



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

Media Advisory

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March 31, 2006

Founder of SVdP Clinic Retires After 14 Years

He had arrived at THAT moment in his life . . . retirement. He could now pursue all those little things that he didn't have time for during his busy career as a thoracic and cardiovascular surgeon.

And yet Dr. Earl Baker chose to start a second career and take up the challenge of providing medical care to the uninsured, working poor families in Phoenix. That was 14 years ago.

Dr. Baker once envisioned a clinic at the Society of St. Vincent de Paul that could serve up to 5,000 uninsured and working poor patients a year. His hard work and determination, as the founder and Medical Director of the Virginia G. Piper Medical & Dental Clinic, has made that dream a reality. The clinic completes nearly 13,000 medical and dental visits each year, with the value of the care provided estimated at more than \$2 million.

Dr. Baker will be honored at a reception on Sunday, April 2, as he celebrates his retirement from the clinic. Many community and business leaders will be on hand to congratulate him for his accomplishments over the years.

"We are so fortunate that Dr. Baker blessed us with his leadership and his enthusiasm for providing health care for the uninsured and working poor," said Steve Zabalski, executive director for the Society of St. Vincent de Paul. "Those that are really benefiting from his dedication and passion are the patients who can receive the care they need at our clinic."

His dedication to providing medical care to the working poor has earned him high acclaim, including a Health Care Hero Lifetime Achievement Award by The Business Journal in 2003 and a Champion for Health by Blue Cross Blue Shield of Arizona in 2004.

Dr. Baker, a former president of the Arizona Medical Association, was a pioneer in his field, being the first surgeon to successfully complete open heart surgery in Phoenix. He retired from his practice in thoracic and cardiovascular surgery in 1992 to spearhead the establishment of the Clinic at St. Vincent de Paul. For 14 years, he worked to recruit volunteer medical professionals, get medical equipment donated, and raise funds to operate the clinic.

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.

Who: Dr. Earl Baker will be honored as he retires after 14 years as the medical director of the Virginia G. Piper Medical & Dental Clinic, which provides healthcare for the uninsured, working poor families

Where: Society of St. Vincent de Paul, 420 W. Watkins, Phoenix

When: Sunday, April 2, 4 to 7 p.m.

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