

# Hope in Action

Your compassion to help neighbors in need



You are  
helping him  
thrive.





## Julie's Journal



### Dearest friends,

What does “home” mean to you? In my life, I moved a lot. I remember what it feels like to be in a new place at Christmas. What traditions could we maintain? Would Christmas be fun?

One year, when our kids were young, we were moving to a small town. The only place we could find to rent before moving into our new home was a double-wide modular home out in the country. The bottom third of the living room curtains (circa 1972) had been shredded by cats, there was ample evidence of a mouse infestation and the hot water tank held only 10 gallons. How could we possibly have a real Christmas here?

As it turned out, Christmas was spectacular because home wasn't about the place. It was about the people. I bet you feel that way too.

**But what if you don't have a home at all?** Too many of our neighbors don't have a place to call their own. They

turn to the Society of St. Vincent de Paul — Madison and, thanks to you, receive help and hope. Some of these neighbors receive that help at Port St. Vincent de Paul and the St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Program. They receive housing assistance and support to plan for life's next steps. Thank you for your care!

Right now, more neighbors urgently need you. Rising prices and the compounding effects of inflation on families already in poverty mean more families are struggling. The need for help with food, basic essentials and housing is increasing. Please give now to provide a sense of home and a place to rest to neighbors in need.

With Christmas joy and gratitude,

Julie Bennett  
CEO & Executive Director

## How would you like to help your neighbors?

There are several ways to provide continuous support to people accessing our community services at increasing rates. Our legal name is District Council of Madison, Inc., Society of St. Vincent de Paul and our federal EIN is 39-0824876.

### Online

Give securely online at [svdpmadison.org/donate](https://svdpmadison.org/donate). Give through an Electronic Funds Transfer (**preferred method**), credit card, Venmo or Paypal.

### Stock and bonds

Avoid capital gains tax by asking your financial advisor to let us know of your intended gift through a transfer of stock. Michele Dahlk at UBS will help complete the transaction. Reach her at (608) 831-8677 or [michele.dahlk@ubs.com](mailto:michele.dahlk@ubs.com).

### IRA Required Minimum Distribution (RMD)

The IRS lets you put money into a traditional IRA and defer taxes on your contribution and any investment gains all through your career. If you're 72 or older, make a tax-free gift from your IRA through a Qualified Charitable Contribution. RMDs also apply to employer-sponsored retirement accounts such as 401(k) and 403(b) plans.

### Sustaining Samaritan

Easy, automatic monthly giving. Help support your neighbors in need all year long. Give securely online or directly from your bank account.

### FreeWill

As a gift of thanks for your support, we partnered with FreeWill. Start your legacy planning online today! (Information on FreeWill's website is intended as general guidance and does not constitute legal advice to any specific individual. Please consult your attorney for legal advice.)

# Continuing to help patients heal

A lifelong volunteer and health care professional, Kathy moved to Madison after nursing school. She spent the bulk of her working career in the NICU at St. Mary's Hospital. She retired in 2013 and began volunteering at the St. Vincent de Paul Charitable Pharmacy.

"I knew about the stores," Kathy said. "I first started in the food pantry and volunteered there for about six months. Then someone told me there was a pharmacy downstairs. So, I came down and stopped going upstairs," Kathy laughed.

### Above and beyond volunteer service

When she began volunteering, Kathy was the "welcome window lady." She checked patients into the pharmacy and confirmed their prescriptions were ready for pickup. She continues this role now with the curbside process and fields questions from people about the certification process or the pharmacy in general.

Kathy always goes above and beyond her duties as a volunteer. She sees a problem and works to fix it.

For example, she regularly answers calls from people interested in donating items to the pharmacy. For medications the pharmacy can accept, she supplies the needed information for folks to do so. For medical supplies, the pharmacy cannot accept she coordinates with a friend, Mary Dowling, at Sharing Resources Worldwide to donate supplies to medical missions in Honduras.

A while ago, Kathy noticed the supply of expired donated medicines that the pharmacy couldn't use. Kathy worked out an agreement with Officer Barret R. Erwin at the UW-Madison Police Department to safely dispose of the medications. Thanks to Officer Barret, the station accepts and disposes of the medications for free rather than having the pharmacy pay to dispose of them.

"I just had this thought; UW Police isn't too far away," Kathy recalls. "Since we're a nonprofit, they'll take the medications for free. I collect the unused medications and coordinate a time to drop them off. If there's a simple way to take care of something that's not terribly out of my way, I can do that."

### The best aspects of volunteering

Kathy is grateful the pharmacy accommodates her flexible schedule and that she doesn't have to find a substitute when she is sick or on vacation. She is grateful for expanding her network, and the best aspects of volunteer have been the

people and patients.

"It's the people. The people you get to know," Kathy said. "The patients who know your name, especially when they came to the window. They have all been very nice and generous. We laugh a lot."

"My idea of retirement is that you work or you volunteer at a place so you can expand the group of people that you know," Kathy continued. "You have to keep active in retirement. Find your niche and volunteer to share your skills. Find what you want to do and find where you can be helpful."

