



St. Vincent de Paul Waukesha County

Neighbors Helping Neighbors

"Doing A Little Good"

Because of your generosity, St. Vincent de Paul Waukesha continues to make a meaningful impact in neighborhoods across Waukesha County. In 2024, we launched a new community initiative responding to one of the most urgent challenges facing our neighbors today: affordable housing.

Our Vincentian members were on the front lines, providing more than **\$700,000 in emergency shelter and rent assistance** to help neighbors remain safe and housed. As a Council, we recognized the need to move beyond crisis response toward long-term solutions that create stability and opportunity.

That commitment took shape in the fall of 2024 through our deep involvement in the Winter Overflow Shelter and the launch of new initiatives, including the **Tenant Opportunity Fund** and a growing partnership with **Hebron Housing Services** at **Siena House** as we do a little good for our neighbors seeking a safe and affordable home.



St. Vincent De Paul

Tenant Opportunity Fund



St. Mother Teresa once said, "If you can't feed a hundred people, then feed just one." Guided by this spirit, our Board of Directors established the **Tenant Opportunity Fund** to help neighbors take the critical step from instability to secure housing.

One of the greatest barriers for working individuals and families is the cost of a security deposit. In Waukesha County, deposits for a one- or two-bedroom apartment can exceed **\$3,000–\$4,000**, placing safe housing out of reach for many. "The hardest case for a Vincentian is working with the homeless.

There never seems to be adequate room in the shelters due to the large numbers seeking help, explained John Doherty, St. Vincent de Paul member and administrative volunteer. The cost of moving into a home has always been prohibitive to those struggling."

Through the Tenant Opportunity Fund, St. Vincent de Paul provides security deposits or deposit guarantees to bridge this gap when a neighbor cannot afford first and last month's rent. Thanks to donor support and proceeds from our thrift stores, we have invested **\$40,000** in security deposits, helping **36 neighbors** and their families secure housing. In some cases, our involvement eliminated the need for an additional deposit altogether.

One recipient exclaimed, "Thank God! Thank Jesus! for giving me and my wife a place to live rather than under a bush we slept together for the last month." This was shared by a neighbor who is a senior citizen and struggled for several years with homelessness. The couple spent two winters living in their car, which they eventually lost. Although she was employed, they still struggled and were forced to literally live on the ground using bushes for shelter. With the winter coming on, they were desperate. With the help from Corpus Christi-St. William Conference and the involvement of the Landlord Engagement specialist, Ramon, they were able to secure housing.

Essentially this program functions as a **revolving fund**, allowing deposits to be returned and reused to assist future families. Neighbors also can participate in our **Getting Ahead** financial planning program and receive regular check-ins to support housing stability and positive relationships with property managers.

John Doherty is grateful for this new Community Initiative. "The housing team and the program they developed have been great. It's a relief to Vincentians to have an organization ready and willing to help out with the most difficult cases. We are lucky to have such a dedicated and helpful team."

St. Vincent de Paul is deeply grateful to the Waukesha County Community Foundation for their first-time grant of \$10,000, which is helping us expand this vital program. We also welcome partnerships with local property managers and owners as we work together to strengthen our community—one neighbor at a time.

New Partnerships, New Pathways Forward

St. Vincent de Paul values collaboration with local organizations serving neighbors experiencing homelessness. By identifying service gaps, our Vincentians and staff provide support where it is needed most.

From our longstanding partnership providing meals each Monday at the Hope Center, to our newest collaboration with **Hebron Housing Services**, these partnerships are creating new pathways to stability. When shelter beds were reorganized in the City of Waukesha, Hebron invited us to help launch a new program at **Siena House**. Six beds are now reserved for homeless men who have exceeded the 90-day shelter limit.

Drawing on lessons from our Getting Ahead workshops, our staff is providing support services—and early outcomes have been encouraging.

Monique Rodriguez, St. Vincent de Paul Waukesha program coordinator reflected the personal satisfaction helping Siena residents, “Being part of what’s happening at Siena House has honestly been one of the most rewarding things I’ve experienced. Two of the men we started this journey with have already moved into permanent housing, and we still check in with them as they settle into their new homes. Seeing them reach that goal has been such a powerful reminder of why this work matters.”

