



SOCIETY OF ST. VINCENT DE PAUL ALTOONA/JOHNSTOWN

MAY 2023

SVDP AND FFF PROUD TO HAVE TWO OF OUR WOMEN HONORED IN THEIR COMMUNITIES

WISE Women of Blair County held their annual dinner in April at The Casino at Lakemont Park to honor local women for their achievements in seven different categories. This year, the dinner included one of our own, Sister Paula DeGrosso, who received the lifetime achievement award.



Sister's story on page 4

The Johnstown YWCA Tribute to Women held their banquet and honors ceremony in May at Ace's



in Johnstown. The banquet provides an opportunity for the community and area employers to recognize women in several different categories. This year the dinner included one of our own, Marjorie Lechene, who received the award in the Non-Profit sector for her work with St. Vincent de Paul.

Marjorie's story on page 4

Sonny Consiglio, SVDP, FFF Executive Director said, "I am not surprised. Sister Paula and Marjorie have been tremendous assets to this organization. We are very blessed to have them here."



2023 WISE Women of Blair County Honorees

Famvin Quote of the day, May 25

*"It is an obligation for us to inconvenience ourselves for the service of the poor."
— St. Vincent de Paul
— Sometimes the poor can be very demanding and want their needs met at the most inconvenient times. When these situations arise, remind me, Lord, that I am their servant.*



- ◆ **SIP, ROCK & DUCK DROP**
PNG Park, Johnstown
Saturday, July 8
4:00 PM
[Click here](#) for more information
- ◆ **15TH ANNUAL GOLF OUTING**
Park Hills Country Club, Altoona
Friday, September 1
9:00 AM
- ◆ **YOUR EVENT HERE**
Send event info to
svdpadmin@atlanticbbn.net

Your event can be added a month or months in advance. Special promotions being hosted by the thrift stores, fundraisers, dinners, just to name a few. Get them on the calendar as soon as possible.

CONTACT US

(814) 943-1981

avcdepaul@atlanticbbn.net

www.svdpcares.org



LIKE US ON

Memory/ Honor of Donation

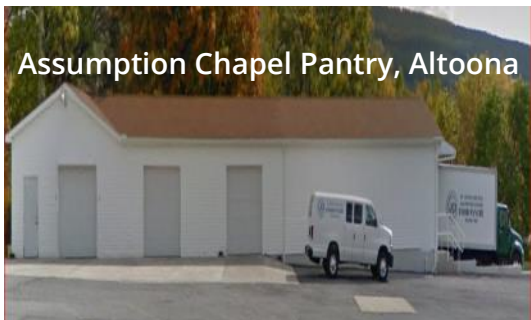


[Click here](#) for daily reflections and a quote of the day.



Georgia Lehman, Grant Writer for SVDP Food for Families and Jerry Baxter, SVDP Financial Consultant hold a \$40,000 check awarded to Food for Families from the [Lee Initiatives Grant](#).

This is the 17th year for the grant. For the past seven years Georgia has been instrumental in applying for and winning the Lee Grant for Food for Families.



On Saturday, May 13 local postal carriers picked up non-perishable food items from local residents in Altoona.

Several pantries and food banks in the Altoona area received boxes of donated items. Don Belsey, Assumption Chapel Manager, said the pantry received 131 totes of food with an estimated value of \$9,170.

Not to be outdone **Boy Scout Troop 10867** collected over 700 boxes of cereal in April for the Assumption Chapel pantry.

Thank you to area residents that donated and to the postal carriers and boys scouts that collected the items.

ANOTHER SUCCESSFUL FUNDRAISER BY THE JOHNSTOWN HIGH SCHOOL KEY CLUB

The **JHS Key Club** raised \$5,6224.40 at their annual Empty Bowls event on April 20. Several organizations benefitted from the event including the SVDP Johnstown Family Kitchen. Each group received \$1,875!



Greg Karcher, Kitchen Manager and Reghan Wolfe, Assistant Director for Food for Families manning the bake sale table.



Reghan Wolfe, posing with Key Club displaying the \$5,625 check from the event.

And Reghan accepting the \$1,875 check on behalf of Food for Families.



ST. MARK'S GOOD FRIDAY LUNCH

As per their tradition, **St. Mark's Church Conference** in Altoona hosted a lunch on Good Friday for the community since the Altoona Soup Kitchen was closed.

Many Vincentians and other volunteers came out to cook, serve, and clean-up so local residents could enjoy a hot meal and some fellowship.

The volunteers served 66 meals.



