



SOCIETY OF ST. VINCENT DE PAUL ALTOONA/JOHNSTOWN

MARCH 2024

MEET OUR JOHNSTOWN FFF DIRECTOR



Christopher Lehman, Johnstown Food For Families Director

My name is Christopher Lehman, and I am pleased to be joining SVDP Food for Families as the new Director.

Some may recognize my name as I worked for Food for Families back in 2014 thru 2018 in various roles in the warehouse.

With my new position, I am eager to maintain the current standard and build stronger relationships off of that. I'm excited to contribute to our common goals and learn from each of you through your experiences.

Should you have any questions or require my assistance, please do not hesitate to reach out. I am currently in the training stage of my position but look forward to forging a strong working relationship with all of you.

Christopher is following in his father, Tom's footsteps. Tom was the FFF Director from 2014 to 2021.

SPRING PRESIDENTS' MEETING



The spring meeting held Saturday, March 23 saw a new Conference President installed. Pictured from left are Mary Beth Schmidhamer, Diocesan Spiritual Adviser, Frank Mihilik, New President of St. Andrews Conference in Johnstown and Stan Gordon Johnstown District Council President.

Famvin Quote of the day, March 30, 2024

"Blessed are they who wear themselves out for Charity." (CCD 5:499, 11:357, 13a:1)
— St. Vincent de Paul

— Lord, give me a generous heart, always ready to give freely without counting the cost.



- ◆ **SIP, ROCK & DUCK DROP**
Saturday, July 13, 2024
4:00 pm
Peoples National Gas Park, Johnstown
- ◆ **16TH ANNUAL GOLF OUTING**
Friday, September 6, 2024
9:00 am
Park Hills Golf Course, Altoona

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Memory/Honor of Donation



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

STRENGTH IN NUMBERS

Conferences get calls for assistance every day, that is what they do... help those in need. You may think it is about helping with utilities, rent, food, and it is but that is not all.

St. Thomas Conference in Bedford has Vincentians that visit residents at nursing and personal care homes. One of the conference's newer volunteers, Martha or "Marty" as she is known mentioned a situation to Mary Lou Waugerman, conference president. A disabled woman living in a personal care home was having trouble transferring from her wheelchair to her bed or a chair. The woman had polio as a child and has no family in the area. Often this woman would fall and Marty was concerned that she would get hurt so she went to Mary Lou and asked her if a lift would be something the conference could provide. The cost with shipping was \$2,400.

The cost was a lot for just one conference since they rely on donations from local businesses and individuals and do not get any government funding. But Mary Lou said she would see what they could do. She checked with the treasurer to see what the St Thomas conference could provide; then she called the SVDP executive director, Sonny, and explained the situation.

Immediately he sent an email to all the conferences and quickly several responded with an amount they could give. The total was raised and in two weeks from the first inquiry the lift was ordered, delivered and set up. The woman is so happy.

This is a great example of strength in numbers and what can be accomplished when we work together. It is easy to say my little bit won't do much. You have one day that you can give some time to volunteer, do it. Monetary donations are always needed and what is modest to one may be a lot to someone else, give what you can and together we can make a difference in someone's life.

ALTOONA FAMILY KITCHEN CHICKEN BBQ

On Sunday, March 24 the **Altoona Family Kitchen** held their annual Chicken BBQ fundraiser. As always the event was a success thanks to the many volunteers. The menu included Murph's famous potato salad and a bake sale with many homemade goodies.



CHALLENGES OF A VINCENTIAN

SOCIETY OF
ST. VINCENT
DE PAUL

SPIRITUALITY • FRIENDSHIP • SERVICE



Ed McCarthy, SVDP National Treasurer recently wrote this poignant letter as a Vincentian, it is posted on the svdpsua.org website.

He began, “In my 40 years as a Vincentian, I have made many mistakes. From my mistakes, hopefully, I will become a better person. My hope is you will learn from my mistakes.”

It’s about me. I call this the Santa Claus effect. When I first became a Vincentian, giving something to somebody made me feel good. I got to “help” someone, but it cost me nothing. Then I learned it was not about me, but the person I was helping.

Poverty is a lack of money. I thought this way in the beginning. As you help people, you realize poverty is a mindset. Improving the situation of a neighbor in need takes education, hope, culture, time, work, acceptance, and, yes, some money.

Learning from fellow Vincentians. I had the idea that I could do this by myself. I did not need the support and encouragement of my fellow Vincentians. There is a reason we visit and talk to the poor in pairs. There is a reason we have Conferences with a group of Vincentians.

Cynicism. I was cynical. The poor are only interested in money. I was lied to, used, and taken advantage of. These events were few and far between, but it does instill a cynical view. A Vincentian needs to take each person and interview as a fresh start for the person you are meeting and for you. I needed to get past the cynicism and realize Christ did not judge. We need to do the same.

Why am I doing this? As a Vincentian working week after week, sometimes hearing from the same people week after week, a bit of “why am I doing this?” may set in. This is the most dangerous of all my mistakes. I am never going to solve all the social issues. I am never going “to fix it.” Not me, not on my own. With prayer and help from my fellow Vincentians I may be able to help one person or one family at a time.

Arrogance. Sometimes I would miss an opportunity to really meet someone. I would think the encounter with the poor is just a business transaction. I did not learn about the person, their situation or background. I would just take care of the monetary problem, but not see the person for who they are.

Acceptance. This was very difficult for me. Sometimes a lack of funds — or a lack of a solution — makes the work very frustrating. This is one of the greatest challenges to a Vincentian. I must accept that I cannot solve everything. I may have some setbacks as a Vincentian, but with God’s Grace, I must acknowledge it is not defeat.

Don’t lead, just follow. This mistake is one with its own limitation. I would not have experienced the next level of being a Vincentian if I never accepted a leadership position. MY positions of leadership have been extremely fulfilling. There are many opportunities in the Vincentian life — Conference President, VP, District President, Treasurer, Committee person.

Evangelization. One of the things I did not do for many years was tell non-Vincentians about SVdP (Vincentian Friendship, Service, and Spirituality). Please go out and spread the word about our great organization. There are a lot of people looking for an organization like SVdP.



Day of Service Sunday, April 21, 2024

Are you interested in hosting a group of volunteers on **Sunday, April 21, 2024** for Penn State Homecoming's Annual Day of Service?

If so, [click here](#) to complete the form.

If you have any questions please contact universityhomecoming@psu.edu.



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:





Email Erika, volunteer coordinator, at svdpmonasterygardens@gmail.com with volunteer dates and times.

The gardens are a great chance to get outside, while helping a worthy cause.



The new National Council Board made a small name change, and we are now the Voice **FOR** the Poor Committee. While the committee's name changed slightly, the mission and focus remain the same.

Click here for more information on [Voice for the Poor](#). For an updated manual [click here](#).

Click here for [tickets](#). | Follow on [Facebook](#).



On Wednesday, April 3 the **Harmony Singing Society** supplied the main course for lunch and helped serve at the Johnstown Family Kitchen. Thank you, your help is much appreciated.