

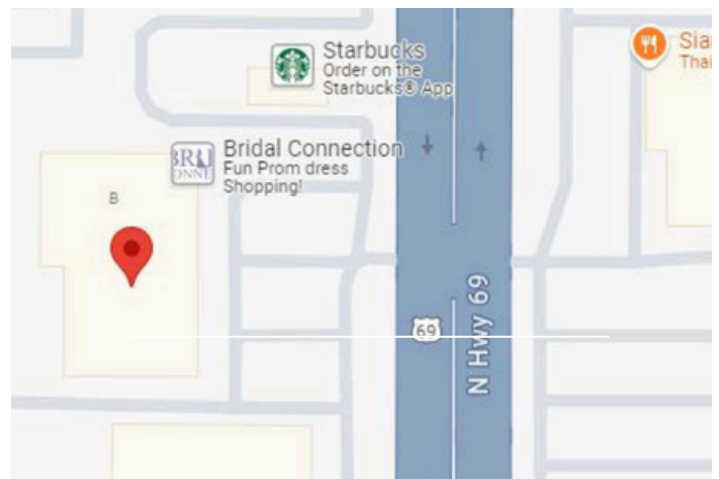


# MARCH NEWSLETTER



We are excited to announce the opening of our fourth thrift store location, which will continue to serve our community by providing affordable goods and supporting our ongoing efforts to recycle and reuse. The adventure already began in December 2024 in the former Ace Hardware building located at 700 North Ankeny Blvd. We are currently preparing the space with new floors, lighting, donation doors, and fixtures. Stay tuned for updates as we work towards our grand opening, which is scheduled for early April. This new location will be our second largest, featuring a sales floor of 9,300 square feet, showcasing all the great finds available in our current locations.

If you are interested in helping out, we are hiring for management, cashier, and backroom production positions. Additionally, we have an ongoing need for volunteer support, so if you find some extra time in your day, we would love your assistance.



# FIVE STAR REWARDS

We are converting our rewards program from a physical point card to a digital format on your phone. When you shop at our stores, you will notice a new pin pad at the counter asking for your phone number. The new rewards system is identical to our previous program, with the only difference being how points are loaded. From now on, the cashier will load points to your phone app, and you will receive updates via text message. We encourage you to complete your profile on the app for access to special offers.

# DONATION NEEDS

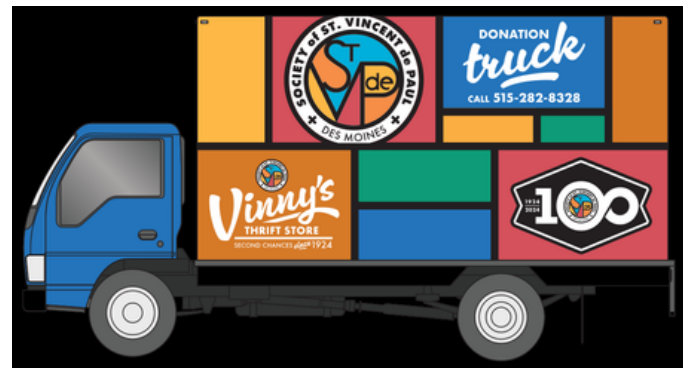
We are excited to announce that donation collection will begin in Ankeny in mid-April. We will share the specific date through our social media channels, in-store announcements, and possibly an email blast as soon as possible! A list of acceptable donations can be found on our website (<https://www.svdpsm.org/our-stores/>)

Please note that our 6th Avenue and Army Post locations are currently seeking home décor items and women's clothing.

# WAYS TO DONATE

We want to make donating easy for you! There are several ways to contribute that support our stores and social services:

- Drop off donations at any of our three locations, Monday through Saturday, from 9:00 AM to 5:00 PM.
- Schedule a pickup by phone at 515-282-8327 or online at [www.svdpsm.org](http://www.svdpsm.org).
- Visit us online at [www.svdpsm.org](http://www.svdpsm.org) and select Donate to make a monetary contribution, which directly supports Social Services.



# VOLUNTEERS

St. Vincent de Paul of Des Moines has AMAZING volunteers who support the programs and mission daily! With the time and energy provided by these volunteers, this organization would not be able to serve and to help in the way that we do. We welcome anyone who has a few hours to spare.

SVDP continues to provide monthly volunteer onboarding, which is in accordance with the organizational National Safeguarding Policy requirements. All Conference members, board members, and volunteers must complete this training prior to volunteering at any of the SVPD locations.