Another Siena House resident is working two jobs and is taking advantage of our Tenant Opportunity Fund to secure an apartment. This is a huge step forward for him, and it’s incredible to see these opportunities open when the right support and partnerships come together.



Monique Rodriguez

“Every day, we are learning more about their goals, their strengths, and what they need to keep moving forward. It has been amazing to start building creative, meaningful ways to support them, and you can really feel hope growing in the house. I am so grateful to be part of this partnership and to walk alongside these men as they work toward stability and independence.”

Monique Rodriguez,
St. Vincent de Paul Waukesha

Heart of our Mission



Our Vincentian members, serving through local parishes, are the heart of our mission. Each Conference and the Council work together as true partners in service. Home visits are the basis of our SVDP work and are key to our own spiritual growth. This happens when we meet extraordinary people and listen to understand their stories and fill in support however we can.

Two outstanding examples are **Karolyn and Regge Krueger** of the Corpus Christi Conference. Karolyn is a longtime educator at Catholic Memorial High School, and Regge works as a broker for major household products while also serving at a local funeral home.

Regge & Karolyn remember three years ago when Chrissandra moved to Waukesha to start a new life with her two children, now ages 17 and 11. She was fortunate to receive housing through the City of Waukesha Housing Authority, but beyond that she had little to make a home. They met her soon after moving into their home. “We were immediately struck by her welcoming attitude and openness in our discussion. The more we listened, the more we understood and could appreciate her situation and request for assistance.”

Over the next three years the Corpus Christi Conference met her needs with rent assistance, food, clothing vouchers, school backpacks. Regge and Karolyn learned Chrissandra only asked for assistance when she was the most desperate. They wished she would have reached out sooner. “What we saw over the years was a woman working so hard to be successful in raising and protecting her family. Nothing was ever for her, it was always for someone else, to make their lives better.”

With dedication and a strong work ethic Chrissandra has moved into a supervisor role at a local homeless shelter in Waukesha. Her “been there/done that” attitude having struggled in poverty while keeping a vision for success for herself and her family offers a strong, positive image to the residents. Our latest visit was at her workplace where we reviewed her application for a scholarship from the St. Vincent de Paul Endowment Grant Fund. She has an associate degree in criminal justice and is seeking a degree in Social Services through WCTC. With her prior degree and work experience she may earn a double degree. In fact, a school counselor even suggested they may hire her.

“Though Chrissandra’s life has been filled with struggle, we were fortunate to be able to work with her over the years. She has inspired us and no matter how difficult situations can be, we think of her and how she continues to work for success, but at the same time is caring and compassionate with those she serves in work and life.” Chrissandra has a clear vision of what success looks like for herself and her family, and Regge and Karolyn are thankful to be a small part of her life, as we continue to grow in our own spirituality as we work with her and others through our home visits.

By the numbers:



\$313k

Value of food distributed



500+

Members Strong



39k

Service Hours to People



3,135

Summer Lunches Served



610

Backpacks Handed Out



23.2k

Neighbors Served



\$2.1Mil

Dollars Returned to the Community



33

Getting Ahead Graduates



\$284k

Total in Vouchers

Donate Today!



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St. Vincent de Paul - Waukesha County

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Milwaukee BizTimes Social Enterprise of the Year Finalist



We were honored to be recognized as a Milwaukee BizTimes Social Enterprise of the Year finalist, celebrating organizations whose primary goal is advancing a social mission rather than maximizing profit.

Our three thriving St. Vincent de Paul thrift stores in Waukesha County reinvest their proceeds directly into programs that serve neighbors in need. Every donated item and every purchase play a role in strengthening our community. We could not do this work without your support.



700 Full School Buses

Did you know that with the help of our neighbors (that's you!), we were able to keep 3.5 million pounds of textiles out of landfills in 2025? Because of your donations, shopping, and continued support, clothing and fabrics were given a second life instead of becoming waste. Together, we're creating a more sustainable and compassionate community. That's the power of neighbors helping neighbors.