Society of St. Vincent de Paul

St. Ann Bethany Beach Conference

February 13, 2017

President Mike Farrar called the meeting to order at 9:34 AM in Delaney Hall. Father Klevence was in attendance as well as Vincentians Paul Collins and Richard Day from Wilmington.

Deacon Jack Freebery led the opening prayer on the unity and presence of Christ. His reflection, on the Works of Mercy, recalled both the call of Christ to holiness and the call of Micah 6:8 to be authentic.

**President’s Report**: Mike compared today’s meeting to a year ago, noting how we have grown and progressed as a Conference. Given our physical size, he encouraged all efforts at expanding our mission. He reminded us of Frederic Ozanam’s counsel: 1) do the best you can; 2) never ask anyone to do what they’re not comfortable with.

**Newcomers:** John and Wendy Schilling, Colin and Pat Hurley, and Jim Schaeffer were introduced.

**Minutes**: Due to computer problems on Marilyn’s end, minutes will be sent out this week, with her apologies.

**Treasurer**: Eileen Mulaney reported a current balance of $28,000; $5,000 spent, $1,000 taken in. We are spending $1,000 a week. Conference received a $20,000 bequest from the will of Kathleen Eton. Thus far, we are unable to learn why. Do we want to put it against current spending or earmark it for capital expansion? Consensus was that we use it for future projects, but start small. Report approved.

**For the next meeting**: Mike asked for small project suggestions.

**Fund Raising**: Lenore Thommes announced we’ll be selling See’s Candy for Easter. Conference will receive 50% of the profits; we stand to make $1,000. In mid-March, she will have a chocolate and wine kick-off at her house, to preview selections, purchased with $500 seed money from friends and make purchases. She will also be selling outside of church and at Sodality and the Men’s Club. Since Father Klevence says there is no room for a Special Second Collection this summer, this will be our seasonal fund-raiser.

**Spiritual Enrichment**: Mary Ann Conlon announced April 23 as a possible Day of Reflection, led by Father John Kane from Philadelphia. It will include Mass and a meeting/workshop format. He would like to visit us to customize his presentation to our particular needs.

**Team Rosters**: Mike Galu said with so many people on Food Pantry Teams, were they all keeping busy? Ron Forgnoni said winter Thursdays are very busy – especially now that we have heat, thanks to Father Klevence - so people stay busy. Summer is less so.

**NEW BUSINESS**:

**Client Contact Record Keeping**: Tish Galu said our paper records are too voluminous to keep with the phone. She suggested getting a (computer) Tablet, for $300-400. Mike Galu knows a data entry clerk who will enter the records. Father Klevence asked if there will be a tutorial. Dan DiLuzio asked where we were with operating funds. Eileen said we had $1300. Rosemary Wlaschin also asked about training, and if it would be possible to move from stand-alone computer to the Web. Dan said we’d need a professional to set up an on-line Data Base, but that, once done, it would not be hard to retrieve data. Rosemary was also concerned about security issues. Mike Farrar said he tended to trust Tish’s judgment. **A motion to allocate up to $500 for a tablet was approved.**

**Furniture Acquisition**: Bill Clarke reported on a brand new bed, with linens, that was donated to the Conference. They gave it to a woman who’d been sleeping on the floor and installed it for her. We used to get part of ACTS profit, but don’t now (could check with Sue Cutter, who volunteers there). Mike Farrar asked if we could use a voucher system for furniture to give directly to a client. Pyle Center already does this. Local furniture dealers or realtors or people who are downsizing are good potential sources. Ron said Habitat for Humanity gets a lot of their furniture that way. Jon Traina said Soul Ministry does as well, and, at minimal prices, we could even pay for it. Joanna Shannon said Christian Store House would provide furniture, work with us and not charge us. Pat Ryan suggested we put a notice in the church bulletin. Mike Galu related his experience, using only a pick-up truck and volunteers, in furnishing over 300 apartments in a year.

**USO Donations**: Rosemary has fliers for USO “donations for the troops.” Items may be dropped off at St. Ann during the month of March.

**TEAM REPORTS**

**Team One (**January -Jackie Boyd): **FP** – 16 bags, 37 family members. **CC** – 5 CC, $600 for propane, and rent; 1 HV. Three special cases, Deacon Jack will address (see below).

