



LENT 2021

Grace Notes

HELPING OUR NEIGHBORS IN NEED

There When No One Else Was

New place. Lost job. Three kids. On the brink. Then Gary found St. Vincent de Paul.

"Gracias a Dios por St. Vincent de Paul y Sus bendidos para todos que les ayuden." **Thanks be to God for St. Vincent de Paul and His blessings to everyone who helps them.**

Gary had tears in his eyes as he expressed these words of thanks to the people who provide support to the Society of St. Vincent de Paul.

Gary came with his wife and children to Madison on the advice of a family friend. They had been living in Texas, barely making ends meet. Then the pandemic hit, and job loss followed.

Gary believed a good job and a stable life for his family would be waiting in Madison, but when they arrived, the friend was nowhere to be found. They found shelter in a local hotel but knew their limited funds would not last long. Gary looked for help wherever he could find it. A Facebook post led him to the St. Vincent de Paul Food Pantry.



Since losing his job due to the pandemic, Gary and his family have turned to St. Vincent de Paul for help.



"You were a blessing to us, you treated us like people. Like human beings. Coming to the pantry has been a great help." —Gary

Like many regular food pantry clients, the free food, diapers and personal care items Gary's family receives allow scarce dollars to be spent on other essentials such as housing, transportation, and children's school needs.

At the pantry, Gary met Kathleen, a regular pantry volunteer and member of the St. Vincent de Paul conference at St. Thomas Aquinas Church. She arranged a home visit with Gary and his family to see what other needs they could help meet. The conference helped the family secure an apartment and continues to aid and encourage Gary and his wife.

Clothing vouchers usable at the St. Vinny's Thrift Stores ensured the family had warm clothes going into winter. A furniture voucher made their new apartment more like home.

"St. Vincent de Paul is like a family to us," said Gary. "I want God to return to each of you the love you have shown to us."

Warming Up Our Warm-Hearted Crew



We've been blessed to receive help from the Madison Community, Oscar Rennebohm and Irwin A. & Robert D. Goodman Foundations for our drive-through food pantry's winterization project. We added an outdoor heated "dugout" (pictured left), a shed for storage and warmth (right), and brighter lights.

"We love our Wisconsin winters, but know they can be brutal at times. We were determined to continue helping families no matter what and were fortunate to receive help."

—Jennifer Troia, Associate Director of Client Services

Volunteer from Home!

It will take more than a pandemic to stop us from continuing to help those in need. Check out a few options to help families while you're at home. Visit svdpmadison.org for more opportunities!



Personal essentials and/or food drive



Create masks for clients



Write encouraging notes and cards for families



Follow us on Facebook
(St. Vincent de Paul Madison)

Thanks to You, We're Recycling the Warmth!

THANK YOU to our donors and sponsors for another successful Recycle the Warmth Blanket Drive on January 29-31!

We collected & bought **SEVERAL THOUSAND BLANKETS** that will be distributed to Dane County families in need throughout the year.

NEWS 3 NOW
CHANNEL 3000

Mid-West Family
Madison



Pre-COVID, Donny gave staff more hugs and smiles than medications received. He misses that the most. So do we.



\$6,400/month

Combined value of life-saving medications for Donny and Harold

Caring: Our Pharmacy's Best Medicine

Dane County patients find the St. Vincent de Paul Charitable Pharmacy in a variety of ways.

Donny sometimes visited our food pantry to stretch his income from two part-time jobs and learned about the pharmacy at a pantry visit. **Harold** lost his health insurance following his divorce and couldn't afford his medicine. A friend suggested the charitable pharmacy.

While a pantry client, Donny learned he has diabetes. "I was feeling weird," Donny explained. "My vision was blurry. I didn't feel right. I was gaining weight." Donny went to the doctor.

"My blood sugar was so high, they didn't even do the other tests," Donny said. "I had a low form of health insurance and couldn't afford the medicine. My doctor said not to worry. He had already called in meds to St. Vincent de Paul. Right away I was able to get insulin."

I Give to St. Vincent de Paul to Help Real People

Cathy and Mike

"We feel feeding the hungry is what God calls us to do, and St. Vincent de Paul is an efficient and well-run ministry."



Amy and Ed

"It is the little things that really show the heart of St. Vincent de Paul. As volunteers, we constantly saw staff and volunteers reaching further to help. We will forever be grateful for the good you do."



Alison

"Eventually I want to volunteer and be a part of helping families receive access to healthy food and medicine. My stimulus check was a great opportunity to help right now. I'm glad to help."



Why do YOU give to St. Vincent de Paul?

We'd love to hear your story :). Email Julie at jbennett@svdpmadison.org

"I also used the diabetic food boxes from the pantry for a while. My health is better since I came to St. Vincent de Paul. My insulin is reduced to a real small unit. I've lost over 60 pounds and might be able to get off of insulin if I get my weight down some more."

Harold's thyroid condition made his medication essential. "When I got divorced, I lost insurance," Harold said. "I also needed medicine for high blood pressure and cholesterol. It was all just too expensive to afford."

Then Harold learned he also has diabetes. "The pharmacists and other staff are always helpful. They connected me with a nurse to learn better nutrition and made sure I had all the meds I needed."

Harold also credits the pharmacy for helping him avoid surgery. "My doctor wanted me to go under the knife for my prostate, but the medicine I get from St. Vincent de Paul has helped me avoid that."

The medicines Donny and Harold receive would cost **\$6,400/month**, more than either of them could afford to pay. Both are grateful they receive free medications but are even more thankful for the care and compassion they have experienced.

"Life would be harder and I would be struggling without St. Vinny's. I love coming in to see everybody. It feels like a family. Your assistance changes lives."

Donny, pharmacy patient

"They're always willing to talk with me. They check my blood pressure and ask me how I'm doing. I feel like I have a friend when I go there."

Harold, pharmacy patient

