



The Top Hat

The Vincentian Voice of
The Society of St. Vincent de Paul

Archdiocesan Council of New Orleans

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Volume 2 Issue 12

June 2010

SVdP Adult Learning Center closes the books on a successful session and celebrates a good year

-by Sr. Bonita Sniegowski, GED instructor

The Learning Center has experienced many aspects of growth this year: an increase in staff, volunteers, programs and students. **Sr. Lory and Sr. Kathleen**, two sisters of the Congregation of St. Joseph, have been operating the Learning Center since January, 2007. In August, 2009, **Sr. Bonita**, a sister of Notre Dame from Toledo, Ohio, joined the staff. She came with many years of experience in teaching at various levels, which included instructing adults. In addition, **Becky Kleive**, a recent college graduate, joined the ALC team during her one-year of service; as part of the volunteer program sponsored by the St. Joseph sisters. Becky brought a level of maturity, along with an enthusiasm for learning that resonated with the younger participants and motivated them to learn and succeed.

Mrs. Marlene Wilson has been a faithful volunteer for two years. This year, Sr. Pauline and Sr. Nancy-Sisters of the Holy Faith from California, moved to New Orleans and are helping with instruction three days a week. This brings the total number of available teachers to seven on some days. Most important, the Center has been able to expand its program to serve more students. With a larger staff, the Center was able to open an evening class from 4:30-7:00 pm, to meet the needs of those individuals who work or cannot attend the morning classes. More staff also made it possible to assist more students. In the 2008-2009 school year, 78 students participated. This year, the number of students almost doubled, with **148 students** participating in the program. Gratitude, positive energy and family spirit marked the end-of-the-school year celebration at the Adult Learning Center on June 15th. Students and family members, staff volunteers and some of the year's GED graduates gathered to recognize the growth and accomplishments of the students and the Learning Center itself.

The Journey toward achieving a GED is not an easy one. It takes many hours of study, self-motivation, determination and a sense of commitment. Students need to attend classes from six months to two years to attain their goal. Recognizing the process of the students is a way to help keep them motivated. Academic progress is posted on the bulletin board monthly and award ceremonies are held twice a year. Seventy-three students received certificates of improvement this year. Hard work and perseverance pay off when students receive the results of their GED testing and find out that they have passed. Disbelief, laughter, tears, screams and a sense of joy and accomplishment are the various reactions to the news. Seven of our students celebrated their graduation this year. A long awaited goal had been reached. However, this is not the end, but the beginning. New doors are now open to allow the graduates to reach yet another goal, to become a licensed plumber or welder, a pre-school teacher or ultrasound technician. These individuals now have a chance to improve their own lives and to make a positive contribution to society. It has truly been a good year for the **Adult Learning Center** and there were many reasons to rejoice. God has been good, sending generous people who gave their time and talent to help keep the center open. **Your support** of its staff and programs through your contributions to the Society of St. Vincent de Paul is greatly appreciated. The Center will be closed during the month of July for its summer break. It will reopen on **August 2**, ready to educate and assist people in achieving their life goals.

Please join us in making dreams a reality for our students!

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THE TOP HAT....

Is a publication for the Society of St. Vincent de Paul and it's designed to inform its communities of past, present and future services and events. The Society of St. Vincent de Paul is a Catholic lay organization that offers service to the needy in the tradition of its founder, Blessed Frederic Ozanam and its patron, St. Vincent de Paul.

From the Board Room.....

-by Elaine Selle

Highlights from the SVdP monthly board meeting, held on May 27, 2010.

