

# VINCENTIAN

CONNECTION

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## HOPE FOR OUR HOMELESSNESS CRISIS

SVdP's new neighborhood shelter redefines homelessness solutions and gets people housed.

*Also, introducing the new SVdP app that offers instant help from those who can give to those in crisis.*

# The Hope Lens

Jamila Dawuni and her daughter, Hannah, share a moment of joy and unbelievable gratitude inside the Resource Center waiting room of St. Vincent de Paul's Diane and Bruce Halle Center for Hope and Healing, which serves those experiencing or at risk of homelessness. SVdP Social Worker Ronnie Smith had just let Jamila know that she was all approved for her new apartment and that SVdP would cover the moving costs.





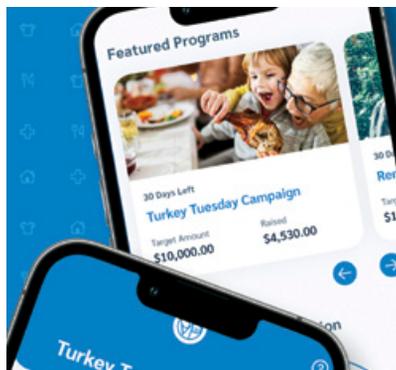
# Features

**7 Together again at last**  
 After three years apart and virtual events, SVdP's Restoring Hope Breakfast returned in person to the Arizona Biltmore for a morning filled with long-awaited hugs and a chance to help SVdP uplift the community. Catch up on the morning's happenings and one woman's story of hope after brain surgery.

**12 A homelessness solution**  
 SVdP opened a new neighborhood shelter in partnership with the City of Phoenix and Maricopa County that hopes to be the model for the region in helping decentralize and end homelessness one person at a time.



**10 Angels a click away**  
 A new smartphone app for SVdP's Angels on Call program connects those who can offer help with those in immediate need of assistance by transferring financial gifts instantly to SVdP to help a family or individual at its doorstep.



**4 Our new leading lady**  
 Hear from SVdP's new CEO Shannon Clancy in an intimate Q-&-A interview. She stepped into the top leadership position at SVdP this October.



# VINCENTIAN CONNECTION

P.O. Box 13600, Phoenix, Arizona 85002-3600

Diocesan Council President Steve Attwood	Writers Sarah Farrell Troy Hill
The Rob and Melani Walton Endowed CEO Shannon Clancy	Marisol Saldivar
Chief Marketing Officer Mary Chou-Thompson	Photography Alejandra Bucon Sarah Farrell Troy Hill
Editor Marisol Saldivar	

The Society of St. Vincent de Paul is an international nonprofit organization dedicated to serving people in need and providing others with the opportunity to serve. SVdP has been assisting central and northern Arizona families since 1946 and has a network of more than 80 parish neighborhood pantries. SVdP offers services for the homeless, medical and dental care for the uninsured, charity dining rooms, transitional housing and homelessness prevention assistance.

Vincentian Connection magazine shares the stories of compassion, hope, healing and impact SVdP has in building a better community. The magazine has a circulation of 90,000.



## On the Cover

James Davis and his dog, Miracle, bask in the peace of having an apartment after James lived on the street. He is one of the many residents who have successfully found home after seeking help and a bed at SVdP's new Washington St. shelter and housing program.

## Departments

- 6 President's column
- 17 Profiles
- 19 Thousand thanks



## MEET SVdP PHOENIX'S NEW CEO SHANNON CLANCY, THE FIRST WOMAN TO HOLD THE RECENTLY ENDOWED POSITION

By Marisol Saldivar

**A** leadership transition nine years in the making came to realization in October as Shannon Clancy officially assumed leadership of St. Vincent de Paul Phoenix as The Rob and Melani Walton Endowed CEO.

Shannon has more than 30 years of experience working for local and national faith-based nonprofit organizations. She graduated from Xavier College Preparatory in Phoenix, the University of Notre Dame and has a Masters in Human Development from the University of Maryland at College Park.

Maybe most remarkable are the almost 20 years she's dedicated to SVdP, many of which she spent leading alongside former CEO Steve Zabilski. From the moment Steve met Shannon, he recognized the exceptional person she is and envisioned a great future for her and for SVdP with Shannon's gifts, talents and grace at work within the mission.

Together, the SVdP family and community have witnessed that inkling of great potential grow into the nonprofit's first woman CEO, who we are honored to have at the helm and celebrate in a special Q-&-A.

## Q&A

### WHAT INSPIRED YOU TO PURSUE NONPROFIT WORK?

**Shannon:** When I was a sophomore in college, a service opportunity challenged students to be immersed in the needs of their hometowns. I spent three days and two nights in downtown Phoenix where I learned about organizations like St. Vincent de Paul that were serving people experiencing homelessness in our city. Though I had grown up in Phoenix and been downtown many times, I had no idea of the immense poverty there. So many people. Hungry. Homeless. A level of suffering that I had never personally witnessed, let alone experienced. Once I saw it, I just couldn't look away. I realized that nothing was as important to me as helping alleviate the suffering of people living in poverty and providing opportunities for people to realize their God-given potential.

