



St. Vincent de Paul  
 St. Francis of Assisi Conf.  
 Steuben Co.

“It is not enough for me to love God if my Neighbor does not love Him. I must love my neighbor as the image of God and the object of His love.”

St. Vincent de Paul

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# Community Update Winter, 2024

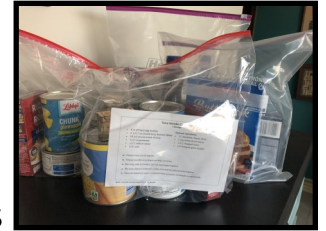
## Bags of Loving Comfort (Food) Lenten Alms Giving

In February, your St. Vincent de Paul conference will be collecting food for the blessing box using “Bags of Loving Comfort.” YES, THIS IS SOMETHING NEW. Each bag will include a recipe or meal plan along with a shopping list, so that once the bag is filled with the items on that list it will provide a family with a complete set of shelf-stable items that can be prepared into a meal.

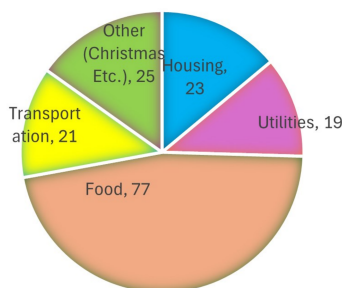
Are you willing to give this a try? If so, look for the specially designed plastic ziplock bags in the Gathering Space of church in early February. Choose the bag you are willing to fill and take it home. Then use the shopping list to fill the bag with the items needed to prepare a family meal. Place the recipe sheet or meal plan back in the bag, recipe side out. Return the filled bags to the specially marked bins/boxes in the connector between the church and parish offices no later than **February 28<sup>th</sup>**. They will then be placed in the Blessing Box by a Vincentian so that this food distribution will be spread out over the weeks ahead.

February is a month that celebrates love. Hopefully participating in this loving outreach will serve as a fulfilling way for you to express God’s love. Families may find this to be a great way for their children to really visualize what it can look like to help your neighbor. THANK YOU!

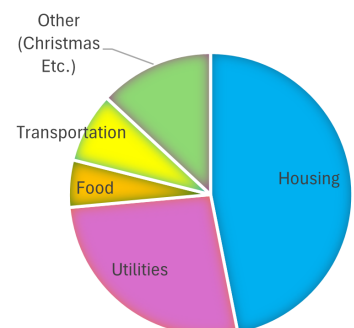
**PS:** Please feel free to contact Annette with any ideas for future meal/recipe ideas. [acalloway345@gmail.com](mailto:acalloway345@gmail.com)



NUMBER OF PEOPLE SERVED  
 OCT 1, 2023 TO DEC 31, 2023



DOLLARS SPENT  
 OCT 1, 2023 TO DEC 31, 2023





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"Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much." - Helen Keller

"If everyone is moving forward together, then success takes care of itself." - Henry Ford

"No one can whistle a symphony. It takes a whole orchestra to play it." - H.E. Luccock

"None of us, including me, ever do great things. But we can all do small things, with great love, and together we can do something wonderful." - Mother Teresa

"It takes two flints to make a fire." - Louisa May Alcott

**"For where two or three  
are gathered together in my  
name, there am I in the midst  
of them."**

**Matthew 18:20**

## Community Update: Winter, 2024

### Layers of Collaboration

By: Annette Calloway

I have been asked why the work of St. Vincent de Paul is needed when there are agencies such as the trustee's office, Brightpoint, and the welfare system. What I think is important to know is that your St. Vincent de Paul conference often works in concert with these groups to meet the requests of families/individuals who are in need of assistance. When a Vincentian receives a call, they review what that person has already done to obtain help. Sometimes that results in helping them navigate their way through the applications necessary to receive aid from these safety-net organizations. In fact, many of the local trustees know us and work with us to affirm situations and find solutions.

Once these opportunities are exhausted, then the St. Vincent Conference works to fill in a gap in the systems above. This is the next layer of collaboration which is accomplished within the conference itself. No Vincentian makes a decision alone. The one who takes the call will turn to our conference, relaying all the pertinent information so that a consensus can be reached.

Occasionally the needs are too great for our conference to handle alone. Then another layer of collaboration kicks in and our conference president will reach out to a half dozen other area churches that often merge their resources with ours to assist. The strong bonds that have been formed with other area churches is a very unique aspect of our conference. Last year an annual dinner was initiated to celebrate this ecumenical relationship.

Finally we value our supporters who collaborate with us through financial support and prayers. Your Vincentians may be the face and hands to the poor, but their work would never be possible without your support. The mission of St. Vincent de Paul is, "to create a network of friends, inspired by the Gospel, growing in holiness, and building a more just world through personal relationships with and service to people in need." Your support is an important part of the circle of friends that is serving our neighbors in need in Steuben County, thank you. I trust you can see that you are a big part of the many layers of collaboration that come together to serve.

"Charity is the cement that unites communities to God and individuals to each other, so that he who contributes to the union of hearts in a community binds it indissolubly to God" (quote from St. Vincent de Paul). Hopefully, what all this collaboration leads to is a witness that God loves us all and a recognition that the help we offer to our neighbor is seen has an outreach of that loved outpoured and a glimmer of hope.