



St. Vincent de Paul Village

FAST FACTS

St. Vincent de Paul Village in downtown San Diego offers a continuum of care for people to regain their lives. The Village provides for singles and families, long- and short-term transitional housing and permanent affordable supportive housing. Wrap around services include case management, mental health counseling, addiction treatment, career counseling, job training, a child development center, medical, psychiatric and dental care and an on-site elementary school.

Staff, residents scour San Diego for annual homeless count

By Patricia M. Walsh

The man in the alley is decidedly homeless. More than his ragged clothes and the large plastic garbage bag he has slung over one shoulder, it's his manner that speaks to his status; he avoids eye contact, looking away when our car rolls by. He's minding his own business in an attempt to blend in the residential area of City Heights. But to us, this stern-faced African American man looking in dumpsters at 7 a.m. on a sunny San Diego morning is obvious. I'm so glad I found him because he counts.

I put a tally mark on my map to show where I saw him.

We're nearing the end of the morning of the homeless count in San Diego and have 17 marks on the map to show where we saw homeless people on the streets, all but one men, all but a few wandering alone. We also have three stars where we saw structures where homeless people could possibly take shelter. As instructed, we didn't look under or in anything, we just indicated on

the map where we saw the could-be homes.

Grant writer Emily Lieber and I are just one of six teams from St. Vincent de Paul Village participating in San Diego's homeless count between 4 and 8 a.m. on Jan. 30, 2009. The other five teams are fanned out to Encanto, Southeast San Diego, 32nd Street, Barrio Logan and Center City. Each of those teams includes a resident from the Village.

Citywide, more than 420 volunteers took to the streets to count over 180 designated areas for San Diego's annual homeless count, according to Kiefer Rich, project manager of the Regional Task Force on the Homeless. Tally sheets were sent to San Diego State University's Institute of Public Health, which is now in the process of verifying and analyzing the data.

We did a mostly rolling count of City Heights; Emily drove and I tallied. Not wanting to miss a soul, we drove slowly up and down the alleys, through residential streets and on the main thoroughfares of Fairmount and Home Avenue. Down one alley we observed two



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Grant writer Emily Lieber participates in San Diego's homeless count in City Heights.

people going through a dumpster and determined they were homeless. I made two marks on the map. They count.

Just after sunrise we parked and walked in an area where we saw two homeless men. One man told us that the lock on the gate to the drainage ravine was always broken because people lived there. Cardboard boxes, bags, blankets, graffiti and trash indicated people spent time there. I made two tally marks and

a star on my map, the men we saw and those who might find shelter in the ravine count.

Back in the car we stopped at a convenience store. Inside the store a tall, painfully thin Caucasian man stood out among the people grabbing coffee and a bite before work. Disheveled. Dirty. No jacket, no backpack, he had one hand in his jeans pocket and the other on a beer. I made a mark on the map. He counts, too.

Staff at St. Vincent de Paul Village who participated in the homeless count included Ashaki Adowa, Tammy Baca, Julio Barajas, Sara Brunoli, Elia Campos, Mayra Campos, Cheryl Deblois, Paul Delessio, Jennifer Guthrie, Edward Hershey, Eliza Hook, Mimi Kelley, Jon Lutack, Steven Masters, Tessa Maxsimic, Adam Meyer, Lori Saldate, Mielle Schwartz, Marc Stevenson, Earlene Thompson, and Cedric Turner. Village residents who participated were Andy M., Julian M., Charles K., Johnny J., and Nicole A.

Under a now postcard-sunny day we see a man lying in an alley on a bedroll talking to another man. I wonder if these men have eaten at St. Vincent de Paul Village or used the day showers, and think about how the programs at the Village could change their lives. I put two tallies on the map because they count. ■

Patricia M. Walsh is editor of the VILLAGE NEWS.



Mail bag



Editor's note: The dedicated program staff of St. Vincent de Paul Village provides a continuum of care that gives our neighbors in need the tools they need to regain their lives. After they graduate, former residents write to keep in touch with their case managers. Here are their success stories.

First of all, I would like to give a big "Thank You" to all the staff members for all the wonderful support I had at St. Vinny's for 13 months. It was truly a wonderful blessing from God almighty, through Lord Jesus Christ to have this wonderful shelter to repair my internal soul, as well as my physical body through recovery.

