



NORTHWEST DISTRICT-ST LOUIS COUNCIL
SOCIETY OF ST. VINCENT de PAUL

MINUTES FOR NORTHWEST DISTRICT MEETING
OCTOBER 15, 2104

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 P.M. by Matt Medina, President of the Northwest District.

OPENING PRAYER was led by Father Robert Banken from St. Francis Parish.

SPIRITUAL READING – Father Banken shared some thoughts on sacred scripture and Vincentian spirituality regarding holiness in relationships. We are indeed guardian angels to each other.

Father Jim Benz welcomed all to St. Cletus parish and commended members for being the presence of God in the world and bringing Jesus to others.

TREASURER'S REPORT – YTD summary documents were distributed by Brother Raphael Kreikemeier, FFSC.

SECRETARY'S REPORT – Minutes were emailed to members and approved prior to the meeting.

ST. CLETUS SVdP – Mary Ellen Ahlheim, President of St. Cletus conference, welcomed attendees and gave an overview of the activities at their parish. Their conference has 25 members and is widely supported by funding efforts of other parish organizations within the parish. Homelessness is a big concern. Last year ~\$50,000 was distributed to 729 clients.

Mary Ellen cautioned about a Romanian family that is going from parish to parish requesting assistance using several names.

NORTHWEST DISTRICT UTILITY ASSISTANCE – \$19,000 has been distributed YTD. No funds are available at this time.

2014 WALK FOR THE POOR – Teresa Waddington from Immaculate Heart of Mary happily reported that 12 conferences and 161 walkers participated in the event! The weather was beautiful and over \$12,000 was raised for NWD. This represents a new record for the NW District.

FORMATION COMMITTEE/OZANAM TRAINING/SPIRITUAL ADVISOR TRAINING – 33 Vincentians completed Ozanam training and 16 completed spiritual advisor training this year. Only one training session is planned for next year. It will be on April 25, 2015 at Assumption parish in O'Fallon.

NORTHWEST DISTRICT NEW MEMBERSHIP GOAL -- Matt reported that the goal to increase membership by 10% was attained this year. He challenged conferences to a repeat performance in FY 2015. To aid in recruiting, keep SVdP activities visible with bulletin notices, activity reports, and if your pastor is agreeable, pulpit talks by members. A monthly special collection for SVdP also increases awareness. Several instances of poor box theft have been reported. A switch to monthly envelopes provides better security and a better audit trail.

NEW MEMBER INITIATIVES/NEW MEMBER MENTOR PROGRAM – Joyce Cain, President from St. Charles Borromeo SVDP reported on some of the techniques utilized in her conference. New members are assigned to a mentor and given a book of resource information at their first meeting. The new member and mentor work closely in a 1:1 relationship making visits and learning the procedure for the call book. The mentor serves as a “go to” person as the new member takes on more responsibility.

Other helpful resources are available at www.svdpusa.org

To download sample bulletin announcements, click on these links:

SVdP Members
Programs/Tools
Tools
Spirituality/Formation
Bulletin Announcements

These announcements can be customized by including monthly statistics from your conference's activities.

SVdP PARISH FINDER – <http://www.svdpstlouis.org/how-to-help/parish-finder-page/>

NORTHWEST DISTRICT WEBSITE – www.northwestsvdpstl.org

ANNUAL AUDITS – Matt thanked all the conferences for completing FY 2014 audits. 2015 forms will be coming soon.

TERM LIMITS FOR PRESIDENTS AND TREASURERS – Matt reminded members that the term limit for presidents and treasurers is six years. There were 2 extension requests this year for Treasurers. Succession training is essential!

CAR REPORTS – Q4 2014 reports are due. The quarter ended on September 30, 2014.

JOBS FOR LIFE – Contact Bob Schrieber at 636-441-3981. Jobs for Life is a cooperative effort by 40 area churches to help prepare participants to enter the work force. Last year SVdP referred 11 clients to Jobs for Life. Matt challenged all conferences in St. Charles County to refer two clients in FY 2015.

ST. LOUIS COUNCIL UPDATES – Dave Winslett expressed gratitude for the opportunity to serve as President of the Board of Directors and shared some insights from “When Helping Hurts.” His joy is in meeting Vincentians from all over the world and watching the Society grow. Next year St. Vincent dePaul will celebrate 170 years in St. Louis. The Society continues to reevaluate services and finances on an ongoing basis to maximize benefits to those who need our help. Mr. Winslett said to expect a balanced budget in 2015 with increased program supports for conferences, more financial aid to conferences, and a focus on increasing the level of formation for members. Our goal should be to bring the love and peace of Christ to the suffering and to walk with clients to bring hope and positive change in their lives.

VINNIE'S AUTO/CAR REPAIR PROGRAM/THRIFT STORE CREDITS – Ryan Carney explained some of the data that triggered restructuring of how we address the transportation needs of our clients. Overall, requests for assistance with car repairs greatly exceed requests for assistance with acquiring an automobile. We will be working more closely with Catholic Charities to help people build resources to purchase cars in the marketplace. The new system is being piloted in five conferences, including St. Robert's with roll-out to all conferences planned for January 2015.

The system of awarding St. Vincent dePaul store credits has been scrutinized and restructured. Ryan urged conferences to continue their support of the thrift stores. Some discussion was held concerning the amount of credits being given for clothing drives. Ryan Carney said he'd review this issue again downtown.

John Foppe shared some of the activities planned for celebrating SVdP's 170th anniversary in St. Louis.

ST. LOUIS COUNCIL /Rx PROGRAM/WALK FOR THE POOR RESULTS -- Steve Rupp congratulated organizers and participants on a successful Walk for the Poor. Largest turn out for the St. Louis Council/Conferences this year.

Mr. Rupp also reported great conference participation in the newly revamped Rx Program.

HOMELESS PROJECT -- Lynda Atchison Vice President NW District, provided an update on the activities and success stories of the Homeless Project. Since its launch in October 2013, they have received 109 referrals for assistance. They continue to learn more about generational vs. situational poverty and are looking to develop relationships and increase collaboration with other organizations. They are currently "walking with" seven families to improve their living situations.

Paul Cook brought sample items/baskets made by Stitches for Charity which can be used by conferences to raise money for the Homeless Project. You may contact him at 314-239-9024 for additional information.

The next Northwest District meeting will be held on April 8, 2014 at St. Robert's Parish.

Thank you to St. Cletus for hosting this meeting.

Closing prayer was led by Father Robert Banken.

NOTE: All conferences were in attendance with 39 Vincentians present.