



St. Vinnie's Voice

Autumn 2025 News from the St. Vincent de Paul Society of Lane County, Inc. www.svdP.us

Major upgrades for SVdP family shelter

First Place Family Center (FPFC) and Night Shelter Annex, home to St. Vincent de Paul's day and night programs for families experiencing homelessness, underwent much-needed renovations this summer.

Thanks to generous grant support from Trillium Community Health Plan, SVdP repaired the property's aging roof, upgraded the kitchen to expand meal services, and repainted the exterior. This TLC will make FPFC an even more welcoming place for families seeking shelter and services. SVdP also finished a new playground that marks major progress toward reopening First Place Kids childcare program, and a new kids' book nook.

Big thanks to all community members, businesses, and foundations that made these improvements possible!



Recent improvements at SVdP's First Place Family Center include (clockwise from top): New exterior paint and roofing; updated kitchen; all-new playground; and a kids' reading nook.

SVdP's 'An Evening to Envision' fundraiser returns Nov. 7



Guests get in on the excitement of the auction during SVdP's 2024 "An Evening to Envision."

On Friday, Nov. 7, SVdP's third-annual "An Evening to Envision" gala will take place at Venue 252 in Eugene. Proceeds from the fundraiser will support and enhance SVdP's ability to build pathways to lasting stability and permanent housing for the most vulnerable in the community.

The 2025 event will again include dinner, guest speakers and special presentations, live and silent auctions,

raffle, and other fun activities, with live music performed throughout the evening by local favorites Shelley James and Agents of Unity.

Tickets are \$150 each, or \$1,200 for a table sponsorship (eight seats). Both can be purchased online now at www.svdP.us.

For additional announcements ahead of Nov. 7, follow SVdP on Facebook (@svdplanecounty).

Letter from Leadership:

Turning Pages & Warming Hearts

From the Desk of SVdP Executive Director Bethany Cartledge

This newsletter should land in your hands around the start of October, so let me be the first to say Happy National Book Month! Books are near and dear to us here at St. Vinnie's, as Lane County's largest bookseller. They play a pivotal part in our story as a nonprofit pioneer in the waste diversion, recycling, and retail-thrift industries — and demonstrate how we bind it all together into successful, sustainable social enterprises benefitting our community.

Enough about books for now ... but watch for me on KVAL's "Sustainable Spotlight," during the 9 a.m. newscast on Tuesday, Oct. 7, to learn all about that part of the St. Vinnie's story!



Turning the page, I'm excited to tell you about developments in the past quarter that highlight SVdP's continuing commitment to service. I hope you'll read through this newsletter to learn about the many ways your support translates into real, positive impacts on the lives of neighbors who need help the most. And those needs continue to grow, both for those we already serve and those we might soon be called upon to serve.

I am especially proud of how, in the past quarter, we have operated SVdP's new Schlies Resource Center to great success. This tremendous, resource-full facility demonstrates how fruitful it is when we bring government agencies and local nonprofits together to achieve our shared goals of addressing poverty and homelessness. (Read more on Page 6.)

As local kids continue to adjust to life back in the classroom this fall, it makes me happy to think of the 3,500 students we helped equip with new backpacks in the Eugene, Springfield, Junction City, and Florence school districts. Our stores conducted a back-to-school roundup fundraiser at registers to benefit Project HOPE, and St. Vinnie's customers generously stepped up in support of low-income families needing help with school supplies.

It also warms my heart to reflect on how we all came together — SVdP staff and volunteers and community partners — to again operate a potentially lifesaving cooling center for our unhoused neighbors during the hottest days of summer. Now, as the comfortably crisp and golden days of autumn bring relief, we take time to prepare for the next round of emergency responses we'll be called to lead in the community. This includes gearing up for another Egan Warming Centers season in the winter months. To learn how you can help with this critical effort as a volunteer or donor, please visit www.eganwarmingcenters.org.

As the seasons shift, we also divert attention toward preparing for our fabulous fall gala, "An Evening to Envision," which will happen Friday, Nov. 7, at Eugene's Venue 252. I hope you'll be our guest for dinner, live music, presentations, and all kinds of fun and fellowship as we build support for our programs fostering long-term stability for our vulnerable neighbors.

In the meantime, thank you very much for your continued support of SVdP. I also hope you have a wonderful fall season and enjoy many opportunities to curl up with a good book.

(P.S. I know where you can find a whole bunch of them!)