### AS THE FIRST WOMAN CEO OF SVdP PHOENIX, WHAT DOES THAT MILESTONE MEAN TO YOU?

I am honored to be the first woman to hold the position. Since being selected, I have seen with greater clarity how much it also means to other women of all ages in our community in even more of a significant way than I anticipated. I am humbled by it and recognize the great responsibility that comes from being the "first."

I hope that one day we won't need qualifiers in the workplace to distinguish people who come into a position. Until then, I believe it's the responsibility of those who hold those positions to recognize the role we play and educate, mentor and support the next generation of leaders. Role models have tremendous power to demonstrate a new way of being in the world — to show what's possible for ourselves and those like us.

### WHAT IS IT LIKE FOLLOWING STEVE ZABILSKI? WHAT HAVE YOU LEARNED FROM HIM?

Following Steve into the CEO position is humbling and fills me with deep gratitude.



I have been blessed to have him as a role model and mentor over many years and have learned from him how to lead a large, impactful organization like St. Vincent de Paul while carrying the weight of that responsibility with strength and grace. He has taught me a great deal about grace under pressure, prioritizing time, prioritizing people, and running a nonprofit like a business but never without your heart at the center of it.

### AT THIS MOMENT, WHAT ARE SOME OF THE GREATEST CHALLENGES YOU FEEL OUR COMMUNITY FACES?

So much weighs on my heart these days. Increased homelessness. Lack of affordable housing and increasing rents, cost of living and evictions. Lack of access to high quality, comprehensive health care for uninsured patients. Increased mental health needs, particularly among young people searching for purpose, meaning and belonging. A lack of hope and optimism for the future.

In all these arenas, SVdP must continue to scale efforts and partner across the community to seek solutions and take action. What gives me hope is to witness the deep compassion, generosity and love that this

community has. And how eager people are to come together to care for one another. In this way, no challenge is too great for us.

### WHAT IS YOUR VISION FOR SVdP?

I hope to carry forward our deep commitment to reaching out to and lifting up the most vulnerable. I want to continue to enhance and expand services for people in need, particularly in the areas of homelessness, eviction prevention and health care for the uninsured.

It's also important that we continue to say 'Yes' to the community when it calls on us to serve in large ways and invite the greater public to be part of that response. That means we must grow our efforts to engage the community at scale and offer people purpose, meaning and belonging within our mission.

I also want SVdP to continue to be a place of common ground, where those who need help and those who can offer it, come together. I envision enhancing and expanding our campus to offer the space, environment and programming that allows people to connect and belong — a campus where people find great joy, healing and fulfillment, especially in our service to others.

### ARE THERE ANY THINGS ABOUT SVdP YOU WISH TO CHANGE?

I don't know that I feel meant to change things as much as to continue to invest in them and to help SVdP continue to evolve as the needs of the community evolve. It feels that I am being passed a torch that is burning brightly, and I am tasked to protect it, to tend it, to keep it burning even more brightly, to honor the service of all the guests, Vincentians, volunteers, employees and donors who have come before me.



Scan QR code for a special video with Shannon or watch online at [stvincentdepaul.net/news/ceo-welcome-shannon-clancy](https://stvincentdepaul.net/news/ceo-welcome-shannon-clancy)



# Celebrate the Dignity in Each of Us

By Steve Attwood

Recently I was asked to speak at a graduation ceremony for St. Vincent de Paul employees who had completed a course in leadership. Before making my remarks, I had the opportunity to hear each of the students share how much they enjoyed getting to know each other during their time together and what specific benefits they derived from the course. It was a joyous event, lasting a little over an hour, but what will remain with me was something that occurred shortly after the ceremony, as everyone was saying their goodbyes and preparing to return to their workplaces. The husband of one of the students entered a

back door to the room, accompanied by two small children, carrying a bouquet of balloons to be presented to his wife and their mother, recognizing her for successfully completing the class. It was a very touching moment.

During the course of my career, I received certificates and plaques in recognition of different accomplishments, and I presented numerous awards to others, but I admit, over time, I must have become somewhat jaded by the experience. This young husband and father reminded me of the importance of demonstrably recognizing the value in each of us, particularly those we love. By honoring

his wife, he taught an important life lesson to his children, and to all of us who witnessed the event.

**Every life has dignity. Every life is worth celebrating.** Every spouse or parent caught between jobs and feeling inadequate because of an inability to provide for his or her family. Every child who struggles academically or socially because of poor nutrition or the absence of good parenting. Every high school graduate who dreams of pursuing a particular vocation but can't afford college tuition. Every immigrant who has overcome hardship and traveled long distances in search of a better life. And yes, every lost soul who finds him or herself in need of a meal, a shower, and a safe place to sleep.

All life is sacred. All life is worth celebrating. The Good Shepherd left the 99 in search of the one stray sheep. Jesus said, "There will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents..." May we not become too jaded to recognize the human dignity of every person. May we always be mindful to look for opportunities to celebrate life.

