



FORT WAYNE DISTRICT COUNCIL 260-456-3561

St. Vincent de Paul Society

1600 SOUTH CALHOUN STREET, FORT WAYNE, INDIANA 46802

A MISSION MOMENT - 2017

Case 1:

Client R - approximately 35 years of age - disabled – turned down twice for SSDI for lack of information. R's wife had been seeking help constantly from both Our Lady of Good Hope and St. Vincent de Paul conferences for several years.

It was suggested to them to try one more time to apply for SSDI, R had seemingly given up on trying. During a home visit, they were informed about a program called AllsupAlliances.com that has a working agreement with National Society of St. Vincent de Paul under the heading SVDPAAllsup.com. We posted a profile of R on the website and guided his wife through the assessment process. R's disability is the loss of the use of his right hand. The assessment, which is instantaneous, indicated him to be 100% eligible.

They were then directed to the application which they completed and transmitted to Allsup. Several weeks later one of our members was shopping in a retail store and accidentally met R's wife. Our member was told to thank the person involved because everything was now ok. With this disability income and R's wife being able to earn some income, they no longer need assistance.

Eliminating systemic poverty one client at a time.



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Case 2:

Client D. – approximately 61 years of age – disabled – had spent her retirement money to pay off her mother’s medical bills, after her mother’s death. D had requested assistance to obtain a refrigerator. Through our normal methods, we found a very nice used refrigerator.

Unfortunately, it did not fit beneath her kitchen cabinet. However, she wished to keep the refrigerator. We then enlisted the aid of one of our parishioners, a cabinet maker, who took the cabinet down, reworked it and put it back in place so that the refrigerator would fit nicely under the cabinet. While we were in her home, we noticed how terribly hot it was and after speaking with D discovered that her central air was not functioning and was too outdated to be worth repairing. Not being able to afford a new air conditioning unit, we did the next best thing. We ordered a window unit for her bedroom. We would have placed it somewhere else in the home, but she only had one double hung window. Because the window sill was uneven, two men constructed a balance on the window sill and installed the air conditioning unit. At least D could sleep comfortably.



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I was on call for the St. Vincent de Paul "Help Line", when I received a phone call from one of our SVDP Parishes concerning a single mother with five children who was in need of a bed, a dining set of table and chairs, and a recliner or regular easy chair.

I called and talked with the lady and later visited her in her home where she had just moved in. There was a couch, a TV set and one small bed. Other than that, the house was empty of any other furniture. There was a piece of carpet on the wood floor on which some of the children were sleeping with three pillows against the wall.

I asked her if I got some furniture, could she pick it up or pay \$40 for it to be delivered, but she said she had no way to pick it up, nor could she afford to pay to have it delivered. So my wife and I went to the St. Vincent DePaul Thrift Store, picked out a bed, a mattress and box springs, a table with four chairs and a recliner. We delivered it to the family and she couldn't thank us enough. This becomes a Mission Moment for the works of our St. Vincent de Paul Society in Fort Wayne.

Christ just knocked at our door!



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Howdy Fellas!

One Tuesday, while driving around scoping out a new SVDP Handyman project, we happened to be close to a wheelchair ramp we built over by the old Harvester Plant. 2 years ago, we built a ramp for some homeowners and shortly after we finished, the husband passed away. Since we were just a block away, I called the homeowner to see if there was anything else she needed, we left a voice message because nobody answered the phone. Here is the note she sent back to us:

“Hey Mark, it was so nice to hear from you. It brought tears to my eyes. The summer of 2016 and all of you wonderful men, doing god’s work those very HOT days was something that will dwell in my heart forever. I pray all of you are doing well. I am doing ok. I started a job a BAE in the summer and am very Thankful for it. It has been challenging for me. I am on day shift getting trained right now but expected to go back on second at some point. Please know that you all are I my prayers and my heart and know that if I ever do need a repair I will keep you in mind. Please feel free to call anytime. Please tell the fellas “Howdy” for me and if you ever need lunch while do your work, I would glad to accommodate you all if at all possible.

Forever grateful”



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Cathedral – Imagine That

On this day, I visited a man needing a bed. He welcomed me into his home, which was a nicely converted outbuilding. Although it was very warm outside, his home had air conditioning and was very comfortable. His bed was just a mattress on the floor, and he needed box springs and a bed frame to get him up off the floor and to make it much easier to get in and out of bed. It was very difficult for him, now that he was older and weaker, due to the fact he was on dialysis and his health was compromised. I was happy to give him a voucher to the SVDP Thrift Store for a complete bed.