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St. Vinnie's Voice is the quarterly newsletter of St. Vincent de Paul Society of Lane County, Inc. (SVdP).

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ABOUT US

St. Vincent de Paul Society of Lane County (SVdP) is Lane County's largest nonprofit human-services organization. We serve those most vulnerable in our community, including individuals and families experiencing homelessness; at-risk youth; formerly incarcerated individuals; seniors; veterans; and community members living on low incomes. SVdP manages about 1,500 units of affordable housing and two day-access shelters for those experiencing homelessness, as well as emergency shelters; offers low-barrier employment; administers many programs that foster long-term stability; and operates a variety of innovative environmental stewardship and recycling-based initiatives.

OUR MISSION

We assist the vulnerable and those in need of consolation, seeking out and utilizing every resource. Being mindful of the sanctity and dignity of all, we know that any charitable work that advances those goals is within the mission of St. Vincent de Paul.

OUR CORE VALUES

Resourcefulness, Innovation,
Service & Empowerment (RISE)

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FPFC Annex gives young family a needed boost into housing



Angel and Olivia Merlos with kids Jordan and Dakota at SVdP's First Place Family Center.

Olivia and Angel Merlos, like so many served by SVdP's First Place Family Center and Night Shelter Annex, needed someplace safe to regroup with their kids and take the steps to go from homeless to housed.

Recently, after several months staying temporarily in the Annex dormitory and working with an SVdP case manager there, the young family successfully moved on to their own two-bedroom rental in a Eugene triplex.

"I've been on and off homeless for the last decade, so I'm excited to get my kids stable for once," says Olivia, the mother of Jordan, 5, and Dakota, 4.

"I definitely was raised and grew up in poverty," she continues. "We did low-income housing, lived off of state benefits and the government — which there's nothing wrong with it when it's needed. Obviously I've had to do that too, to just get by ... but it will be nice to finally break that cycle because this is not a low-income house we're moving into. Obviously we'll be living paycheck to paycheck, but we'll be just the same as everyone else."

Angel and Olivia knew each other for a decade, before starting a relationship almost a year ago and sharing a single bedroom at his mom's home for a time with the two kids. "It was a little cramped in there," Angel admits.

After both also overcoming years of compounding struggles including addiction — he's now 10 years sober, and she 2 ½ years — the pair "got to that point where we were just ready to be stable again," Olivia says.

They married in a ceremony at Tugman Park during their time at the Annex, and worked diligently with their case manager, Atticus, to complete everything required to secure the new rental where they moved on Aug. 1.

"We'd even go and just hang out and do paperwork in his office," Angel says with a laugh. "Whoever needs it, I would absolutely recommend that they try out this program and do their best ... and don't be afraid to ask questions. They're very helpful."

Olivia admits the path to stability "has been long and tiring, but it's been super helpful having the resources we need literally here in our palm."

"I reach out to everyone I know who may need it" and tell them about First Place, she says ... "and not to just take advantage of a free place to stay, but to actually work with your case manager, get all your ducks in a row, and do it. It's worth it; it's so much better to be stable than not stable."

Learn More & Donate

- Read more about First Place Family Center & Night Shelter Annex: bit.ly/FirstPlaceAnnex
- Donate: bit.ly/DonateSVdP



Some of SVdP's August cooling-center team (L-R): Chris Summers, Mike Speiser, Richard Hatfield, and NJ Sevit-Poarch.

SVdP staff, volunteers shield unhoused from summer heat threat

SVdP activated its Emergency Response Team for cooling-center operations on Aug. 11-12, and remained on standby through summer's end. SVdP operated a cooling shelter at Lane Events Center on those days, as temperatures surpassed 100 degrees in the daytime and only dropped into the mid-60s at night. The center shielded 37 unhoused guests on Aug. 11 and 53 on Aug. 12, serving 70 individuals across the two days. Staff and volunteers also served food and drinks to guests and drove shuttles offering rides to the cooling center and passing out water, sandwiches and snacks. Thanks to our community partners, donors, staff and volunteers for stepping up to serve!



Kids' shoes await pickup by families at SVdP's First Place Family Center on Sept. 3.

'Kicks for Kids' donation benefits FPFC families

Thank you to Les Schwab Tire Centers and KEZI 9 News for again supporting SVdP's First Place Family Center with their annual "Kicks for Kids" shoe drive! About 800 pairs of shoes were delivered on Sept. 3 and distributed among FPFC families and others in need. Thanks to the generosity of Les Schwab customers who donated shoes, hundreds of local kids in need are starting the new school year with the confidence and comfort that come from a fresh pair of kicks!

