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A HISTORY OF SAINT VINCENT de PAUL SOCIETY Roseville Area Conference, Inc.

By Dr Thomas Stanko, MD



Father Michael Cormack and Doctor Tom Stanko, MD The Saint Vincent de Paul Society, Roseville Area Conference, was founded in August of 1983 as a project of Saint Rose Catholic Church in Roseville. The idea for forming a Saint Vincent de Paul Conference sprang from a dinner conversation between Father Michael Cormack, then Pastor of Saint Rose of Lima, and Dr. Tom Stanko. Dr. Stanko was inspired by the charitable work of Father Dan Madigan, founder of the Sacramento Food Bank & Family Services, and asked Father Cormack if he felt it would be possible to start a similar charitable program at Saint Rose Parish? Father Cormack was very supportive of the idea and invited Deacon Bill Boudier to join them in this endeavor. The three agreed that the Saint Vincent de Paul Society model would be the right vehicle for their effort. Bill became the first President of our Saint Rose Conference. Using his leadership skills and dedication, the conference grew and thrived.

We originally started as a small Thrift Store and office that provided free furniture and financial help towards rent and utilities for Roseville residents. Soon, our little organization was receiving requests for other goods and services such as hot meals, groceries, showers, mailboxes, and hygiene supplies. In January 1984, we opened our Dining Room and soon were serving 40-50 free hot meals a day. At the same time, we started the Food Locker program in an adjacent 10x10 foot room. In the first month that the Food Locker was open, we provided groceries for about 200 households.

Since that time, Saint Vincent de Paul of Roseville has created other programs and services. In 1988, Sherry Schiele, a Saint Vincent de Paul volunteer at the time with a

passion for helping the homeless, persuaded the Saint Vincent de Paul Board to take on an endeavor she named "St. Vincent de Paul Home Start," a transitional housing program for homeless families. Sherry became the first Executive Director. In 1992, the program was expanded when she located a building - the old Flamingo Hotel on Riverside Blvd., which Saint Vincent leased. At the urging of Saint Vincent's Board, Home Start became an independent charity and formed its own governing Board in 1995. In 1998, Home Start's Board asked Sherry to resign because she missed the deadline for filing a federal grant application. Unfazed by this setback, Sherry founded "What Would Jesus Do," a non-profit organization dedicated to improving the quality of life for the homeless. It is an all-volunteer agency providing a mobile food service in the Roseville, Auburn and Sierra Foothills area, along with medical care and counseling referral services for homeless men, women and children. "What Would Jesus Do" maintains office space at Saint Vincent de Paul's office on Giuseppe Court in Roseville.

In 2000, Saint Vincent DePaul of Roseville felt that there was a need for additional transitional housing units in Roseville and aided by a substantial bequest from a Saint Vincent volunteer, Ed Lester, we started "New Beginnings," a transitional housing program for homeless families with children. The program leased apartments to house these families while the program director helped the parents address the problems that resulted in their homeless situation.

In 2012, due to budgetary restraints, Saint Vincent's Board voted to discontinue the New Beginnings program and our last family graduated from the program in December 2012. During the existence of the "New Beginnings" program, 166 families had entered the program and 93 families had successfully completed the program, found permanent housing, and remained in permanent housing for at least one year after graduation. This represents a 56% success rate.

In 2003, with the help of a grant from the City of Roseville, Saint Vincent initiated our BAGS program, a home delivery of groceries to homebound seniors and handicapped persons. The BAGS Program provides a sufficient quantity of groceries to prepare 9 nutritious meals each month and thus helps to meet the nutritional needs of low income, homebound citizens.

In 2004, Saint Vincent de Paul of Roseville began a weekly, free medical/pediatric clinic with free prescription and over-the-counter medications. In 2009, in collaboration with Placer County Department of Health & Human Services, we joined with the Gathering Inn of Roseville to open a second clinic on their campus. The Gathering Inn, a nomadic emergency overnight shelter for the homeless in south Placer County, shares a history with Saint Vincent. The new program's Executive Director, Deacon Bill Boudier, requested Saint Vincent's help getting it launched. In response, Saint Vincent provided the intake facility at its Bonita Street location during the first season of operation, the winter of 2004-2005.

As the population in and around Roseville grew, new Catholic parishes were formed. First, Saints Peter and Paul parish in 1981, then Saint Clare parish in 1993, and Saint Joseph

Marello parish in 2004. All of these parishes have joined with Saint Rose of Lima parish to form the Saint Vincent de Paul Society, Roseville Area Conference.

