



# THE VISITOR

Vol. 8 - May 2024

[www.svdppitt.org](http://www.svdppitt.org)

Dear friends,

As the warmth of spring embraces us and the world around us bursts forth with new life, we are reminded of the profound significance of renewal and growth. Just as nature awakens from its slumber, so do our hearts. And spirits stir with the promise of transformation.

In Holy Scripture, the concept of springtime holds deep symbolism, reflecting themes of resurrection, hope, and the promise of new beginnings. In the book of Ecclesiastes, we are reminded that "to everything there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven." Spring represents a time of rebirth, a season where dormant seeds awaken and blossom into vibrant expressions of life.

In the Gospel of John, Jesus speaks of this transformative power of renewal when he says, "I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me will live, even though they die." Just as the earth experiences a resurrection of sorts each spring, so too are we called to embrace the opportunity for spiritual renewal and growth.

At the Society of St. Vincent de Paul, we witness the beauty of springtime renewal in the lives of those we serve. Through our outreach programs and acts of charity, we strive to be agents of hope and transformation in the lives of those facing adversity. Like the tender shoots that push through the soil in search of light, our clients find strength and resilience as they journey towards brighter days.

As we celebrate the season of spring, let us be inspired by its timeless lessons. Let us cultivate seeds of compassion, kindness, and generosity, knowing that through our actions, we can help bring about a world that is filled with the promise of new life and endless possibilities.

May this season of renewal fill your hearts with joy, your spirits with hope, and your lives with abundant blessings.

Your brother in Christ,

*Ricardo*

Ricardo Luckow  
Executive Director

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## **THE HEART OF THE SOCIETY OF ST. VINCENT DE PAUL: CELEBRATING OUR VOLUNTEERS**

In the busy world we live in, where time is a precious commodity, volunteers stand as beacons of selflessness, embodying the spirit of service that enriches communities. During April, we honored National Volunteer Recognition Month, which gave us an opportune time to shine a light on the invaluable contributions of volunteers to organizations like the Society of St. Vincent de Paul.

The Society of St. Vincent de Paul, rooted in compassion and driven by a mission to alleviate poverty and provide support to those in need, relies on the dedication and passion of volunteers. These individuals—currently about 800 in number--serve as the backbone of our organization, lending their time, skills, and hearts to uplift the most vulnerable members of society.

From organizing food drives and serving meals to providing financial assistance and offering a listening ear, volunteers play a multifaceted role in fulfilling the diverse needs of our community. Their unwavering commitment not only transforms the lives of those we serve but also fosters a sense of solidarity and empathy that binds us together as a compassionate society.

But the significance of volunteers extends beyond the immediate impact of their actions. Their presence serves as a catalyst for change, inspiring others to join in the noble cause of service. Through their acts of kindness and generosity, volunteers sow the seeds of hope and empowerment, creating ripple effects of positivity that resonate far and wide.

We extend our deepest gratitude to the remarkable individuals who embody the essence of service and sacrifice. Their dedication illuminates the path towards a more compassionate and equitable world, reminding us all of the profound difference that each of us can make when we choose to lend a helping hand.

As we celebrate the invaluable contributions of volunteers, let us also reaffirm our commitment to standing in solidarity with those left in vulnerability, ensuring that the flame of compassion continues to burn brightly in our hearts and communities.

Together, let us honor the volunteers of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul and all those who selflessly devote themselves to the betterment of humanity. Your kindness, your generosity, and your staunch spirit of service are the driving force behind our mission, and for that, we are profoundly grateful.

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## **A CALL TO GENEROSITY: RECURRING GIVING**

Recurring giving is a vital and impactful way to support the Society of St. Vincent de Paul. This method of giving involves setting up regular, automatic donations to the organization, providing consistent support for SVdP's mission to alleviate poverty and assist those in need.

One key benefit of recurring giving is its ability to create a steady and reliable source of funding, enabling SVdP to plan and implement long-term initiatives effectively. By committing to regular contributions, you can help ensure that essential services such as food assistance, housing support, and medical care remain available to individuals and families facing hardship.

Additionally, recurring giving offers convenience and flexibility by allowing you to spread your contributions over time and budget your giving more effectively. Moreover, by joining the ranks of recurring donors, you will become part of a bigger community dedicated to making a sustained difference in the lives of vulnerable individuals and communities. Through recurring giving, supporters of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul will play a significant role in combating poverty and promoting social justice on an ongoing basis.

We hope the spirit of giving moves you through our Spring fundraising campaign. Should you have any questions about giving or would you like to set up a recurring gift to the Society of St. Vincent de Paul, please contact Jennifer Thoma at [jthoma@svdppitt.org](mailto:jthoma@svdppitt.org) or 412.607.4146. Or, simply go to [www.svdppitt.org/donate](http://www.svdppitt.org/donate) and use the PayPal form.

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## NEW 50% OFF TRANSIT PROGRAM FOR SNAP RECIPIENTS

SVdP just learned from the Department of Human Services of Allegheny County about Allegheny Go, a new, discounted transit fares program for low-income individuals. With Allegheny Go, eligible families and individuals can receive a 50% discount when riding Pittsburgh Regional Transit (PRT).

**The program will launch on June 3, 2024.**

Allegheny Go is the direct result of a successful, year-long [pilot project](#). Nearly 15,000 recipients of SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) participated in the pilot and used PRT to enable travel for work, school, grocery shopping, medical appointments, and more. We used the pilot as an opportunity to learn valuable insights from PRT riders, and found that not only did the discount alleviate financial burdens, it also resulted in greater use of PRT farecards and ridership.

