



ST. VINCENT DE PAUL
SOCIETY OF MARIN

InsideView

2024 NEWS

Inspiring Hope in our Community

EVEN ON THE DARKEST OF DAYS, there is a light that remains waiting to be uncovered. Our community and their endless outpouring of generosity, compassion, and commitment are what make the most despondent of days seem conquerable.

The critical mission of St. Vincent de Paul flourishes with the steadfast support of our benefactors. Without such aid, many of our struggling neighbors 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 tangible difference.

You empower us to help those who need it most. It's because of you that we're able to inspire **hope** in all those we serve. These are people who are oftentimes at the lowest point in their lives and feel like they have no one to turn to. They are scared and alone and in search of a little bit of kindness. You have made it so they find the helping hand they so desperately need at St. Vincent de Paul.

As the client stories 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 daunting to face at St. Vincent de Paul. We are determined to help every single person that walks through our doors as long as we serve the people of Marin.

Seeing hope on the faces of those we help 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.

Hope *noun* /hōp/

1. a person or thing that may help or save someone. 2. grounds for believing that something good may happen. 3. a feeling of trust.

You Gave our Community Hope

Dear Friends,

Our vulnerable neighbors have depended on St. Vincent de Paul since our introduction to Marin in 1946. Thanks to your support, we have been able to continuously bless our community with love and dignity. Your unrelenting compassion for those less fortunate ensure that our mission to end hunger and homelessness in Marin remains firmly unchanged. Thank you for allowing us this honor. **We cannot do our work without you.**

For so many of those we serve, hope for a brighter tomorrow feels like a distant idea. To them, it may feel like the world is against them and that there is no way back to a place of stability. **You answered their call for help.** 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 situations. **Together we are changing lives.**

As the following pages of this newsletter explore, you will discover stories of newfound hope and dedication to creating a brighter Marin County for all. You will hear stories of new beginnings and showcases of outstanding community involvement. Every day we are in awe of not only the steadfast support of our community, but also the incredible transformations of our clients during their life journeys. **You made this possible!**

We remain committed to ending homelessness in Marin and your kind generosity has allowed us to **house 136 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 **1,700 home visits** in the past year, helping more than **3,200 people**. Additionally, our 11 incredible conferences distributed more than **\$750,000 in financial aid**, and almost half was used directly for rental assistance.

As this letter comes to a close, please read this lovely note that we received from a thankful client.

"I am very grateful for the support I received from St. Vincent's. I don't know what I would have done without it. I'm taking baby steps in my housing adventure, but baby steps are whole steps too. I want to show my appreciation and gratitude to the folks who make these programs possible. Thank you so much and God bless you."

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

With gratitude,



Christine Paquette
Executive Director



Kathleen Woodcock
Chief Philanthropy Officer

Those who love the poor in life will have nothing to fear in death.
— St. Vincent de Paul

New Beginnings

S **T. VINCENT DE PAUL'S SOBER LIVING ENVIRONMENT (SLE) PROGRAM** is a supportive housing placement that provides an opportunity for individuals who have experienced intense hardships related to drug misuse, mental health, and various health challenges to seek another chance. This program serves clients on Medi-Cal, those experiencing homelessness, and people newly graduated from detox or treatment and who are sober to gain financial assistance for moving into an SLE. For merely \$3,600 we can house an individual for three to four months while they work on their sobriety.

Please enjoy the following note of gratitude from an individual you've already helped.

Sabrina's Story

"I want to share a little story about myself and how my journey of getting sober started. I was a homeless addict and reached a point where I was tired of living

that lifestyle. I was ready for change.

I spent some time in rehab and knew that if I wanted to stay sober, I would need to look for a Sober Living Environment (SLE). My recovery coach introduced me to Matt Smith, a case manager at St. Vincent de Paul. He got me a spot in a local SLE and paid for my rent. It was crucial to my recovery.

I was so thankful that I was given the opportunity to receive the help I needed to stay sober. Not having to worry about the finances allowed me to dedicate myself to the program. This changed my life.