## IN BRIEF

### A BIG SEND OFF FOR STEVE ZABILSKI'S LAST DAY AS CEO

Sept. 30 marked the last day for Steve Zabilski as St. Vincent de Paul's CEO after more than 25 years of leading the Phoenix nonprofit. To honor his service and celebrate his immense contribution to the mission, staff sent him off with a big surprise. All employees donned their "Steve Z" outfits — the classic SVdP ball cap, slacks, button up and tie Steve was known to wear. Incoming leader Shannon Clancy, The Rob and Melani Walton Endowed CEO, chose to channel her inner "Super Z" on the day. It was a sight to be seen and a day — and a man — the SVdP family won't soon forget.

*Thank you, Steve Zabilski, for your kind heart, wisdom, leadership and most importantly, your embrace. You fully embraced the mission and each person who came to you through it. We love you and wish you all the best in your next endeavor as the new President and CEO of the Virginia G. Piper Charitable Trust starting April 2023.*





# GATHERED AT LAST FOR THE RESTORING HOPE COMMUNITY BREAKFAST

**After three years apart, the SVdP family came together to share stories of hope and invite the community to be part of its work.**

BY SARAH FARRELL

**O**n a brisk November morning, sounds of laughter, conversation and reconnection could be heard drifting out of the ballroom at the Arizona Biltmore. After three years apart, the St. Vincent de Paul family came together again at last on Nov. 4 for its Restoring Hope Community Breakfast — a cherished annual tradition and fundraiser.

This year's theme centered on the idea of home. As the speakers throughout the morning said, home is about much more than just a physical structure. It's about people and the community with which you surround yourself.

Nearly 1,000 supporters flocked to the Arizona Biltmore to celebrate all the ways that SVdP is

home for its guests, volunteers and donors who support the mission each day.

Many guests had the opportunity to meet Shannon Clancy in her new role for the first time as SVdP's Rob and Melani Walton Endowed CEO.

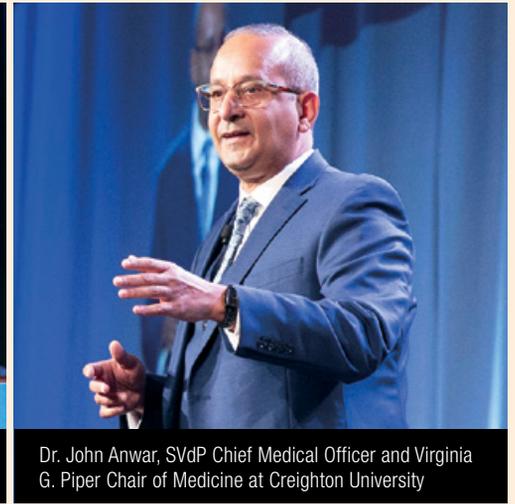
"St. Vincent de Paul is a home — that offers the kind of care and compassion that feels like the warm embrace of family," Shannon said. "That creates a space for all of us where we can come together and be reminded of how powerful a community is when it cares for one another — and puts LOVE at its center."

**S**hannon shared the important work that SVdP is doing to help people find home through new shelter and rehousing efforts, and just as important — the millions of dollars SVdP’s distributed to families to help them stay in their homes and avoid the difficult cycle of eviction and homelessness.

Dr. Ken Snyder and Dr. John Anwar illustrated the critical health care gaps that the Virginia G. Piper Medical and Dental Clinics, in partnership with Creighton University and other clinic and health care institutions provide for the community. These clinics serve as a health care home for the uninsured population in



12 News anchor Mark Curtis emceed the event.



Dr. John Anwar, SVdP Chief Medical Officer and Virginia G. Piper Chair of Medicine at Creighton University



Dr. Ken Snyder, SVdP Executive Dental Director

Arizona. The crowd learned of one uninsured patient, Ernesto, who came into the clinic in a wheelchair and now ends his physical therapy sessions dancing with his wife, Hermila.

And last, but certainly not least, is the home found in the SVdP family, who was there for Nina Lindsey and so many others who don't have a family or support system in times of crisis. SVdP provided one-time assistance of \$2,500 to help repair Nina's air conditioner while she was recovering from brain surgery. (Read Nina's story on page 9.)

As quickly as the morning started, it came to an end, leaving the SVdP family of supporters inspired and filled with hope thanks to all the everyday miracles SVdP and the community make possible.



Scan QR code for a video recap of the event or visit [stvincentdepaul.net/news/restoring-hope-community-breakfast-recap-2022](http://stvincentdepaul.net/news/restoring-hope-community-breakfast-recap-2022)



Ernesto Valencia, at right, stands with his wife, Hermila, as the crowd celebrates his improved health after having arrived at SVdP's medical clinic in a wheelchair.

# FIRST-TIME HOMEOWNER NINA LINDSEY'S STORY OF HOPE AFTER BRAIN SURGERY

BY SARAH FARRELL

**H**ome is a concept that the speaker at our Restoring Hope Community Breakfast, Nina Lindsey, has been trying to find her whole life.

