

Lent 2026

Hope in Action

Your compassion to help neighbors in need



1925 **YEARS** 2025

A Century of Helping Our Neighbors In Need

Helping Our Neighbors In Need
Society of St. Vincent de Paul — Madison

Investing In Strong Families

Lent invites us into a season of honest reflection and courageous love. We are asked to slow down, to look inward, and to open our hearts outward. In his recent reflection, Dilexi Te ("I have loved you"), Pope Leo reminds us that authentic love is never abstract. It takes shape in compassion, in solidarity, and in a willingness to draw near to those who are struggling. That's what you have done through your generosity.



I am honored by the trust you place in our employees and volunteers. I know you believe in caring for vulnerable families and reducing their suffering. We are your hands caring for parents choosing between rent and groceries, seniors stretching a fixed income, and families one unexpected bill away from crisis. These encounters are not statistics. They are sacred moments of human connection. When you walk alongside someone in need, you build a community of dignity, hope, and shared responsibility.

Lent calls us to prayer, fasting, and almsgiving. Prayer invites us to cultivate empathy. Holding our neighbors in our hearts, we consider how we might be instruments of peace and healing. Fasting teaches us awareness. It helps us recognize both our own abundance and the daily sacrifices others make just to get by. And almsgiving moves love into action. Action to provide warm meals, stable housing, life-saving medicine, and more.

My Catholic faith informs my work, but these values are universal. Reflection, generosity, and solidarity transcend religious boundaries. They speak to our shared humanity. When you donate, please know that you are investing in stronger families and a more just future.

This Lent, I invite you to reflect on how you are being called to respond to the needs of our neighbors. Perhaps it is through a renewed commitment to giving. Perhaps it is through sharing our mission with a friend. Perhaps it is simply holding our neighbors in your thoughts and intentions. Whatever form it takes, you matter and your engagement matters.

With gratitude,

Julie Bennett
CEO & Executive Director

101 WAYS To Get Involved

As we launch into our 101st year of helping neighbors in need, we invite you to join our mission of alleviating suffering and providing help to the most vulnerable in our community. There are hundreds, in fact, one-hundred-and-one, ways you can join the SVdP Madison family this year! Check out the full list at <https://svdpmadison.org/101-ways/>.



Donate goods to the stores



Advocate through SVdP USA's Action Center



Make a financial gift

Your Care In Action Through Social Services

Families who've just found permanent housing after being homeless face several obstacles. One way you're helping these families stabilize is through the St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Program. Program director Katy Polich and Social Work Intern Matthew Indra are your hands and feet, providing support to these fragile families. A first-year Master of Social Work student at UW-Madison, Matthew has over a decade of nursing experience and aims to become a therapist. He's interning with SVdP Madison to gain experience as a community social worker.

1 Why did you pursue nursing and social work?

I really like working with and taking care of people, and I was always interested in science. I found nursing, and worked in the emergency room while I was finishing up my degree. Then I developed a really great skill and love for working one-on-one with patients. Realizing that many people are struggling mentally and physically. I started learning more about psychotherapy, mental health, psychology, and philosophy, and the more I got into it, the more I realized I wanted to switch into psychotherapy. But I chose social work to pursue a therapy degree because I really love the social work values of human dignity, service, and self-determination. The field has a great holistic view of an individual. We look at systemic factors in people's lives that contribute to the issues they face.

2 What have you enjoyed most as an intern?

Over the last few months, I've learned how we serve

clients in the Seton Program, and that's been my area of focus. It's a really great internship because it's extremely flexible, and Katy allows that, which I greatly appreciate. We do many home visits for single adults with kids within the program. It's a really great experience to come into clients' homes, get to know them, understand their goals, and identify the negative events that are impacting their well-being. We try to navigate those waters as best we can together as a team.

3 What are some obstacles people are facing?

Clients are struggling with different things, and a lot of them are newly housed, so I think the main goal is to make sure we do everything we can to support people's housing. Making sure that everything they need is addressed. Transportation is always a huge issue because if a person has a job but can't get to work because of transportation issues, that's a huge barrier to their success, their goals, staying housed, and moving forward in their career.

4 What should people know about the social services SVdP Madison provides?

I think we have a huge impact on people's lives. People need as much support as possible. Resources and support systems are breaking down. People need our services more than ever; whether it's mental health services or transportation, or helping people afford their rent or food, whatever that looks like. And I think that we provide all of that and more because we're also providing that human connection.



Matthew Indra, Social Services Intern

We care, and it's not hierarchical. It's a very "We're in this together," kind of attitude. We don't go into these homes acting like we know what's best for our clients. Our clients know what's best for them. And our goal is to meet them at their level and get them where they want to go.

I think St. Vinny's is very special because of the people who work here. Everybody is willing to help, and I think the people we serve are seen as human beings first, deserving of care. It's important to see those we serve as human beings, and not as somebody who needs to be fixed. They just need our service. I know people can feel it when they're looked down upon. It's very tangible. Most people here don't have that perspective. We come from a place of respecting our clients and their dignity.



“Without St. Vinny’s, I don’t know that I could do what I do.”

Desean moved to Madison with her two young boys over ten years ago. With courage and strength, she established a new life for her family. Unwavering support from St. Vincent de Paul — Madison employees and volunteers helped her along the way.