(February - Mike Galu): **FP** – 6 bags, 13 family members. Mike G. suggested we get push cart, for around $50, to load full bags to car. Can also use Mike’s hand truck. Issue was tabled. **CC** – 8 CC, 1 HV with bag of food; $987.50 for electric and propane.

**Team Two** (Rosemary): **FP** – 30 bags, 68 family members. **CC** – 4 CC, 1 HV; $693 for rent, water, gas for car, bed bug treatment. Rosemary suggested, since the revised client interview form has a “watch list” checkbox, that we eliminate the separate watch list folder.

**Team Three**: **FP** – 19 bags, 10 families**. CC** – 4CC, 1 HV; $706 for utilities.

**Team Four**: (Jim L.) **FP** – 32 bags, 67 family members. Spent 2.5 hours buying and inventorying food, making pre-loaded bags for start-up. **CC** – 8 CC, 3 HV; $1256.67 for car insurance and utility.

**Team One Special Cases** (Deacon Jack):

1Aa young man needed transportation to Georgetown Municipal Court because he missed a former court date and had to appear in person. On the way he told the team he also needed $269.50 for an arrest warrant outstanding from not paying a DUI fine three years ago, and $200 to renew his expired driver’s license. He confessed having suicidal thoughts. After a HV in his garage, he said he also needed $200 to renew his expired driver’s license. Team paid his phone bill for the past two months and his car insurance for $212.00; took him to Pyle Center for food. Deacon Jack noted need for follow-up on Client Interview Form; would also refer to Follow-up Team.

2. A young homeless family was begging outside of OLG on Sunday, February 6 and in front of Giant on Monday, February. 7.

3. A follow-up is needed for an insurance check that was never received.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:25 A.AM.

**Next monthly meeting is March 13, 9:30 A.A.M. in Delaney Hall.**

**Guest Speaker: Paul Collins**

Our Lady of Fatima parish. A long-term Vincentian, active at the both the National and International level, Paul estimates he has made 12,000 Home Visits. He is currently Acting President of St. Vincent de Paul State Council, Wilmington. He was accompanied by Richard Day, State Council Treasurer.

Mr. Collins expressed his enjoyment at our enthusiasm. He said he liked hearing about the “cases that go deeper. We are not a band-aid outfit.” He described what he called the “Gospel of Vincent de Paul.” We are not Social Workers. We seek to become more Christ-like by working with the poor. We do this not for others, but for ourselves. Our ultimate goal is “to see the face of Christ in the Poor.” Twenty years ago, he started a Prison Ministry. There is a great need for visitation here, also with who he called “old” people (he is in his 90s). When we do this, we are practicing prayer in action.

The original St. Vincent de Paul group in France started as evangelizers of the young, but decided they didn’t like teaching. Christ, he said, told stories, not sermons. He told a story about a man who, viewing Michelangelo’s statue of David, supposedly said to the artist: “How did you know he was in there?”

He called our attention to a School of Charity in Smyrna on March 11, from 10-2. He told us that, with proposed new tax laws, every individual conference must have a 501C3 or piggybank on the State’s.

Mike Galu asked Mr. Collins what we could do better. He said hold down the meeting time. He loved seeing so many people in attendance, but noticed that, after about an hour, people were leaving. He reminded us that the St. Vincent de Paul Rule calls for a twice monthly meeting.

Madelyn Lazaro asked how we could raise people’s awareness to visiting the old and lonely. Mr. Collins suggested posting in the church bulletin, visiting hospitals, contacting the Visiting Nurses Association, and taking Communion to the sick.

He ended with his own experience of being asked to visit “a grumpy old woman, who nobody wants to see.” After confirming that he was not a “damned Republican,” she let him in. He visited every other week for 1 hour. He discovered she was very knowledgeable about national and world events. After two years, she entered the hospital. Throwing out the “damned psychiatrist,” she asked him to take her home (he had her power of attorney.) He did. “Well,” she said to him, “I’m going to be leaving here soon. I’ve enjoyed you. And I left you a few cents.” 15 minutes later, she died. And he discovered she’d left the Society $150,000.