Since recovering, I have begun volunteering at local organizations to try to support people who are going through the same struggles that I was. St. Vincent de Paul is doing a great job. You change so many lives. I am thankful that I was one of the individuals chosen to get the help they needed.

You have no idea how this has impacted my life, my family, and my friends. I'm in a good position right now and I can't complain. Thank you!"



Finding Hope in the Darkest of Times

A **LIFE DEFINED BY HURT.** Clara had only known pain, first surviving her abusive childhood home, only to find herself married to an abusive husband later in life. She just couldn't take it anymore.

In a fit of panic, Clara fled to the streets on her own and spent years keeping to herself, developing psychological illnesses and dealing with a mounting dependency on alcohol. This was the only way she knew how to cope with her unbearable reality. **There was no hope left inside her.**

Her presence in the unhoused community eventually caught St. Vincent de Paul's eye. Engaging with her and building a trusting relationship took time but was nonetheless extremely rewarding for both Clara and our case managers. SVdP was able to get Clara temporarily housed in a transitional housing program while we worked tirelessly to find a

more permanent situation.

At the same time, her dependent relationship with alcohol was catching up with her. She often required emergency medical care. The fact that this seemed like a dire case didn't scare our case managers away. At St. Vincent de Paul, we refuse to give up. **We believe in the dignity of all people and will always fight for those who seek our aid.**

A light appeared at the end of the tunnel when our case managers were able to secure an apartment for Clara. Unfortunately having a roof over her head didn't mean that her mental illnesses suddenly disappeared. She was terrorized by her own mind, a prisoner of delusions and increasingly afraid and suspicious of everything and everyone. The anguish of her realities were too heavy a load to bear.

She just wanted to be better, wanted to be happy and relieved to be in the new, safe situation St.



Vincent de Paul had worked relentlessly to give her. It wasn't that easy. Even in her most unsure of moments, she knew change had to come from within and she would need to take recovery seriously to create the life for herself she had always dreamed of.

“ At St. Vincent de Paul, we refuse to give up. We believe in the dignity of all people and will always fight for those that seek our aid.”

Clara quit drinking on her own out of sheer determination. She is now four years sober, no easy feat and a massive milestone on her way to a full recovery. Secondly, she started medication to give her control of her own mind back. While this has certainly improved her quality of life, Clara continues to fight the demons in her head and seek the perfect medical combination to free her completely.

Despite this, she remains humble and frugal, existing happily on less than \$400 per month. She takes great care of her appearance and is **sweet and kind to everyone she meets**. She knows all too well that there could always be a deep, dark story behind every smiling face she sees. Kindness to all and acting as a safe space to everyone who crosses her path is her small way of making amends.

Clara has been a client of St. Vincent de Paul for more than five years. To this day, she receives ongoing care from our case managers. When she first began engaging with SVdP, there was still a lot of sentiment in the community that case managers should move along from clients after getting them housed. Clara is only one example for why this is not always the best time to leave a client, right as they begin the difficult journey of navigating their new life on their own.

St. Vincent de Paul case managers were at the forefront of the conversation, advocating for an ongoing relationship with clients, arguing it only



makes sense after having spent so much time building a trusting relationship with them. We saw how keeping clients involved in case management led to higher success rates, especially among chronically homeless individuals like Clara who require difficult long-term work to make the necessary changes needed to build more fulfilling and sustainable lives for themselves.