Current Programs

The major goal of Saint Vincent de Paul is to provide essential services to individuals and families in our community who are homeless, low-income, physically or mentally ill, and victims of abuse, emergency or disaster situations. Our immediate goal is to provide the fundamental necessities of life - food, clothing, and medical assistance. By providing access to these resources, we also help individuals and families to avoid becoming homeless by allowing them to use their limited resources to pay rent and utility bills. Saint Vincent de Paul, Roseville, also collaborates with other charities in south Placer County to optimize our community resources. We provide hope for a better future for all those we serve.

Saint Vincent de Paul, Roseville, currently administers four major Social Service programs:

1. Food Locker: The food locker has been in continuous operation since 1984. Each household or individual may obtain food once every 30 days. The quantity of food is sufficient to make 9 meals for each member of the household. The food locker is open on Tuesday through Saturday from 9:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m.



Photo by John E Boll, 2015

Volunteer John Hagener Prepares Bags of Groceries for the Needy

In 2014, the demand for supplemental groceries has continued to decrease somewhat. We served an average of **778 households representing 2039 clients per month**, which represents a 10.9% decrease compared calendar year 2013. The number of BAGS clients receive remains fairly stable at **91 clients**. We are encouraged by this trend and feel that

in our improving economy, some clients are finding employment or higher paying jobs and no longer need our food locker services.

The majority of our food is obtained from donations from grocery stores, restaurants, hospitals, community food drives and the U.S.D.A. program. We continue to expand our base of food donors. Additional food is obtained from the Placer Food Bank. Food staples needed to provide a complete, nutritious diet (such as canned tuna fish, peanut butter, chicken, potatoes, rice, beans, and dairy products) are purchased at Placer Food Bank and discount food stores. In order to purchase this additional food, we have been awarded a City of Roseville CDBG grant (**\$12,750**) for fiscal year 2014-2015. Saint Vincent was also awarded an **\$8,500** grant from the City of Roseville Citizen's Benefit fund for use in our food locker program. We have applied for additional funds for purchasing food from a FEMA emergency food and shelter grant this year. However, it is currently unknown if this grant program will be fully funded again this year.

In order to increase the quality of fresh produce available to our clients, we have just recently established a relationship with the Sacramento Food Bank. The Sacramento Food Bank purchases fresh produce from local farmers and organic growers so the quality of the produce will be much improved! However, Saint Vincent will be expected to share in the cost of obtaining this produce.

2. Dining Room: Our hot meal program is open to anyone who requests to eat at the Dining Room. No ID or proof of residency is required. A staff security person oversees the operation.



Photo by John E Boll 2015

The Saint Vincent Dining Room in Roseville Serves a Noontime Free Hot Meals Daily

We have seating for 35 guests and serve guests in shifts until all are fed. The Dining Room is open five days each week and serves a noontime meal. The Dining Room has a commercial size kitchen and a rotating, all volunteer staff prepares the meals. The Dining Room program is so popular with our volunteers that there is a waiting list for crews wanting to join the program! In 2014, we served an average of **81 guests** a day. With food donations from the USDA, businesses, churches, and individuals and cash donations from foundations, churches, and individuals, we have been able to continuously operate the dining room since 1983.



Photo by John E Boll 2015

Volunteer Cooks Prepare the Noon Meal Five Days a Week

3. Medical Clinic: The Saint Vincent de Paul free Medical Clinic has been in continuous operation since 2004. The clinic is staffed by volunteer physicians and nurses and provides free urgent and triage care to uninsured and underinsured patients. The clinic is currently open every Wednesday morning from 9:00 AM until noon. With the support of a grant from Kaiser Permanente Health Plan, we are able to provide free prescription and OTC medications for our patients. Patients with chronic medical problems are referred to our in-house (on Wednesday mornings) Placer County Health and Human service worker to see if they are eligible for ongoing medical care through the County MCSP Program or MediCal. We also provide T.B. skin screening for Gathering Inn guests. In 2013, the Clinic had **173 medical visits** and provided **64 prescriptions**.

4. Thrift Stores: Our Thrift Store first opened in 1983. When we moved our office and Food Locker in 2006, we continued to operate a small used furniture store on Riverside Boulevard and opened a second Thrift Store on Melody Lane in 2007. The stores provide good quality used clothing, household goods, and furniture at very affordable prices so low income individuals and families can shop for needed items at a fraction of the price of

new items. Many items of clothing and household items are given away to those who cannot afford to purchase them.

A secondary goal of the stores is to provide a profit to help finance our other programs. In order to make our Melody Lane Thrift Store more profitable, we have reconfigured the store and added more space. Adding space will allow us to display and sell more furniture and hopefully, increase our profitability.



Photo by John E Boll 2015

The Saint Vincent de Paul Thrift Store on Melody Lane, Roseville



Photo by John E Boll 2015

Brian Moore, Saint Vincent de Paul Executive Director