Now, all pilot participants are transitioning to the 50% discounted fares program and qualified Allegheny County residents receiving SNAP benefits are encouraged to apply.

### Who Qualifies for the Allegheny Go 50% Discounted Fares Program?

- Current Allegheny County residents
- Between ages 12 and 64
- Receiving SNAP benefits for at least 3 months
- Have a mobile device and can access the Ready2Ride app. Non-mobile options will be available later this year.

For more information and to register, visit <https://discountedfares.alleghenycounty.us>.

Thank you for helping to spread the word.

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## TRIUMPH OF THE HOLY CROSS CONFERENCE IS "OFF AND RUNNING"

On a Wednesday night in April, I spent one of the most interesting evenings that I have had in a long time. I had the pleasure of attending the SVdP Conference bi-monthly meeting at The Triumph of the Holy Cross parish. But the story of this Conference is both a short story as well as a much longer story to be told.

The short story is the Conference history, which only began this past September when, after repeated attempts to get approval to start a conference, Denise Boring succeeded in her efforts to establish the new group. She accomplished this through her own diligence but also with help from others within the parish and



with consultation and helpful suggestions from Vincentians and leaders from other conferences in the Diocese.

As the Parish outreach representative, a Social Worker in her vocation, and from living in the area, Denise knew there was a tremendous need within their rather large geographic area. And she knew that many members of the church had a heart for this type of ministry. Soon, they gathered a strong group of leaders, and the new conference was 'off and running!' When the first meeting was held, there were 25 persons present and ready to get started.

The longer part of this story entails all that the conference has been doing since it began. That includes: establishing their own furniture warehouse that has swollen with many donations from parishioners as well as other locals; a food pantry which is also well stocked and much needed; a clothing pantry that currently cannot accept any more donations since the time spent sorting and organizing clothing has become overwhelming; and a home goods room that contains various items that are in demand as well.

All the Vincentians help in a variety of ways as each person is allowed and encouraged to find their own niche, whether it is home visits or picking up furniture donations or keeping records, among many other areas of interest.

[READ MORE](#)

## NEW BINS FOR YOUR DONATIONS



St. Vincent de Paul Council of Pittsburgh has brand new bins that we would like to place in high-traffic areas to continue serving our neighbors in need. We currently have over 100 bins

throughout Pittsburgh that are picked up weekly. Donating clothing and shoes is easy and convenient, as there is most likely a donation bin near you (<https://svdppitt.org/donate/svdp/>).

If you know of a business or location that would be perfect for a new bin, please contact Bryan Engel at [bengel@svdppitt.org](mailto:bengel@svdppitt.org).

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## READING & EDUCATION CORNER

*"Evicted: Poverty and Profit in the American City" by Matthew Desmond*

Published in 2016, Desmond's Pulitzer Prize-winning work provides a powerful exploration of poverty, housing instability, and economic exploitation in urban America. Through vivid storytelling and meticulous research, Desmond follows the lives of several families struggling to keep a roof over their heads in Milwaukee. He exposes the harsh realities of eviction and its ripple effects on individuals, families, and communities.

Desmond's work not only highlights the urgent need for affordable housing but also underscores the interconnectedness of poverty and social justice issues. Vincentians and others engaged in advocacy and service will find "Evicted" to be a compelling and relevant read, offering valuable insights into the complexities of poverty in contemporary society.

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## PAST & UPCOMING EVENTS



***Vincentian Family Gathering:*** On Saturday, April 6, members of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul, Sisters of Charity of Section Hill, and Ladies of Charity from Greensburg and Pittsburgh Dioceses all came together to celebrate our shared history and spirituality. The theme was "Today's Hope for Peace, Listening to the Voice of the Youth." Several Vincentian student

organizations presented, including SVdP's St. Francis of Assisi Conference at Duquesne University. The student-led Conference presented on their homeless ministry of feeding those in downtown Pittsburgh. The students were inspiring and fostered dialogue among all those in attendance!

**Ozanam Orientation:** Over 50 Vincentians came together on Saturday, April 14th, to celebrate Mass and learn about our Vincentian Calling. Experienced Vincentians spoke on topics including: the history of the Society, Vincentian spirituality, conference life, council life, poverty, and home visits. This formation is critical to new Vincentians and helpful for those who have been serving for years! Stay tuned... Ozanam Orientations will continue to be offered bi-annually throughout the Diocese!

**Eucharistic Procession:** Join us on Thursday, June 13th! Eucharistic processions have already started in each of the four corners of the county and will meet in Indianapolis in July. One of these National Processions will be in our Pittsburgh Diocese between June 12th & 19th. Providentially, the pilgrimage directly passes our St. Vincent de Paul office in Brookline! Please join us as we process for a mile with the Eucharist from Resurrection Church (St. Teresa of Kolkata Parish) to St. Pius X Church starting at 11am on July 13th! A reception at our SVdP office located at 3048 Pioneer Ave will commence directly after the procession! Hope you see you there!

**YOUR DONATIONS HELP US  
SERVE OUR NEIGHBORS**

**DONATE TODAY**

FOLLOW US ON SOCIAL MEDIA FOR GREAT DEALS IN OUR STORES + STAY UP-TO-DATE ON WHAT WE'RE DOING TO HELP OUR NEIGHBORS IN NEED EVERY DAY!



The Society of Saint Vincent De Paul | 3048 Pioneer Ave | Pittsburgh, PA 15226 US

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