



THE SOCIETY OF ST. VINCENT DE PAUL OF CONTRA COSTA COUNTY

Helping People in Need for 53 Years

SPRING 2017 NEWSLETTER

“St. Vincent de Paul Volunteers Change The Lives of Many”



Jim Noe might be a household name in Contra Costa County after the last few months.

Noe was awarded a Lifetime Achievement Award by the East Bay Leadership Council. He was awarded the Martin Luther King Jr. Humanitarian of the Year Award by the Contra Costa County Board of Supervisors. He was featured as a man who helps the needy in many local papers-- the *East Bay Times*, *The Catholic Voice*, and *Alamo Today*.

For those who haven't met Jim, you may ask “Why all of this recognition?”

Jim Noe has been one of St. Vincent de Paul's most committed and enduring volunteers over the past

30 years. He is a man of talent, vision, and good-will. He is almost always the first person to say, “Yes, I can help,” and “Yes, we can do this!”, when presented with any problem affecting impoverished members of our community.

He is so gifted in identifying the needs of the community and willing and able to meet those needs. After retiring from a successful business career, Noe threw himself into volunteer work full-time, serving as a board member at Shelter, Inc. in Richmond for 15 years and as Shelter, Inc.'s President for 2 years, starting the Swing for Shelter Golf Tournament. He co-founded the San Ramon Ecumenical

Homeless Ministry. Noe has been a member of St. Joan of Arc Catholic Church's St. Vincent de Paul Conference in San Ramon for 15 years. He is an active volunteer at Loaves and Fishes of Contra Costa.

Through this time Noe has worked quietly and effectively to help provide food, clothing, and financial assistance to people in need in Contra Costa County.

Jim served as a board member at Society of St. Vincent de Paul of Contra Costa County (“SVdP”), becoming Board President in 2008 and serving for 6 years.

As Board President, he used his own time and resources—both financial and skills-based—to improve the lives

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Dear Friends,

I have some very inspirational news!

Over the years, St. Vincent de Paul of Contra Costa County has grown remarkably. Our committed group of trained volunteers, known as Vincentians, has steadily increased to over 700 people.

So it is with great pride and gratitude that we announce our newest conference: Our Lady of Mercy Catholic Church in Point Richmond, formed in January.

It was initiated by Our Lady of Mercy's pastor, Father David O'Rourke, who saw a need in the community best addressed through a ministry of St. Vincent de Paul. Before coming to Point Richmond, Fr. David started a St. Vincent de Paul Ministry in Benicia that grew quite rapidly. After moving to Our Lady of Mercy, he wanted to create that same opportunity for parishoners to get involved in Christian charity.

The new conference's spiritual advisor, Anne Brussok, says, "What resonates is that everyone connects with the poor in our community. Seeing the face of Christ in our brothers and sisters in need is a powerful draw and has a profound effect on those of us that participate."

In a short time, it already hosted two Vincentian training events and members have gone on home visits with Vincentians from other conferences.

In a parish of 85 families, Our Lady of Mercy conference already has nine members--tiny but mighty!

Our Lady of Mercy shows that St. Vincent de Paul has unstoppable love and strength. Where there's a need, we Catholics are willing to help. And when people are willing to help members of their community who are in crisis, we are advancing closer to defeating poverty and bringing God's love to all.

With Gratitude,



Melanic Anguay

Executive Director

of countless Contra Costa County residents

Under Noe's leadership, SVdP grew and expanded its services to meet needs he recognized, including building the St. Vincent de Paul Free Dining Room in partnership with Loaves & Fishes of Contra Costa County. On his initiative—through his careful planning, lobbying, fundraising, and sheer willpower, SVdP opened the free dining room in Pittsburg in 2010. Today it serves over 120 meals per day, over 31,000 meals per year!



Noe also helped SVdP respond to the needs of the medically uninsured.

In 2010, SVdP built a 4-exam room clinic in its Pittsburg Family Resource Center. Jim developed the partnership with local Rotary Clubs and RotaCare Bay Area.

To date it has responded to over 7,800 patient visits needing medical help. Jim also helped established a dental program in 2015, that provides dental services for those without dental insurance.



Jim also led the effort to expand the SVdP Family Resource Center which added a handicap ramp to the building, renovated bathrooms and added needed space for the social worker and clinic support.

"To provide hope to others is the reason we're all here. Feed the hungry, care for the sick, clothe the poor. That's what we should all be doing."