Growing up, her parents struggled with serious substance abuse and mental illness, and at 12 years old she was transferred to the foster care system. She lacked both a physical and emotional home. So as an adult, being independent and having a place to call her own was vitally important.

With a stable, well-paying job at Maricopa County Public Health, the single mom of one made a big jump and purchased her first home in October of 2021.

Careful with her money, Nina was able to adjust to her new homeowner bills and budget, until her chronic medical condition suddenly worsened.

For the past 10 years, Nina lived with a brain tumor. It was under control, until her symptoms drastically changed. She thought she simply had an itch from athlete's foot. After many doctor's appointments, however, she learned it was neuropathy. Her brain tumor had doubled in size within the last year. When she went to go see a neurosurgeon, he warned her that the rapid rate at which the tumor was growing put her in danger.

"You could be driving down the street and have a stroke," she remembers him saying.

Nina had good health insurance through work, but the extra bills towards medical deductibles and copays started adding up, leaving little savings for anything unexpected and Nina living on a razor thin budget.

On July 11, she had successful brain surgery and headed home for six to eight weeks of recovery.



*"I remain grateful – perhaps even more so as I comprehend the lasting impact of that one-time assistance."*

But just a week later, her air conditioner went out right in the middle of the Arizona summer. Nina didn't have a lot of options to pay for the \$2,500 repairs as the medical bills from her surgery kept coming in, and she didn't have short term disability yet. She was in crisis.

"When you are in crisis it is hard to problem solve those things," she said. "It's hard to sit down and think, 'Okay, I do not have any air conditioning. What are all my options?'" And after brain surgery you are really dealing with a diminished brain capacity. I just did not have the strength or mental capacity to ever pursue that [help on my bills] because I already had too many balls in the air."

She planned to open a new line of credit and work hard to pay off the debt when she recovered.

But she didn't need to worry; SVdP was there to step in and help. Nina had met SVdP Chief Program Officer Jessica Berg when she worked with a SVdP partner, St. Joseph the Worker, years ago. Jessica saw Nina's post on Facebook detailing her surgery and the problems she faced with her air conditioner. SVdP provided one-time bill assistance through the Angels on Call fund (read more on page 10) to help Nina get her air conditioner repaired and focus on her recovery.

"I went back to work in September," Nina said, "and even months after SVdP was there to catch me in my moment of crisis, I remain grateful — perhaps even more so as I comprehend the lasting impact of that one-time assistance. You see, right after I went back to work, there was a period where my short-term disability had ended and there was a four-week lag before I could get back onto payroll. If back in July, I had maxed out my credit and borrowed from friends to somehow pay for the air conditioner repair bill, I would still be in trouble when I went back to work with depleted savings, maxed out credit, and with no money for groceries and gas."

By stepping in to provide that assistance, SVdP gave Nina the mental, physical and emotional space to take a breath and recover in the comfort of the home she'd worked so hard to build for herself. She was able to get back to her career and pay the kindness forward.



Scan QR code to watch Nina's video or visit [stvincentdepaul.net/news/Nina-Lindsey](https://stvincentdepaul.net/news/Nina-Lindsey)

# New app connects Angels to families in crisis

SVdP's Angels on Call program launches a smartphone app to connect those who can instantly give with those in need of emergency assistance.

BY MARISOL SALDIVAR

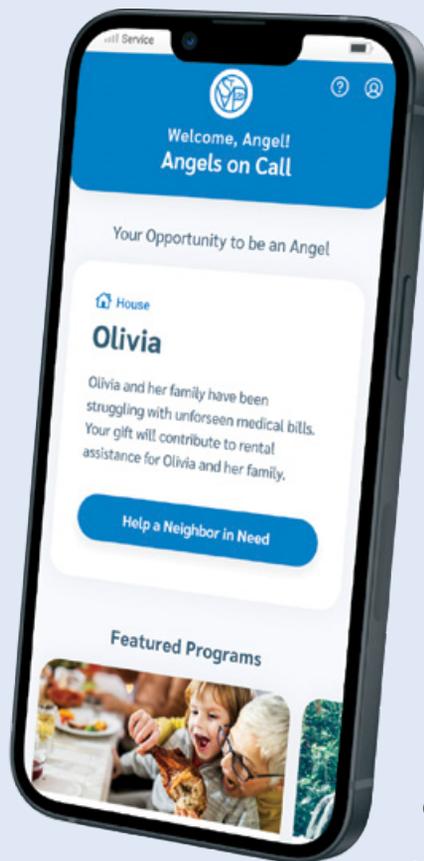
**It started with a simple idea: When someone shows up at St. Vincent de Paul's doorstep, how can SVdP connect an individual or family in crisis with someone charitable and ready to give?**

**T**hat question sparked SVdP's Angels on Call program in 2020. The program offers that one-to-one connection to a list of interested donors, or "Angels," ready to be called on to give instant financial support, usually to an individual or family facing homelessness or already on the street.

Now that connection is right at donors' fingertips thanks to the new Angels on Call smartphone app launched this fall by SVdP.

