

The following are bulletin stories about the ministry of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul shared by Patti Hall of St. Benedict Cathedral Conference. Messages like these appear each week in the St. Benedict bulletin and are approximately 200 words in length. You are encouraged to use these examples for sharing the prayer, service, and friendship of your conference members with your fellow parishioners. Keeping others informed on how their donations are used to help the poor is necessary accountability for increasing trust and generating future donations.

Imagine a night without a bed. Now, imagine a night without a home. Now, how about a night without your child. This week, we called on “Annie,” a single mom with a four-year-old daughter. Annie had nights without any of those things. She had been homeless, and the Department of Child Services had taken her young daughter away from her. As you can imagine, Annie deeply wanted her daughter back and worked to find a decent home to rent. Now, she is essentially starting over and has nothing. She needs everything and – most urgently – needs beds before DCS inspects her home. They will want to ensure that she has decent living conditions and a bed for her daughter. Plus, Annie needs a bed for herself. She has never reached out to us before, but now she needs our help. Please pray for Annie that she is able to get her daughter back. Please consider giving to St. Vincent de Paul so that we can help neighbors like Annie get beds and beddings so they can make a decent home for their children. Now...imagine what a better place this world, and our neighborhood, would be if we would all help neighbors like Annie.

Yes, we give assistance to neighbors in need for utilities and rent. Yes, we give vouchers for beds, furniture and clothes. Yes, we give emergency food vouchers and also give additional resources for assistance. Yes, we do all of these things, but what we do best is listen. We listen to our neighbors, their stories and their prayers. We listen to the adult daughter who just lost her mother and is missing her deeply. We listen to the mom whose child has severe allergies and has to miss work to stay home with them. We listen to the neighbor who had a severe brain injury and is now afraid he is going to lose his home. We listen to the neighbor whose eyesight has gotten so bad that he isn't able to work so can't pay his rent. We listen to the neighbor who lost his front teeth in an accident and had to use his money to get them fixed so fell behind on bills. We listen to the mom who is pregnant and asking for a bed and prayers for a safe delivery and a healthy baby. We listen to all of them, we help them where we can and we pray for them at each meeting.

Sometimes life doesn't go the way you plan. This is how things were going for one young couple who lives in our neighborhood. "Jack and Ashley" had been married for a few years and were renting a house near St. Ben's. Unfortunately, Jack lost his job at the end of last year. They were both working hard trying to make ends meet when Ashley began having health problems and was being monitored for kidney failure. Their medical bills were beginning to stack up and Ashley was also unable to work. Meanwhile, Jack's severance pay had run out. He started searching for work and quickly had two interviews. Unfortunately, he didn't get either job. That's when we received their request for help. The first part of their request was for help with their rent. The second part was for clothing vouchers for Jack's job interviews. Thanks to your generous contributions, we were able to pay their rent for an entire month and give them clothing vouchers. They were so happy and grateful. Please pray hard for them things to turn around for them...for her health, for their job opportunities, for their future.

"Sandy" moved to our neighborhood three months ago to get away from an abusive situation. She is a retired veteran, but still struggling to make ends meet even with her VA benefits. Sandy needed appliances in her new home, specifically a refrigerator. Thanks to your generous donations, we were able to provide her with a refrigerator. She also asked that we pray for her to keep going, so that she can stay mentally fit and recover from her past. All of us are so thankful for our veterans and their military service. But oftentimes it is hard for them to return from service and enter into productive lives. As Veteran's Day approaches this fall, please consider giving to St. Vincent de Paul so that we can help neighbors like Sandy who are facing so many challenges. You can use the SVDP envelopes in the offertory or you can give electronically at saintbenedictcathedral.org, by clicking on "Giving Opportunities" in the top right corner and then on "WeShare." Thank you for your generous contributions, and for your continued prayers for our neighbors.

It's almost fall, but the heat is still affecting many of our neighbors. High utility bills are continuing to mount, and the extreme heat is making them worse. The heat is also affecting our neighbors in even worse scenarios like our neighbor "Kate." Kate has a nine-year-old son and is six and a half months pregnant. She had been working at one of the dollar stores and recently passed out at work due to the heat. Her employer was scared that she would become a liability and let her go. Now Kate has no income at all and the rent is due. She has no family members that are able to help as her mom passed away last winter from Covid. Please help us keep Kate, her son and new baby-to-be with a roof over their heads. If you currently give, thank you. Your contributions help women like "Kate" keep their homes. If not, please consider helping – even a little bit each month can help.