If you are looking to volunteer, there are shifts available for one hour per week, or even 40 hours if you wish! Currently, we have over 125 volunteers who help between the three locations, and we are always seeking more assistance and more friends to help! For more information on volunteering, please contact Holly at:

[holly.dommer@svdpdsm.org](mailto:holly.dommer@svdpdsm.org)





# FOOD PANTRY

St. Vincent de Paul (SVDP) operates two food pantries in Des Moines, located prominently on 6th Avenue in central Des Moines and Army Post Road in south Des Moines. These pantries are situated in areas where access to affordable, healthy food can be challenging. Rising food prices can disproportionately affect families in these neighborhoods, making it difficult for them to purchase the essentials needed for adequate meal planning. Factors such as limited funds and transportation issues contribute to these struggles. The SVDP food pantries provide relief by allowing individuals and families to shop once every 14 days. The pantries carry a variety of shelf-stable items, refrigerated and frozen foods, as well as fresh produce. Visitors can select a quantity of items based on their household size.

In 2024, the two SVDP pantries served over 22,000 individuals from nearly 6,200 households. In addition to food and nutritional staples, individuals visiting these pantry locations can also receive clothing, household items, and personal necessities at no cost. Appointments are scheduled for pantry visitors to ensure everyone has adequate time to explore the available items and plan their selections accordingly.

In 2024, SVDP continued its successful partnerships with various organizational Conferences and Capitol City Produce in Norwalk, IA, for the Hope for the Holidays

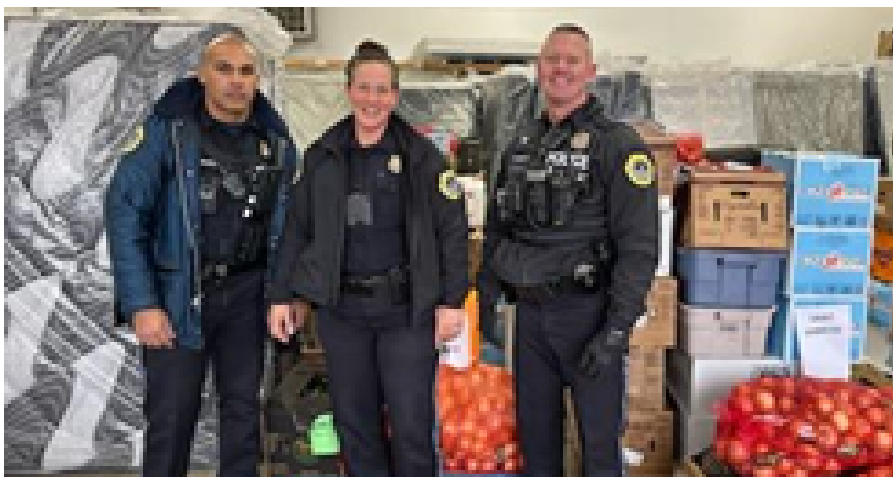
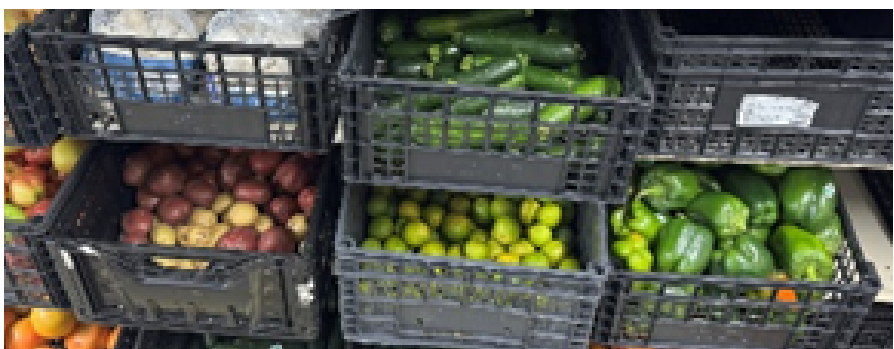
event. This annual initiative enables the food pantries to provide fresh produce baskets to those in need during the holiday season. At both Thanksgiving and Christmas, dedicated volunteers worked alongside SVDP staff to distribute these fresh produce baskets, serving 3,106 individuals this year!

St. Vincent de Paul of Des Moines is particularly grateful to the staff at Fredrickson Byron Law for their contributions during the 2024 holiday season. Together with SVDP pantry staff, they provided Christmas gifts, including clothing and gift cards, helping to ensure a very special holiday for individuals and families receiving assistance from SVDP. Unfortunately, we are witnessing a concerning rise in food insecurity and the demand for assistance. Between the two SVDP pantries, we see an average of around 1,800 individuals per month, a dramatic increase compared to previous years. This growing need is driven by various factors, including unemployment, underemployment, lack of transportation, and limited access to needed items such as fresh produce, eggs, or meat. However, one significant underlying cause is the rising cost of food over the past several years. Families that could previously budget effectively are finding it increasingly difficult to make their income stretch, leading many to run out of funds by the end of the week or month.