Desean’s journey began with a stay in a local shelter, before transitioning to SVdP Madison’s St. Elizabeth Ann Seton House. With a safe place to live, Desean received support to begin healing from her past, connect with health services for her family, and help her boys get on the road to school success.

“St. Vinny’s was amazing to us because when we got here, we never had a place where we could go and get all the resources and all the things that we needed,” Desean said.

The family shopped at the St. Vincent de Paul Food Pantry and redeemed clothing vouchers to cope with

Wisconsin’s weather extremes. She fondly remembers their first Christmas in Seton House.

“I’ll never forget it: they gave us candy canes and hot chocolate, and they gave the kids toys,” Desean remembers. “That meant so much to me because, at the time, we didn’t have anything. But for them to give help to my kids by giving them a toy and making the dream of Santa live on meant so much to me as a parent.”

Staff at Seton House helped Desean navigate to her own apartment. But the family had absolutely nothing.

“One of the young ladies (a conference home visitor) actually came to my house and looked around to help,” Desean said. “Then, they gave us a broom and a mop. It was just like a group of people helping, and it was amazing. They don’t treat you like you’re a poverty-stricken person. They don’t come in boastful.

They're warm and welcoming, and they do their best to make you feel like you're part of the community, which is very important."

"It was just like a group of people helping, and it was amazing. They don't treat you like you're a poverty-stricken person. They don't come in boastful. They're warm and welcoming, and they do their best to make you feel like you're part of the community, which is very important."

- Desean, food pantry neighbor

Desean turned her apartment into a home with help from the conference home visitors and furniture vouchers to shop at Dig & Save Outlet Store.

"It was a miracle for us when they said we could get a table, chairs, and silverware from Dig and Save," Desean recalls. "It was everything to us. They had someone who could help us get it to the house. All those things that you think are non-important are very important. What good are things if you can't get them to your house? What good is having an apartment if you don't have a table, a chair, or a fork? They stepped up and said, "Hey, we understand."

After her boys grew older, Desean's heart led her to become a foster parent. Today, she is parenting six foster children under the age of 7. She continues to visit the food pantry from time to time to get diapers, wipes, and fresh produce.

"I found we could afford a 15-passenger van, so we're all in the car," Desean said while laughing. "We will go together, and they'll slide the food into the car for us. They know us when we pull up, and then when we get home, I bring out the bags and let the kids help me bring it in."

The service and compassion of SVdP Madison supporters, members, volunteers, and staff, paired with Desean's resilience, have made an important and lasting difference in her life and her children's lives.

"Without St. Vinny's, I don't know that I could do what I do," Desean said. "It takes a village to raise children, and St. Vinny's has been a part of that village for me."



Volunteers in the **pharmacy and pantry** give essential resources to neighbors in need and help run service operations

SPRING INTO VOLUNTEERING!

National Volunteer Week

begins on April 19th. If you're looking to meet new people, give back to your community, or learn a new skill, become a volunteer with SVdP Madison. Bring a friend, get out of your comfort zone, and help our neighbors in need. Learn about open positions at <https://svdpmadison.org/join-us/>.



The new **Young Adult Conference** is currently recruiting members who want to grow spiritually through service and friendship

At **Lacy Garden**, volunteers grow produce for neighbors using our pantry



Impact Report

Thank you for helping our neighbors in need in 2025. The data points below pages represent just a small sample of the incredible impact of your support. Please take a look, learn more about each of the programs you make possible, and know that with you, lives are changed. To view the full report visit <https://svdpmadison.org/our-impact/>.



CLOTHING & FURNITURE

Our seven St. Vinny's Thrift Stores exist in part to provide basic-needs items, including clothing, free to people experiencing hard times. Clothing and furniture can be chosen from any of our stores when people apply for a voucher.

1,050 Furniture Vouchers

1,729 Air Beds

100 Portable Cribs

900 Bedding Sets

5,993 Clothing Vouchers

24% more families received clothing vouchers this year than in 2024

Charity	Value of Service	% of Total
Food	\$4,007,996	65.8%
Medicine	\$1,034,517	17%
Clothing	\$522,470	8.6%
Furniture	\$258,153	4.2%
Other	\$172,149	2.8%
Utilities	\$73,866	1.2%
Microloans	\$20,322	0.3%
	\$6,089,473	100%

FOOD PANTRY

Thanks to you, hungry families get fresh produce, bread, meat, dairy products, and dry goods from our pantry. We also provide personal care items, pet food, and household cleaning products.

36,775

Families Received Food through the drive-thru pantry, by ordering online, or by getting food delivered to their home

15,060 LBS

Food Harvested by volunteers at Lacy Garden

PHARMACY

With your help, uninsured patients can obtain their prescription medicine from our pharmacy at no cost. Staff also provide vaccines.

354 Patients Served

2,358 Patient Encounters

8,917 Prescriptions

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.

Vincentian Values

- Simplicity
- Humility
- Gentleness
- Selflessness
- Zeal

Your Crucial Support

Your generosity changes the lives of Dane County neighbors in need. Donate online by scanning the QR code below.

Contact Eric Fleming at (608) 442-7200 x34 or efleming@svdpmadison.org to leave a bequest in your will.



1925 **YEARS** 2025

A Century of Helping Our Neighbors In Need

svdpmadison.org/donate
 PO Box 259686
 Madison, WI • 53725-9686
 EIN# 39-0824876

