

# Society of St. Vincent DePaul

what we are...what we do

Our ministry started in Paris, France in the early 1830s at a time when the City of Lights had a dark side. The dark side was the throngs of destitute people living on the streets and in the squalid slums. Into the picture arrived a young man of comfortable means from the country-side who came to Paris as a student, enrolled at the Sorbonne. His name was Frederic Ozanam and he quickly saw and responded to the desperate need he witnessed. With a gathering of like minded associates, he launched a charitable outreach that today is worldwide in scope, with close to a million members.

Over a century later and a continent away, the St. Patrick's Conference of the Society of St. Vincent DePaul was organized and has continuously ministered to the needy of our community since 1945. The St. Patrick's Conference operates on the same guiding principles instituted by Ozanam so long ago, providing short term emergency assistance in the form of food, clothing, utilities, rent and fuel, plus much more.

Assistance is given after a personal home visit is made by two St. Vincent DePaul members. People of any faith are helped. However, unlike the several other excellent welfare agencies in the community that render significant assistance to the needy but, of necessity, do so in a non-religious atmosphere, St. Vincent DePaul attempts in a subtle way to convey the message that the hand of a loving God is at play in the help that is being provided. As well, recipients are told that they will be remembered in our prayers. Aid is restricted to those living in Natick and all visits and assistance to the needy are conducted in strict confidentiality; not all parishes have a Society of St. Vincent DePaul.

Like conferences worldwide, the membership of our St. Patrick's Conference consists of about a dozen men and women who volunteer their time and talent for the visits and other tasks that are routinely performed, e.g. Thanksgiving and Christmas meal distribution, scholarship awards, the administration of our annual pancake breakfast or simply carrying the food that is collected at the rear of the church to local food pantries. The membership holds an evening meeting on the first and third Tuesday of the month when a period of prayer and meditation is joined with a business session, dealing mostly with the review of recent requests for aid from those in need.

The St. Patrick's Conference is one of 154 similar groups in the Archdiocese of Boston, many of which are self sustaining by relying on the generosity of the parishioners. Here at St. Patrick's Church, the baskets at the doorways of the church are the chief means of financing the Society's outreach. Occasional bequests and fundraisers are also part of the mix.

Any Natick resident in need is asked to call (508)-509-1736 for a confidential discussion of his or her situation, whereupon a short personal visit will be scheduled. Likewise any individual who would like to learn more about the Society is invited to call that same number.

What we do is a reflection of the support of the good people of St. Patrick's Parish. For this, the Society of St. Vincent DePaul sincerely thanks you.



Did you know that over the past year your SVdP did the following:

- \$18,000+ in aid and material support has been distributed to the needy.
- Over 150 individuals have been assisted in some way.
- Sixty-six home visits were completed.
- Five scholarships were awarded to '10 graduates of Natick High.
- Four families have been assisted with scholarships towards parochial school tuition.
- Hundreds of bags of groceries have been delivered to The Natick Service Council and A Place to Turn.
- Dozens of bags of groceries have been given to the needy who have contacted SVdP directly.
- Several thousands of dollars have been spent helping those in difficulty with rent payments and/or utility bills.
- Several homeless individuals have been given funds to help defray the expense of local motel rooms while awaiting emergency housing.

For your support,  
the SVdP thanks you.