"We use our phone to connect to people, to our friends and to our family," says Shawn Donnelly, the community engagement programs manager tasked with helping Angels on Call grow to meet community need, "so it was time for us to bring the opportunity to help our neighbors in need through this same device."

"St. Vincent de Paul has missionaries out in all the neighborhoods, they have a natural way of identifying the people and their needs more effectively," says Bob Auray, a sponsor for the Angels on Call app. "By using technology to quickly link needs with those able to give, we can help people faster. My thought is this app can make charity viral."



Previously, Angels would receive a phone call, learn of the person's crisis, and make a one-time gift until they were called upon for help the next time. If it wasn't the right time or within budget, Angels could decline, and SVdP would move on to the next Angel.

The smartphone app aims to offer a similar freedom and experience. When a donor first downloads the app, they sign up to be an Angel and set up base preferences for donation amount and frequency, which can always be adjusted. When a neighbor in need aligns with an Angel's giving preferences, the app sends a notification sharing a person's crisis and offering the Angel a chance to donate whatever amount they're comfortable giving.

All funds are securely processed through the app and transferred to SVdP, who then directly pays for rent, utility bills, hotel stays and more for the person in need.

And the human element is still a big part of the experience. Every individual or family's story in the app comes from exactly what they share with a SVdP social worker.

"These are real life situations that people are facing, and you are hearing from the neighbor you are helping," Shawn says. "And that's important because Angels like to know that they helped 'Sally' specifically. I think when they have a chance to really be more connected by heart to somebody's situation, it resonates with them."

***“Angels will still receive calls, be provided with updates and thanked for their continued support of the program because that human touch is paramount.”***



## Denise is housed because of an Angel

**A**fter getting sober and finding a job, Denise needed one-time financial help to pay a security deposit and first-month's rent to move off the street and into an apartment. An Angel made that possible for her. Now Denise is set up to support herself moving forward.



Scan QR code for full story and Denise's video or visit [stvincentdepaul.net/news/newly-housed-and-full-hope](http://stvincentdepaul.net/news/newly-housed-and-full-hope)

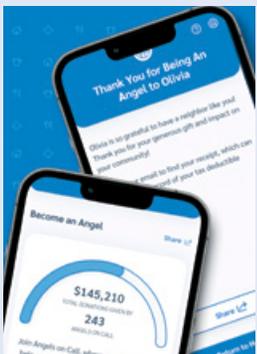
## Myron Hammes helped an evicted family avoid homelessness

**W**hen Angels on Call contacted Myron Hammes, it was to help a family of four on the day of their eviction after both parents lost jobs during the pandemic shutdown.

“They came to me and said, ‘If we can find a hotel and put [this family] up for a month, we can find them permanent housing, but we need that one-month gap,’” Myron says. “They told me how much the one month of hotel stay would be. I paid that. They found a home, and ultimately we kept the family from being on the street.”



Scan QR code for full story and Myron's video or visit [stvincentdepaul.net/news/be-angel-someone-need](http://stvincentdepaul.net/news/be-angel-someone-need)



That personal touch goes beyond the app, especially for Jasmine Smalls, the recently hired donor program manager.

“Angels will still receive calls, be provided with updates and thanked for their continued support of the program because that human touch is paramount,” Jasmine says.

But she's also proud of all the work put into the app and how it provides a personalized connection for Angels.

“We really care about the Angel experience,” Jasmine says, “so a lot of the editing and fine tuning has gone into creating not only a pleasant experience, but one that also keeps that emotion, heart and connection at the core of the program.”

SVdP is grateful to already have 114 Angels this year and more connections happening daily — all resulting in more people remaining in their homes or exiting homelessness and finding a new place to call their own.



**Interested in becoming an Angel? Scan the QR code to download the Angels on Call app in the App Store or on Google Play.**



# A BED TODAY, A HOME TOMORROW

**Go inside SVdP's new neighborhood shelter redefining homelessness solutions and follow one resident's journey from the street to his own apartment.**

By Troy Hill and Marisol Saldivar

**J**ames Davis used to wake up in abandoned buildings. They were the closest thing to shelter in the many months that he experienced homelessness before landing at St. Vincent de Paul's new shelter on Washington and 28th streets.

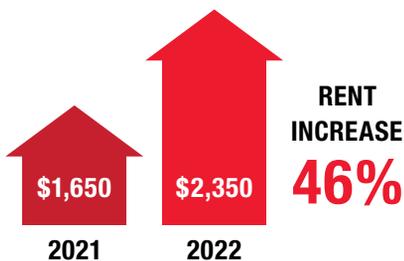
James experienced homelessness off and on for several years. Despite

the challenges, he worked hard at making something of himself. He would spend his days on the street, figuring out where to get food or maybe some cigarettes, one of his few comforts at the time.

During his first bout of homelessness, he worked his way into an apartment by taking classes to become licensed in peer support. He lost his job when management had a round of layoffs.

Later, he qualified for Section 8 housing that helped him secure an apartment for a year, but at the end of his lease, the complex raised rent by \$500 per month. He couldn't afford the increase, nor could he find a place on short notice within his budget.

James was back on the streets only 30 days later.