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HELP US HELP OTHERS. ST. VINCENT DE PAUL INVITES YOU TO A MEETING. If you have been staring your stewardship form and wondering what box to check, please consider checking the St. Vincent de Paul box. It's a very rewarding call that is flexible and easy to fit into your weekly schedule. We are a fun and diverse group who love to laugh, listen to each other's stories, and come together for the common purpose of helping our neighbors in need. We meet weekly on Mondays at 6pm in the Parish Center, and you can come on whatever Mondays that work for you. Our SEPTEMBER 26th MEETING will be specifically for anyone interested in learning more with no commitment. Members of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul (or "Vincentians") are men and women who strive to grow spiritually by offering person-to-person service to individuals in need. We are young and old. Our members come in every shade of skin color. Some of us are wealthy, some are financially poor, but all of us are blessed with an awareness that our blessings (time, talent, and treasure) are to be shared with our brothers and sisters in need.

When a parishioner gives a special donation and it connects with a specific need of one of our neighbors, it seems like a God sign. Last week, we had someone give a donation in special intention of "Our Lady of Knock." This apparition dates back to August 21, 1879 where fifteen witnesses saw an apparition of the Virgin Mary, St. Joseph, St. John the Evangelist, angels, and the Lamb of God on the south gable of the town church of Knock in the west of Ireland. For a period of about two hours, a crowd gathered to adore the apparition and to pray the rosary. Despite the rainstorm, the ground around the gable did not get wet. Thankfully and coincidentally, we were able to use this donation to help a family who hasn't had water since April. They have four young kids and no way to wash laundry or bathe. With this donation, we were able to catch up on their past due and have their water reconnected again. Pope Francis said that Our Lady of Knock exemplifies the importance of prayer and hope. Please continue to pray, hope, and donate as the needs our of neighbors continue to rise each week.

It's back-to-school time and many of us have been shopping for backpacks and books, school supplies and clothes for our kids or grandkids. It's a busy and expensive time of year for parents – including some of our neighbors. Last week, we called on "Michelle," a single mom with three children and had been working hard to get them ready for school, in addition to working hard at her job to keep her bills caught up. Unfortunately, their

school supplies were more than expected and they fell behind on the CenterPoint bill. We also visited “Cheryl” a single mom with four kids and no water, and no way for her kids to bathe as they started school. In addition, we called on a family with seven kids ages 4 to 14. All of them behind on bills and needing a little extra help. Thanks to your kind donations, we were able to help them all to keep their utilities. As you help your kids shop for lunch boxes and pencil pouches this year, please remember others who may not have enough resources to provide everything their kids need for school. If possible, please put a little extra in your St. Vincent de Paul envelope this week or donate online at saintbenedictcathedral.org by clicking on “Giving Opportunities” in the top right corner and then on “WeShare.” Every child deserves a good start to the school year and we’re working hard to make sure our neighbors have the rent, water, utilities, clothes and food to help them get one.

There are neighborhood children who need your help. When you check your boxes on your Stewardship renewal form, please consider our St. Vincent de Paul Society. Whether you give a few extra dollars each month or would like to attend a meeting to learn about volunteering, we need you. They need you. In the last few weeks alone, we helped “Jacky,” a single mom with five kids who had lost her job a month ago and had a shut off notice from CenterPoint. She has since started working as a CNA and hopes to get caught up on her bills. We also helped a father with four kids who is a disabled vet with double amputations. They had fallen behind and also had a CenterPoint shut off notice. In addition, we helped “Sylvia” who has four daughters and a granddaughter living with her. Sylvia was behind on bills and her water was shut off leaving the six of them living in a house with no water. In addition, we helped a family with nine children aged 4-17. They had also fallen behind on CenterPoint and were needing help getting caught up. All of these families, these children, and more like them need your help.

Jesus fed the hungry multitudes by multiplying loaves and fish. We feed hungry multitudes with baked spaghetti and fried chicken from local groceries and restaurants. Maybe our tactics are a little different, but our hearts are in the right place. If you didn’t know, our St. Benedict’s St. Vincent de Paul group hosts a soup kitchen on the fourth Saturday of every other month. Typically, we serve around one hundred needy, hungry people and luckily, we have always found the funds to do this. Sometimes, we cook and sometimes we order warm meals that are such a comfort and sign of hope to so many. Either way, we supply all the food, drinks, dishes, and supplies. Your donations can help with feeding our neighbors. Please consider contributing to our SVDP group so that we can continue these efforts. When you give, know that you’re helping feed our neighbors

just like Jesus did. We are counting on your help and God's blessings for the continued service of our soup kitchen. And those we serve...the homeless and working poor of Evansville are counting on us for warm meals, compassion, and hope.

