



DIOCESAN COUNCIL OF AUSTIN SOCIETY OF ST. VINCENT DE PAUL, INC.

Conference Presidents, please forward to your conference members.

SSVDP Calendar

Upcoming Events

[5/14 Ozanam Orientation - St Theresa Conference](#)

5/14 Thrift Store's "First Saturday on Braker" celebration

Predatory Loan Conversion Program

The Numbers

\$51,304.04 in loans converted

75 high interest loans converted

22 closed loans

7 incentives paid

329% APR for loans converted

2.25% APR for PLCP loans

85.7% repayment rate

22 day without a default

[Link to secure "how to" page - now with client forms in Spanish.](#)

Systemic Change Question

Question:

"I'm a Conference Spiritual

Friday, May 13, 2016

A Special Thank You

We hope that everyone who attended this week's Blessing Ceremony at the Vincentian Family Center and Thrift Store feel as overwhelmed by the love, support and enthusiasm as we do. It is a true testament to the vast Central Texas community's support of the work we do. Thank you to all the Vincentians, non-profit leaders, clergy, collaborative partners, friends, family, and more who continually support the vision and mission of The Society of St Vincent de Paul.



Thank you to the dozens of volunteers, board members and staff who worked tirelessly for days and days, and even more days, to get us successfully moved out, moved in, up and running, and ready for the events of this week and beyond. It has been a community effort - a proverbial barn raising - and we couldn't have achieved any of this without you.

Many hands make light work, and for those hands we are forever grateful.

Google Bans Ads for PayDay Loans

Google announced on Wednesday that it would ban all ads for payday loans on its website due to unaffordable repayment terms and financial harm to consumers. David Graff, Director of Global Product Policy at Google, announced in a blog post that the global ban would take effect July 13, 2016. This ban would apply to loans requiring repayment in 60 days, as well as loans carrying an APR of 36% or higher. "This change is designed to protect our users from

Advisor. Are we supposed to continue to do Spiritual Reflections or is Systemic Change training taking over our monthly Spiritual Reflection meeting?"

Great question. When we started Systemic Change training, we asked the Conference Presidents to please permit the Systemic Change Reps 15 - 30 minutes at the end of the Spiritual Reflection meeting. We recommended that the Systemic Change Rep let the Spiritual Advisor know in advance the topic of the training in the hope that the Spiritual Reflection would flow into and support in some way the theme of that month's training. The training should be done after the Reading of the Rule and build on the Spiritual Reflection, which is at the core of our communal movement towards holiness through innovative care and support for our brothers and sisters in need.

In case there is still any confusion, we have not changed the name of the meeting to the Systemic Change Training meeting. It is and will remain the Spiritual Reflection meeting. Systemic Change is rooted in the Gospel and in the words of our founders and our patron reflected in the Rule. We are not attempting to replace Spiritual Reflections with Systemic Change training. We are hoping to amplify our spirituality by expanding the ways we can put our faith into action in the service of those in need. In the Gospel, Jesus tells us, "Love one another as I have loved you." When Jesus said "one another" he was referring to all of our Brothers and Sisters in Christ.

It is the hope of the Austin Council that the Spiritual Advisors, the Conference Presidents, and the Conference Systemic Change Reps will collaborate to bring a unified message rooted in Gospel values. If it is not possible to share the Spiritual Reflection meeting then the Systemic Change training will need to find

deceptive or harmful financial products," wrote Graff. "Ads for financial services are a particular area of vigilance given how core they are to people's livelihood and well-being."

It is the first time that Google has banned such a broad range of financial advertisements on its site, however the move was welcome by advocates seeking stricter controls on an industry long-accused of targeting low-income and minority communities with loans that carry egregiously high interest rates.

Lisa Donner, Executive Director of Americans for Financial Reform, said in a recent statement that Google's decision would stop abusive lenders from marketing what she described as "debt-trap products that do serious and lasting harm to consumers."

As Vincentians striving to effect Systemic Change, this news comes at an opportune time, inspiring strategic action from the Society as a whole, whose efforts at the local and regional level can indeed make real change in the lives of those we serve.

First Saturday on Braker

Stop in at the Thrift Store **TOMORROW, May 14** for our first Saturday on Braker! Our new location is officially open for business, and we can't wait to show you our new home.

To celebrate our big move to north Austin, we're offering 15% off all items in the Thrift Store throughout the day and hourly door prizes from 12:00 pm - 5:00pm. Bring the whole family for cookies, great sales, and fun!

We're also offering an open house at the Vincentian Family Center. Come check out our office spaces, computer lab and training classroom, food pantry, and prayer room from 9:00 am - 7:00 pm.

We'll see you Saturday!

Our Society

Pope Francis Quote

"What we say and how we say it, our every word and gesture, ought to express God's compassion, tenderness and forgiveness for all."

- Pope Francis @ Pontifex

Systemic Change Update

This month we are traveling to each of the Districts in the Austin Council bringing the message of Systemic Change. Thank you to the District Presidents for allowing us time on the agenda for our presentation, and to everyone for making us feel so welcome. The fellowship has been amazing and the food has been delicious. It is important that we continue the dialogue about poverty and

another time slot.

Archived Documents
[Vincentian documents](#)
[Spiritual Reflections](#)

Links
[Bulletin Announcements](#)
[Ethics & Integrity in Ministry](#)

[Donate your vehicle to our Vehicle Donation Program - the proceeds from the sale of your vehicle will stay right here in our diocese!](#)



Donate to our Thrift Store!

