



**SOCIETY OF ST. VINCENT DE PAUL
BILLINGS DISTRICT COUNCIL
2610 MONTANA AVENUE, BILLINGS, MT 59101
DOWNTOWN STORE: 406-252-1855
GRAND AVENUE OUTLET: 406-248-9125
CHARITY OFFICE: 406-248-1411**

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The Vincentian Word

From Our New Director...

Thank you for the opportunity to serve the Society of St. Vincent de Paul and the Billings community. The members of the board of directors have honored me with this responsibility, and I ask for your prayers as I succeed, not replace, our retiring executive director, Harry Merchant. I have been shadowing Harry around the Charity Office and our two Thrift Stores for two weeks, and simply trying to keep up with Harry has been a challenge and a great learning experience! I want to thank our staff and volunteers for making my introduction to the daily operations so extraordinary. I also want to thank our many volunteers who form the backbone of our Society. Thank you for all you do. We could not be what we are without you. Many of you have taken time to come meet me, and I welcome the opportunity to continue the relationship that has led so many to volunteer their time and energy with St. Vincent de Paul.

I especially look forward to meeting our many donors and patrons during the coming weeks and months. I thank you for your support, I value your financial contributions and sacrifice, and I ask you to keep the Society in your prayers. I am committed to continuing the Society's principles and I am elated that we will continue to have Harry's trusted presence with us as we press forward with our renovation efforts.

I look forward to working with our staff, our volunteers, our donors, and our customers as we endeavor to meet the needs of those we serve.

Agnes Samples

Executive Director
SVDP Billings

Society of St. Vincent de Paul Board of Directors

| | |
|-------------------|------------------------------|
| PRESIDENT | Mary Jo Michels |
| VICE-PRESIDENT | Jeanne Bender |
| SECRETARY | Jackie Maiden |
| TREASURER | Bruce Ellis |
| PROGRAM COORD. | Donna Pavlish |
| SPIRITUAL ADVISOR | Bill Belinski |
| OTHER MEMBERS | Joan Michael Kelly Studer |

Society of St. Vincent de Paul Staff

| | |
|-------------------|------------------|
| EXEC. DIRECTOR | Agnes Samples |
| CHARITY OFFICE | Felicia Lehman |
| PAYEE OFFICE | Jeanette Skinner |
| STORE MANAGER | Debbie Butler |
| VOLUNTEER COORD | Justina Curran |
| ASST. TO THE DIR. | Randy Heinz |

Remodeling Update

A representative from the Murdock Charitable Trust will meet with us on Feb. 16th or 17th to discuss our fund raising progress toward our remodeling project. We still need around \$25,000 in donations to be able to qualify for their grant which could cover half of the \$230,000 cost. We have met with the architects to discuss beginning the project with the funds we have in hand, and should know more by mid-month. We hope to begin the remodeling this winter with completion when all funds are secured. If you can contribute to this project which will expand our Charity Offices, provide a second set of laundry facilities and a restroom for the homeless, expand the area where we serve breakfast and sack lunches to the homeless, and provide a classroom so we can help people learn budgeting and other skills, please write "remodel" on your check.

Volunteer of the Month

Chic Magilke is the February Volunteer of the Month.

Chic has been volunteering with St Vincent de Paul for many years. Whether she is helping on the sales floor, cleaning the employee break room or helping to prepare the newsletter for mailing Chic always has a welcoming smile and kind words for everyone she comes in contact with.

We are all grateful for her time and everything she does and Chic sets a great example for all of us.

Did you know...

- ◇ In December our Charity Office received \$91,756 in cash donations, and distributed \$29,151 in assistance.
- ◇ As you think about doing your Spring Cleaning remember that we need your good slightly used items, **especially beds, dressers, other furniture and household goods**. Items can be dropped off at either store location. If you need them picked up, call Nick at 252-1855.

A charitable contribution of capital gain property such as real estate or marketable securities, may be deducted for income tax purposes at fair market value without having to recognize the value of the property for tax purposes.

To discuss this tax provision, call Bill Belinski at St. Patrick's Co-Cathedral - 259-3389.

Bill volunteers his services to St. Patrick's as well as St. Vincent de Paul..

There is no cost.

From the (former) Directors Desk...

I couldn't leave my position without one last chance to say how much I have enjoyed my work with SVDP and with so many of you over these past 18 years. The support I felt from all of you who believe in the work we do kept me energized. I retire knowing that the Society in Billings is in very good hands!

We have a tremendous Board that has taken strong leadership over the past several years, especially with the Regional Meeting we hosted in 2007, and the recent selection of my replacement. After working with Agnes Samples over the past few weeks, I am able to leave knowing that the leadership of SVDP in Billings is in capable

hands. She will be blessed, as I have been, with a great staff which has truthfully made both of our stores the cleanest, friendliest and most organized thrift stores in Billings. I only wish more of you would shop here and find out for yourselves! The Charity Office Staff continues to work beyond expectations, showing great respect for the poor whom we serve.

