

Judith was quick to involve her fellow community members and encouraged them to drop off any food items they had for a bagged lunch such as snacks or

drinks, which her children and their friends would then put together and get ready for drop-off at our kitchen.

Judith has helped make and deliver more than 5,000 meals for our community since March 2020.

With a schedule of making between 50 to 100 bagged lunches twice a month, we could not be more grateful for her steadfast support. **It's people like Judith that are keeping our community fed.**

"I'm very interested in continuing to find ways to encourage not only young people, but everyone to actively do things to help the people in our community," Judith said.

Due to her clear dedication to our community, Judith was asked by our Executive Board Treasurer Duane Geck and his wife Terri to join our Board of Directors and get further involved with SVdP. To our utmost excitement, she accepted in January 2022. Judith is currently serving as our Secretary.

"St. Vincent's gets out there and meets people where they are," Judith said. "They put in a lot of effort to not only find housing for people, but also to help make it sustainable."

St. Vincent de Paul is dedicated to serving every client that comes to us for help. We believe in the dignity of all people and see potential in even the most seemingly hopeless of cases. **No one is turned away when they come to St. Vincent de Paul.**

Judith has seen this through her own experiences at our Free Dining Room, when after one occasion of dropping off bagged lunches, she was warmly greeted by a member of our kitchen staff and quickly asked if she was here for a meal.

"He wasn't going to ask me any questions about who I was or why I needed a lunch, he was just ready to give it to me," Judith said. "I think it's that attitude of whoever comes, we will help, and that's what we want to be fostering for ourselves and for our children."

Judith has seen how we believe in the dignity of all people, foster independence in our clients, and support them every step of the way in their life's journey. It's through this philosophy that we are able to have a 95% success rate in keeping our clients housed. Thank you Judith for all that you do to help keep St. Vincent de Paul a pillar for our community.

If you are interested in volunteer opportunities, please contact Kate Hill at khill@vinnies.org.

Celebrating our Annual Pennies from Heaven Gala

WITH GENEROUS SUPPORT from our extraordinary benefactors, Pennies from Heaven raised more than \$600,000 in support of our mission!

This year we proudly focused on raising funds for housing seniors in our community.

Pushed onto the streets, our low-income elderly neighbors are facing a retirement defined by fear, loneliness, and cold nights, instead of a safe and af-

fordable place to live. With about 75 seniors currently without a stable home in Marin County, the beautiful generosity of our benefactors has helped these struggling individuals and families find a safe place to live with dignity.

Thank you for your support, for we cannot do our work without you. We look forward to seeing you at our 2024 Pennies from Heaven Gala on Saturday, October 12th.





ST. VINCENT DE PAUL
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You're invited!

Join us on **Thursday, March 21 at 4 PM** for a special **open house/ribbon cutting event** celebrating our new Help Desk space at 747 B Street in San Rafael.

Join us for the BIG Shred!

Your donations for shredding services sponsored by Valley Oak Wealth Management's Annual "BIG Shred" benefits St. Vincent de Paul. Join us on April 20th at the Our Lady of Loretto Church parking lot in Novato from 9 AM - 12 PM to shred!

Please consider joining our Legacy Giving Circle

Your legacy gift will provide housing, emergency food and crisis intervention services for our vulnerable community members.

FEDERAL TAX ID #94-1207701

For questions, please contact Kathleen Woodcock, kwoodcock@vinnies.org or 415.297.6587



ST. VINCENT DE PAUL
SOCIETY OF MARIN

THE VINNIES AUXILIARY BOARD
INVITES YOU TO

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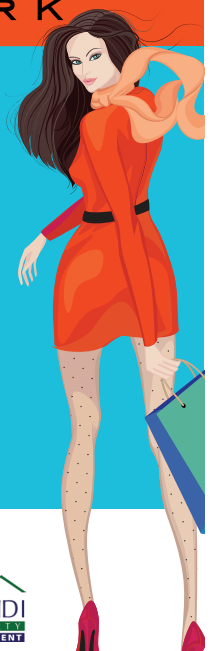
THURSDAY
APRIL 11 2024

SHOPPING
10:00 am-3:00 pm

LUNCH AND
FASHION SHOW
12:00 pm-1:30 pm

TICKETS **\$150.00**
TABLE OF 10 **\$1500.00**

FOR TICKETS CONTACT
Kathleen Lazor Woodcock
at **415.297.6587**
kwoodcock@vinnies.org



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