

The St. Vincent de Paul Society of San Francisco At-A-Glance: Accomplishing Phenomenally Helpful Programs on a Lean Budget

Since 1860, the St. Vincent de Paul Society of San Francisco has offered a crucial helping hand to the needy women, men, and children in the community. Today, the St. Vincent de Paul Society is one of San Francisco's major human service organizations and a leader in providing support, shelter and affordable transitional housing to those suffering from homelessness, poverty, addiction and domestic violence. The St. Vincent de Paul Society is a Catholic lay organization which serves and employs people of all faiths. Its mission is to serve anyone in need through direct person-to-person service and professional social service programs, focusing on breaking the cycles of homelessness, substance abuse and domestic violence, helping people become self-sufficient, reducing the harm they cause to themselves and others, and treating all people with compassion and respect. A singular strength is the Society's ability and willingness to take in people with more complex issues, often people no one else will take in. The Society accomplishes this, and the below programs, on an annual budget between only \$8 million and \$9 million. You can find additional information at <http://www.svdp-sf.org>.

Multi-Service Center - Homeless Shelter

The largest homeless shelter in Northern California. Shelters, feeds and supports 340 homeless men and women every night, and also provides additional drop-in services on a limited basis including shower and toilet facilities, programs and occasional meals. In addition to a safe place to sleep, full breakfast and dinner, the Multi-Service Center offers crisis counseling, drop-in medical care and HIV-testing, mental health and substance abuse case management, job and housing search assistance, a library and computer lab, support groups for those recovering from trauma, and emergency clothing, shower and laundry facilities.

Riley Center for Battered Women and their Children

The largest continuum of domestic violence shelters and support services in San Francisco, and home to more than half of the domestic violence shelter beds in the city. Services include a 24-hour crisis hotline, an emergency shelter, a transitional housing program, and a community office offering drop-in help, education and follow-up services to former clients. The Riley Center shelters and supports approximately 1,400 women and children each year. Over 60% of the shelter's residents are children.

Ozanam Detoxification Center / The Wellness Center

Founded in 1978, a social model drug and alcohol detoxification and recovery center which offers care and hope to more than 40,000 low-income men and women each year. "The Oz", as the Center is often called, has provided a critical first step to sobriety, offering up to four days of safe shelter, a clean bed, hot meals and special care to help clients stop the brutal downward spiral of addiction. The Oz also offers counseling, relapse-prevention workshops,

money management assistance, and daily 12-step meetings, and support groups twice a week. One of the few such programs in San Francisco, The Oz plays a vital role in the city's safety-net for those struggling with addiction. The new [Wellness Center](#), opened on November 1, 2009, emphasizes a daily program of meditation, exercise, spirituality, social support groups and nutrition.

Vincentian Help Desk

A crucial helping hand for the homeless and working poor, and one of only two programs of its kind in San Francisco, the Help Desk provides free clothing, food supplies and small household items to over 12,000 people a year. The Society helps people meet their most basic needs for clean clothes, shoes without holes, a warm coat and a bag of groceries in an especially respectful manner. The Help Desk is operated almost entirely with volunteers and organized community drives for the items that people need, accommodating referrals from over 65 social service organizations citywide.

Conferences

The Society's work has always hinged on the faithful, modest work of dedicated individuals helping the needy one-on-one. While the Society's programs make the Society one of the largest social service providers in San Francisco, the backbone of the St. Vincent de Paul Society is the parish-based Conferences - groups of men and women with a common concern for the poor and needy, and a desire to provide direct, concrete aid to those in need. The St. Vincent de Paul Society has Conferences based in Catholic parishes throughout San Francisco. Conference members make home visits to the elderly, homebound and otherwise needy, deliver boxes of food during the holidays, make sandwiches for the homeless, collect and distribute food and blankets, pick up groceries and medicine and provide transportation for the infirm, provide furniture for the newly housed, help with utility bills, serve meals and volunteer throughout the Society's programs. Conference members personify the spirit of the St. Vincent de Paul Society, seeing God in the face of the poor, and giving of themselves to help others in need.

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