



Standing Together

A Publication of the St. Vincent de Paul Society of the Diocese of San José ■ 3rd Quarter, 2003 ■

Los Altos Settles Federal Lawsuit with Day Laborers



Day workers are hoping to be employed this day. They would much rather be working than waiting and hoping!



Maria Marroquin (manager) interviews a client to see what jobs he is best suited for.

(Los Altos, California) At a special session on Thursday, September 4, 2003, the Los Altos City Council approved a consent decree settling a lawsuit brought by day laborers and the Society of St. Vincent de Paul against the city's anti-solicitation ordinance. The decree was then signed by Federal Judge, Jeremy Fogel.

The consent decree includes provisions that require Los Altos to:

- amend or remove its ordinance;
- take down any "No Solicitation Zone" signs;
- educate the day laborers, their employers and the police force through outreach and publicity; and
- meet with workers on a regular basis to address concerns.

The attorneys in the case are the Palo Alto office of Morrison & Foerster and MALDEF (the Mexican American Legal Defense and Education Fund), a Latino civil rights organization. The plaintiffs are the Workers' Commission, comprised of current and former day laborers in the City of Los Altos, and the Society of St. Vincent de Paul of Santa Clara County.

Morrison & Foerster accepted the pro-bono case after hearing of the day workers' dilemma. St. Vincent de Paul currently runs the Day Worker Center in Mountain View, and another in San José.

"St. Vincent de Paul and the Workers' Commission are very pleased with the settlement," said Anna Erickson White, a litigation partner at Morrison & Foerster. "Under the settlement, the Los Altos City Council will pass a new ordinance that does not infringe on the day laborers' freedom of speech. Los Altos will also work with St. Vincent de Paul and the Workers' Commission to educate the Los Altos police, community, prospective employers, and day workers regarding the ordinance and the day worker center run by St. Vincent de Paul in Mountain View."

Added MALDEF Vice President of Litigation Thomas Saenz: "In addition to vindicating day laborers' right to free speech, the agreement establishes mechanisms for workers to continue to meet and work with city officials to address their concerns. This ongoing dialogue will help workers and residents to continue to thrive in Los Altos."

Day Worker Centers

San José:

408-923-9019

749 Story Road

Tuesday-Saturday
7:00am-2:00pm

Sunday-Closed

Monday-Closed

Mountain View:

650-938-1298

1880 California St.
(at Escuela)

Monday-Saturday
7:00am-2:00pm

Sunday-Closed



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The Good News Is There... Only It's Harder To Find!

The August, 2003 edition of the Western Region's Newsletter to the Society is entitled "Good News." Hah, I thought, tossing it onto the pile of unread mail while I pondered the drastic cuts in services and hours facing our Council due to reductions in donations, grants, and sales. How could anyone think there is good news?

Our Board reminded me of Vincent's words, uttered when his treasurer informed him that there was no money left: "Good, now we can *really* trust in God."

That first inkling of some good news came two days later. In Federal Court, a consent decree was discussed and agreed upon in principle that completely supports the position taken by our Council against the ordinance enacted by the City of Los Altos (which banned solicitations of work by day laborers—see cover article). A tremendous amount of thanks and gratitude is owed to the law firm of Morrison and Foerster, and to the Mexican American Legal Defense & Education Fund (MALDEF) for their willingness to accept this case, and to do so without charge.

The day after this decree, the Regional Chairs and Council officers met to discuss progress within this Council, and to plan for our next year. An exceptional report was given regarding the north region's volunteers providing a day of service in cleaning up the Mountain View store, including power-washing the exterior and parking areas, cleaning the windows, and sorting and stacking clothes. The store looks gorgeous, and even more glowing is the reflection of this kindness on the faces of our hard-working staff! Thank you, John Emmett and your crew, for a great job!

Spreading the word about our great volunteers and their works is not always easy. Our volunteers are quiet folks, working two-by-two for the most part. The last thing they want is to have anyone consider their efforts as part of a self-promotional effort. Sharing the news of our great works is necessary, however, to encourage more participation from fellow parishioners. Like the elusive good news waiting to be found in hidden places, the *Serving in Hope* series developed by the National Office is a remarkable informational video with a written guide designed to assist us in our primary goal of supporting the spiritual growth of our membership. The cost is so reasonable that I am providing each of our area representatives with a copy to share amongst the parish conferences they serve. Please make use of this *Serving in Hope* video.