All of this critical dialogue among community partners paid off. Today, it is common practice for case managers in Marin to **maintain an ongoing relationship with clients at a frequency and intensity that best suits their individual needs**. The compassion and dedication of our case managers, paired with the support of our community is what has allowed us to ensure people like **Clara will never be alone again. Thank you for giving Clara hope.**

Finding Passion in Service

A **S IS A COMMON STORY**, Elaine Ireland spent her adult life working as a professional in the “for-profit” world. She became quite the jack of all trades, working in fields ranging from banking, high tech, to healthcare service organizations. She even created her own consulting firm specializing in business operations, support services, strategic and tactical marketing, internal and external communications, and customer relations. Needless to say, **Elaine is an asset to any organization she dedicates her time to.**

With all this impressive experience, Elaine says that her most meaningful role was working as a Member and Customer Service Director for an organization that supports philanthropic causes worldwide. It was here that Elaine received the highest degree of satisfaction, knowing that she was participating in an effort to give individuals around the world a better life. **Making a difference is immensely rewarding.**

Retirement eventually came knocking and while it was a relaxing paradise for some time, Elaine quickly began feeling like she had too much time on her hands. With an incredible resume in hand and a knowledge that **giving back is food for the soul**, volunteering seemed like the obvious answer to her boredom.

Elaine knew that she wanted to give back to the community in which she resides, Marin County. For the past three years Elaine has graciously donated her time and talent to the non-profit world, prioritizing organizations that provide services to individuals and families that require vital support services to live and thrive in Marin.

By providing administrative support to her chosen non-profits, she was giving each organizations a great

gift. **Assistance of any kind is always so gratefully appreciated** and it absolutely makes a tangible difference in our ability to keep our organizations running smoothly.

However, Elaine still had a critical resource in abundance: time. Paired with her desire to do more for her community, she turned to St. Vincent de Paul.

Elaine was already familiar with SVdP as she is a parishoner at St. Hilary Church in Tiburon and had learned about our organization there. She was eager to reach out, offering to volunteer her time and expertise to help support the development department and the critical work they do. Thrilled to have her on board, we were quick to accept her offer.

“I am honored to be a part of SVdP and gratified to know that through my time and efforts I am helping to support people that are vital to the health and strength of our community,” Elaine said. “So many need assistance as they struggle with economic factors and other barriers to achieve self-sufficiency so they can continue to live in our beautiful and blessed County of Marin.”

We are humbled by Elaine’s respect for SVdP and her willingness to contribute to our cause. St. Vincent de Paul is dedicated to serving every client that comes to us for help. **We could not do this without the support of our community and incredible individuals like Elaine.**

Elaine 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 is through this philosophy that we are able to have a 95% success rate in keeping our clients housed. **Thank you Elaine for all that you do to help keep St. Vincent de Paul a pillar for our community.**



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.

Homelessness can happen to almost anyone. Just one illness, job loss, or economic downturn is all it takes for many of our neighbors to find themselves

short on rent or unable to pay their mortgage. At St. Vincent de Paul, we are dedicated to building a Marin County where no one must worry about how they will access food or shelter if they are facing this type of unexpected crisis.

Thank you for your support, for we cannot do our work without you. **We look forward to seeing you at our 2025 Pennies from Heaven Gala on Saturday, October 11th.**





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Join us for the BIG Shred!

Your donations for shredding services sponsored by **Valley Oak Wealth Management's Annual "BIG Shred"** benefit St. Vincent de Paul. Join us on **April 12th** at the Our Lady of Loretto Church parking lot in Novato from 9 AM - 12 PM! Thank you Anne and Tim Russell of Valley Oak Wealth Management for your partnership.

Please consider joining our Legacy Giving Circle

When you name St. Vincent de Paul Society of Marin County as a beneficiary for either a percentage or specific dollar amount in your will, I.R.A. or estate plan, your bequest will ensure that Marin County residents facing the harsh realities of poverty will always receive comfort and assistance.

Employee Giving

Did you know many companies offer Employee Match Programs? Check to see if this is offered at your company and double your gift to SVdP.

FEDERAL TAX ID #94-1207701

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



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The Vinnies Auxiliary Board invites you to
*Sip * Shop * Socialize*

BOUTIQUE, LUNCHEON and FASHION SHOW
at the MEADOW CLUB featuring

TRINA TURK

Thursday
March 20 • 2025

Shopping
10:00am - 3:00pm

Lunch and Fashion Show
12:00pm - 1:30pm

TICKETS \$175.⁰⁰ TABLE OF 10 \$1750.⁰⁰

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

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