

SVDP DISTRICT MEETING MINUTES

May 7, 2024

Dan Miller, President, called the meeting to order at 6pm, Tuesday, May 7, 2024 at Sts. Mary & John parish in Rager Hall.

In attendance: Executive Board Members: Dan Miller, President; Jeff Kropfl, Vice President; Megan Charlton, Secretary; Melanie Seibert, Treasurer; Sr. Doris Clippard, Spiritual Advisor; Joe Cook, Executive Director; Noah Werner, Director of Case Management; Melissa Coleman, Thrift Store Manager; Mike McKee, Thrift Store Advisory Board Chair; Sr. Donna Herr, Food Pantry Manager.

Minutes. One correction was made to the April 2, 2024 District Council meeting minutes. The next quarterly gathering will be held on Sunday, June 2nd, however, the minutes stated that the gathering would be held on Saturday, June 2nd. *After this correction, the meeting minutes from the April 2, 2024 District Council meeting were approved unanimously by the District Council.*

Financials. The District Council Financial Summary from January 2024 to March 2024 was brought to the attention of the District Council.

District Council donations continue to fall behind last year.

The District Council has started to receive Friends of the Poor Walk sponsorship donations, at this time the sponsorship donations are figured at \$9,850.

The annual District Council financial audit has not yet been completed.

At this time, about \$7,500 of District funds has been spent on the design plans for the expansion project at the Thrift Store property.

During the first 6 months of last fiscal year, the District Council had disbursed \$5,000 in conference grants. During the first 6 months of this fiscal year, the District Council has disbursed \$47,000 in conference grants. This \$42,000 increase in conference grant disbursements explains the \$37,000 year-to-date deficit for the District Council.

Food Pantry donations are ahead of last year.

March food purchases by the Food Pantry were up about 20% compared to last year; and year-to-date food purchases are up about 34% compared to last year.

Food Pantry operating expenses are up about 12% compared to this time last year.

Thrift Store donations and sales are both slightly ahead of last year.

The March Thrift Store maintenance budget includes \$4,000 to repair the heat exchanger, but overall Thrift Store expenses are down about 3% when compared to last year.

Thrift Store net income is about \$23,000 ahead of last year.

The Treasurer's Report was approved unanimously as reported by the District Council.

Centerpoint Online Payments. One of our conferences has reported that they have had to close their bank account and open a new one because their payment information was being retained by Centerpoint, and some neighbors have been able to access it to continue paying their bills. Until there is assurance that Centerpoint will address this issue, Melanie is recommending that all conferences stop using the Centerpoint online payment portal, and revert to making pledges and sending checks for payments. There will be more to come in the future, regarding this issue.

Friends of the Poor Grant Application. The Friends of the Poor grant application period is open for the Mideast region until May 15th. Conferences can apply for up to \$5,000 for specific needs in their community. There is no limit to the number of conferences within a District that can apply. The application can be found on the National St. Vincent de Paul website.

Our District Council is working on submitting an application for the Friends of the Poor grant to specifically help our increasing number of Hispanic neighbors.

Ozanam Orientation. The Ozanam Orientation held on April 13th was successful with 32 Vincentians attending. The next Ozanam Orientation will be held on October 26th. Vincentians can register for Ozanam Orientation on the Evansville SVDP website.

Security Grant. The Executive Director's office has applied for a grant through the Department of Homeland Security to provide the Food Pantry, Thrift Store, and their supporting vehicles with GPSs and security systems.

Centerpoint Energy Foundation. The District Council has been granted \$10,000 from the Centerpoint Energy Foundation to fund our Getting Ahead program. This grant should cover the expenses of one and a half Getting Ahead cohorts.

Getting Ahead. The second Getting Ahead cohort has 10 people participating in the program and one volunteer going through the program for training purposes.

There will be a Bridges Out of Poverty training held on June 26th.

There will be a Getting Ahead facilitator training held on June 5th. At this time there is one person attending this training.

Translation Services. Noah was able to secure phone translation services for conferences to use during home visits. A handout explaining how to access the Voyce interpretation services was presented to the District Council. This service is provided to our District Council through partnering with Ascension St. Vincent Hospital. This service is provided to us with no cost to our District Council.

Microloan. The Microloan program is fully operational at the 1st Federal Bank. Those who have completed the Getting Ahead program will be eligible for a microloan through the 1st Federal Bank. Noah and Chris Pace are currently working with 2 past Getting Ahead participants to apply for a microloan.

The Executive Director's office is continuing to work on creating a partnership between our District Council and Banterra Bank for a microloan program for our eligible neighbors.

The Executive Director's office will need to form a Microloan Committee to review eligible candidates before they apply for the Microloan program. Vincentians wanting to volunteer for the Microloan Committee should contact Joe or Noah.

Thrift Store. Mike McKee presented the Thrift Store Voucher and Volunteer Tracking handouts to the District Council. In April 2024, there were 296 volunteer hours, 238 people served through vouchers, and 21 people helped through bed vouchers.