### THE FORCES DRIVING INCREASED HOMELESSNESS

Housing struggles like this aren't unique to James. Phoenix's median rent has increased to \$2,350 across the Valley, a jump of 46 percent, in the last year alone.

Rent increases are reason enough to cause a housing crisis in someone's life, but combined with the pre-existing lack of affordable housing, an economy battered by the pandemic, high rates of debt from pandemic unemployment and increasing costs of daily living, a perfect storm formed to create a homelessness surge.

The lifting of the federal eviction moratorium in 2021 initiated the downturn.

At the start of 2022, there were more than 9,000 people experiencing homelessness in Maricopa County, 5,000 of whom were unsheltered and living in places not meant for habitation. **That number is double from what it was in 2018. That's 100% growth in four years.**

In the downtown area around the Human Services Campus (HSC), there were approximately 500 people living unsheltered in January. By May, it had exploded to over 1,000 just as temperatures broke into triple digits.

For people experiencing homelessness in Phoenix, it takes everything just to survive the harsh summers. In 2021, there were 339 heat-related deaths in Maricopa County, and in 2022, the county set a half-year record for heat-related deaths.

With summer bearing down on the Valley, establishing additional shelter became more critical. That's where St. Vincent de Paul stepped up to join in a community solution.

### THE VALLEY'S NEWEST NEIGHBORHOOD SHELTER

**T**ogether with the City of Phoenix, Maricopa County, Community Bridges, Inc. and From the Ground Up, SVdP opened a new neighborhood shelter and housing program on the corners of Washington and 28th streets that sleeps a total of 200 men and women.

The shelter prioritizes alleviating homelessness in its direct neighborhood first, then targets downtown around the HSC. It has an intense focus on serving as a guided path, not only to housing, but to rediscovering stability and productivity as an engaged citizen of the community.

The City and County together provided \$4 million to initially fund the operations, with the City continuing support to keep the shelter open through 2024.

"It's a great privilege and responsibility to be one of the lead partners on this pilot

program,” SVdP Chief Program Officer Jessica Berg says. “We like to think that City and County chose SVdP for not only our proven track record of running a successful shelter, but also for our culture of dignified service, kindness and working collaboratively with our neighbors.”

***“The idea of having a closed campus is really different in that people have the same bed and space every night, and so they get to feel a sense of stability and safety. They know where they’re sleeping.”***

The model is envisioned to be THE example for future neighborhood shelters across the Valley, helping to decentralize homelessness services and prove that such a shelter can help (not hinder) neighborhoods. What makes this model different is its 24/7 operation and wraparound services all located on site.

Unlike traditional shelters, the Washington St. shelter is not an overnight stop where guests leave in the morning and return in the evening,



SVdP Chief Program Officer Jessica Berg signs the Good Neighbor Agreement between the neighbors of the area and the shelter partners.

hoping to get a bed again — and often don't. At the Washington St. shelter, guests have a dedicated bed just for them. They can stay in the shelter all day to access its services, like showers, laundry, fresh clothing, hygiene items, case management, workforce and volunteer opportunities, and support to overcome substance abuse or mental health

obstacles. SVdP also provides three hot meals a day. However, many residents leave to go to work or apartment hunt, if that's a possibility.

“The idea of having a closed campus is really different in that people have the same bed and space every night, and so they get to feel a sense of stability and safety. They know



Residents get three hot meals a day, including dinners provided by several restaurant partners. And sometimes generous community organizations host special events, like the pizza party here made possible by the Arizona Cardinals.



SVdP Shelter Program Manager Jennifer Morgan

where they're sleeping," Jessica says. That's the key to the shelter — coupling stability with workforce and volunteer opportunities so that people can get back on their feet and focus on more than just survival. There is a staff of case managers, many of whom worked to get off the streets themselves.

**“We have faced the hopelessness of trying to figure out how to change your life, and we want to bring hope to the people who come here,”** SVdP Shelter Program Manager Jennifer Morgan says.

They help each resident overcome unique obstacles. For some, that's reconnecting with family. For others, they tackle health care needs or help sort out finances, work, and housing options.

“We have to think about this program like a pipeline to housing,” Jennifer says. “So while we may have only 200 beds at a time, as each person transitions to housing, a spot opens to invite a new resident to start their journey toward stability and home.”

That's the main goal of the shelter — to end homelessness one person at a time.



A computer lab offers residents access to online opportunities for job and apartment hunting. It also helps with building up a digital portfolio.



More than just a safe place to sleep, the Washington St. shelter offers all types of courses from watercolor painting to resume writing to help residents with employability as well as positive ways to decompress and express themselves.



# Ending Homelessness one person at time

**A**fter a partner agency connected James to Svdp's Washington St. shelter, James went from having no place to put his head to having his own bed and a secure locker for his possessions overnight.

At night, he could lie in his cot (fitted with his sheets and his blanket) and feel safe and secure. Waking up, he could go out of the sleeping area and eat a freshly prepared breakfast. If he wasn't hungry, he could take a shower. And after that, chat with friends or shelter staff, who he says treats residents with the utmost respect. James was especially impressed with his interactions with the shelter's manager.