SVDP is immensely grateful for the monetary support provided by the Conferences that continue to back our food pantries and the vital work of our organization. We also appreciate the efforts of members who donate specialty items, such as eggs and produce, and those who drive local donation routes to deliver items like bread and baked goods. Our food pantries simply could not operate without the support of our phenomenal volunteers!

We would also like to recognize and thank our food rescue partners in the community. These donations help meet the daily needs of our pantry visitors. Capitol City Produce, in particular, is a remarkable partner, providing donations that enable families to access fresh, healthy options at our food pantries.

The SVDP pantry staff work closely with visitors to assist them in accessing additional resources that can help them move toward self-sufficiency. Many individuals who come to our pantries have been referred by other SVDP programs, such as Immersion or Back2Work. Our goal is to ensure that visits to SVDP address individual and family needs comprehensively, supporting the community in a multi-faceted way as they move toward self-sufficiency.



# PROGRAMS

The Back2Work pre-employment training program successfully conducted two cohorts serving 23 individuals in October and November, aimed at enhancing skills for job seekers entering or re-entering the workforce. Over six days, participants were guided by SVdP Community Navigators on essential topics such as resume building, workplace communication, and career development. Community partners also contributed by leading discussions on leasing contracts and financial education. On the final day, partner employers volunteered to conduct mock interviews, providing invaluable experience and feedback to participants. One participant expressed, "I was so nervous for the mock interviews, but what we covered in the classes helped me focus and I was prepared."



St. Vincent de Paul was awarded the contract in October 2024 for the Safe Babies Court Team (SBCT) program. This program is a comprehensive, multi-disciplinary initiative aimed at strengthening families and improving outcomes for young children by integrating multiple support systems. This approach emphasizes the importance of early intervention and holistic care in preventing negative long-term consequences for families. SVdP Community Coordinators play a key role in fostering collaboration between family court, health services, child welfare, early education, and community resources to ensure that infants, toddlers, and their families receive the necessary support and skills to thrive. In the first quarter, SBCT served almost 30 families, totaling 60 individuals. Safe Babies Court Team represents a proactive, comprehensive, and collaborative approach to strengthening families, with a focus on early intervention and comprehensive support systems to ensure positive outcomes for young children and their families, ensuring all receive wraparound services.



**Safe Babies**  
A Program of ZERO TO THREE

The immersion Reentry Program is vital in helping individuals' transition from incarceration back into their communities. By conducting outreach inside the Polk County Jail (PCJ), the program ensures incarcerated individuals are informed about the support services available through St. Vincent de Paul upon their release. In the first quarter of 2024 (October to December), the program had a significant impact, serving 135 individuals during PCJ resource meetings. Active participation in the program stood at over 300 individuals, reflecting the reach and demand for reentry support. A crucial element of the program involves creating individual service plans from the very first meeting. These plans often include practical steps to remove barriers that could hinder successful reentry, such as helping individuals obtain essential documents like state ID cards and birth certificates. This support is vital for individuals seeking to secure employment upon release, as these documents are often required by employers. Additionally, participants receive one-on-one case management. The program offers individualized coaching and resources, meeting as frequently as necessary to support each participant in achieving their goals and taking the next steps toward a successful reintegration into society. This comprehensive approach is essential in reducing recidivism and helping individuals rebuild their lives post-incarceration.



St. Vincent de Paul (SVdP) received a significant 3-year federal grant from the U.S. Department of Justice's Bureau of Justice Assistance in October 2024. The grant will enhance SVdP's existing programs, including Back2Work and Immersion, by providing a comprehensive reentry service plan aimed at helping individuals transition back into society after incarceration. The initiative will focus on reducing barriers faced by formerly incarcerated individuals by offering a variety of wraparound services such as obtaining ID cards, birth certificates, and providing employment support. SVdP will partner closely with Polk County Jail, establishing connections with individuals before their release. These connections will allow SVdP to provide early support, ensuring a smoother transition into the community. The program will also provide case management services, guiding participants through each step of their reintegration process. Currently, steps are underway, with plans to begin implementing the program by late spring of 2025. This initiative aims to foster successful reintegration into society by addressing the multifaceted challenges faced by individuals returning from incarceration, promoting long-term stability, and reducing recidivism.



# SOBERING CENTER

On November 18th, 2024, the St. Vincent de Paul of Des Moines Sobering Center opened its doors at 1914 Carpenter Ave. Through a partnership with Broadlawns and Polk County, this facility offers a variety of community resources and service referrals, all while providing a safe, non-judgmental environment for individuals under the influence of alcohol consumption. Within this space, individuals can more calmly recover while avoiding any potential necessity for medical emergency centers, or correctional facilities.