I have to say that looking back while at the Village it is truly a wonderful program for those who truly want a new start in life! The educational opportunity, medical support, and good food provided is a tremendous blessing for people who have hit rock bottom.

God has blessed me with a wonderful place two trolley stops from the Village. I'm at

the present time doing some volunteer service at God's Extended Hand to help feed the homeless with spiritual food as well as food for their flesh.

God Bless and take care.
—James

I live with my husband and daughter here in San Diego. We have lived here for 11 months. My husband works for a temporary agency. My daughter goes to Perkins Elementary School. We are really happy in our one-bedroom house. We thank you for our stay at St. Vinny's. —Rochelle

As you know, the economy has been having a lot of trouble. Currently, I feel fortunate that by the grace of God, I have a job working as a real estate

investment broker.

I am the assistant for the most successful broker in multi-family (apartment complexes) in the San Diego office. His name is Chris Z. Chris gave me two new suit jackets and a new pair of pants and three high-end ties. His associate David S. gave me a lot of casual clothes. Another broker in the office gave me eight ties. I did not ask for anything.

I have not had any success with reconciling with my wife, but I have not given up, for this is the right thing to do. Well, that is as honest as I can be at this point in my St. Vincent de Paul Village success story.

—Harry M.

Now here at the Thursday veterans' group, one year after moving into my own apartment, I am very thankful that St. Vincent de Paul Village was there for me when I had nowhere else.

This is hard — but true — to admit.

Even though it was very difficult for me to stay at the Village for eight months, I am aware of how close I was to being on the street.

I am still struggling for medical treatment and follow-up with the VA. I am making myself available and volunteering around town for various community projects.

Struggling on a month-to-month basis financially, I meet the challenges of my responsibilities. I do my best to maintain a positive outlook and try to enjoy life. Looking ahead at my still young age, I am satisfied with the joys of volunteering. —John

I graduated from the Long Term Families program in September 2008. Since then I have maintained my employment as a waitress and have been able to pay all my rent and bills with my tips alone. I am totally self sufficient now. I do not rely on any government benefits, which is a huge accomplishment for me.

I have four young children who I am now able to support and was able to show them a wonderful Thanksgiving and Christmas in our own home. This would have never been possible before my stay at the Village. I am forever grateful.

I am now working on my latest goal. That goal is to buy a car. With this year's income tax return and the money I have saved my goal will be accomplished. Thank you to all the staff that supported me through my most difficult times! God Bless you! —Ruth E.

Improving data collection to improve programs

By Miriam H. DiBiase

A data-collection tool is making it easier to record and monitor services used and evaluate programs at St. Vincent de Paul Village.

Dubbed “Fast Pass,” the system requires all guests to swipe an ID card when receiving a meal, taking a shower, using the computer lab or other services in the Career & Education Center, or checking in for Children’s Services. The system was implemented in the public lunch program in July 2007, the Career & Education Center in October 2007, and the resident dining room in July 2008.

To obtain a Fast Pass card, residents and day-use guests provide some basic personal information. Fast Pass collects nine data elements: First, middle, and last name; Social Security number; date of birth; ethnicity and race; veteran status; and disability status.

“We do not refuse services to anyone who does not want to provide this information,” says Kathi Bradshaw, program analyst for St. Vincent de Paul Village. “But nearly everyone has been very cooperative once we explain that funders want to know who they’re helping.”

Specifically, funders want to know how many individuals St. Vincent’s serves and what the population generally looks like. Fast Pass shows how many meals are provided in a specific period of time, which helps staff identify trends in demand for services that can provide context when applying for grants.

Data collection and analysis have come a long way since the early days of the Village, notes Bradshaw. “Ten years ago, there was one person working on evaluating the success of all of our programs,” she says. “With the new process, all directors and program managers take ownership of their program outcomes and are skilled at looking at their programs critically. So now we can use a group process to analyze the effectiveness of

programs, ask and answer questions, and determine where programs can be improved and better support each other.”

Logic Model

The foundation of the data analysis process is the Logic Model, which was implemented at the Village in 2005. Each program has its own Logic Model that describes the needs addressed by the program, the program’s activities and key indicators of success to measure the program outcomes and impact on those being served.

Having an effective data collection tool in place has allowed directors and program managers to better use their Logic Models to measure each program’s progress and—more importantly—discover ways to improve.

