

Saint Vincent de Paul
Board Meeting Minutes
January 13, 2025

Present: *Gemma Brennan, Sharon Bianchi, Jill Bradley, Paul Capelli, Joe Damato, Kathy Minton, Barbara Neary, Meg Otchy, Mary Schwarz, Debbie Weingroff, Gen Yachnik*
Absent: *Frank Kelly*

- Gemma** – commenced meeting at 1:30 pm followed by Debbie with opening SVdP prayer.
- Purchased new green material for the garden cross – will change the colors for the appropriate church seasons.
 - Code Blue Housing Centers – for the homeless, volunteer opportunities for any interested members to help cook for the homeless or stay overnight. Gemma brought food and juice from the food pantry to the Center at United Methodist Church, Theresa Hinds bought coats (\$5 at Costco's) at Gemma's request and Gemma provided to the Housing Center. Centers are open between 7:30 pm – 8 am on evenings below 35 degrees. Pastors at these Centers are now resources for education and work.
 - Next County SVdP meeting, February 12. Advise Gemma if you plan on attending.
 - Fiscal results for SVdP have been sent to Tom Spina – his company will produce posters for display at SVdP and the Church.
 - February 21, next general meeting, 1:30 pm.
 - Working on SVdP retreat for April 2025.
 - Christmas Toy Drive, will need new coordinator, will discuss further in the spring.

Client Home/Office visits: (first three from January 6, 2025 – board email votes)

1. Gemma – Client, #1 – Gemma contacted Department of Social Services - she is completing form, per their instructions, for immediate attention to Director of Social Services to provide assistance to client. Client thinks receives \$500 in #SS and \$200 in food stamps. Social Services had attempted to help in the past but client refused. Client is now agreeable to move and get assistance. This is beyond the scope of SVdP and will now be handled by the appropriate agencies. **SVDP will not pay for any improvements to the mobile home.**

2. Gemma – Client, #2 – board vote approved payment of \$94.03 for Progressive insurance bill. Per Gemma, could not pay this bill because of automatic withdrawal set up. Gemma agreed to pay the phone bill instead. *Gemma – how much did you agree to and what was the actual payment?*

3. Joe Damato – Client, #3 – **approved** by email vote – paid **\$1,450 for rent**, Green Meadows apartments.

Kathy Catron – Client, #4, 48 yrs, (15 yr old child with brain tumor, autistic, and in a wheel chair), spouse just moved back in with family (possible drug/alcohol problem), lives at Hopes Crossing for the past 10 years, Section 8 housing. Older child moved out, client was working 50 hours per week but now not working, needs to care for the younger. Client has applied for caregiver income. Current income \$998 (Medicaid for child) and \$487 in food stamps. Without the rent in arrears, income = \$1485 and expenses = \$1548. If approved for caregiver income and spouse works, client should be able to keep up with all expenses.

Last rent payment was July 2024, client tried to pay in January but was locked out of the portal and Hopes Crossing would not accept the payments except through the portal. Had eviction notice. Rent had been \$172 then went up to \$1080? No valid reason for that big an increase. New ownership of Hopes Crossing. Client's rent is \$4942 in arrears. Client paid \$1200 last week for January/ late fees but needs the additional for back rent to avoid eviction.

Post meeting update – client was not evicted, **board agreed to pay the \$3742 back rent**. Kathy to discuss with Hopes Crossing the issue of client being locked out of the portal. Gemma to contact State Rental Assistance Program – given the significant increase in rent that has been happening with this case and others – for Hopes Crossing residents.

Joe Damato – three more potential cases from home visitors...Snyder's, Kern's, and Scattrito.

Sharon Bianchi – treasurer: current balance = \$36,381.51, weekly deposit = \$1584.

Financial support to clients through this meeting = \$3742 (Client #4)

From January 6, 2025 email vote = \$1450 (client #3) and ? (client #2)

Jill Bradley, secretary – all minutes up to date and on web.

-2024-2025 member registration forms completed and provided to Linda P. Thank you to all coordinators, great job!

-Met with Greenbriar Woodland's, “Outreach” program and presented Certificate of Appreciation. Well received and one person thinking of joining SVdP.

-Will contact OCC for way to attract interested students in volunteering for SVdP.

Mary Schwarz, food pantry coordinator

-December data = food for 232 families that included 528 adults and 346 children, 395 turkeys given out between Thanksgiving and Christmas. Great job FP staff! No need for new computer at this point. Fulfill provided and loaded it with needed information.

-Discussed Fulfill pilot program for fresh produce – board declined. Will participate in their Banana Box of needed items.

-Evening hours tried in November and December – no clients. This program will be discontinued, there are other food pantries that open on nights and weekends.

-Cleaning service starting today, once a month, cost of \$100, fully insured.

-In need of volunteers, particularity for Friday afternoon shift.

Barbara Neary, fundraising coordinator

-Paver sales will be in May, Charlie Rott to handle, and Tom Jones to do the orders. Consider twice a year, memorial and veterans holidays.

-Consider raffle fundraising, Gemma to contact Causeway for potential car raffle.

-Also consider a dance.

Paul Capelli, furniture coordinator

-Currently working on three cases. One client case on hold, may be a problem with the rental client has.

-Pat and Paul meeting on January 15 with Elizabeth Ann Seton staff to train them to handle furniture needs on their own.

Meg Otchy, garden coordinator

-Seven beds completed, one more to be done.

-Contacted KC and Kathleen – will assist tonight to gather the poinsettia plants for the garden use.

-Consider a financial literacy course for clients. Gemma will discuss at the County meeting.

There is someone from that meeting who is looking to do just that.

Gen Yachnik, helping hands

-Need winter coats. December results: served 135 families (295 adults, 256 children) with 2,231 items for in-kind donation of \$13,431.50. Great job – HH staff.

Kathy Minton, technology coordinator

-Provided email on course for grant writing. Several board members interested. Kathy will have Chris look into grant opportunities.

-Updating website on NJ Housing Resource Center and Rental Assistance Program.

Post meeting note - Farro's on line SVdP store is temporarily closed. Kathy will work with Farro's to address shipping and pick up options for out of state orders.

SVdP and ST. Luke Church will be closed on Monday, January 20 in honor of Martin Luther King.

Next board meeting – will be notified whether an actual meeting is needed or cases can be handled by email.

Gemma adjourned meeting at 4 pm followed by Debbie with closing prayer.

Please also include prayer requests from Gemma for Amy (Rita, travel agent's daughter), from Mary for her niece, Barbara, and from Debbie for Wendy, Joe, Lori, and Steve in your prayers.

Respectfully submitted,
Jill Bradley, Secretary