The Thrift Store report was presented by Melissa Coleman. The Walnut Street construction seems to cause some confusion for customers regarding parking and operational hours at the Thrift Store. In April, there was a 22% decrease in overall customer foot traffic. However, the average customer is spending 25% more at the Thrift Store.

The Thrift Store is in need of more couches and dressers. There are not enough couches and dressers coming into the Store to keep up with the needs of shopping customers and neighbors using vouchers. The Thrift Store Advisory Committee is discussing this issue at their next meeting.

Food Pantry. The Food Pantry report was presented by Sr. Donna Herr. The April 2024 Assistance Summary Report was brought to the attention of the District Council.

The Food Pantry continues to have to purchase food to stock and supply the Pantry's basic items.

The Food Pantry received a donation to spread new rock in their parking lot.

The Coordinator's office is discussing and researching purchasing a new phone system with the help of the Executive Director's office.

Evansville Endowment Fund. The Food Pantry was granted the funds from the Evansville Endowment Fund for the installation of a new outdoor electronic sign. The Food Pantry sign installation has been on pause until the variance has been approved by the County. On May 15th, the variance application will be reviewed for approval or denial.

Conference Bylaws. It was recently discovered that in 2020, when conferences renewed their conference bylaws, the incorrect bylaws were unknowingly adopted by the conferences. Each conference will receive a copy of the correct conference bylaws. Conferences need to review these bylaws with their members and vote upon their approval. Once approved, conference presidents need to return the signed bylaws to Joe. Joe would like to collect all approved and signed conference bylaws at the June District Council meeting.

Real Estate Review. The Committee will have an update at the June District Council meeting.

Friends of the Poor Walk. The annual Friends of the Poor Walk will be held on September 28th. The Executive Director's office has sent out letters and sponsorship forms to previous sponsored donors. In the coming weeks, there will be solicitation letters sent out to businesses for potential new sponsored donors.

The Executive Director's office is continuing to work towards speaking to kids at parish schools about the Society of St. Vincent de Paul in anticipation of the Friends of the Poor Walk.

Sullivan County Donations. After a recent tornado in Sullivan County, surrounding St. Vincent de Paul District Councils are donating funds to help the families in need after this disaster. There is not a St. Vincent de Paul Council in Sullivan County. The goal is for \$60,000 to be raised by the surrounding District Councils. The National Council has given \$20,000 in disaster grant funds towards this cause. The money raised will go towards funding 'house in a box', which will supply about 15- 20 families with everything needed to start a new home.

Mike Rogan motioned that the Evansville District Council donate up to \$10,000 towards the Sullivan County disaster fund, and Debbie Neufelder seconded this motion; the present District Council unanimously agreed with this motion.

Financial Review Committee. The proposal for the policy and procedure of the conference financial review and audit was brought to the attention of the District Council. The District Council is proposing a type of financial review committee to ensure conferences are handling and tracking funds appropriately. The goal is to have conference financials be reviewed every 4 years by an unbiased committee. Conferences should review this financial audit proposal and bring feedback to the June District Council meeting for discussion.

Diocesan Council President. The current Diocesan Council president, Joe Strosnider, is finishing his first presidential term. Joe is going to run for a second term, starting October 1, 2024. If there are other nominations for Diocesan Council president, bring these to Dan.

The Diocesan Council is also in need of a vice president. If there are any nominations for Diocesan Council vice president, bring these to Dan.

MidEast Regional Meeting. The MidEast Regional meeting is being held on June 14th and 15th in Cincinnati. Joe is going to attend. The registration is open online for those wanting to attend.

Quarterly Gathering. The next quarterly gathering will be held on Sunday, June 2nd by the Sts. Peter & Paul conference. The gathering will have mass at 10am at the Sts. Peter & Paul parish with a meal and speaker to follow in the parish school cafeteria.

Online Bed Voucher. The Thrift Store online bed voucher has been updated to reflect the ability to help our neighbors with mattresses and frames separately.

District Council Secretary. The District Council Secretary, Megan, will be stepping down from her position in June 2024. Conferences should consider members who could fill this position. The District Council Secretary position requires attending and recording minutes for all of the monthly District Council meetings, as well as the Executive Council meetings that are held every other month. Vincentians should contact Dan with District Council Secretary nominations.

Small Group Discussions. At the next District Council meeting, conferences will discuss the question, "can we lessen the load for some of our more oppressed conferences? If so, what might that look like?".

The compiled notes from the February and April District Council small group discussions were brought to the attention of the District Council.

Upcoming Gatherings. The next Ozanam Orientation will be held on October 26th.

The next quarterly gathering will be held on Sunday, June 2nd at the Sts. Peter & Paul parish with mass starting at 10am and a meal and speaker to follow.

The annual Friends of the Poor Walk will be held on September 28th.

The MidEast Regional meeting will be held on June 14th and 15th in Cincinnati.

Roll Call. Absent this month: Holy Rosary and Sts. Francis & Wendel.

The next meeting will be held on Tuesday, June 4th at 6pm at Sts. Mary & John parish in Rager Hall.