But none of what we do could be successful without our generous volunteers and regular supporters both financial and with your good used items. And your prayers for our ministry have been "priceless". So many of the great things that have taken place during my 18 years

happened very differently than I had envisioned. I don't know how many times I had to get out of the way and let God take over! When Christ talks about the Church being His body, and all the parts being necessary for the body to function, He gave us a perfect description of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul in Billings. You people are great!

With the remodeling and expansion plans shaping up and our joint venture with the Montana Rescue Mission and the Billings Food Bank developing, SVDP is ready for a new growth phase with new leadership. There were 38 people in attendance at our January 22nd training

session chomping at the bit and anxious to get more involved with SVDP.

Bitsy and I will be remaining in Billings and plan to stay active with our St. Bernard SVDP Conference. The Board has asked me to be available as a consultant and I am pleased to do that. THANK YOU for making these past 18 years so enjoyable and fulfilling! Keep us all in your prayers.

In Christ's Peace,

Harold Merchant
SVDP Billings

Charity Office Update...

Harry, there is no one word to describe him. He is patient, caring, understanding, compassionate faithful and at times funny. Everyone knows Harry. I can't go anywhere and mention Saint Vincent de Paul or Harry Merchant without someone knowing who he is. He has become the face of Saint Vincent de Paul, a friend and advocate for those in need, and a mentor to his community. He has built relationships with other community leaders to ensure future ways of helping those we serve. He has encountered many situations, where most would turn and run the other direction. Not Harry, he stays and handles it with patience and understanding. He is one to watch and learn from.

I have had the pleasure of having Harry as my boss for over 10 years. Over the years he has taught me patience, which is a necessity for this job. I have learned so much from Harry and I am so very grateful, for what he has taught me about myself and what he has taught me about others. Over the years I don't think I have seen Harry mad more than a handful of times, and I don't even know if you would call those moments being mad. He is just a kind and caring person.

I have seen Harry take someone who is in the lowliest place and would bring them up to a higher place. "Emma" was

a homeless elderly lady, she lived in a cardboard box outside, she didn't shower often and yelled at people on the sidewalk when they would walk past her. She really didn't trust anyone, not even the police. People would walk past her and make fun of her, not knowing any better. Harry on the other hand would talk to her; take a few moments to ask her how she was and over the years built up her trust. Eventually Harry helped her to get off the streets, and she now is in a nursing home, and she still asks about Harry, and he goes to visit her. That is just one of example of who Harry is.

Harry will be missed by many, although he says he will still be around here and there, but from I hear that list of Bitsy's is pretty long. Thank you Bitsy, for sharing him with everyone for so many years and hopefully we can continue to share him. Thank you Harry for your commitment, and your kindness.

Good luck with your retirement.

And welcome to Agnes, I look forward to your new ideas and friendship that we will build. Welcome to this crazy thing called Saint Vincent de Paul. And don't let Harry's craziness sway you, (he was really like that

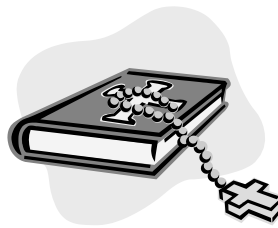
before, we had nothing to do with it.)

I also want to thank everyone for your thoughts and prayers for my Father's passing. I appreciate

everyone's kind words and support.

Felicia

Memorials



In Memory of...

Hubert Brabec

by: Neil & Kitty Sundheim, Keith & Dee Sundheim, Tim & Jamie Sundheim and Julius, Jolene & Colby Sundheim

Marinae Dietrich

by: Chuck Sommers

Sue Glatt

by: Larry Glatt

Jim Huck

by: Rosie Jelden

Jackie Hurick

by: Dorman Hurick

Phyllis Krings

by: Janice Geiger

Wayne Lehman

by: Randy Heinz
Harry & Bitsy Merchant
Bob & Mary McKinney
Joe & Kathy Rude
Sisters of Charity

Catherine 'Kay' Mueller

by: Kim Larsen
Gil & Marge Ficek

Angela Rector

by: Gregory & Marilyn Schell

David Roberts

by: Pat & Mary Kay Byorth

Cyril Sannes

by: Kay Larsen

Art Schaaf

by: Marion Schaaf

Wayne Scharosch

by: Julie Palmersheim

Clifford Schwend

by: Genevieve Schwend

Jerry & Jon Whitmer

by: Nancy Whitmer

Lou Zygmund

by: Marilyn Zygmund

In Honor of...

Harry Merchant

by: Dr Andy Pickens

Sharon Scharosch

by: Julie Palmersheim

Cletus J Walsh

by: Kathleen & Bill LaMeres