St. Vinnie's Locations:

Know where to stop, shop, and donate!

St. Vinnie's operates 14 retail-thrift stores and a used-car lot, covering Eugene-Springfield and the greater Lane County area — and extending all the way north to Albany, Salem, and The Dalles. Most stores are open every day from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m., and most sites also have a drive-up donation lane. To see all locations, hours, and donation details on SVdP's website, scan the QR code at bottom.

EUGENE

- * 201 Division Ave.; 541-762-7837
- * 705 S. Seneca Road; 541-636-3254
- * 2890 Chad Drive; 541-743-7117
- * 2167 W. 11th Ave.; 541-600-8480
- * 888 Garfield St.; 541-313-4888
- * 1175 Hwy. 99N (car lot); 541-607-4541

SPRINGFIELD

- * 4555 Main St.; 541-747-5811
- * 199 Q St.; 541-746-7784

JUNCTION CITY

- * 333 Ivy St. (Hwy. 99); 541-600-8514

FLORENCE

- * 2315 Hwy. 101; 541-997-8460

OAKRIDGE

- * 47663 Hwy. 58; 541-782-4483

ALBANY

- * 2220 Pacific Blvd.; 541-928-1559

SALEM

- * 445 Lancaster Drive NE; 503-400-7550

THE DALLES

- * 505 W. 9th; 541-370-1231

COTTAGE GROVE

- * 910 Row River Road; 541-293-1441

Scan for all locations & hours!



DI-dYe: Brandi Dykstra, left, and Julia Martin work on dyeing vintage lingerie at the SVdP clothing warehouse in July. The refreshed items are then resold in St. Vinnie's stores.



What's new at St. Vinnie's stores? Well, more than you might think!

Shopping at St. Vinnie's, it might be easy to assume that everything is always just business as usual. Regardless of the day at any of our 14 stores, you'll always find a wide selection of quality preowned items, and a few new and like-new specialty products from name-brand retailers, at appealing low prices.

But in the past few months, heavy lifting by our warehouse and retail teams has led to improvements in the way our stock is presented to you. You'll see taller, deeper new shelving in many stores — putting inventory on clearer display and making organization easier for staff. A major warehouse reorganization effort also made it possible for us to host the biggest-ever St. Vinnie's tent sale this summer, featuring huge discounts on housewares and miscellaneous overstock goods.



Chad Drive St. Vinnie's is one of several locations with new and improved shelving.

Beyond those bargains, you might have seen some exciting new things in our stores in recent months.

We accepted a shipment of vintage furniture from the United Kingdom for the first time in many years this summer, after rekindling important partnerships with organizations there that share our commitment to reuse.

And in the clothing arena, you'll see "new" products that reflect a growing array of "upsmart" initiatives that inject fresh life into unwanted items and help keep them out of landfills. For example, SVdP e-commerce manager Julia Martin is overseeing a hand-dyeing process to bring new color and life to good-quality items that are otherwise drab; and the creation of popular "Daisy Duke"-style shorts from distressed jeans that are less desirable on their own.



Treasures from across the pond: Furniture from the U.K. in SVdP's warehouse in June.

SVdP remains mattress-recycling leader in Oregon and nationally

In January 2025, mattress recycling in Oregon underwent a massive overhaul thanks to Senate Bill 1576 — which removed disposal fees and expanded drop-off locations for mattress recycling statewide. SVdP of Lane County, which founded the first viable mattress-recycling program in the nation, was also among the first in Oregon to have a fully functional recycling facility and more than a dozen statewide drop-off locations ready to receive mattresses.

Since the program's start, SVdP has recycled more than 30,000 mattresses and box springs. This is in addition to more than 100,000 units processed in our California operations every year. At our peak SVdP has processed some 300,000 units annually between facilities in California and Oregon, making us one of the nation's largest recyclers in this product category.

But why mattresses? More than 75 percent of a mattress is recyclable according to The Mattress Recycling Council, which oversees Oregon's stewardship program. At SVdP's Eugene facility, workers break down mattresses by hand to their primary components of metal, wood, foam and fabric. These materials are then sold back into manufacturing industries to be reused in new products.