- The Board is in the process of establishing a **Fundraising Committee**. We ask that each District nominate two Vincentians to serve on this important Committee.
- The Board voted to recognize the **Adult Learning Center** as a Special Work of our SVDP Archdiocesan Council. The Chairperson of the Adult Education Committee will become a permanent voting member of the Board.
- Nominees for **Archdiocesan Board President**, a three-year term, are being sought. District Presidents will provide a Nominee's Autobiographical Statement to all Conference Presidents, for distribution to all members. Any Vincentian interested in running for this office must complete this Statement that District Presidents will give to Deacon Rudy for forwarding to the Board's Nominating Committee.
- A "**value-added**" incentive is being offered to encourage participation in the 2010 National Meeting to be held at the Sheraton New Orleans Hotel. To each Louisiana Conference or Council that donates \$500 to this event, four passes will be issued, entitling 4 of their Vincentians to attend any open workshop from Sept. 8-11. These passes exclude food functions that require an additional fee for attendance. (See donation Q & A, page 4 for more information.)
- **Tom Benson** has graciously offered, for SVDP raffle, a pair of **Saints** tickets for the season opener against the Minnesota Vikings on Thursday Sept. 9 in the Super Dome, where our Super Bowl Championship Banner will be unfurled. All proceeds from the Raffle will be used to defray costs associated with our National Meeting. Tickets will be available for sale in July, and can be sold to anyone. More information to follow.
- **The Walk Committee** has received from the City of Mandeville its Special Events Permit for our Third Annual Friends of the Poor Walk that will take place on the Lakefront in Mandeville, on Saturday, September 25. The City, Police and EMS Service have waived all costs associated with this event. A big "thanks" to Mike Lanaux from Our Lady of the Lake Conference for spearheading this effort.
- **Janie Wright** is the new **President of St. Benilde** Conference and **Karen Haydel** is the **Twinning Coordinator** for the **East Jefferson District**. Congratulations, Ladies!

Upcoming Quarterly Meetings:

St. Tammany District-August 5th at St. Anselm in Madisonville (after 9am Mass)
Downtown District-June 26th at Immaculate Conception (after Vigil Mass)
East Jefferson District-July 14th at St. Edward the Confessor at 7p.m.
Mid-City/University District-To be announced
Gentilly/Lakeview-July 12th, location: To be announced
West Bank District-August 12th at Our Lady of Perpetual Help at 6:30p.m.

The next SVdP board meeting will be held on **June 30, 2010**
 at the St. Vincent de Paul Community Pharmacy

National Council News
-from President Joseph Flannigan

June 1, 2010

Dear Brother and Sister Vincentians,

Tornados struck Oklahoma on May 10-11, 2010. Multiple tornados devastated the area; nearly 1,500 buildings and homes were damaged and 280 homes were destroyed. Thousands were impacted this disaster. People lost everything. Many have been displaced and rendered homeless, many were injured.

The Council of Oklahoma is working hard to respond to the need. There are thirty seven members of the Society in Oklahoma working tirelessly to help the victims. The National Council has already sent emergency funds. More is needed to assist those in need of services to help put their lives back together. There is a need for more funds to help the homeless and suffering. We are appealing for your help on behalf of the Oklahoma victims of these disasters. Please mail your check, noting "Oklahoma Disaster Relief," to the National Council of the United States, or donate on-line at www.svdpusa.org.

Yours in St. Vincent and Blessed Frédéric,



Joseph Flannigan
President
National Council of the United States

In Memoriam:

Jacob "Jake" Fruchtnicht, Jr.
Jake was an active Vincentian for over 30 years. He served in St. Agnes Conference, and also helped distribute Thanksgiving and Christmas baskets to the needy. Remember to keep Jake's family in your thoughts and prayers.

"Let us do without hesitation whatever good lies at our hands".

-Blessed Frederic Ozanam

2010 SVdP Annual National Meeting Update Value-Added Donation Q & A

What is the Value-Added Donation all about?

In an effort to encourage local participation in the 2010 National Meeting, a special offer is being made to Louisiana Vincentians whereby for a Conference or Council "donation" of **\$500**, 4 "passes" will be issued for use throughout the SVdP Annual National Meeting being held at the Sheraton New Orleans Hotel September 7- 11, 2010.

Who can use these 4 passes?

Any Vincentian member of the donating Council or Conference can be issued a pass for entrance into the National Meeting events.

When can these 4 passes be used?

The 4 passes can be used throughout the National Meeting for entrance into all open meetings and workshops.

Are there any restrictions on what can be accessed with a pass as opposed to a full registration benefit?

Yes. The full registrant gains access to all workshops and open meetings and food functions. The pass holders are not eligible for food functions without an additional fee.

Can the pass be used only for one day's entrance into National Meeting events or for multiple days?

The passes are good for the entire event – Wednesday through Saturday. They can be used by multiple people on multiple days or multiple people in one day. Only one person can gain access to an event at anytime by using a pass.

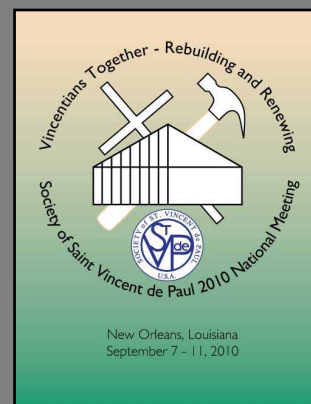
When will the passes be issued to the donor?

