



Society of St. Vincent de Paul, 420 W. Watkins, Phoenix, AZ 85003

## Media Advisory

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### American Diabetes Alert Day is Tomorrow

*St. Vincent de Paul clinic treats more than 300 diabetic and pre-diabetic patients*

**Phoenix** –Tomorrow is American Diabetes Alert Day, held annually by the American Diabetes Association. While the nation will focus attention on diabetes on this day, doctors, nurses, and nutritionists at the Society of St. Vincent de Paul's Virginia G. Piper Medical & Dental Clinic deal with diabetic patients on a daily basis.

More than 300 of the clinic's patients are either diabetic or pre-diabetic, meaning that they have an elevated glucose level and will become diabetic if they do not change their diets, increase their exercise, or make better health choices.

Although it is hard to pinpoint how many Arizonans have diabetes, it is estimated that between 284,000 and 519,000 Arizonans have the disease. The disease is growing at an alarming rate, especially among Latinos and among younger Arizonans.

The Society's clinic has seen the increase in the disease among its patients who generally come into the clinic for treatment of other symptoms or illnesses. It has started several programs to stem the alarming growth of the disease. The Family Diabetes Program works with entire families to teach healthier eating habits, food preparation, healthy exercises, and other lifestyle choices.

"The family diabetes program has found great success by providing a comprehensive program that empowers patients to take control of their disease and to become health advocates in their own families and communities," said Janice Ertl, RN, MHSA, Director of the Clinic.

Other services at the Society also have made changes to address the issue. Recently, The Healthy Eating Program was started to encourage children to eat the vegetables and salads that are served as part of the dinner provided at the Family Evening Meal each weekday from 5 to 6 p.m.

"We want to do all we can to help our community. The Clinic is seeing more health related problems in our younger patients, so we are doing what we can to teach kids to make healthier food choices," said Jerry Castro, Manager for SVdP's dining rooms.

The Society serves 3,500 meals on a daily basis to guests at five dining rooms across the Valley, including the Family Evening Meal, and to 18 other nonprofit organizations.

People can take a diabetes risk test on the web at: <http://www.diabetes.org/risk-test.jsp>.

**Photo Opportunities:** Family Evening Meal, Monday through Friday, 5 to 6 p.m., 420 W. Watkins

Virginia G. Piper Medical & Dental Clinic, Best times for clinic visits are Tues. and Wed. 9 a.m. to noon or Thurs. 6-9 p.m.

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*The Society of St. Vincent de Paul is a non-profit organization, dedicated to serving the poor and providing others with the opportunity to serve. . Programs include services for the homeless, medical and dental care for the working poor, five charity dining rooms and general assistance for individuals in need, regardless of race, origin, religion, or gender.*