Additionally, as a nonprofit serving the most vulnerable in our community, SVdP can capture additional units before they end up in the landfill. If they have plenty of life left, we divert them to our human-service programs. In this way we keep with our dual mission of supporting community members in need and stewarding environmental initiatives. To learn more about SVdP's mattress recycling program, visit bit.ly/SVdPmattresses.

Sustainable
Spotlight on KVAL:



From left, KVAL News morning anchor John Mayer with Dennis Carey and Dave Bartlett from the St. Vinnie's Used Car Lot.

'Sustainable Spotlight' focused on St. Vinnie's

If you've missed the first few installments, be sure to tune in to KVAL 13 News on the first Tuesday morning of every month to see a "Sustainable Spotlight" segment highlighting all that St. Vinnie's does in the areas of recycling and sustainability. Each time, one or more SVdP staff appear for the live, in-studio interview about a timely recycling topic for that month; topics so far have included mattresses, appliances, clothing, and vehicles. Don't miss our next interview about books on Tuesday, Oct. 7. And thanks to KVAL for being the exclusive media sponsor of SVdP's "An Evening to Envision" fundraiser, coming up Nov. 7!

KVAL NEWS 13 ON YOUR SIDE



Briana, John & Lily
MORNINGS 5am & 6am



Brandon & Kendall
EVENINGS 5pm & 6pm

DID YOU KNOW? SVdP recycled 107,640 pounds of expanded polystyrene (aka Styrofoam) in 2024.

Where in Eugene to access SVdP services

SVdP MAIN CAMPUS

2890 Chad Drive; 541-687-5820

What's here: Nonprofit's headquarters are home to general administrative offices, many SVdP departments, and a front desk/lobby open from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. on weekdays. Access point for SVdP Property Management/housing waitlists, human resources and hiring, and general program questions.

EUGENE SERVICE STATION (ESS)

450 Hwy. 99 N; 541-461-8688

What's here: Primary Eugene day site for individual adults experiencing homelessness, offering food, clothing, laundry, showers, and other forms of stabilizing help. Also the entry point for Dawn to Dawn and other SVdP night shelter and overnight parking options. The new Schlies Resource Center, which offers centralized access to homelessness services from multiple agencies, is across the parking lot.

LINDHOLM SOCIAL SERVICE OFFICE

456 Hwy. 99 N; 541-689-6747

What's here: Access point to a variety of programs and services available to help low-income households in Lane County. Office is next-door to the ESS.

FIRST PLACE FAMILY CENTER (FPFC) and NIGHT SHELTER ANNEX

4060 W. Amazon Drive; 541-342-7728

What's here: Day-shelter services for unhoused families with children; FPFC is also the access point for the Night Shelter Annex and First Place Kids programs, which are both onsite.

VETERAN SERVICES

1870 W. 11th Ave.; 541-743-7107

What's here: Ground floor of the Lamb Building is home to SVdP's Veteran Services department, where staff serve veterans and their families by providing case-managed support in crisis and helping households with stabilization into permanent housing.

Scan for more SVdP services info!



St. Vincent de Paul
Society of Lane County, Inc.

Schlies Resource Center expands SVdP's ability to help the unhoused

SVdP has opened a new hub to bring together area agencies to provide services for local residents in need, in one convenient location. Schlies Resource Center (SRC) opened April 18 at 470 Hwy. 99N adjacent to the Eugene Service Station (ESS) — where SVdP has provided critical programs for the unhoused since the 1990s.

Named in honor of Marianne Schlies, SVdP's longtime finance/contracts manager, the SRC now hosts Senior & Disability Services (SDS), SNAP Training & Employment Program, Lane County Public Health, White Bird Clinic, Oregon Dept. of Human Services, Lane County Diversion Rehousing, Lane Independent Living Alliance, and Lane County Mobile Public Health. Cooperating agencies each have their own office spaces for working with clients. In just about three months, the SRC helped 177 individuals access services 308 times from the various providers.

"We are proud to be a leader in this initiative to bring together partner agencies for the shared mission of caring for vulnerable populations," says SVdP Executive Director Bethany Cartledge.

Having a network of services tailored to the varied population that SVdP



Above, guests tour the Schlies Resource Center at its April 18 grand opening.

serves will remove access barriers for many guests at ESS. For one, staff have noted a rise in elderly and disabled clients at all SVdP sites. Having Senior and Disability Services on site will connect ESS clients seeking services or shelter with additional needed resources.