“For example,” says Bradshaw, “when we counted only service instances, such as 25,000 visits per year to Guest Services, it was difficult to think in terms of relationship with these visitors. Once we implemented these reporting tools, we discovered those 25,000 visits were being made by 2,500 individuals.”

“There was a mental shift at that point,” notes Mary Case, vice president of programs at St. Vincent’s. “Instead of counting people attending a service—number of hours sitting in a classroom for example—we can measure their increased knowledge that occurred as a result of class attendance.”

The Fast Pass system is being expanded to include mental health services and may one day gather data for every program at the Village. “We have always been an organization serving those closest to the edge—of poverty, of homelessness, of unemployment,” says Bradshaw. “These tools allow us to build stronger, better programs, and to celebrate the success we can bring to our clients.” ■

Miriam H. DiBiase is the board liaison for Father Joe’s Villages.



VILLAGE NEWS Jim Hastings

DR. McCAHILL RETIRES: Dr. Margaret E. McCahill was joined by Father Joe Carroll to accept the 2008 Physician-Humanitarian award from the State of California Medical Board. Director of the Village Family Health Center at St. Vincent de Paul Village since 1998, Dr. McCahill is retiring.

Poverty training How can I best help?

By Clyde Atkinson

How can I best help this client?

As staff here at the Village, it’s a question that we all ask ourselves, or certainly should ask ourselves, on a regular basis. Recognizing that we are all unique ... each of us coming from different backgrounds, with different values, and different goals ... there is no one best answer, which sometimes can make things difficult for both residents and staff.

One of the best ways to learn more about how to approach these dilemmas and find solutions that stand a better chance to produce a win-win, long-term result can be as easy as signing up to attend the day-and-a-half Village workshop on Poverty: Concepts and Strategies. The workshop is conducted about four times a year and is co-facilitated by members of the Poverty Workshop Training Team.

On Day One, participants are invited to examine their own beliefs about poverty and the poor, are given an overview of philosophies and programs used to address poverty in this country (some good, some not so good), and examine hidden rules among the classes. Other topics include exploring resources and different styles of language. Day Two focuses on strategies of how to work with folks in poverty and also provides an opportunity to practice what has been learned.

According to Esther Monroe of the PMC Residential Program, “Poverty training showed me how to work with my clients.”

All staff members are encouraged to attend poverty training, which provides the tools for effective and successful endeavors at the Village. ■

Clyde Atkinson is the VCARE team leader for St. Vincent de Paul Village.

NOTE: Esther Monroe tragically died when she was struck by a car after this article was written. She was much loved and fondly remembered by over 100 residents and staff at a gathering in the JKC Chapel on March 23. She will be sorely missed.

Service increases Meaningful trends in Fast Pass data won’t appear until the system has been in place for more years, but there are some services at the Village for which increased demand can be measured solely on the basis of number of services provided. The chart below refers to units of service provided—e.g., one shower, one meal—not individuals served.

	2007	2008	% Increase
Hot meals served to non-residents	215,647	358,276	66.14%
Day Center (Showers, hygiene services, clothing vouchers)	4,066	6,194	52.33%
Guest Services (legal and travelers aid, veterans services)	3,544	5,301	49.58%

Guest Services and Day Center increases are largely due to the Village adding the Neil Good Day Center to the continuum of care in July 2008.



Ready to roll

Forklift drivers at Village warehouses recently received training and certification for proper operation of the equipment. Back row, from left, Benito Marroquin, Juan Bautista, Rigoberto Martinez, Jose Cervantez, Ramon Campos. Front row, from left, Sergio Livingston, Carlos Saldana, training instructor; Ramiro Ramirez. Certified drivers not pictured: Juan Acosta, Ignacio Miranda, Abel Moreno, Jose Vasquez, and Victor Ybarra.

VILLAGE NEWS Hernando Marquez

A strong support and recovery system changed her life

Editor's note: Once a month a graduation is held at St. Vincent de Paul Village to celebrate residents' completion of programs on their path to self-sufficiency. Graduation begins with a speech by an individual who has made notable achievements. In March, Stephanie gave the following speech.