-Jim Noe, Vincentian Volunteer

"I was lucky to learn at a very young age that to be able to provide hope to others is the reason we're all here," Noe says. "I was raised to believe it. Feed the hungry, care for the sick, clothe the poor. That's what we should all be doing."

It is the life Jim Noe has lived and, by his example, inspired many others to do the same. It is the strength of St. Vincent de Paul.



Client Success: Rhonda's Rise to Self-Sustainability

Many people in our community have employment struggles that most people rarely notice. Rhonda is one. She had been a caregiver for the elderly. When her client passed away, she faced two problems-- finding work and finding a way to get to work.

St. Vincent de Paul ("SVdP") was able to help her in both areas through its Workforce Development Program ("WFD"). After her client passed away Rhonda was jobless; then she saw a posting for the SVdP WFD and came to the Job Preparation Workshops. Little did she know at that time that she would be selected to join the program!

The SVdP program is designed to help individuals re-enter the workforce. People who have experienced serious barriers to employment or those who have found difficulty getting a stable job that pays a decent wage are its focus. WFD applicants are hired as paid, part-time employees for 24 weeks in SVdP transportation and retail departments with on-the-job training. WFD's distinctiveness is the weekly curriculum and mentoring that works to improve the trainee's life skills and job-seeking and retention capabilities.

Rhonda explains, "you learn a lot about resumes and how to present yourself in job interviews. And I learned a lot working with Mr. Moffet (SVdP's Pittsburg Thrift Store Manager), how to work the cash register, point-of-sale systems and other skills. "I also got my current job because John Rebar (one of the SVdP program mentors) was able to connect me with an employer for a position. I finished the whole program and got the call the next day that I got the job!"

But getting full time employment was just the first step for Rhonda. She didn't have reliable transportation to get to work. She had to walk and take the bus; most days she didn't get home until 11 PM.

After a home visit by Diane Tegge and Dan Gabe from the Conference at St. Bonaventure Catholic Church, Rhonda's need for reliable transportation was addressed. Then Steve Krank, SVdP Vincen-tian Support Manager, connected Rhonda with Mike's Autobody, which has a Benevolence Program for low income residents in need of automobiles. Mike's program gives selected applicants a newly refurbished vehicle, filled with Christmas gifts plus a year's car insurance. Rhonda was chosen as one of the recipients and now has reliable transportation to and from work.



Within a year, Rhonda's life and ability to self-sustain was changed in a positive way. She sums up her experience with SVdP's WFD as **"a good opportunity. This place will teach you. You learn different skills you don't know."**

"Don't be intimidated, someone's always going to be there to help you out. The St. Vincent de Paul staff is wonderful. If you have goals, if you have dreams, if you want to do something for yourselves in life, the Workforce Development Program is a good start," she adds, **"Don't give up on yourself. Anything is possible."**

To help members of your community like Rhonda, you can donate your vehicle to SVdP's Auto Donation Program.

To donate: Call 1-800-YES-SVDP (937-7837) or visit www.yes-svdp.com to schedule a pick up.

Thrift Stores' Sales Calendar & Upcoming Fundraisers

Don't miss out on great savings!



Pittsburg Store Hours: Mon-Sat 9am-5pm,
P.Hill Store Hours: Mon-Sun 9am-5pm

April 16-22 (Both stores) Easter Sale **25% OFF Storewide, 50% OFF Easter items**

May 6 (Both stores) Customer Appreciation Day, **25% OFF Housewares**

May 29 (Both stores) Memorial Day Sale, **25% OFF Storewide**

June 4-10 (Pleasant Hill) Summer Sale, **25% OFF Storewide**

June 5-10 (Pittsburg) Summer Sale, **25% OFF Storewide**

Discounts do not apply to white tag merchandise or items already 75% off

Fundraisers

May 4—East Bay Gives, Online: www.eastbaygives.org

July 24—Knights of Columbus at St. Joan of Arc Catholic Church is hosting a Golf Tournament (Fundraiser for Free Medical Clinic) @ Crow Canyon Country Club, San Ramon

For further information, **please contact parish office: (925) 830-0600**

September Varies—Friends of the Poor Walk @ Multiple Sites

October 14—Bocce Ball Tournament @ Martinez Bocce Federation

November 27—Dinner Fundraiser for the Free Medical Clinic @ Gianni's Italian Bistro, San Ramon



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