### A heart to help people

If the pharmacy didn't exist, it would be a daily struggle for patients with diabetes to find regular medications and more people would end up in the Emergency Room, Kathy said. The care that the pharmacy volunteers and staff provide helps lower patients' stress.

"I think St. Vincent de Paul is a good organization that works with people who need help," Kathy said. "Everyone involved is committed to improving the community and helping others. All of the places I volunteer help people with low incomes."

Besides her longtime commitment to the St. Vincent de Paul Charitable Pharmacy Kathy has volunteered at Specialty Care Free Clinic in Madison since 2011. As the only free specialty clinic for uninsured patients in the state, the clinic sends numerous patients to the pharmacy for their prescriptions. She also volunteers at the Lacy Food Pantry Garden where she helps plant, grow and harvest produce for distribution at the pantry. She is an avid sewer and donates her handmade quilts to Open Doors for Refugees.

*Join the volunteer team! Visit [svdpmadison.org/join-us](http://svdpmadison.org/join-us) or contact Zoe Lavender, Volunteer Coordinator, at [zlavender@svdpmadison.org](mailto:zlavender@svdpmadison.org) or (608) 442-7200 x71 to help.*



Officer Barret and Kathy disposing unusable medicines.



## Neighbor story



## Creating futures of hope

**“Enrique is the best example of Port St. Vincent de Paul,”** Nick Fatsis, Port St. Vincent de Paul Director, said. “The way he’s living and taking care of his business is setting an example for the other men. I wish I could clone him. He’s really that impressive.”

Enrique is a current resident of Port St. Vincent de Paul which provides a home and hope for up to 30 men as they transition out of homelessness, prison, or struggles with addiction or mental illness. The 24-hour staff help men like Enrique navigate life challenges, apply for jobs, rest and stabilize, find permanent homes and restore their hope for the future.

### Accompaniment on a new path

Enrique’s new path of hope is made possible by your generosity and your care for him and many men working to change their lives for the better. His journey could not be realized without you - your donation of goods, volunteer support, shopping at our thrift stores, and monetary gifts.

You and the Society of St. Vincent de Paul — Madison have embraced Enrique and are accompanying him along his new path of hope.

In addition to being a model Port resident, Enrique is a St. Vincent de Paul — Madison employee who recently earned a promotion at the Processing Center. He joined the staff while serving a sentence at Oakhill Correctional

Institution.

“While I was in prison, I worked my way down to the custody level to be able to get a job in the community,” Enrique said. “And that’s where I met John Cobb (Associate Director of Retail Operations) and he hired me, gave me a job at the Processing Center and this is how this all started. If John didn’t give me the chance, I know I wouldn’t be doing as well as I am doing.”

“If I didn’t get the opportunity to work I would have gone back to Milwaukee and wound up right back into the mix,” Enrique continued. “I probably would have ended up doing drugs again, coming back to prison. John put me in touch with Nick and talked to the social worker and my probation officer, they got in touch and set it all up and here I am.”

What started was a transition from incarceration to full-time employment and support to plan his next steps in life while living at Port St. Vincent de Paul. Enrique is now working towards building a new life with your help and continued support.

### The people who help

Enrique credits the personal connections he has made through St. Vincent de Paul with helping him be successful.

“Nick has been amazing,” Enrique said. “He is probably one of the nicest people I’ve met in my life. It doesn’t matter

what you did, or where you're from. He doesn't look at you any differently. He's just got a huge heart. He's a great guy."

Nick applauds Enrique's work to change his life and commends him as an example of the immense power and potential of Port St. Vincent de Paul.

"He is setting an example for other Port residents," Nick said. "The way he's living and taking care of his business is setting an example."

### The generosity of others

Port residents receive counseling, daily meals, laundry facilities, and access to phones and computers through the program. Residents pay nominal program fees to partially underwrite expenses and establish a payment history for tenancy when they move into permanent housing. Staff work with residents to identify and achieve their goals which leads to greater stability and independence such as references for permanent housing and employment.

Nick is moved by the generosity of people like you who volunteer and donate money to support men changing their lives through the men's housing program.

"I already have calls from people that are planning to bring loads of wrapped Christmas gifts," Nick said. "It almost makes me want to tear up. The fact that people do care in this community."

### Overcoming challenges and moving forward

Enrique has his sights set on a brighter future.

"I hope to get my own place and continue starting my life over," Enrique said. "It's crappy having to restart all of the time. I just turned 34 and I'm still climbing out of holes."

When asked if he had advice for other men in similar situations, Enrique said he would tell them to reach out for help.

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**"I hope to get my own place and continue starting my life over."**  
- Enrique

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"I would tell them that if they're in need and they're struggling like I was, they should try this route," Enrique said. "I would tell them about Nick."