**"She would have me in her office and talk to me, just like I'm her best friend,"** he says. "If you wanted to talk to Jennifer, you could walk into her office at any time, as long as she's there, and she will sit down and talk to you."

And of course, he loved the food.

In the dining room are also the caseworkers' desks, where James often convened with his own caseworker, who helped him access

his social security money and find affordable housing. He spent about two months in the shelter when a leasing agreement for an apartment was approved, and he was able to move into his place.

James isn't an isolated case either. Between May 13 and Nov. 1, the shelter has served 613 residents, and 366 people have had positive housing exits, with 56 moving into permanent housing.

And each one of those days, residents haven't had to worry about where their next meal is coming from, where they're going to spend the night, if the heat will be too much, or if their few possessions might be stolen.

Before James moved into his apartment, he qualified for a special rehousing program at Svdp called Bringing Hope Home, where Svdp's thrift store and truck teams set up newly housed individuals with furniture and other household essentials for their new home. James picked out a new bed, a new couch, and much more.

With the team's help, he moved into his new apartment in August with his puppy, Miracle,

that he adopted while staying at the shelter. "It was like I died and went to heaven," James says of his first night home.

After everyone left, he and his puppy cuddled up on the couch. He watched YouTube videos on his phone, feeling Miracle's breath on his chest, before falling asleep in the soft peace of his new home.



Scan QR code to watch James' video story or visit [stvincentdepaul.net/news/shelter-update-james-davis](http://stvincentdepaul.net/news/shelter-update-james-davis)

# MEDICAL CLINIC SAVES DENISSE PAOLA BERNAL IBARRA

FROM RARE HEREDITARY DISEASE THAT TOOK HER BROTHER

BY TROY HILL



*“Everybody’s very sweet. The help has been so big. For me to be able to have that medication when it’s so expensive, it’s been a big impact.”*

**A**fter Denisse Paola Bernal Ibarra’s brother passed away from an extremely rare hereditary disease, St. Vincent de Paul’s Virginia G. Piper Medical Clinic for the uninsured was there to help her avoid the same fate.

At first, Denisse had no idea there was something wrong.

“I actually hadn’t really noticed anything — just minimal things that had been occurring,” she says. She had some pre-existing conditions and chalked up her respiratory problems to that.

It wasn’t until her brother was diagnosed with alpha-1 antitrypsin (AAT) deficiency that it occurred to her that it might be something else. According to the

American Lung Association, AAT is an important protein produced in the liver, and a deficiency in it can damage the lungs to the point of death. It is also hereditary.

“Because of my brother’s liver transplant and because of my history, that prompted me to go get more studies done. And that’s where I found out,” Denisse says.

Tragically, her brother passed away quickly from the deficiency. It had only been a year since his diagnosis. His passing grieved her deeply, but it also spurred her to do something about her own condition.

Another clinic quickly referred Denisse to SVdP because of

its clinic’s unique offering of more than 30 different areas of specialty care, including pulmonology, which is the specialty care Denisse needed.

The first time Denisse stepped into the lobby of the SVdP medical clinic, she was nervous. She wasn’t sure if SVdP would be able to help her. Medicine for AAT deficiency can cost around \$70,000 a year.

“It would have been impossible for me. That’s a lot of money,” she says.

Not only did she receive free labs and care from a pulmonologist, but SVdP also connected her to a pharmacy to get the life-saving medication she needed free of cost.

Now with her medication, Denisse doesn’t have to worry about the AAT deficiency causing her any harm. Her health has improved, as her lungs are now healthy enough that she doesn’t have to use an inhaler anymore.

For now, she returns to the clinic for regular checkups to maintain her health and continue her care.

“Everybody’s very sweet,” she says. “The help has been so big. For me to be able to have that medication [when it’s] so expensive, it’s been a big impact.”

# AFTER RAISING HER CHILDREN IN THE FAMILY DINING ROOM, ONE MOM VOLUNTEERS TO SUPPORT THE COMMUNITY

BY SARAH FARRELL



**G**uillermina and her family started coming to the Next Phase Family Dining Room almost 19 years ago when she was pregnant with her daughter. Her husband was the only one working at the time; they had two other kids and money was tight. A friend advised her that the family could help stretch their budget by getting free food and diapers at St. Vincent de Paul.

Over the years she has seen the dining room grow tremendously, adding important services and activities for families including the opening of the educational Dream Center in 2010. She has seen each of her five kids grow up there.

“Favorite for me and my kids is when Santa comes and they take pictures with Santa,” Guillermina says. She has photos of each of her kids, the oldest who is 25 and the youngest who is 6, from every year when they saw Santa at SVdP.

Now the family’s needs are different, money isn’t so tight, and the Family Dining Room

has become more than just a place to come for food and diapers; it has given her the opportunity to give back as well.



**“We come from a very humble family. I think that’s what made me want to help people because my parents are the same way.”**

“Now that my other kids are older and money is more stable, we come here because they offer my younger kids help with homework and other activities that help them,” she says. “I help because they help my kids. It’s a way to show that I am thankful.”

