



# Grace Notes

HELPING OUR NEIGHBORS IN NEED

## From an unsure “No, thank you,” to a confident “Yes, please!”

*St. Vincent de Paul Charitable Pharmacy staff continue to provide health information to patients on receiving their COVID-19 vaccines*



St. Vincent de Paul Charitable Pharmacy staff and volunteers provide both information on and COVID-19 vaccines to “hard-to-reach” folks who have been hesitant to receive a vaccine. Staff pharmacists Becky Mann and Yolanda Tolson-Eveans share stories of patients they have talked with and educated about the importance of receiving their COVID-19 shots. In some cases, folks were current pharmacy patients and asked if they would like to receive a vaccine and initially said no. After explaining the benefits, talking about their concerns and sharing information, several patients received their vaccine with a resounding “Yes, please!”

In one instance, a patient accompanied a family member while they received their vaccine. Several weeks later, that patient decided to follow up with our pharmacy and came to receive his own vaccine. In another case, staff offered a patient a COVID-19 shot and discussed their concerns.

**At that time, the patient declined, but several months later when the opportunity arose, he had re-considered due to the positive conversation and helpful information our staff shared.**

Many of our patients face barriers to receiving

healthcare: transportation, information only provided in English and lack of internet to access resources. Our pharmacy consistently helps patients overcome these barriers. Through Uber Health, we can offer patients a free ride to and from our pharmacy. Our volunteer interpreters allow staff to engage with Spanish-speaking patients. We offer a variety of ways to sign-up for an appointment and retrieve medications. We advertise our standing as a free public resource on several platforms.

Our vaccination clinics have increased awareness of our pharmacy. As the only free-standing pharmacy in Wisconsin, we are not connected to or supported by any single healthcare organization. The more people that are aware of us, the more patients we can help and the healthier our community can become.

*If health care assistance is important to you, please consider supporting our Charitable Pharmacy with a financial donation. Reach out to Eric Fleming, Director of Development, at (608) 442-7200 x34 to discuss how an individual or business can assist with our pharmacy needs.*

*Below: Staff pharmacists Yolanda and Becky administer vaccines to patients and staff.*



Since March 2020,  
**348**  
COVID-19 vaccines administered  
**60+**  
COVID-19 tests given





Debby Leisner is VP of Business Operations at Widen, an Acquia Company, in Madison.

## Small, everyday acts of kindness can make a long-term impact and inspire hope

Debby Leisner grew up in a Milwaukee suburb with two brothers and a single mom. Even as a child, she understood her family was poor, but never felt underprivileged. Her mother worked several jobs to provide for her kids, but struggled to make ends meet. At one point she realized she needed to seek help. Debby and her family visited a food pantry in a local church basement. Walking in, they saw bags of groceries – cans, pantry staples and non-perishable items. As her and her family approached the bagged items, a nun looked at Debby and said, “We’ve got something special for you.” The nun reached up behind a back shelf, pulled down a box of Cap’n Crunch cereal and handed it to Debby. That exchange stuck with Debby for a long time.

Reflecting on this moment, Debby shared that it stuck out to her particularly as a moment of inspired hope. **“It defined what hope could be; there will always be people that care and we are never alone,”** Debby said. **“It was a moment in my life where I felt hope and knew that everything would be okay.”** Debby shared that she gives back to share that spark of hope she felt in one experience as a nine-year-old. Her wish is that if one child can receive something special, something out of the ordinary just one time and feel that sense of fulfillment and promise, it will be worth it. **“Sometimes we believe that extra can of food, that extra step to help someone won’t make a difference, but it will. It makes a difference to the person on the receiving end of that action,”** Debby said.

Food insecurity is a large need across Dane County. With your support we will continue to provide help and hope to thousands of families this year. A child may find the same hope that Debby did.



