



Society of St. Vincent de Paul
203 Park Ave. SE
Aiken, SC 29801

Society of St. Vincent de Paul Ministry 2023 Year End Report

We wish to thank the entire St. Mary Help of Christians parish for your continued support of our local chapter of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul. It comes from you, the parishioners, in the financial support you provide on the fourth Sunday of each month, and for your food donations that make our Thanksgiving and Christmas Basket program a success. It comes from St. Mary's School and others for the used grocery bags you bring to the pantry, and the peanut butter drive that helps keep that item on our shelves. It also comes from over 100 of you who volunteer your time and energy to operate our pantry.

This past year we were involved in the Migrant Fundraiser, along with Catholic Charities, Knights of Columbus and the Franciscan Fraternity in providing 400 Hygiene Kits to 400 migrant workers. This took place in Ward, SC and it included a Mass with Bishop Jacques E. Fabre officiating. A lunch followed and we then distributed bags of food, the hygiene kits and large bottles of shampoo. It was a truly wonderful event and Bishop Fabre made everyone feel so special.

For the Year 2023 we provided groceries to 3,620 families (9,085 total people). Thanks to the ability to purchase food at a reduced cost from Golden Harvest Food Bank and to food received at no cost from many of our local supermarkets, and the U. S. Department of Agriculture we were able to provide approximately 292,000 pounds of food for the cost of \$36,730.

Because of your extremely generous donations throughout the year and because of the great need in our community, we were able to maintain our services in Aiken County by providing emergency financial support to avoid utility service shut-off, providing food to our families in need and providing our homeless assistance with food and hotel services in certain circumstances. St. Vincent DePaul provided \$214,294 of financial assistance to 784 families to prevent cutoff of vital utility services. We provided \$3,727 for prescription medications. We were also able to contribute \$2,000 to the Saint Vincent de Paul Disaster Relief Fund.

Our Thanksgiving and Christmas basket program has been such a success every year. For the Year 2023 we provided 85 Thanksgiving Baskets and 60 Christmas Baskets. A big thanks goes out to all our volunteers, especially Joe Tillman who make this program work.

We purchased 110 fans to help with the hot months of summer and distributed them to our neighbors in the community as 1 per family. In the fall we purchased 50 space heaters and were able to help another 50 families. Both efforts went extremely well and we hope to be able to do this again next year.

A special thank you goes out to youth of the parish for partnering with our Conference to provide 340 Sunday lunches to those in need each month. A total of 4,080 lunches for the year! We also thank our parish youth for their help with the Thanksgiving and Christmas Basket program, and putting together our homeless food bags which we distribute each week to our homeless men and women who come by the pantry.

We also would like to thank the children, families and faculty of St. Mary Help of Christians School for their continued support throughout the year.

As an outreach ministry, we have overhead expenses such as electrical costs due to heating and air conditioning and many refrigerators and freezers. We also have expenses for water, telephones, internet service for client research and trash collection. Since all of our members are unpaid volunteers, we are able to keep this overhead to less than 10% of our expenses.

We want to thank all our volunteers and especially the ones who have stepped up recently to fill available positions in our Conference. Good Job! Thank you for your support.

Remember, we are always looking for volunteers to work in the Pantry. We could use your help in packing food; for caseworkers who answer phones to schedule food pickups and help with utilities; for runners who take the grocery carts to curb; and donation collectors for after 4th Mass each month.

Please contact me, Lauren Alexander at ewalexan@yahoo.com, or 803-606-8496 if you are interested in any of these volunteer positions.

God Bless and Happy New Year!