



# Traditions



Winter, 2011

News from Marillac Social Center & St. Vincent de Paul Center  
Missions of the Daughters of Charity

## We've been blessed. St. Vincent's and Marillac Friends Bring Joy and Hope to Local Communities

*The 2010 holiday season at St. Vincent de Paul Center was as exciting as ever.*

Hundreds of donors, staff and volunteers came together to provide a Christmas to remember, through awe-inspiring kindness and selfless generosity. We embraced traditions, both new and old, and celebrated one very important anniversary!

"Santa Mike" and Friends celebrated their 40th anniversary this Christmas, marking four decades of gift-giving to the children and families here at St. Vincent's.

The group has also hosted the annual Senior Dinner Party for nearly 35 years. This year over 300 local senior citizens came together for an evening of dinner and socializing. A record-breaking 425 homeless clients

attended the annual Outreach Luncheon also hosted by Santa Mike, where volunteers served a traditional Thanksgiving meal with all the trimmings. In addition, each individual

received a coat, thermal underwear, a sleeping bag, a hat, and gloves.

For years, Holy Family Parish in Inverness has donated much-needed items to each of our programs. This year, parishioners provided:

- contributions to our food pantry,
- \$2,235 in gift cards for our Senior clients,
- 345 gift cards totaling \$10,750 to families in our Child Development Program,
- gift bags and toys for 36 families at the Center.



St. Vincent's also received 194 wrapped gifts for each School-Age child and three large bags of clothing for our Seniors and Homeless Outreach Clients (See St. Vincent de Paul, Page 2)



*Marillac Social Center spreads the spirit of Christmas far and wide.*

This holiday season at Marillac brought joy and hope to the local community as the spirit of Christmas spread to Marillac staff, donors, volunteers, local churches, area businesses and clubs. Due to overwhelming generosity, we were able to reach out to nearly 3,000 people involved in our programs.

A group of dedicated volunteers held their 20th annual

Christmas party for 80 Hope Junior children, which included a magician, crafts, lunch, a visit from Santa and gifts for each client. The After School Matters Party included movie passes for each teen in the program.

Project Hope held its first Father Christmas Party, and each father received a gift for his child. Also in Project Hope, 50 teen parents and their children participated in a Matching Family Program.

(See Marillac Social Center, Page 2)

## Happy New Year!



*As I reflect on 2010, I feel immense gratitude for all of the staff, donors, Board members and volunteers who dedicated their time, talent and resources to St. Vincent de Paul Center and Marillac Social Center.*

*As in past years, 2010 presented us with both challenges and triumphs. Two of our most exciting triumphs were the reaccreditation by NAEYC at St. Vincent's and the strengthening of our partnerships on the west side, especially with the West Side Collaborative, at Marillac.*

*As we embark on 2011, I wish you a year of happiness and peace, and I look forward to working together to continue our mission to help those most in need.*

*Thank you.*

*Bart Winters, CEO,  
Marillac Social Center  
and St. Vincent de Paul  
Center*

*(St. Vincent de Paul Center,  
continued from Front Page)*

from St. Teresa of Avila Parish.

St. Clements Parish contributed several donated items for our Homeless Outreach and Child Development Programs. We were presented with almost 200 food bags and baskets for our families from Wells Deliverance Parish and an individual anonymous donor. Lastly, DePaul University's School of Public Service organized a drive and donated several gift cards and toys.

While walking through St. Vincent's, one could not help but hear the sounds of a choral performance from our Early-Childhood classrooms or a Christmas play being performed with great enthusiasm in our School-Age program.

On behalf of all of us at St. Vincent's we would like to thank each organization, volunteer and donor for making this holiday special for our families and clients.

*(Marillac Social Center,  
continued from Front Page)*

Outside organizations donated their time and talents throughout the month. The talented Maine South Hawkettes performed their Christmas Program for the children at the Center. Teachers and children in the Early Childhood Student Classrooms performed a spirited recital, which was well-attended by family and friends, and the School Age program performance included poems, songs and skits. The Society of Actuaries and Bolingbrook High School hosted parties for the School-Age children.