The National Meeting of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul was in Atlanta this month. Although it is an obligation of the president to participate as a Trustee, I declined to attend this year, as did our executive director. Even if I had paid for the travel out of my own funds, I do not believe that it would have sent the right message to our staff. Traveling to a meeting while our employees are home, suffering painful cuts in hours and salary, did not seem appropriate. This is clearly a time during which we are called for self-examination and introspection of our mission. Starting within each conference, the process of evaluating where we stand should begin with a request for "An Invitation to Serve." I am certain that the ensuing fervor for this program will create enough volunteers to fill a bus to the 2004 National Council gathering, in Phoenix, Arizona. As that George Zimmer fellow of the Men's Wearhouse says, "I Guarantee It!"

May God's Blessings continue to find us.

John Rinaldi, President—Santa Clara Council

“New” Thrift Store

by Mike Birmingham and Stardette Hartley



The primary mission of the St. Vincent de Paul Thrift Stores continues to be to serve people in need. This is accomplished by both the sale of donated goods at below-market prices, and through the voucher/assistance program. The quantity and quality of items in the St. Vincent de Paul Thrift Store is good and getting better!

We look forward to welcoming increased numbers of shoppers to our newly relocated San José Thrift Store—749 Story Road, San José (between 10th and McLaughlin, across from Kelley Park). You will like the changes that have been made to better serve the community.

Come see the *first-rate quality at secondhand prices* in all our stores. Under new management, we have thoroughly upgraded our furniture line to include the finest in premier, brand-name items for your living room, dining room, and bedroom. True and faux antiques are being acquired—from Art Deco to French Revival.

Along with vintage goodies, you'll find near-new appliances and quality clothing. Our newly revamped warehouse/distribution system insures that all three Thrift Stores continually provide a wide variety of goods. (See store location addresses on the back page of this newsletter). Your purchases at our Thrift Stores help us help the needy.



Photos of the new Thrift Store at 749 Story Road in San José.



*“We are workers,
not master builders.
Ministers, not
messiahs. We
are prophets of
a future that is
not our own.”*

**Archbishop Oscar
Romero**

†



These men were hired from the Day Workers Center to help with landscaping.

Day Workers

by Sushma Raghavan

Roberto was once one of the many laborers who signed in daily at the St. Vincent de Paul Day Worker Center in San José. He took on jobs in construction, landscaping, house painting, and any other work that became available. Once, he took on a part-time job as a cook. Today, he is working as the head chef for the San José Convention Center.

The St. Vincent de Paul Day Worker Center is celebrating its tenth anniversary this year. It has provided ESL classes, medical assistance, lunches, and above all, jobs, to many of the 80 men and women who sign in each day. Its goal is to provide a safe place to which both employers and workers can meet.

The day workers have created a small community both in the Mountain View and San José centers. Support, empathy, and encouragement are

continually offered. Many faces, including Leonor's, are seen regularly. Leonor, who moved here from Cuba as a teenager, has been performing jobs such as moving assistance, housecleaning, construction, electronic wiring, and house painting. She is now getting a law degree to better deal with the injustices she has seen. She says: "Mary (the manager of the San José Day Worker Center) fits each employer's request to just the right worker. Because of efforts like hers, St. Vincent de Paul is the best place for Day Workers in the state."

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Letter from the Executive Director

Dear Friends:

The Society and its partners are creating a new facility to serve people in a way that most other organizations can only dream about. Yet the recession continues to create challenges for individuals and families, non-profit organizations, business, governments and others. According to the Mayor of San José, Silicon Valley has lost more jobs during the last two years than the rest of California combined.

We are faced with a dichotomy—a great new facility to serve the poor at a time when resources to help those in need are dwindling. If ever the power of the Conference model was put to the test, this would be it. Many of our Conferences continue to do well, strengthened by the faith our fellow parishioners place in our mission.

Fortunately, we have many blessings that will help us make it through this tough economic time:

- Hundreds of Vincentians continue helping the poor through their Conference work in Santa Clara County.
- We have a talented, committed staff who first and foremost understand our mission of service and combine it with a business sense that can make things work. They have made many sacrifices lately. Please pray for their well-being.
- Our new home is a premier facility for serving the poor that is being championed by many people in the community, from funders to government officials and individual donors.