The passes will be mailed to the donor Conference or Council the week of August 23, 2010.

We encourage everyone to support this prestigious national meeting, either as an individual or collectively as a Conference or Council. Your support can take the form of an ad in the meeting program, a personal or Conference donation and/or as a volunteer.

Conferences are encouraged to take advantage of the "value-added" opportunity to receive 4 passes to the meetings and workshops for a \$500 donation.

For inquiries regarding the upcoming annual meeting, contact Sandy Norman, title at e-mail address-



REMINDER

This is an **election year** for the National Council and in September; for the Archdiocesan Council of New Orleans as well. Look within yourselves to elect the best candidate for upcoming elections/re-elections

-Ransdell Hebert

**Society of St. Vincent de Paul
Archdiocesan Council of
New Orleans**

1995 Gentilly Blvd.
New Orleans, LA 70119

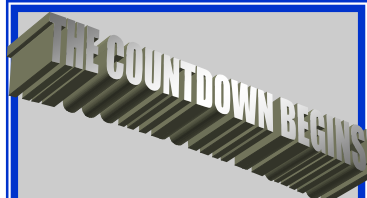
Phone: 504-940-5031
Fax: 504-940-5031
e-mail: svdp@bellsouth.net
Website: www.svdpnola.org

**Top Hat
Newsletter Staff:**

Deacon Rudolph Rayfield
Executive Director

Mr. Claiborne Perrilliat
President

Kelly Parker
Publications Specialist



**Society of St. Vincent de Paul
National Annual Meeting**

**September 7- 11, 2010
Sheraton New Orleans Hotel**

**Vincentian Formation
Materials in
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The Rule, Manual and Ozanam Orientation PowerPoint presentation are now available from the National Office.

Order by fax:

314-576-6755

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The Rule: \$2.00

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***Letter From The Spiritual Director of The Society of
St. Vincent de Paul***

VINCENTIANS AND THE OIL CRISIS IN THE GULF

- by Fr. Louis Arceneaux, C.M.

I am having a difficult time dealing with this terrible crisis of oil spilling out in the gulf into the Louisiana marshlands, beaches and moving along to the rest of the Gulf coast.

I ask myself what we Vincentians can do about this situation. To begin with, we can certainly pray—Pray that the well will be capped sooner than later, pray that more and more of the oil escaping into the gulf will be picked up in a variety of ways. We can also pray for all the people affected by this tragedy—the people whose livelihood depends on this industry, from the fishers and trappers to the processors and restaurants and many others. And yes, we need to pray for the people of BP that they will accept total responsibility for their terrible mistakes and pay all those who are losing so much as a result of this tragedy and do their part to remedy the situation. We can pray for all those who are working to remedy this situation, from those devising plans to cap the well to those in the gulf and on the shores trying to pick up as much oil as possible. We can also pray for our political leaders, regional, state and national that they will have the wisdom to make good decisions about handling this situation now and anticipating similar situations in the future. And lest we forget, we can pray for the entire environment along the coast, including all the inhabitants of the waters and the land, such as the shrimp, oysters, crabs, fish and our beloved pelicans.

Beyond prayer, we can also volunteer to help in various ways, both along the coast and wherever else volunteers are invited. We can also keep ourselves informed about the political issues being raised and advocate through phone calls and e-mail for safeguards for our coast and for our marshlands.

A more challenging response to this crisis is one that many of us do not want to address because it touches the livelihood of many of us and the way of life of even more of us.

What I am referring to is a hard look at our national and our personal dependency on oil.

Others more knowledgeable than I have pointed out that we in south Louisiana cannot have it both ways. We cannot complain about the destruction of the marshlands and our coasts because of what oil companies have been doing for years, even before this tragedy, and yet still want to have all the oil we want to drive our large cars, trucks and SUVs. We cannot complain about this destruction and still want to depend on the oil industry for so many of our jobs.

St. Vincent de Paul and Blessed Frederic Ozanam challenged the people of their day to look at their life styles and their priorities. They may be asking the same of us at this time. For the good of our people, of our land and of our nation, I hope we will have the courage to face this challenging situation and not just focus our attention on the other guy, in this case, BP, for all the blame.

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