Being a mom is a beautiful gift. It is also a huge responsibility. So many of the neighbors we visit are not only the "mom," but they are also the only parent in their children's lives. Last week, we visited "Sarah," a working single mom with 17-year-old daughter who had a shut off notice from CenterPoint and needed help to keep the utilities on. We also called on "Mary," a single working mom with two boys ages seven and twelve who also had fallen behind on bills and had a shut off notice with CenterPoint. That same week, we called on "Jessie," a single working mom with five kids who was struggling with bills and needed assistance with her growing CenterPoint bill. And we visited "Trina," a single mom who just got a new job and needed clothing for her kids, ages 4, 7, 11 and 12. Thanks to your generous contributions, we were able to help all of these "moms" who are all working so hard to take care of their families and keep current on their bills. Please continue to help us help these moms. It takes a village for some of them- we are part of their village. They need our prayers, support, and assistance.

When you're on a very tight budget, sometimes even a small event can snowball into major challenges for you. Last week we visited "Andrea" who lives right around the corner from St. Ben's. She had been working full time at a local store to support herself and her baby daughter. Unfortunately, the father of Andrea's baby had left town and she had only received \$50 in child support ever in the lifetime of her child. She was lucky that her sister could provide childcare for her baby while she worked. She was also happy to be close enough to work that she could walk. Then, Andrea contracted Covid and missed two weeks of work. She fell behind on bills and her electricity was cut off. Without electricity, she and her baby had to move in with her mother who lives further away. Now, Andrea is having to drive to work, adding gas bills to her very tight budget. As she continues to work hard to get back on her feet, your generous contributions have helped us pay her CenterPoint bill so that she and her daughter can move back into their home. Thank you for helping our neighbor overcome this challenge.

Many of those who call for financial assistance are simply looking for a second chance. Last week, we called on "Eddie" who had recently moved into a recovery residence in our neighborhood. He needed a second chance, and also needed his first month of rent. Eddie was set to start a new job this coming week and hadn't had a chance to save up any money. The home where he was moving is part of a certified program that helps

individuals recover from addiction and other setbacks, offering transitional services such as education and support for their residents. Another neighbor, "Danny," had recently been incarcerated and was also looking for a second chance. Danny needed help with rent as well so that he could start over with a new job and a new place to live. Just like us, the neighbors that we visit through St. Vincent de Paul are human. All of us make mistakes or poor choices from time-to-time. And we all deserve a chance for a fresh start to make it right. Your generous contributions are giving these neighbors a chance to start again and be positive contributors to our community. This help not only shows them the love of Christ, but it also makes our community a better place for all of us.

When one of our neighbors calls us and asks for a bed, we typically can give them a voucher for one bed every six months. So, when we get a call from a single mother with four kids and zero beds, how do we choose who to give a bed to? Last week, we called on "Susan" who has four children ages 11, 10, 7, and 2. She had recently relocated to a new home due to issues with her boyfriend and was unable to move any beds or furniture. Susan and her four kids were starting over with nothing. She had no bed for herself, and no beds for any of the kids. Again, we asked "how do we choose who gets the bed?" Do we give one to Susan and leave the children to sleep on the floor? Do we give one twin bed for the two-year-old? Do we bend our norm and give beds to the growing 11, 10 and 7-year-olds? What we would really like to do is reach deep and give beds to all of them...one bed for Susan and one for each of her kids. With the generous donations of our Parish members, we are hoping to do just that.

Water. Often, we take it for granted...when we wash our clothes, when we brush our teeth, when we cook. Those that don't have it, don't. Ashley, a 50-year-old woman living alone, recently had a hip replacement followed by a stroke and cannot work. She fell behind on bills and had her water turned off. Lucy is a 28-year-old mom with two children who babysits additional kids for income. She had fallen behind on her water bill and it was consequently turned off. Abbey is a 30-year-old with three kids, ages 2, 8 and 11. The children currently live with her cousin but are in the process of reestablishing a home environment with Abbey who has an upcoming job interview. Unfortunately, her water was shut off yesterday jeopardizing her getting her kids back. Tina is a young mother with four children who had to quit her full-time job because she was breastfeeding and her four-month-old refused to take a bottle. She is currently looking for a work-from-home job. She is now facing a water shut-off and looking for work from home. If you give to St. Vincent de Paul, thank you. If you don't, please consider making even a small donation in the weekly poor box at the back of church.