I ask for your continued prayers for the entire Vincentian community and invite you to stop by and see our new facility as it takes shape. The men and women on the construction crews understand and appreciate the value of the new facility and are working their hardest to keep it on time. Please thank God in your prayers for their particular contribution to our work.

Thanks for all your support.

God Bless,

Stephen Pehanich, Executive Director

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Typical

Day Worker Jobs:

construction

child care

heavy labor

moving assistance

elder care

housekeeping

painting

plumbing

window washing

yard work

(see cover for phone numbers)

Update on Move

by Austin Mao

In early June, St. Vincent de Paul moved its Emergency Services and Day Workers Programs to become the first tenant of the Resource Center at 749 Story Road, San José. Our new building will now be called “Kelley Park Community Resource Center,” since we are across the street from Kelley Park at Story and Senter.

This collaboration will meet both the emergency and longer-term needs of over 20,000 San José residents with very low incomes. Culturally and linguistically appropriate emergency services, medical care, legal services and career training will be offered in one location:

- **Community Health Clinic:** O’Connor Hospital will operate a primary health care clinic M-F with a full array of services including low/no-cost consultations, drop-in care and preventive health classes. (Scheduled opening date: January, 2004.)
- **Healthcare Career Training Program:** St. Francis Career College will offer training programs for advanced health care technician, certified nurse’s assistant, home health aide and vocational nursing. In addition to skill training, the program also provides comprehensive support service including counseling, remediation, crisis intervention, emergency housing, food, clothing, transportation, childcare assistance, and spiritual support to ensure student success. The first classes began on September 22, 2003.
- **Legal Services:** The East San José Community Law Center (c/o Santa Clara University) is providing Day Workers with information on issues affecting employer-employee relations. Legal services to very low-income residents will soon begin at the new Center, including workshops and legislative updates on issues affecting the community. Free legal assistance will be provided in employment, immigration, consumer and small business development.

The programs and activities of this center are intended to empower low-income families and individuals to maintain the economic, physical, and social stability necessary to be self-sufficient in this community.

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Multiply Your Gifts Without Giving Any More

Many area companies match employee contributions to St. Vincent de Paul—if they know about them. General Electric (GE) matches the donations to non-profits by employees or retirees. We know of two GE employees who now donate to St. Vincent de Paul—are there others who support what we’re doing? Sun Microsystems and other companies make grants available only to organizations that receive donations from their employees. Do any of our donors work there? Would you please take a moment to let us know your employer, or the company from which you retired? Contact Kathie Sheehy, 408-298-7290, ext. 17, or send an e-mail to: ksheehy@svdp.org.

We will check to see if your company has

- a matching gifts program, or
- grants available to non-profit organizations.

†



Preparation of the new Kelley Park Community Resource Center which opened in August.

Donor News

A Special Thank You to the Following Donors!

An anonymous donor has given several large gifts to St. Vincent de Paul in recent months. He commented: "My life is much better than that of many people in my community. My business has been successful. Now, whenever I am paid for a new contract, I immediately send a percentage of the profit to St. Vincent de Paul."

Paul Marchesano, one of our regular donors, grew up in New York. His mother "believed in St. Vincent de Paul." Even his sister-in-law (ever the skeptic) thinks that SVdP is "really effective at helping others." Years ago, Paul came to St. Vincent de Paul in need, and received help. He now wants to help others.

Mary and Sam Winklebleck have been long-time contributors; Sam has also done volunteer work for SVdP. Mary remembers her childhood days in Chicago, helping her father deliver food baskets to the needy in the area.



"Service is the rent you pay for room on this earth."

Quote from Shirley Chisholm, the first black woman in Congress.

Why Does SVdP Exist?

In 1833, a college student accepted a challenge to display that his Catholic faith truly did inspire him to help those in need. Today, St. Vincent de Paul volunteers and staff all over the world still have a common goal—to help individuals and families as they overcome temporary obstacles that prevent their self-sufficiency.

SVdP is committed to keeping overhead costs to a minimum. Last year, administrative and fundraising costs were below 12%. So for every \$100 given to us, more than \$88 goes directly to helping change a life.

Conference Thank You's and Prayer Requests



Church of the Resurrection gives thanks for its interested new members, and its active and healthy long-term members.

Holy Family Conference also offers prayers of thanksgiving for its new members. They are also thankful that donations have been steady during this tough period. Holy Family requests prayers for the good health of Mauro Valcazar.

Our Lady of Peace requests prayers as they rebuild their Conference. Prayers are also requested for Daniel Walsh, a parishioner who is in O'Connor Hospital.