*If you have a heart for creating futures of hope for Enrique and men like him, please pray for them and Director Nick Fatsis, and give generously to support the life-changing work at Port St. Vincent de Paul.*



## Meet Nick Fatsis

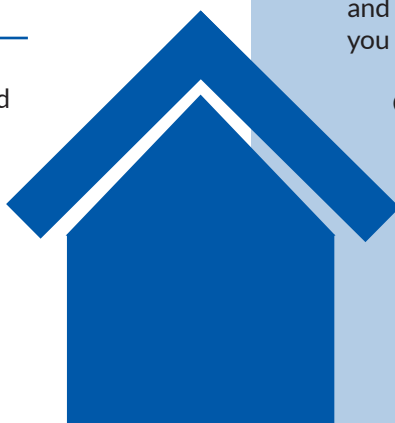
**Nick Fatsis is living proof of the power of a supportive community and a personal mindset of change.** His life experiences, skills and background serve him well as the new Director of Port St. Vincent de Paul. He leads a caring staff and helps men living in the home plan, set and achieve their goals in life.

Nick realized his interest in helping people who cope with homelessness and noted the dire need for housing assistance through previous employment at Focus Counseling and Just Dane. He has a keen insight into the challenges people face in finding permanent housing such as a lack of credit history, incomplete job references or less-than-perfect record. He notes Port St. Vincent de Paul is unique in the individualized, case-by-case care offered.

Nick stresses that his life experiences allow him to relate to men living at the Port and show empathy for each individual's situations and circumstances.

"I feel that God has prepared me for this job all of my life," Nick says. "I'm convinced of that. I'm a work in progress, we all are, and that's okay. It's important to be a worker among workers. Suit up and show up, do the best you can. You're human, you can make mistakes."

Compassionate people built a community of support around Nick during periods of his life when he was alone. His work at Port St. Vincent de Paul accompanying men on their journey provides that same community of support.





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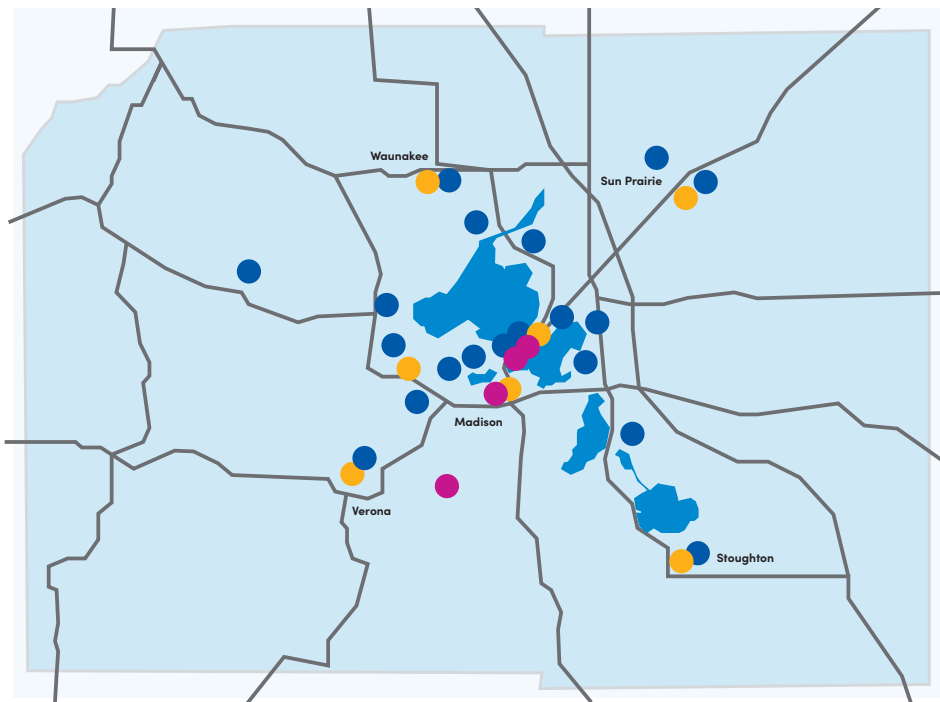
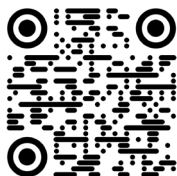
### Our Mission

We are 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.

### Your crucial support

Your compassion and generosity changes the lives of thousands of people each year in Dane County. Donate online now by scanning the below QR code or call (608) 442-7200 x34.

Contact Eric Fleming at [efleming@svdpmadison.org](mailto:efleming@svdpmadison.org) or (608) 442-7200 x34 to leave a bequest in your will or estate to care for future needs of our community.



## Mapping your impact

### Thrift Stores

Three thrift stores in Madison (on Williamson Street, Odana Road and Park Street), one each in Stoughton, Sun Prairie, Verona and Waunakee.

### Programs

Food Pantry  
Charitable Pharmacy  
Vinny's Lockers  
Vouchers for food, furniture and household goods  
Rent and utility assistance  
Lacy Food Pantry Gardens  
Port St. Vincent de Paul  
St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Program

### Member conferences

Home-visiting members across Dane County provide face-to-face support to neighbors in need.

### Moving Forward Together in Hope

You can help thousands of Dane County families in need.  
Give hope today.