Donation drop off is now open at the Vincentian Family Center and Thrift Store! Please bring your donations to the facility Monday through Saturday from 9:00 am - 7:00 pm.

Like us on Facebook 

Follow us on 

Systemic Change that started within the Society with the election of Sheila Gilbert as President of the National Council of the United States, and has continued with our introduction to "Bridges Our of Poverty " and Dr. Donna Beegle's "Communications Across Barriers".

In the United States, the land of milk and honey, in the year 2010, 46.3 million people were living in poverty. Four years and billions of dollars later there were 46.7 million people living in poverty in the U.S.. In this country we are spending billions of tax dollars annually on the war on poverty. A plethora of nonprofits serve this same population with billions of dollars and millions of hours. But like the war on drugs, it appears that the war on poverty is one we are losing - NOT from lack of trying or lack of passion.

With the implementation of Systemic Change we will be working closely with those living in poverty to better understand and address the root causes of their condition, collaborating with other organizations to develop innovative ways to reduce or eliminate poverty, and advocating for long-term change at the local, state and national levels.

We, as Vincentians, can feel proud of the work we do. When we help by paying a bill or providing food we help with an immediate need and as Vincentians we will continue to do that. But, to help someone walk out of poverty, we need to address the causes of the poverty. So, when we are asked why Systemic Change, we can easily sum it up in the old adage, "Give a man a fish and you feed him for a day. Teach a man to fish and you feed him for a lifetime."

Each of the Conferences in the Diocese has a different personality and is starting in a different place. Therefore, we, the Systemic Change Committee, cannot draw up a blueprint that will work in every Conference. For some Conferences, Systemic Change will include working with other community organizations toward a common goal. For others, it will mean expanding programs and being creative with the resources they have. And for still others it will mean something as basic as doing a better home visit. Wherever your Conference is, we are asking you to stretch your imaginations and discover what you can do to better serve the least of our brothers and sisters. Always keep in mind the words of our founder, Blessed Frederic Ozanam, "No act of charity is foreign to the Society."

Vincentian Family Center: Food Pantry News

The VFC Food Pantry will open on Saturday, May21 and run through the summer as an independent pantry. After our 90 day waiting period, we hope to become an approved Capital Area Food Bank Pantry and have access to all of the benefits of membership. Until then, we continue to need to support the stocking of the pantry through the generosity of the community - through food drives and cash donations. Please consider how you can help us feed our neighbors this summer (and beyond). To get more information - contact Paula Pompa at paula@ssvdp.org.



In Case You Missed It

The Journey Dreams Do Come True: From the Board President

For many years it has been a dream to have a Vincentian Family Center in the Diocese of Austin. Speaking with past presidents and members of the Council, this has been on the "wish" list for a very long time. As we approach the Blessing of the Vincentian Family Center and the new and improved Thrift Store, we will see a dream come true that will allow us to serve in a more efficient and productive way.

Once the decision was made to sell the jointly owned South Congress Store, the process was started. Proposals were sent out, bids accepted and the sale was finalized in December of 2015. In the meantime, a Store Expansion Committee was established, and weekly meetings began.

Sitting on the sidelines, many of you may wonder how all of this has happened, why we did what we did, and how it will impact you, your conference and the folks we serve. To begin with, our process was to identify wants and needs, including:

- A much larger Thrift Store with adequate warehouse space & a large receiving and processing department
- Office space for the Diocesan Council Staff
- Computer lab and Education room
- Easy Access and adequate parking
- Client Services (directed to the appropriate conference)
- A "Client Choice" food pantry
- Conference room and office space to lease to entities that serve the same folks we do
- Space - between 20,000-30,000 sq ft.

In order to find a space to accommodate all of this, the Store Expansion Committee began the search. Ironically, the first site we looked at was the one at 901 W. Braker Lane. Even though we all felt this was the best choice, we continued to look for other options. We checked out all available spaces that might have worked, but none addressed the list of needs like the Braker Lane site. None of the buildings were move-in-ready; ALL had been vandalized, (including copper being stripped out) and would require extensive remodeling. It became apparent that we had no option but to begin working on a remodel plan with the Braker Lane site as our best option.

And so the fun part started. Meeting weekly, the committee hired

professionals to begin the remodeling process; a project manager, architect for the design of the building, getting permits, contractors, etc.. Very quickly we recognized that patience would be the key denominator to learn and accept.

Looking back, it seems like yesterday that we started this process. Looking forward, we see a beautiful facility that will not only address all wants and needs, but will create multiple income streams to help support the whole. Added bonuses are the inclusion of a healthy choice deli/coffee shop and a small, but beautiful prayer room for silent reflection.

The future is bright in the Diocese of Austin as we move forward to assist you, your conferences and those we serve. Thank you for going on this journey with us. We pray that you are as proud of the dream and vision of a new Vincentian Family Center as we are.

We hope you will join us on Tuesday, May 10th for the Blessing .

~ Joleen Boyer

Diocesan Council Staff - Phone: 512-251-6995
NEW: PO Box 81511, Austin Texas 78708-1511

Stacy Ehrlich Executive Director stacy@ssvdp.org
Roz Gutierrez Conference Support Director roz@ssvdp.org
Katie Conyers Assistant Director of Development katie@ssvdp.org
Midge Beard Executive Office Manager midge@ssvdp.org
Paula Pompa Vincentian Family Center Manager
paula@ssvdp.org
Paul Kleypas Store Director 512-442-5652
svdpstoreaustin@sbcglobal.net

Prayer Requests: pray@ssvdp.org

Physical Address of New Vincentian Family Center:
901 W. Braker, Austin, TX 78758