Sip, Rock and Duck Drop w/
Tab Benoit
Saturday, July 8, 2023
4:00 PM

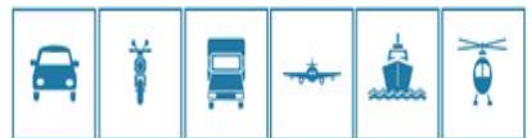
Drink, dance and have fun
with Tab Benoit, all while
supporting the
Johnstown Family Kitchen!

\$20 per person



Call **1-800-322-8284** or click on the picture for more information and to start the donation process on line.

Remember, it doesn't have to run and you can designate what ministry gets the proceeds from your generosity. The program is not limited to cars, we accept:



Sister Paula DeGrosso

Article by Amanda J. Michelone, President-Elect, WISE Women of Blair County

A self-proclaimed sports enthusiast, it is no wonder Sister Paula is a champion and quarterback for all who enter the St. Vincent de Paul Food for Families Soup Kitchen [Altoona].

Born in Altoona, Sister Paula entered the world as baby sister to Jackie, and daughter to Mary and Tom.

Sister Paula assumed her place as an active member in a loving and committed family. Family comes first for Sister Paula and her immediate family, who practice by example in making each other a first priority in times of need.

After graduating from Altoona High School, Sister Paula went on to earn an associate degree from Mount Aloysius, a bachelor's degree from St. Francis University and a master's degree and certification in counseling from Duquesne University.

Her religious vocation began in 1957 and has continued for 50 years. She served 34 years with the Diocese of Altoona-Johnstown, initially as an educator and counselor for 12 years, followed by 22 years serving as an office administrator.

With her natural ability to develop good rapport among students and colleagues alike, Sister was quick to assume new and influential roles such as Assistant Superintendent of Schools, a position she served for 18 years.

Thirty-two years ago, Sister Paula started her career as Director of St. Vincent de Paul Food for Families Soup Kitchen. With her she brought her gift of cultivating relationships and personal connections, which has become a tremendous asset to the kitchen and community it serves.

“Sister Paula’s passion for her work and for the people she serves is clear. It is a rare person who truly dedicated their life to the service of others. Sister Paula has chosen to focus her time and talents on the least fortunate in our community and, as a result, she has touched thousands of lives” says James Shepherd, one of many dedicated kitchen volunteers.

Sister Paula is motivated by her “desire to bring out the best in everyone no matter what their circumstances might be.” It is this desire that maintained a steadfast network of support during the pandemic shutdown. It may not be widely known that the Food for Families Soup Kitchen continued to prepare and serve hundreds of meals in a “to-go” fashion, every weekday throughout the uncertain times of the pandemic. Perseverance and the unwavering dependability of the Soup Kitchen and its family of volunteers and workers is what Sister

Cont'd column 2, Sister Paula

Marjorie E. Lechene

Article by Mary Parson, Administrative Assistant, Johnstown YWCA

Marjorie E. Lechene is the Nonprofit Award honoree. The Johnstown resident is manager of the St. Vincent de Paul Thrift Store in Johnstown. She was employed as a registered nurse for 42 years.

Lechene said she is in disbelief to have been chosen. “All I do is my job, and to be recognized for it is a humbling experience,” she said. “I’m extremely honored and I feel unworthy. There’s a lot of people who could receive this award, but I accept this on behalf of St. Vincent and all the volunteers.”

Lechene said award-winners are an inspiration to younger women. “There’s so many unsung heroes out there, and a lot of times they’re the wind beneath the wings of events, and people don’t realize all the efforts that are put into something to make it work,” she said.

Lechene received the nomination from Anita M. Altman. “She really turned around the St. Vincent de Paul Thrift Store and was able to make improvements, and it looks like a really nice store,” Altman said. “She inspires other people and her volunteers, and she’s extremely personal and kind.”



Continued, Sister Paula

Paula is most proud of.

“Sister Paula has helped us tremendously over the years.” “We greatly appreciate all the help she has given us.” Words from Jeff and Diane, who with their daughter Jenna, visited the Soup Kitchen daily for a meal for many years. Leaving the kitchen with grocery bags of food, Diane adds “she accepts everybody.”

Sister Paula’s “effort over the years to continue to help people in this area is just wonderful.” I am “very honored to be part of it.” says Mike Kasun taking a break between washing trays during lunch.

When asked about her experience as a woman in her role as Director of the Soup Kitchen, Sister says it has been tremendous with “phenomenal support all the way.”

The WISE Women Lifetime Achievement award will join a long list of past honors Sister Paula has received for her work in the community.

It is the recognition of kindness and exemplary actions that drives others to serve. Sister believes “by honoring committed, good women” it will in turn “inspire others to pursue their dreams.”