Having providers in one place "has been incredibly beneficial," notes an SDS representative. "It helps bridge essential programs [and] offers vital support to individuals experiencing homelessness, especially those who may not know where to begin or how to navigate available resources."

SVdP: A Year of Service, by the Numbers



166,022

Meals served to clients of SVdP day- & night-shelter programs



6,761

Individuals helped by Homeless & Shelter Services dept.



1,278

People from 500 families served at First Place Family Center



340

People from 138 families sheltered overnight at FPFC Annex



2,319

Residents in affordable housing*

* Estimate accounting for resident turnover during the year.



529

Veterans and family members served*

* Veteran-specific programs, not including general programs.

Just a few of the ways SVdP served the community in 2024!

DID YOU KNOW? SVdP shelter clients received 58,229 showers & 44,387 clean laundry loads in 2024.

SVdP honors Keith Heath's 20 years of service helping the unhoused



Keith Heath, right, is congratulated by SVdP Emeritus Director Terry McDonald.

This past July, SVdP celebrated Keith Heath's 20-year service anniversary at the agency.

Keith has managed the Overnight Parking Program (OPP) for two decades, helping hundreds of our neighbors with access to safe, legal

camping sites. OPP supports those who have lost their homes and are currently living out of cars or RVs.

Known for his unflagging kindness and patience serving people who are often in crisis mode, Keith truly embodies SVdP's core values.

Reflecting on his career with St. Vinnie's, Keith says "It doesn't feel like 20 years! It's never felt like work to me." Asked about his favorite part of the job, he says "just being able to come in here every day and help people. Rarely does a day go by without someone coming back in here to tell me that they're in housing now, or off drugs, and say 'thank you' for the help we gave them."

Colleague Leah Hess-Murray says Keith is unfailingly compassionate and positive, and "he's helped SO many people over the years!"

SVdP director shares second-chance success story at correctional facilities

Bill Barnard, SVdP's Director of Operations, joined with other organizations at the Coffee Creek Correctional Facility and Eastern Oregon Correctional Institution for recent second-chance employment fairs to speak with those serving time about future career opportunities.

Bill was able to speak from a place of lived experience, as someone who was formerly incarcerated and is now thriving as a key staff leader for one of Lane County's largest nonprofits. A common barrier to lasting stability for those exiting the justice system is finding meaningful work opportunities; many employers simply refuse to hire anyone with a criminal background. This can lead



Bill Barnard, right, speaks to Eastern Oregon Correctional Institution inmates about second-chance employment.

to homelessness or an unfortunate return to crime for the recently freed.

But as a second-chance employer, SVdP helps to break that cycle by offering employment and upward mobility to anyone like Bill who shows up with passion, a strong work ethic, and a desire to serve the community.

Many ways to team up with SVdP

Work for a Good Cause

SVdP offers many job opportunities with attractive benefits – and the satisfaction that comes from making a difference in the community! To see current postings and access a fillable application form, visit www.svdP.us/get-involved/employment.

Shop, Donate & Recycle



Every donation & purchase at our stores helps fund our life-stabilizing programs. (Scan code for a list of our stores & donation sites.)

Be a Vinnie's Volunteer

We'd love your support as an individual or group! To start, fill out the application at www.svdP.us/get-involved/volunteer.

Buy or Donate a Vehicle

1195 Hwy. 99N, Eugene
541-607-4541



Grow a Legacy

Consider adding SVdP Society of Lane County to your will or as an estate or life insurance beneficiary.

Become a Financial Donor

Every dollar does good! Scan code now to support SVdP financially, or send by mail to PO Box 24608, Eugene, OR 97402.



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Learn more at www.svdP.us



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St. Vincent de Paul

Cordially invites you to:

An Evening to Envision

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 7, 2025 | VENUE 252, EUGENE

Help SVdP Pave Pathways to Lasting Stability for Neighbors in Need!

Everyone deserves a safe, affordable place to call home and a fair shot at long-term stability. Your generous support of SVdP, through our annual fundraising gala, will allow us to continue providing life-stabilizing resources and affordable homes for thousands of our vulnerable neighbors every year. They include single parents with young children, disabled veterans, medically fragile seniors on fixed incomes, and many others striving to climb from chronic poverty to lasting stability. **THANK YOU!**



DID YOU KNOW? SVdP Property Management serves more than 2,000 affordable-housing residents.