This partnership highlights the common goals of these organizations with a focus on community service of those in need, assisting in finding community resources, and striving to help individuals overcome obstacles and achieve their desired outcomes. At times, Broadlawns will be unable to admit an individual, or individuals, with whom intoxication is a barrier. The St. Vincent de Paul Sobering Center now provides an avenue with which this scenario has an alternative for recovery alongside medical observation. SVDP Staff, including a Site Supervisor, Community Navigators, and on-site EMTs or paramedics, will work with these guests to not only get them sober, but also to keep them hydrated, clean, and rested under careful medical observation.

As of the end of February, the St. Vincent de Paul Sobering Center had seen over 300 guests who had arrived via self-admission, or with the aid of transportation from local police or Crisis Observation personnel. Some of the guests have also done return visits seeking more extended involvement from the Community Navigators, as well as following up with positive results from community resources offered. This facility has already seen a wide swath of successful interventions and follow-ups with individuals who might have otherwise found themselves in medical crisis or legal difficulty.

There is even one recent example of an individual who found themselves in a particularly harrowing situation of having been banned from several clinics, and in a state of heightened mental health crisis. Utilizing the Sobering Center, and with the aid of the on-site Community Navigators, this individual was able to find recovery and enlist in a program for mental health intervention with which they had been seeking assistance.



The St. Vincent de Paul Sobering Center, and particularly the partnership with Broadlawns and Polk County, illustrates the positive outcomes that arise from communities working together, and acting in a caring, non-judgmental manner. St. Vincent de Paul is wholly grateful for the work Broadlawns is doing, and the partnership with which this facility has become such a valuable resource for individuals in crisis in Polk County. These organizations working together will continue to create positivity and effective outcomes for community members entering through the doors.



# NEW DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT

My name is Daniel Beck, and I am the new Director of Development for St. Vincent de Paul of Des Moines. I have been a part of the non-profit community in the greater Des Moines area for over a decade, having most recently served as the Data, Analytics, and Program Coordinator for Des Moines Area Religious Council.

Personally, I have a fervent commitment toward community assistance for those in need, particularly those with whom vulnerability and discrimination are a daily reality. I firmly believe in the moral adage that the health of a society is determined by how ALL members are treated. I am also of the belief that solutions for impoverished and/or discriminated individuals rest in the empowerment of those individuals to be a part of the solutions and voice their stories.



In my time away from work, I enjoy the same things that a lot of folks do; cats and Halloween. I also like to exercise and play various sports depending on the season including hockey, basketball, and soccer. Additionally, I enjoy listening to podcasts, reading, cooking, browsing thrift and antique stores, playing video and board games, learning French, watching horror movies, etc.

I am eagerly anticipating the opportunity to collaborate with the community in my new role, and I look forward to exchanging ideas and building meaningful relationships!.

# A REFLECTION FROM FATHER JOHN



One hundred years ago followers of St. Vincent de Paul ignited a mission to serve the Des Moines Metro needy and neglected. Vincentians, living and deceased for a century have heard and lived the words of the prophet Isaiah who proclaims, “How beautiful are the feet who bring glad tidings, bearing good news, announcing salvation, Your God is King.” The same members of our metro conferences for a century of service have witnessed the Beatitudes of Jesus in today’s gospel, “Blest are the poor, the merciful, those who mourn, those who hunger and Thirst for righteousness.” Beatitude people are Kingdom people. They will not rest or sit still until the world is just, holy, and pure of heart, that is focused with the vision of Christ’s gospel values. In the midst of the crude and the cruel, the greedy and grasping, the selfish and self-serving, St. Vincent de Paul disciples are a shining light and ray of hope. Our challenge is to offer spiritual and social structures that fortify the dignity of all people created in the image and likeness of God.

That dignity and worth of all God’s people was the motive force that drove St. Vincent de Paul. Knowledge is important, enthusiasm for our apostolate is expected. “Unless you love, the poor will never forgive you for the bread you give them (repeat again). These words of St. Vincent de Paul remind us to love those we attempt to serve.

The poor who hunger for bread, justice, and care. Those who are often the less attractive in America, in a country that worships youth, strength and beauty. The marginalized live a way of life we rarely if ever share. The needy see us as being on a different planet. They must come to see you and me as the contemporaries saw St. Vincent. People who care for the forlorn, who agonize over the afflicted, those who look into the disparaging eyes and weep, and those who touch both the aged and young flesh with God’s love and our own.

Good St. Vincent, help us to live the words of Paul to the Corinthians, “Stand firm in the faith, be courageous and strong. Your every act should be done with love, knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain.” St. Vincent, give us compassion for the Crucified, sorrow for our self-indulgence and indignation over injustice. Teach us to persuade by loving. Monsieur Vincent, pray for us, for we are poorer than we know.