



St. Vincent de Paul - Waukesha County

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St. Vincent de Paul Waukesha County

Neighbors Helping Neighbors

"Doing A Little Good"

St. Vincent de Paul is a vital organization that provides material aid—food, clothing, and assistance to sustain shelter. But what about the future beyond a crisis? We know many personal and systemic obstacles can make it difficult to move up the economic ladder. We may have dreams, but do we know the steps to make them reality?

For over a decade, St. Vincent de Paul has sponsored the "Getting Ahead" workshop—an intensive 16-session course where participants become "investigators." Each person takes an in-depth look at the causes of financial instability in their own life, assesses their strengths, makes the decision to change, and creates a personalized financial plan based on finding avenues to increase or better manage their current income.

With the support of mentors and facilitators, investigators explore their spending and saving habits. The program concludes with a graduation ceremony, attended by family and friends. The stories we hear from graduates are what make every session worthwhile. People like Mary, who said the program helped her and her partner turn their finances around—and even saved their marriage. Others share key lessons with family and friends, such as the guiding question: "Do I need this or just want it?"

Lolita, a recent graduate, and our program manager, Liliana, will share their personal journeys and how the program changed the way they think about spending, saving, and planning for the future.



St. Vincent De Paul

Donate • Shop • Get Involved

WITH YOUR SUPPORT

The cost of living for food and shelter skyrocketed since the pandemic. With your help St. Vincent de Paul can help our neighbors in need.

Be the Change

\$25

Provides the tools for the journey!

\$200

Fuels a class building connection and community!

\$1000

Transform a life with a 16-session journey!



Scan Me

Donate Today!

DAILY DEALS

ST. VINCENT DE PAUL

MONDAY

•Double Point Day!

TUESDAY

•Senior Day: 15% Off



WEDNESDAY

•Military Day: 15% Off

THURSDAY

•Student/Teacher Day: 15% Off

St. Vincent De Paul

Named Finalist for Social Enterprise of the year

We were recognized by Milwaukee BizTimes for turning business principles into a force for good—addressing poverty, supporting neighbors in need, and creating lasting impact in our community through our members and Council programs.

2025 NONPROFIT
EXCELLENCE
AWARDS

SOCIAL ENTERPRISE FINALIST

**ST. VINCENT DE PAUL
OF WAUKESHA COUNTY**

JULY 24, 2025

Dan Meyer
DAN MEYER
Publisher / Owner, BizTimes Media

Presented By:

BizTimesMedia

Lolita: Overcoming a Fire of Obstacles

Lolita graduated from the Getting Ahead program three years ago. During the graduation ceremony, each participant creates a posterboard illustrating their journey and dreams for the future. Lolita's poster featured her goal—to open a childcare business by returning to school for Early Childhood Education. That night, she left full of hope and ready to build a better life.

She was already juggling multiple jobs—cleaning during the week, helping at a restaurant, cleaning houses on weekends—and had started caring for two or three children as part of her business. Despite her demanding schedule, Lolita continued in the Getting Ahead Graduate Program, where she met her mentor, Lynn. Lolita rarely missed a meeting and stayed committed to her dream. Lynn saw her determination and once said, “Lolita has a very vibrant attitude in the fire of obstacles.”

