

Continued from p. 3

make judgments on an individual basis. Grants can be limited as to how funds are used," explained Sr. Mary.

OLV's SVdPS at work: Boxes were piled in the living room, some in the kitchen. It was obvious that moving day approached for this grandmother. She said, "I told myself when I moved in here, my next move would be when they took me out of here feet first. But as a loving grandmother, she had recently taken in two of her granddaughters when they were abandoned by their parents. Now she was having to move to a larger, more expensive place and support her two granddaughters on her already limited income.

The SVdPS at OLV helped with "connection fees" at her new residence and provided Christmas gifts through the Christmas Program.

In spring (2008) when the Valley was hard hit by the tornado, every

agency in Aiken County was strained with requests for immediate help of one kind or another. OLV's SVdP members were out making house calls in response to some of those requests. For some it was food, others were in need of help with repairs or yard clean-up, still others needed temporary housing or help with power bills or replacement of furniture items due to damage or loss as a result of the storm. What the SVdPS couldn't help with, they sought out agencies and steered families to other resources for their needs, providing contact information.

Then came the high gas prices and growing unemployment, the end of subsidies for those who had lost jobs when Avondale Mills closed.

Still other needs arose and needed to be addressed - a terminally ill patient who lacked enough money to be able to pay

her electric bill. Another home-bound patient living alone needed help simply keeping track of her bills because medication was affecting her memory.

The needs are here and now. These are only a few instances of the wide variety of needs and concerns people face daily in our area.

Will you take up the challenge that inspired the St. Vincent de Paul Society? Will you put feet to your faith? Will you give of your time, talent, money, and prayers and allow God to strengthen your faith? If you would like to join Our Lady of the Valley's St. Vincent de Paul Society and contribute as you are able in the ways mentioned, please contact Sr. Mary Beard or Sr. Mary Jean, Center Administrator. SVdPS meetings are held every second Tuesday of the month at 4 PM in the Grace Room at the Center. You are most welcome.

Volunteers are an ongoing need. If you would like to serve as a volunteer with any of the programs at Our Lady of the Valley Center, please contact Sister Rose Marie at (803) 593-2634 or by e-mail at <henschkesrr@doc.org>. Our volunteer program is in process of formation. We are truly grateful for the support that you are for others. Needs: receptionists, data input workers, Angel Food workers, ESL teachers, handypersons of all descriptions are most welcome!

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OUR LADY OF THE VALLEY CATHOLIC CENTER

A Word from Horsecreek Valley



Special points of interest:

- Thanksgiving and Christmas: 2008
- In Appreciation
- Love in Action: The St. Vincent de Paul Society
- Service Wish List
- Volunteer Services

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February 2009

Thanksgiving and Christmas 2008

Dear Friends,

Thanksgiving and Christmas 2008 have gone before us into eternity but you can be sure that this is not without notice: "God will not be outdone in generosity" and "your reward in heaven will be exceeding great."

Thanksgiving Day began with communal prayer. The Hall was nicely decorated. One hundred and thirty five guests enjoyed a traditional Thanksgiving Dinner. Many commented on the delicious food and all were invited to take a carry-out for their "midnight snack." Gracious volunteers provided food, favors, transportation, fellowship, and 12 additional meal deliveries. The monthly Brown Bags also provided 100 senior families with a complete holiday meal to prepare.

In the following weeks, young people prepared favors, made and wrapped gifts for 150 seniors. Employees of Shaw Areva Mox provided food, gifts, and clothing for 40 families. Christ Central volunteers provided clothing and gifts for 50 children. You have no doubt seen in the papers and on TV that many charities were hurting during this season due to a decrease in donations. It is very humbling to see the tremendous outpouring of love for and with the people in the Val-

ley. More than 82 families were cared for with food, gifts and clothing. Many were recently unemployed and had never had to ask for help before. All were truly grateful.

The American Legion provided generous gift certificates for food for five families. The youth caroled and gave fruit to 30 home bound and an additional 15 seniors in nursing homes. Members of the Southside Baptist Church trio provided music and song for the meal site participants' Christmas Party. This list could go on and on. All expressed appreciation for so much given and received. We are truly blessed by you, our wonderful friends and partners. Together we are making a difference.

You need not think that your difference is only made at these blessed times. Forty-five students in the morning classes alone have obtained their GED, not to mention

those who are presently in college or certificate programs. In our present economic times it is hard to carve out this time for study. Your financial gifts have assisted many of these individuals to continue when the times got tough. These families are now on the way to independence. More will be added to this in the article on the St. Vincent de Paul Society.

Know that you share in our daily prayers and service. God love and bless you for the support that is YOU.

Most gratefully,
Sr. Mary Jean,
Administrator



The St. Vincent de Paul Society

St. Vincent de—who?! Many Catholics and non-Catholics alike don't know who St. Vincent de Paul was or why there is a non-denominational international organization named for him.

Vincent de Paul was the third son of six children born to a poor farming family in Puoy, France in 1581. Through the sacrifices of his family, Vincent was sent to school to begin his studies for the priesthood. In that era, the priesthood was sometimes more a career choice than a calling. The priesthood offered advancement, security and prestige. Vincent was ordained at age 19, five years earlier than most.