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Cathedral – July 28, such a little thing

Today, beside requests for food and clothes, this request can to the door: A your woman and man came requesting food and drink for a 24 hour bus trip. They had their bus tickets, but were very thirsty and the young woman was extremely sunburned. The bus was leaving in an hour and they had come here because they were promised jobs. As it turned out, the group of people they were with was being sold to a chicken farmer in Ohio. Others in the group were undocumented immigrants. This young man and woman were able to escape and had nothing. They panhandled to get their bus tickets and were trying to get home to Mississippi. I gave them a jug of Lemonade, cups, crackers, peanut butter, anything I could find in small packets, on short notice that they could eat on the way, and \$20.00 cash. It was very emotional, we hugged and cried and I wished them blessings on their way. The young woman told me that she would go to her Catholic church when she got home and would remember me with thanks.



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Several years ago, there was a terrible accident, where a semi hit a vehicle and that was the end of a "normal" life for Pam. She was in the hospital for weeks and at least a year physical therapy. I knew of Pam, through baseball, her son and my grandson played on the same team. I didn't know her very well, but I could see that after her accident, she had been seriously hurt and had a hard time walking.

One evening the boys had a game and we had received a lot of rain that day. The diamond had been worked on and despite of the soaking rain, it was made ready for the game. We were able to enjoy half of the game until it started to lightning, and the game was called. We all headed back to our cars through the grass, and I saw that Pam had fallen several times in the muddy, rain soaked grass. Her husband helped her up each time. I asked if she had a wheelchair, maybe that would be easier to get around, especially with the long walk to the parking lot, and she said they couldn't afford one.

I checked with the St. Vincent DePaul Thrift Store, and they did not have one, so I asked our St. Louis St. Vincent DePaul Society if we could purchase one for her. The answer was YES!

I picked up her new wheelchair at Walmart and delivered the chair to her. She was delighted to receive it, especially a week before an out of town baseball tournament the boys were playing in.

Now, I see Pam, usually at the grocery store and she still gives me a big hug and always talks about her chair.

Sometimes we should look for the needy, not just waiting for the poor and needy to come to us!



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A mother, whose youngest child will graduate from high school this year, was diagnosed with cancer in four of her vital organs. She has kept her faith in God through debilitating chemo treatments. She is all but worn out and she and her husband are financially strapped. During a recent wind storm, their home sustained damage to the roof. The insurance was called and there was a \$1,000 deductible. They had no way to pay for this deductible and they just received another large medical bill.

A plea for funds was called to all the Fort Wayne local SVDP Conferences.

Monies were generously given to pay the deductible. In addition, her own Parish, a SVDP Conference, raised extra funds to help with ongoing medical bills.

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Cathedral – There is room for love

We visited a home that had only requested a bed. When we arrived we learned that the bed was for a Grandmother who had need displaced from another relative's home after the house burned down. The mother and daughter were making a place in their home for the handicapped grandmother. Three generations of women caring for one another. The accommodations were sparse and they only inquired of a bed. As the visit wrapped up, we wrote a voucher to the SVDP Thrift Store for a complete bed (mattress, box springs and frame) and shower seat.



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The members of our small SVDP Conference gather one day each December to assemble our ONE OF A KIND SOUP. In this project, each member brings a gallon or two of homemade vegetable soup and a dozen or two of home baked cookies to our church kitchen.

All the soup is mixed together in a large pot. One half gallon containers are then filled with this delicious, nutritious soup. The soup, cookies and other treats packed in colorful Christmas containers. They are then shared with members and neighbors of our church, who are elderly, home bound, nursing home residents or those who have recently lost a spouse or child, or have fallen on hard times.

As our conference members visit and share these gifts, the true meaning of Christmas is evident and that this is truly a Mission Moment.

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Cathedral – Stories that stay with me

At the Cathedral parish, we have 2 hour periods, 4 days a week, when we open the doors and answer the need of those in our city who are desperate. During my last session, I wrote 14 food vouchers for Community Harvest Food Bank. One was the need of a single mom with 5 children. Another was a man, just released from incarceration. He had NOTHING. Someone needed rent assistance and another needed a bed, an actual bed to sleep on. And this, I remember well: An older woman who was in need of food. She had with her a large hard suitcase on wheels. This is what she carries on the Citilink bus to go to Community Harvest Food Bank to get some food. Imagine if this is your mother or grandmother. All of those that I served that day was so very thankful and appreciative for the help.