

Voice of the Poor

August, 2007

www.voiceofthepoor.org

www.stvincentdepaul.net

Fair Share for Phoenix Requested

VOP's Frank Barrios was part of a delegation to Washington led by Phoenix Councilman Greg Stanton. The group also included Councilman Johnson and representatives from UMOM, the Urban League, APS and several central city churches.

The purpose of the trip was to request that Phoenix, as the nation's fifth largest city, be given its fair share of federal dollars in Head Start, CBDG (Community Block Development Grant) and LIHEAP (low income heating and energy assistance program). Formulas for allocation, developed many years ago, heavily favor older eastern cities. Meanwhile there is a western migratory trend with 5,000 or more moving into Phoenix every month, including low income persons needing assistance offered by these programs.

The group met with Congressmen Mitchell and Pastor and staff in the offices of Congressman Shadegg and Senator Kyl. They also met with Dean Aguillen and Cheryl Parker Rose of Speaker Pelosi's office. The group and message were well-received and understood. Although Section 8 was not discussed at this time, it is anticipated that the request for more housing vouchers will be on a future agenda.

Representing St. Vincent de Paul, Frank made the point that the Society gave out \$2.2 million in rent and utility assistance to needy families last year. There is never enough money to cover the need.

This trip was looked upon as the start of a continuing effort to secure additional funding for Phoenix for these programs.

Housing First Discussed

Lucy reported on a recent Housing First meeting, the program that has proven to be successful in keeping chronic disabled homeless men off the streets as well as save money over time. Housing First has been on the VOP legislative agenda for the past two years. It is hoped that members of the legislature can be educated about the concept and a Housing First pilot program developed in Phoenix.

Legislators Visit St. Vincent de Paul

Three members of the State legislature (Representatives Chad Campbell, Adam Driggs and John Kavanaugh) along with Dog Mings from Congressman Mitchell's Scottsdale office visited the St. Vincent de Paul Center on July 18. VOP members Father Bill Fitzgerald, Julie Douglas, Kathy Jorgensen and Lucy Howell accompanied the legislators on the tour led by Susan deQueljoe, Community Relations Manager. Over lunch in the Hall of Banners, the visitors received copies of the Society's annual report and the Voice of the Poor legislative agenda. Housing First, the proposal of a state earned income tax credit and simplification of the AZ charitable tax credit were discussed.

VOP will NOT meet in August. Next meeting: Wed., September 19 at 3:30 p.m.