On December 17th the Weber Stephen Products company hosted its 30th annual Christmas Party for 100 children and teens. The Weber Stephen staff joined the children for activities such as eating a traditional family-style sit down Christmas dinner, dancing, constructing teddy bears, and jumping in the moonwalk, and then ended with a special visit from Santa. Through additional support from local organizations, churches and

individuals, each child in Early Childhood and School Age received a present for Christmas.

Generous donations and the Greater Chicago Food Depository kept the shelves stocked during the holidays, thus enabling the Food Pantry to continue to provide for over 600 clients a month. The Family Service Christmas Sale served over 330 families, including 1,000 children. The families received a turkey, food bag and a toy for each child. Almost 100 volunteers donated their time to make this day special for our families. Doug Hewitt and his mentors celebrated Christmas with their mentor group and families with games, fun and presents.

At a time when many families struggle, it is amazing to see the great lengths our constituents extended themselves to make someone's Christmas special. We are so blessed and grateful to have such wonderful people who share their time, gifts, money and love with Marillac.

## NAEYC Awards St. Vincent de Paul Center Accreditation

St. Vincent de Paul Center was reaccredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) in January. In the 25 years since NAEYC Accreditation was established, it has become a widely recognized sign of high-quality early childhood education. Eight percent of pre-school and early Childhood programs are currently accredited by

NAEYC. Marillac's early childhood program was also reaccredited last year.

The NAEYC Accreditation system has set voluntary professional standards for programs for young children since 1985. In September 2006, the Association revised program standards and criteria to introduce a new level of quality, accountability, and service for parents and children

in early childhood programs.

The new standards today reflect the latest research and best practices in early childhood education and development.

St. Vincent's would like to thank the faculty and staff for their contributions toward this tremendous achievement.



## Little Girl, Big Heart

*10-year-old Allie is not your average fifth-grade student. Sure, she likes playing sports and hanging out with friends just like most kids her age, but Allie is unique. She also dedicates her time to help others.*

While other Chicago children spent their summer playing outside, going to the beach or playing video games, Allie was making presents for children in need.

Wondering what to do with leftover fabric and other art supplies last summer, she decided to make blankets and hair barrettes to give to local kids in need.



Allie, you are well on your way, and St. Vincent's thank you for your selfless generosity.

"I've always wanted to help the less fortunate," said Allie, which prompted her to donate the gifts to St. Vincent de Paul Center at Christmastime.

Over the last six months, Allie crafted 12 colorful, cozy blankets and over 30 beautiful barrettes that were distributed to St. Vincent's families over the holidays.

When asked about what her dream job would be Allie simply stated, "To travel around the world and help people in need." Well,

## After-School Teacher Inspires Creativity

St. Vincent de Paul Center would like to recognize Dominique Mickens, one of our After-School Program teachers, for her innovative programming in the creative and performance arts. Her continued efforts to educate and to promote experiential learning are an inspiration to all of us.

As one of the eldest children in a family of 12, Dominique has been creating unique ways to entertain her younger siblings for years. "We didn't have a lot growing up, so I have never taken formal classes, but my parents always encouraged singing and dancing in our home. We even have an annual family talent show," says Dominique.

Dominique joined the St. Vincent's family almost seven years ago. "When I first started, I had some difficulty coming up with methods to engage the kids in a fun way," she remembered. "Then, I began to ask the kids what they wanted to do. We start with just an idea or a song, and it grows from there."

Throughout the school year and summer, classroom 3B showcases its talents through



choral performances, dance numbers, plays, poetry readings and fashion shows. "At the beginning of the year, some kids are so shy, but after some time you really start to see their confidence and self-esteem come through," says Dominique.

Last year, when some of the kids showed an interest in

photography, Dominique developed the "Future Photographers" program. Using only her cell phone camera, Dominique asked the children to pick a theme and capture the representative images on camera. After a summer of hard work, the students proudly displayed their projects around

the Center.

When asked how she is able to continually foster such a dynamic and imaginative environment, Dominique simply stated, "It doesn't take a lot to do a lot."

We encourage Dominique to keep up the great work and look forward to the classroom's "Spring Fashion Show."