Vincent secured a post as chaplain at the royal court of Queen Marguerite in Paris and became chaplain to one of the wealthiest families in Europe, the de Gondi's. Madame de Gondi sent Fr. Vincent to visit the poor in the village of Folleville. There he heard the confession of a poor dying man. Through God's grace, Fr. Vincent realized that if he had not been there, this poor man would have died without knowing the mercy and forgiveness of God. This event changed Fr. Vincent de Paul's life. He had at last found his vocation.

He conducted a parish mission on the general confession of one's life. He traveled to the small town of Chatillon-les-Dombes where he established the first Confraternity of Charity

to serve the poor - in their homes. It was during this time that Fr. Vincent was suffering a "dark night of the soul." He prayed God to take away this darkness and promised he would dedicate his life to the service of the poor. God immediately took away the anguish. It never returned. He faithfully fulfilled his vow until the day he died.

God sent St. Vincent to Louise de Marillac, a woman who had learned compassion through years of suffering. Together they founded the Daughters of Charity in 1633. This community of women dedicate their lives to serving the poor through health, education and social ministries. St. Vincent has been named by the Church the "Universal Patron of Charity."

Founding of the St. Vincent de Paul Society: In 1831 young Frederic Ozanam was a law student at the Sorbonne. There he and fellow Catholics heard and felt attacks of anti-Catholicism from a group of St. Simonist. (This group followed the teachings of French social philosopher Claude Henri de Rouvroy, the founder of French socialism.) In response, Frederic gathered a small group of students who shared his beliefs and convictions concerning living their Catholic Faith.

Emmanuel Bailley, editor of the *Catholic Tribune*, joined forces with Frederic and formed *The Conference of History* which met weekly. At a meeting in 1833, Jean Broet, a St. Simonist proponent, challenged Frederic Ozanam and his Catholic friends with this statement: "We agree that at one



time your church was a great church and a source of good. But what is your church doing now? What is she doing for the poor? Show us your works and we will believe you." St. Simonists challenged Christianity to establish a more equitable and just social order.

Frederic and friends recognized the legitimacy of Broet's statement and determined to change things. Thus began the *Conference of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul*, later to be name to the *Society of St. Vincent de Paul*. These charter members sought out Sister Rosalie Rendu, a Daughter of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul, for her help and suggestions in ministering to the poor.



Sr. Rosalie taught them how to minister to the suffering with gentleness and kindness, and to respect the dignity of all as fellow human beings. No form of charity was foreign to the Society. Not only did founder, Frederic Ozanam, and others take care of the physical and material needs of others -

"We must do what is most agreeable to God. Therefore, we must do what our Lord Jesus Christ did when preaching the Gospel. Let us go to the Poor" **Bl. Frederic Ozanam**

food, shelter, clothing, fire-wood—but they tutored, cared for the wounded, the dying, and more. In these works, members are always solicitous for the spiritual and moral welfare of those they serve. From the beginning the key to the ministry of the Vincentians was home visitations. Members always went in pairs as Jesus exhorted his apostles and disciples to "go two by two." It is the same today at OLV's St. Vincent de Paul Society.

Organizing OLV's St. Vincent de Paul Society (SVdPS): Sr.

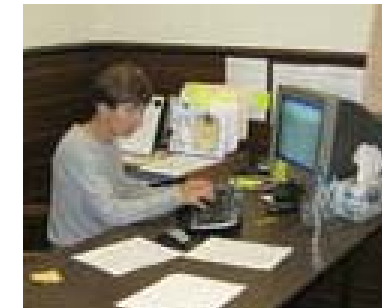
"Love is inventive, even to infinity" -St. Vincent De Paul

Mary Beard is the Spiritual Animator of OLV's group. "We have applied for membership in the St. Vincent de Paul Society at the national and international levels. It usually takes at least six months for approval," said Sr. Mary. "As part of a larger group, it would broaden our support on a spiritual and possibly a financial level. It would give us more contact with other groups and widen our network of resources. The SVdPS is open to everyone—men, women, Catholic and non-Catholic."

"To me, the mission statement of the SVdPS can be summed up in one word: compassion. We're



here to be of service to those in need. When I think of who they represent to me - Christ - it is to serve Christ in them. Compassion is to serve Christ in liberating love," explained Sr. Mary. "Even though our membership is



small, we're fortunate to have a wealth of diverse resources within our membership. Some of our projects have involved yard work, plumbing repair/replacement, weatherization, help with utility bills, medication, identifying services available for the handicapped, and most recently, being a partner in the Center's Christmas projects.



"We look forward to our youth group helping with yard work and household projects. We would like to partner with them more regularly on projects in the future.

"Many times what we offer is as simple as helping people understand their bills and the terminology used by the utility companies or making

sure they know what help may be available from the utility companies. Sometimes it is talking with people to identify their immediate needs and guide them to agencies or other resources that can better help them.

Funding: "Projects are funded solely by donations right now. We don't do any grant writing specifically through the SVdPS. Our parishioners and other individuals who are familiar with the SVdPS will specify that they want their donations to go to the SVdPS. We received \$2,000 from St. Mary Help of Christians'



SVdPS. That's one of the benefits of being part of the total SVdPS group. We are so grateful."

Monies from the SVdPS are not as restrictive as some grant monies can be. With SVdPS monies we are free to help with utilities, rent, deposits, medication or other needs. The SVdPS is free to

Continued on p. 4



"The hand that you clasp, Clasp yours." **Bl. Frederic Ozanam**

*St. Vincent de Paul never wrote a book
But we find the voice of the saint in
The two fundamental sources of his teaching -
The GOSPEL and LIFE.*