*Thanks to Debby sharing her story, PepsiCo shipped us 224 boxes of Cap'n Crunch cereal! We are so grateful for this unique item as we are proud to offer a wide variety of food. Beyond fresh produce, pantry staples, meat, dairy and eggs, yes, we do provide sweets and snacks!*



## Save the Date!

Care Café 2022 *Virtual this year!*  
May 11th, 8:00am

### Your Community Calling

**Hear from...** our staff on the impact of donor support last year and our future plans. Watch an inspirational talk from Matthew Gonnering, SVP/GM of Widen, an Acquia company!



# Neighbors Helping Neighbors the Vincentian Way

*What is a conference? Who are members? A brief history and overview of current service provided by St. Vincent de Paul member conferences in Dane County*



In 1925, the Society of St. Vincent de Paul began serving in Madison at St. Bernard Catholic Church on the east side, and Holy Redeemer Church downtown. Each church formed a conference of members dedicated to providing help to people in need. Ninety-seven years later, the Society continues to serve in Dane County with member conferences at 18 Catholic churches which together comprise the District Council of Madison.



**“I wanted some hands-on work to help people, not just talking about helping people,” Ed Emmenegger, Blessed Sacrament conference member, said, “It lets me put what’s in my heart into action.”**

One way Society members provide relational care and support is by visiting people in their homes. A person in need calls for help and two conference members go to their home to hear their story and learn what assistance they need. **“I like how respectful home visits are,” Jeanne Bauhs, Our Lady Queen of Peace conference member, said, “We’re just showing someone that people care when they are down and out.”** Often, the conference will help with rent, utility bills, or other financial needs, and direct that person to additional resources that may provide support, including the District Council.



In 1941, the church conferences established what is now the District Council, to operate larger programs than any conference could manage on its own. The “Special Works” of the District Council include all our programs and resources you know about today! This includes our customer-choice Food Pantry, Charitable Pharmacy for uninsured adults, housing programs for men, women and children, Vinny’s lockers long-term goods storage, and our seven St. Vinny’s Thrift Stores. The District Council may also provide additional funds to help people whose needs exceed a conference’s ability to help.



**“It’s great to have real assistance as part of an organization,” Mike Meehan, St. Thomas Aquinas conference member, said, “We couldn’t do all this as an individual or a church, but we can do big things as part of a larger group.”** Beyond home visits, conference members provide volunteer service at various St. Vincent de Paul — Madison events throughout the year, run food drives, help with our Recycle the Warmth blanket drive and more (photos at right)!



**“I encourage others to get involved in whatever way they can,” Brenda Welhoefer, Saint Ann conference member, said, “Even if you can’t be a home visitor, you can donate, you can raise money, you can volunteer, you can donate things you no longer need. It’s all done by local people for local people.”**

*Are you interested in becoming a member? Email Membership Director Gayle Westfahl at [gwestfahl@svdpmadison.org](mailto:gwestfahl@svdpmadison.org).*



Address Service Requested

Thank you for supporting

## *Recycle the Warmth!*

With your help, we collected 100s+ blankets, sheets and bedding for neighbors in need during our 30th Annual Blanket Drive in January!



## **“We knew we would need a guiding document.”**

**Over the last few months, you’ve received emails and seen Facebook posts about our partnership with FreeWill.** We want to offer you the gift of making your will online as a thank you for your continued support to St. Vincent de Paul — Madison! Now, hear from two of our supporters on why they chose to solidify their estate plan this year using FreeWill.

John and Heather Hagen had seen firsthand the challenges and headaches of not having a legal document that spelled out post-death wishes. From this experience, they were intentional about establishing a way for their assets to benefit future generations without burdening any family members.

**“Our goal was to be as clear as possible on asset distribution and designating beneficiary charitable organizations,”** John said. **“Going through life and realizing life is so fragile, and now knowing how long we have to live, we wanted to have our affairs in order.”**

By using FreeWill, you will have the ability to plan your legacy and make a sustained impact in our community! You will also have the opportunity to designate your giving to charity. We hope you will consider St. Vincent de Paul — Madison.



***“Creating a will gave us the peace of mind that our specific wishes will be followed and respected.”*** - John Hagen

Information on FreeWill's website is intended as general guidance and does not constitute legal advice for any specific individual. Please consult your attorney for legal advice.