

□ □ [*Illustrated History of SVDP at St. Peter Prince of the Apostles*](#)

St. Peter's SVDP conference was begun more than fifty years ago when Bishop Flanagan was pastor at St. Peter's. During these years, the conference has served the hungry and the needy of our parish, and has partnered with other conferences to meet emergencies

impacting the wider community

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1952: National Conference accredited the Conference of St. Vincent de Paul□

at St Peter Prince of the Apostles Catholic Church in San Antonio, Texas.□

Early active members included: Albert Scharmman, first conference president, Clem and Bud Holshauser, □ Larry Pytel, Jim Butler, and Dave Smiley. □ Their efforts centered on the distribution of food. .□

The pastor (now Bishop) Thomas Flanagan started the Ozanam School of Theology

□ with the following members in attendance: Dave Berger, Joe Savoy, John Spitzer,

Clem and Bud Holshauser.□ The Ozanam School of Theology,□ continues today

as an Archdiocesan annual event designed to orient new SVDP officers toward the spirit of the Society.

1960's and 1970's : Members began meeting weekly in the cafeteria.

Father Hubertus led the group in prayer. Members defined the conference's relations

with Central Council and focused on works of good faith, including visits

to hospitals and rest homes, delivery of groceries to homes, and monthly visits

by the entire group to the State Mental Hospital .

The society dispersed about \$700 in goods and services monthly. During this time, the following

members, led by Liz Davies and Jules Caelli, began a soup kitchen called Friendship House, and worked their every

Sunday morning until 1982. Friendship House was located at the southwest tip

of San Pedro Park on the corner of Flores and Grayson.

Each Sunday morning for nearly twenty years, the following individuals

served breakfast and distributed bus tokens to homeless persons who came to Friendship

House until its assimilation into the San Antonio Metropolitan Ministries in 1982: Reno

Bradicich, Ted Comeau, Jules Capelli, om

Chiminello, Liz Davies , Bill Martin, Joe Savoy,

John Spitzer ,

and

Arthur Uhl

Besides the Friendship House ministry, the following

members continued distributing food and bus tokens, and visiting the sick and homebound:

Val Beyer, Leo Dominicali, Fidel Flores, Bob Fotch, Dick Meskill, Randy Perkins, Tony Steinkruger.

1980's

In 1982, Tom Haack from Central Council was in charge of the SVDP dining room at the newly formed San Antonio Metropolitan Ministries' SAMM Shelter.

They obtained the stoves, and other equipment from Friendship House,

and the St. Peter's members then started helping on a regular basis at the new SAMM Shelter's dining room.

The San Antonio Food Bank was in its infancy and St. Peter's Vincentians put in long hours there. They were able to transfer food to the SAMM

Dining Room which was in need of provision, and also to the emergency food pantry at St. Peter's.

Our conference members continued helping at the Food Bank until inmates of the

Bexar County Jail took over. Work crews included Doug and Emmy

Douville, Bill Beck, Keith Dubouis and Arthur Uhl.

During this decade, our present offices were constructed, marking a significant advance in what our conference was able to offer, especially through the enhancement of our food pantry, and as an office in which to gather, plan, keep records, and particularly, to develop a well-supplied food pantry from which to distribute sacks of food to a growing number of persons in need of such assistance.

1990's

The National Convention of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul was held in San Antonio in 1995. Deacon John Spitzer

chaired Enrollment and Housing. Arthur Uhl worked with Father Tom Flanagan to work on the event's liturgy, which included a Mass of exceptional beauty. Support was given by conference membership including George Parker, president, Maudie Flanagan, and Jane Vivian.

2000's: In 2002, A group of St. Peter's Vincentians worked with Catholic Charities to help settle and acclimate a refugee family from

Afghanistan.

□ In 2003, Arthur Uhl and John Spitzer gathered data for this history

□ of St. Peter's conference which is the oldest conference in the San Antonio area.

□ In 2004, Fran Shinski initiated a home visitation program.

□ Membership during this time included Bill Astelford, Bill Beck, Val Beyer,

□ Jean Craig, Danny and Deborah Deffenbaugh, Josefina Dong, Keith Dubois,

Maudie Flanigan, Joyce Hobbins, eter Mako, Mike and Patience McGuire,

□ Ethel Monroe, Kreg Palko, Cathy Peltier, Arthur Pena, Irene Prescott,

Fran Shinski, John Soliz, Tony Seinkruger, John Spitzer, Connie Trevarrow,

□ Arthur Uhl, Marcel Ulmer, Bill Vick, Jane Vivian, Karen White, Dorothy Watts

Today: At present, increasing numbers of families and individuals

□ come to our offices for help with food and for aid in emergency situations.

Although financial aid in general is restricted to parishioners,

we occasionally combine resources with conferences in other parishes to meet serious needs. No one who comes to the window for food is denied.

If we had twice the number of members that we do, these teams could be larger and rotate their duties.

If we had three times our present membership, we could engage in additional works., including

follow-up calls and visits to clients who have received aid.

We are grateful for parish entities with whom we network regularly –St. Peter’s School which provides invaluable support in stocking the food pantry, the Boy Scouts, the office staff. We

look forward to continuing these important connections, and to extending

our outreach efforts.

The above record was written by Deacon John Spitzer and Arthur Uhl, two of the original conference members. It was written to preserve the memory of how our conference originated and grew.