My name is Stephanie and I am an addict. I was 13 when I did my first line of crystal meth. I progressed from there—my disease was so bad that when I got arrested for under the influence and my kids were taken away I didn't do what I was suppose to do to get them back. It was so bad that during my fourth pregnancy, I couldn't stop using and she was taken at birth and adopted.

I came to Vinny's in 2006 for the first time with two of my kids and I was still getting high. Cheryl (Knight, case manger), tried really hard to get me into Recovery Services, but I wasn't making it. I ended up leaving. It took my two babies to get put into foster care for me to finally get into recovery. I came back to Vinny's in 2007.

I started going to a very intensive out-patient treatment program called Harmony West Women's Recovery. Cheryl

kept track of me during my time there. I honestly didn't think I would make it. I never understood the process of addiction until I got into these two programs.

Let me tell you how strong my recovery and my support system is: In September 2008 I had to deal with four deaths in my family the top being my mom. Then in January 2009, my best friend of 13½ years passed away. Those two deaths could have taken me out, but I wouldn't let it.

I now know what to do instead of using drugs.

I pick up the phone or I'll grab someone to talk to. I am now three days shy from having 15 months clean, I have my babies back and I have a full-time job, being there for almost eight months, and I graduated Harmony West after 13½ months. I am now an alumni.

I want to thank Harmony West, Cheryl, Marc (Stevenson), Jon (Lutack) and Steve (Masters, all staff members in Recovery Services at the Village). I wouldn't have been able to do this without all of you believing in me and helping me believe in myself.

Again my name is Stephanie and I am a grateful recovering addict. ■



VILLAGE NEWS Emily Velez-Confer

Stephanie, left, with Case Manager Cheryl Knight.

Homeless Court Program celebrates 20 years

The Homeless Court Program celebrated its 20th anniversary on March 10, 2009, with a reception in the Law Offices of DLA Piper and roll out of "The San Diego Homeless Court Service Provider Toolkit." The network of people involved in the program were present including Judge Robert Trentacosta to formerly homeless men who were able to regain their lives thanks to Homeless Court.

Steve Binder, Esq., the San Diego public defender who began the program in 1989 during a Stand Down to assist veterans, and Steve Merriam, Ph.D., authored the toolkit, a 103-page guide to the

Homeless Court Program (HCP).

HCP, held bimonthly at the Village, is a special Superior Court session where homeless participants can voluntarily resolve any outstanding misdemeanor offenses and warrants. The program builds on partnerships between the court, the prosecutor, the public defender, agencies, and homeless participants.

HCP strives to open the door of justice so homeless people may address the underlying cause of their homelessness as well as the legal barriers that prevent them from reaching their full potential. ■



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Many organizations work together to make the Homeless Court Program a success. Representatives from some of those agencies are, from left, Adriane Soriano, a probation officer; Dennis Vermeersch, Second Chance/STRIVE; Steve Binder, San Diego public defender; Julie DeDe, director of Social Services at the Village; Bert Capati, job and resource coach at the Village; and Charles Lyles, Veterans Village of San Diego.

Donation is a 'shoe'-in for Thrift Store

Sister Connection, a local organization dedicated to breast cancer awareness, donated 150 pair of gently used shoes to the St. Vincent de Paul Village Thrift Store.

Kimberly Nickerson, a three-year cancer survivor, and Marcella Hailey spearheaded the group's fundraiser. "We feel that St. Vincent de Paul Village does something for the community, and that's what we're all about—helping in the community," Nickerson says. "We see what Father Joe is doing to help

others and we want to be a part and help, too."

The group of 12 close-knit ladies from Southeast San Diego gave shoes from their own closets and collected from friends. Christina Davis Fall is president and CEO of Sister Connection, which is also affiliated with Connected Brighterside in Solana Beach.

**St. Vincent de Paul Village Thrift Store has two locations:
16th & Island**

505 16th St., San Diego, CA, 92101
Open Mon–Sat 8 a.m.–4:30 p.m.
P: 619.687.1070

El Cajon/Fletcher Hills
2325 Fletcher Pkwy.
El Cajon, CA 92020

Open Mon–Sat 9 a.m.–4 p.m.
P: 619.465.5840

To schedule a pickup of your usable household goods, business items or sporting goods, call 619.687.1050 or bring items to 815 33rd Street, San Diego, CA 92102. ■



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Marcella Hailey, left, and Kimberly Nickerson donate a trunk-load of shoes.