



SAINT VINCENT DE PAUL SOCIETY
CHURCH OF THE HOLY EUCHARIST CONFERENCE
1984 - 2007

The Holy Eucharist Saint Vincent de Paul Society was established shortly after the formation of the parish community. The Society started in September of 1984 at the request of then Pastor, Father James Roche. The small group of six volunteers was headed by Joseph Augustyn, the first president, and included: Dorothy Augustyn, Pat Breyley, Len and Jeanette Grantner, and Liz Lang. This family of volunteers shared a concern for those in need and a desire to provide direct assistance to them. The conference was established to generally serve people within the parish boundaries, regardless of religious affiliation.

True to the spirit of Frederic Ozanam, the founder of the Society, volunteers work directly with those in need. A home visit is an essential part of the outreach service to reach out to the poor and needy in keeping with Gospel teachings. The SVdP conference meets twice a month on Monday evenings to pray and discuss the requests for financial assistance in regards to housing, medical and all other needs related to individual and family concerns.

The establishment of a food pantry was deemed an essential need of the society since many of the people served lacked the basic necessities of being able to adequately feed themselves and their families. The SVdP food pantry has been an ongoing growing service of the society and continues to this day to be one of the primary functions of the conference. A formal pantry was established in the back hallway of the church and was stacked on tables. In 1998, cabinets were built by member, Abbott Lee, to house the foods and provide better containment. This also allowed the conference to increase its food storage and distribution. Member, Mike Hogan, established a relationship with the Food Bank of South Jersey to better provide resources for food supplies. In addition to parish contributions, the Food Bank provided access to government programs such as USDA food resources. The Church of the Holy Eucharist underwent building renovations in 2004-2005 and this allowed a space to be developed for a formal food pantry and office for the SVdP conference. The new SVdP food pantry facility opened in March of 2006. Previous to the establishment of the food pantry in the new section of the church, food deliveries had to be made to needy families at their homes. The Pantry is now open on Tuesday and Thursday mornings from 10 AM to 12 Noon for individuals and families to come in and receive food.

The conference has also strived to seek financial resources to assist the poor and needy in the community. The Poor Box of the church has been the basic resource for collecting contributions from parishioners. Other sources of revenue include the selling of Super Market certificates from local stores whereby the society receives 5% for every dollar sold. Fund Raisers are also utilized to assist in meeting financial needs. They include the Fall Yard/Garage Sale; the Gertrude Hawk Candy Sale and the Back to School assistance program for the students of needy families. A new venture this year was the publishing of a cookbook with recipes provided by parishioners.

Our SVdP conference has also developed special programs over the years to further assist those in need in the community. Families are provided a meal and the children receive free ride bracelets at the Pine Barren's Festival conducted every August by the church. Children receive a backpack, school supplies, shoe and haircut certificates, to promote their success for the start of their school year. A Thanksgiving food program provides a meal with a Turkey for each family. A Christmas program provides a food basket along with gifts for children and parents and an Easter program provides a food basket that includes a ham.

In its twenty-three (23) years of service, the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul at Holy Eucharist Church has strived to meet the ever growing needs of the poor and needy in the community. It has grown from 6 members to 30 active and 20 associative/contributing volunteers. One of the sayings of our founder, Frederic Ozanam, states that "No charity is foreign to the society" This principle makes our society strive to continue to develop programs and resources to meet the needs of those we serve in the community. It is our hope and prayer that we may continue to do this to better serve and help those in need.