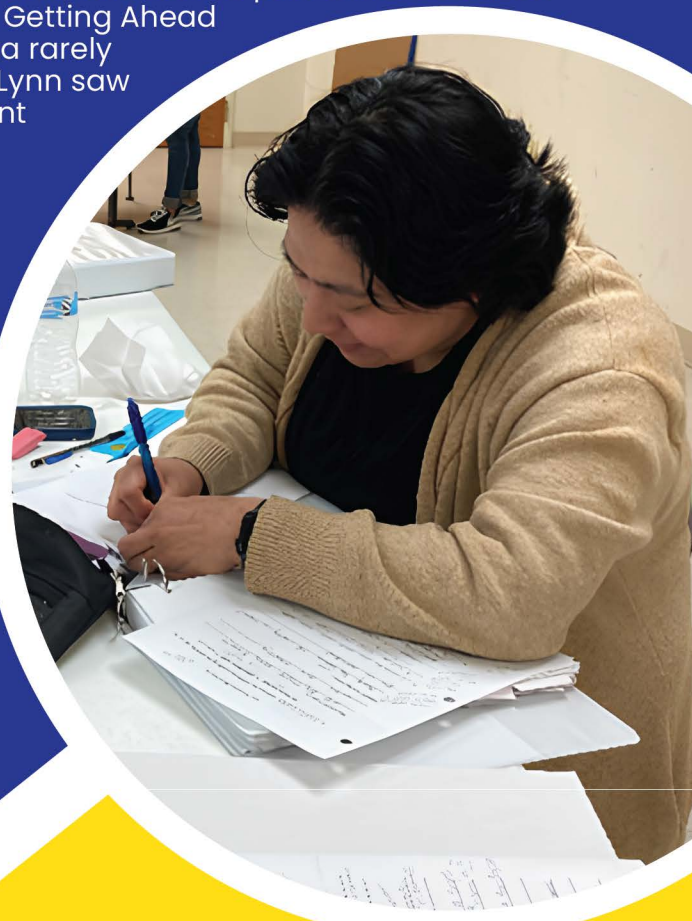
Raising her children, working five jobs, and studying toward her degree, Lolita kept pushing forward. She completed course after course—many with A's—and after two years, earned her associate degree in Early Childhood Education.

In May 2023, Lolita applied for a St. Vincent de Paul Endowment Grant, which helps neighbors pursue life-changing opportunities. The grant helped cover her tuition to complete a bachelor's degree. Lolita said, “My success is my school.”

Her story is more than a personal success. It's a powerful reminder that when we believe in one another, amazing things can happen. Lolita's journey is a victory for all of us.

Focused and Determined

Lolita will soon graduate from the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater with a degree in Special Education. She is a true warrior—and our Getting Ahead team couldn't be prouder.



‘FORE’ THOSE IN NEED



At our thrift stores, creativity thrives. Team members meet regularly to discuss new ideas, big and small. No idea is off-limits—every voice is welcome. Eight years ago, John Erdmann, manager of our Waukesha store, asked, “Why don't we do a golf outing to raise money for the Needy Family Fund?”

The Needy Family Fund provides vital support to hundreds of Waukesha neighbors—from food and clothing to rent assistance. At the time, COO Rod Colburn was skeptical. He knew how much John loved golf—but the team welcomed all ideas, and John got the green light.

“I was hoping to raise \$5,000 in that first outing,” John recalls. Instead, 80 golfers showed up, and they raised \$18,000!

Since then, the first seven golf outings have brought in over \$150,000. The 2025 Golf Outing was sold out for the first time! It raised nearly \$40,000, the most in its history! John beams with pride at how far this “brainstorm” has come. “I am very happy and thankful to be able to work with so many generous companies and individuals to make the Golf Outing a huge success.”

John's story is a testament to the entrepreneurial spirit within St. Vincent de Paul. We are passionate about serving our neighbors in need—while running the best thrift stores around!

John is just one example of the entrepreneurial spirit within our St. Vincent de Paul team. It is driven by our passion for service to those in need while running the best thrift stores around!



Liliana Cavazos

Leading with a Smile



Getting Ahead
Program Manager

Liliana Cavazos loves her job as manager of the Getting Ahead program—and it shows in her ever-present smile. Her enthusiasm is contagious as she recalls the many investigators she's met over the years.

Liliana describes her work as “a powerful experience of growth, learning, and empathy. It's given me a deeper understanding of how a lack of material resources affects people and how people can be empowered to take control of their own futures.”

Getting Ahead is unique. It doesn't give out easy answers or one-size-fits-all solutions. Instead, it equips participants with the tools to find their own way forward. Investigators reflect on their lives, identify obstacles, and create their own path. More than just learning, the program is about restoring dignity. As graduate Rafael put it, “It's not just about getting help—it's about being seen, supported, and respected. They feed you, welcome you and teach you.”

Liliana has witnessed remarkable transformations: people paying off debt from eleven credit cards down to two, applying for better jobs with newfound confidence, or becoming homeowners after two decades of renting. She's seen investigators start their own businesses, return to school, and even educate others in financial literacy.

What touches Liliana most is when graduates come back as mentors and facilitators. They selflessly dedicate their time—season after season—to help others find the same hope they once received. That, Liliana says, is the most rewarding part of all.

And of course, that makes Liliana smile!