St. Cyprian: The Santa Clara County Council offers sincere gratitude to the ladies of St. Cyprian's Conference for all the work they did to prepare and facilitate this year's Easter Bonnets & Baskets celebration. Apologies are extended for not recognizing your work more promptly.

St. Lucy's Conference is grateful for the return to health of Bishop DuMaine. They also pray for the return to health of Florence Murray, the wife of Joe Murray, who has supported him throughout his long years of service to several local parishes. And prayers are requested for Philip Soltan, that he soon finds employment.

St. Maria Goretti requests prayers for Angie Celaya and Katherine Gonzales, officers in their Conference, who are currently dealing with medical challenges.

St. Martin of Tours requests your prayers for two out-of-town clients who are temporarily staying in San José, close to relatives recovering from brain and spinal cord injuries at Valley Medical Center.

St. Martin's—Sunnyvale requests prayers for the son of Pete Duvela, whose kidneys are failing due to an autoimmune disorder.

Donate a Car and Change a Life

Cars are sold to generate funds for service programs.

With the funds received from car sales we are able to generate funds to help those in need.

How will my donation of a vehicle help this cause?

Money from the sale of autos and boats helps someone like Joel, an 18-year old who feels responsible for his younger brother and sister since their parents are gone. He came to SVdP for help finding a job. SVdP also gave him clothing vouchers and rent assistance for that month, and referred him to other agencies that would assist with food, furniture, and more money. Joel found a job within two weeks, and came back, offering to return some of the money to share with others more needy.

Carlos is the father of three children. He had finally found a full-time job and was earning enough to pay rent for his family. His job included driving to various company sites. When his car broke down the first week, he thought he'd have to resign. St. Vincent de Paul was able to help him get a car so he could keep the job.

When a donated vehicle is sold, the money made will help women like Melissa—a battered woman who came to request assistance with a rent deposit so she could leave an abusive relationship. She was surprised to hear from the St. Vincent de Paul caseworker that she might be able to get a job through the CalWorks program. Melissa was referred to an agency that could assist with temporary financial assistance, and to an organization that supports battered women as they rebuild their lives. Recently, Melissa recently let us know how instrumental SVdP was in getting her on a path to independence.

The benefits of donating your used vehicle to St. Vincent de Paul

- Avoid the hassle of selling a used vehicle
- St. Vincent de Paul will take care of all DMV paperwork
- We accept most vehicles, running or not
- Free pick-up can be arranged
- Only 12% goes to administrative costs
- Your donation helps a neighbor in need

Car Lot Hours

Monday to Saturday: 11:00am–8:00pm • Sundays: 9:30am–6:00pm

Car Lot Location

1141 South First Street, San José, CA 95112 (Just south of Keyes)

To arrange pick up of a vehicle, or for more information, call 408-971-9648



Day workers that weren't hired for the day help wash cars from the lot.

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Society of St. Vincent de Paul
Santa Clara County
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www.svdp.org/santaclara
 408-298-7290, Ext. 17

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 3440
 San José, CA

Your donations helped 50,000 people last year!
 Your money goes farther:
 administrative/fundraising costs were
 below 12% last year.



Auto Program

Dale Brown, Manager
 1141 So. First Street (So. of Keyes)
 (408) 971-9648

Thrift Stores

Mike Birmingham,
 Operations Manager
 (650) 298-7290, Ext. 15

Mountain View Store

Virginia Caldeira, Manager
 2044-A Old Middlefield Way
 Mountain View, CA 94043
 (650) 903-0438

Gilroy Store

Grace Ward, Manager
 7680 Monterey St.
 Gilroy, CA 95020
 (408) 842-5524

San José Store

749 Story Road @ Remillard
 San José, CA 95122
 (408) 993-9500



2003 Calendar

- October 4** Annual Meeting and Appreciation Dinner
- November** Regional Planning Group Meeting
- December 10** Board of Directors' Quarterly Meeting

Store Hours

- San José** Tuesday-Saturday 10:00am-6:00pm;
 Sunday- Closed; Monday-Closed
 Donation hours: Monday-Sunday
 9:00am-3:00pm please call to confirm
- Mountain View** Monday-Saturday 10:00am-6:00pm
 Sunday- Closed
- Gilroy** Tuesday-Saturday 10:00am-6:00pm;
 Sunday-Closed; Monday-Closed