

District Council of Madison, Inc.
Society of St. Vincent de Paul

NEWS



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Ralph Middlecamp elected Society of St. Vincent de Paul national president
Longtime local St. Vincent de Paul leader is tapped to head national charity for six years.

MADISON – Ralph Middlecamp, CEO and executive director of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul council serving in Dane County, has been elected to a six-year term as the Society’s national president, it was announced today.

Local announcement came today from Richard Pilsner, president of the Society’s District Council of Madison, following a weeks-long national election that concluded this week. The result of the election was announced today by the Society of St. Vincent de Paul National Council of the United States. Middlecamp’s six-year term as Society of St. Vincent de Paul national president, an unpaid volunteer position, is slated to begin Oct. 1.

Middlecamp, 64, has said that in coming months he will retire from his staff leadership position with the Society’s District Council of Madison to take on the role of the Society’s national president. Hired by the local St. Vincent de Paul Society council almost 30 years ago, Middlecamp has helped grow the organization significantly in its services and resources for basic-needs assistance to people struggling with poverty.

“I am deeply honored to have been elected to serve at the national level an organization that I love and to which I have devoted 30 years of my life,” Middlecamp said. He said that as national president, he would work “to promote continued growth in friendship, service and spirituality at all levels of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul.”

Pilsner said Middlecamp would be missed locally but had done much over decades to build a robust Dane County St. Vincent de Paul organization – one positioned to continue to serve effectively.

“Ralph has been the guiding force in growing our local efforts and operations in service to people in need,” Pilsner said. “Many know us for our stores, which sell donated goods. Ralph took those stores from just one 30 years ago to seven today. Our stores offer direct charity, and they supply much of the funding we use to provide food, medicine, housing and more to local people in need.”

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The District Council of Madison Inc. – Society of St. Vincent de Paul is a Catholic lay organization in which members join together in friendship to grow spiritually by providing person-to-person services to our neighbors in need. Sales of donated goods at Madison-area thrift stores help fund the charitable work of the Society in Dane County. At its Center for Vincentian Charity in Madison, the Society operates a large customer-choice food pantry and a charitable pharmacy; distributes vouchers for bedding, furniture and clothing; and provides other forms of emergency aid to local people struggling with poverty. The Society offers programs that provide housing for men, women and children in Madison. These and all other services provided by the Society are offered without regard to the religious affiliation or beliefs of those assisted. The Society of St. Vincent de Paul is a nonprofit, tax-exempt charitable organization.

Helping Our Neighbors In Need

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“Ralph Middlecamp has been the major builder of our St. Vincent de Paul capacity to offer compassionate service to people coping with poverty here in Dane County,” Pilsner said. “We are proud to see his skill, understanding and great heart put toward leadership service for our Society nationwide.”

Votes cast by Society of St. Vincent de Paul councils across the country were tallied in St. Louis, the U.S. headquarters for the lay Catholic charity that focuses on serving people who are poor and vulnerable. The votes derived from an election among the Society’s U.S. members, who serve in local volunteer groups known as “conferences.” There are about 4,440 St. Vincent de Paul conference groups nationwide, with 18 in Dane County alone. The Society has over 150,000 U.S. members – more than 400 of them in Dane County.

Middlecamp joined the local St. Vincent de Paul staff in 1987, when he was hired as manager of the St. Vincent de Paul thrift store on Williamson Street, then the Society’s only Madison retail location. Under Middlecamp’s leadership, St. Vincent de Paul has developed its local housing programs, built a central customer-choice food pantry and service center, opened Wisconsin’s first charitable pharmacy not connected to a health-care network, grown the Society’s base of Madison-area members and volunteers, and added six more Dane County thrift stores that sell and give away donated goods to support the organization’s mission of helping neighbors in need.

In his new role, Middlecamp will succeed Sheila Gilbert, who is completing her six-year term as Society of St. Vincent de Paul national president. Pilsner said that the board of directors of the Society’s Madison District Council has been supportive of Middlecamp’s candidacy for the national presidency and has put plans in motion for local staff-leadership succession. News about replacing Middlecamp in his local CEO and executive director position will be forthcoming before he takes on the national president role, Pilsner added.

Although Middlecamp will need to travel extensively to visit St. Vincent de Paul members, clients and facilities nationwide, he said he plans to continue to reside in the Madison area. Middlecamp and his wife, Dr. Catherine Hurt Middlecamp, a UW-Madison faculty member with the Nelson Institute for Environmental Studies and the Integrated Liberal Studies Program, are residents of Fitchburg.

More about the Society of St. Vincent de Paul at the national and local levels may be found at svdpusa.org and svdpmadison.org.

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