Every week at our St. Vincent de Paul meetings, we pray, “For families and those who have no homes that they may quickly find a place in which they can live a decent and happy life.” Last week, we prayed with specific intention for “Elizabeth” who asked for our help because she was facing an eviction. She is a young single woman who worked as independent contractor and had maintained her rent for four years. Due to Covid issues, there were times when she didn’t work so she picked up side-jobs such as cleaning, painting, and yard work to make do. However, that income was not enough, and she fell behind on rent. In addition to the eviction notice from her landlord, Elizabeth was without water and had been for over a year. She had no one to ask for help and was under such stress that she hadn’t been sleeping. Luckily, she has us...our generous parish in her neighborhood that not only made sure she had rent assistance, had her water turned back on, but also encouraged her to find improved employment conditions. Thanks to you, our prayers and her prayers were answered.

Three generations were living together. “Laurie,” her mother and her newborn daughter were all living in the same house in our neighborhood. They unknowingly had a leak in their toilet and their water bill ran up. They fixed it on their own because the landlord would not. Now they are facing a shut off on their water bill with a newborn in their house. The water company does not negotiate if you have a leak on your side of the meter. They didn’t know what to do. They came to us for help. Because of your generous donations, we were able to help these three generations of women with their entire bill so that they could have the water they need for baby baths, bottles and washing infant clothes, in addition to their own needs. If you currently give, thank you. Your contributions help women like “Laurie” keep her family together. If not, please consider helping. You can give electronically at saintbenedictcathedral.org, by clicking on “Giving Opportunities” in the top right corner and then on “WeShare.” You can also mail your payments to the parish office at 1328 Lincoln Avenue, 47714.

The St. Vincent de Paul Society at St. Benedict Cathedral works diligently to be good stewards of the generous donations that we receive and to use it to help the poor in our neighborhood. Being poor doesn’t always, or necessarily, consist of being short of material goods. Being poor can also mean being physically and mentally handicapped, illiterate, crippled, old, or sick. This past week, we called on Katie who needed assistance with rent for her family’s home. Katie is married with three children under the age of 18. Her husband is suffering from stage three prostate cancer and is not able to work. In addition, Katie is not able to get in her work hours when she takes him in for treatment.

Because of your generosity, we were able to help Katie and her family with her rent to help. Thank you for helping us grow as a SVDP Society. The more we can grow as a Society, the more we are able to reach the lonely and troubled who have need for care and friendship.

PACK THE TRUCK, JUNE 26TH 10am-2pm. “But does it bring you joy?” If you’ve been looking to go a little Marie Kondo and declutter your house, consider this your incentive. On Saturday, JUNE 26th, the St. Vincent de Paul truck will be in the St. Ben’s parking lot from 10am to 2pm. If you have things around your house that don’t bring you joy like...too many pots, pans or dishes, a linen closet overflowing with unused towels and blankets, excessive clothes and shoes, more toys than your kids could ever play with or furniture in your garage where your car should be, then get some bags, boxes or bins and fill them up. Bring any gently used clothes, toys, and household items to the St. Vincent de Paul truck in the St. Ben’s parking lot on JUNE 26th. They will then be stocked at the St. Vincent de Paul Thrift Store on Walnut Avenue and sold at a low cost to many families and individuals in need. In addition, the St. Vincent de Paul members give out store vouchers weekly to the needy in our area that can be redeemed for the clothes, shoes, dishes, furniture, and other items that you have donated. We promise you that paring down and packing the truck will bring you joy!

At our St. Vincent de Paul Society, some of our biggest clients aren’t big at all. In fact, some of them are very little. They are kids of all ages from newborns to teens. When we help single moms and single dads and families, we are helping so many kids. Kids who did not choose to be in the situations they are in. Thanks to your generosity, we can help them. We help by providing clothing vouchers for kids’ clothes and school uniforms. We help by making CenterPoint payments so that kids have heat in their homes. We help by helping with their water bills so they can take baths and have clean clothes. One of the families upon whom we called this week was a single mom with five kids, including two sets of twins – ages 4, and ages 9. She needed a bed for her family. We were able to provide them with a voucher for a new bed at the St. Vincent de Paul Thrift Store, all thanks to you. Your donations, big or small, add up to making a big difference for some very small neighbors in need.