## Get in Shape and Give Back October 9th

*Is your New Year's resolution to get in shape AND give back? 2011 is your year.* Join the Bank of America Chicago Marathon for Marillac House/St. Vincent de Paul Center Athlete Team and run for a cause. Running 26.2 miles will make a difference in the lives of thousands of Chicago's children, seniors and homeless. 26.2 miles. That's all it takes to impact thousands.

To sign up or for additional information about running another race for St. Vincent's and Marillac, please call Julia Kittle at 312.278.4275 or e-mail [jkittle@svdpc.org](mailto:jkittle@svdpc.org).



save  
the  
date  
4<sup>th</sup> annual  
beacon of  
HOPE

2011 Honorees: W.E. O'Neil Construction Company  
and Kay Hallagan

Join us for heavy hors d'oeuvres, cocktails  
and dancing to benefit the children and  
families of Marillac Social Center.

Friday, April 29<sup>th</sup>, 2011  
Chicago Marriott on the Magnificent Mile

Individual Tickets \$100  
Table of Ten \$1,000

## Thought-Provoking Poetry Performance by Hope Junior Teens

*On December 8<sup>th</sup> Hope Junior Teens, in partnership with the After School Matters Organization, presented a thought-provoking poetry performance entitled, "Our Lives through Our Eyes."*

The presentation focused on the ever-present threat of violence and peer pressure students encounter almost every day. Each student made a powerful contribution through dance, song, theatrics or poetry. Members of the audience were moved by each compelling performance and the message it delivered.

Friends of the agency donated their time, talent and equipment to film the performance. The volunteers also made DVD's, so each teen received a copy of their own.

We applaud the performers and heed the call to action they so passionately delivered to eradicate violence that plagues our community.

## Starbucks Lends a Hand at St. Vincent de Paul Center

As an international business leader, Starbucks Coffee has made a commitment to use their vast resources and presence to make a difference within the community. In conjunction with their annual regional conference, set in Chicago this year, Starbucks Coffee elected to have their executives and staff volunteer at a local non-profit organization. In an effort to expand their civic involvement, Starbucks chose St. Vincent de Paul Center as the location for a day of community service and volunteerism.



St. Vincent de Paul Center proudly hosted the group of 80 Starbucks employees, integrating them into our regular programs, as well as preparations for our annual holiday events. The group accomplished an impressive amount during their time at the Center, cleaning up the

playgrounds and outdoor areas, clearing out and organizing storage areas, washing Center vehicles, assembling a playhouse, cleaning up the Nearly New Thrift Shop, and setting up for the Homeless Outreach Luncheon, which included preparing toiletry bags, sorting clothing donations and unloading a truckload of donated items. In addition, volunteers visited with our home bound senior clients, worked with the early childhood classrooms, and tutored the school-age children.

Starbucks Coffee serves as an inspiring and exemplary representation of corporate giving and community engagement. St. Vincent de Paul Center relies on the generosity of volunteers to donate their time, talents and resources in order to continue to provide such high quality, comprehensive programming and services to the children of the working poor, senior citizens, and homeless clients of Chicago. We are thankful for the hard work and dedication from the Starbucks group and from all our volunteers throughout the year. In addition, we would like to recognize our local Starbucks store, which regularly sends volunteers to events and donates items for the Center.

## Advocacy Ounce of Prevention Fund Ensures High-Quality Early Childhood Programs

*The Ounce of Prevention Fund works to ensure that public policies and a strong infrastructure are in place, and adequately funded to give vulnerable children access to voluntary, high-quality early childhood programs.*

The Ounce has worked for more than 25 years to help policymakers in Illinois develop a sophisticated understanding about the science behind early childhood education so that they will direct public funding toward the most effective programs and reach children most in need. Through their Kids Public Education and Policy Project (Kids PEPP), the agency has helped turn Illinois's early learning system into a national model.

Today, they are working to replicate their success in Illinois in states across the country. Their national policy consultation team closely mentors advocates, practitioners, and funders to help them build and strengthen their states' early childhood systems.

For more information, visit [www.ounceofprevention.org](http://www.ounceofprevention.org).

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