Volunteering and giving back are virtues that her parents instilled in her from a young age.

“We come from a very humble family,” Guillermina says. “I think that’s what made me want to help people because my parents are the same way.”

When she was growing up in Michoacán, Mexico, her parents always gave back and helped others even when they knew nothing about the person. She saw her parents’ example growing up and has always felt drawn to give back.

Her family comes to eat every night, but Guillermina comes in early each day as soon as she picks up her kids and grandson from school to volunteer as well. The kids get to work in the Dream Center, and she gets to work prepping for the day’s meal.

She helps set up the dining room, organize the food boxes with fresh vegetables, distribute diapers to the families, serve the food, and especially clean up at the end of the night. She stays long after most volunteers leave — until 7 or 7:30 some nights, helping staff mop up and return supplies to the warehouse.

Guillermina cherishes the opportunity to give back every night. If she doesn’t come to volunteer in the Family Dining Room each night, she feels like something is missing.

There’s a Spanish saying she recalls, “Doy no me tiempo sin recibir nada cambio,” that translates to say, “You give without expecting anything in return,” and that’s exactly what Guillermina does.

# THE SOCIETY OF A THOUSAND THANKS

One of the greatest privileges of serving in Arizona is being able to work with a generous community of people who care about the well-being of our state. We are filled with hope and gratitude as we see our community rally and unify through a shared commitment to serve and to care about one another.

THE HOME DEPOT FOUNDATION SHOWED THEMSELVES TO BE DOERS BY VOLUNTEERING WITH SVdP THIS SEASON!

Over 400 volunteers from Home Depot stores across the country flew in and visited on Oct. 25 to help spruce up, plant and renovate SVdP's two largest urban farms. All that effort created beautiful and intentionally dignified spaces to not only help SVdP grow food, but welcome in the community to take part in planting and harvesting as well. Every pound of fresh produce goes to SVdP's kitchen and food box program, which helps feed thousands of families and individuals across the Valley. Thank you, Home Depot Foundation, for bringing back that volunteer energy and serving!



# THE SOCIETY OF A THOUSAND THANKS



## TURKEY TUESDAY CELEBRATES 30 YEARS!

Thanks to devoted partners in Basha's and 12 News, Turkey Tuesday has become a cherished community tradition, helping St. Vincent de Paul get turkeys to dinner tables of the less fortunate for 30 years now. The special anniversary called for big celebration with a parking lot party and festivities at four different locations! In total, the drive collected thousands of turkeys and hundreds of thousands of dollars just in time to share with the community for a special Thanksgiving meal.

### SVdP National Council supports Phoenix's first-generation college scholars

When a young person decides they want to build a better life for themselves, they often face an endless series of financial obstacles. That's especially the case for those who come from low-income families and are first-generation college students — the population SVdP Phoenix's Scholarship Program supports. The Society of St. Vincent de Paul's National Council, which oversees local SVdP councils across the United States, kindly gave \$20,000 to fund the scholarship program and help this vulnerable population of students. Funding helped with tuition costs and connecting scholars to community mentorship throughout their post-secondary education. Thank you, National Council!

### Peyton's Phoenix warehouse gives more than 450,000 pounds of food to SVdP

Peyton's Phoenix Warehouse has faithfully served the Valley community by donating 452,886 pounds of food to SVdP's Central Food Bank, helping avoid food waste and getting good food to people who need it. This is especially impactful now as the cost of groceries continues to increase and those living in food deserts face additional obstacles to accessing the essential food items they need. Thanks, Peyton's, for helping stock SVdP parish pantries with food to deliver to thousands of families across the Valley.



### Waste Not and Salad and Go get fresh salads to SVdP dining room guests

Over 40 percent of the population of Phoenix lives in a food desert, with many people experiencing homelessness struggling to attain food even if they are located close to a grocery store. That's why SVdP is beyond thankful for its partnership with Waste Not who rescues food and connected us with Salad and Go. Together, they have been providing fresh salads to SVdP dining rooms every Wednesday since the start of the pandemic. That's over 20,000 pounds of salad this year alone, which means that thousands of people affected daily by hunger get to eat fresh, nutritious meals that keep them going.

### Vitalyst Health Foundation helps uninsured patients access eye care at SVdP

Vitalyst Health Foundation has continued its support of SVdP's Virginia G. Piper Medical Clinic this year with a generous gift of \$80,000 to support eye care for uninsured patients. For more than 25 years, Vitalyst has partnered with SVdP in caring for the community, steadily growing their involvement in SVdP's mission more and more. Their donation specifically helped the clinic diagnose eye health concerns, promoting holistic care and increasing vision wellness for this underserved population.

### Arizona College of Nursing saves lives with a dozen dedicated volunteers

Thanks to Arizona College of Nursing, 12 nurses came to SVdP's Virginia G. Piper Medical Clinic to serve 12-hour shifts three days a week during the summer months of June, July and August. Their service was an enormous help, and they literally saved lives by volunteering with SVdP to meet uninsured patient needs. Without the clinic's help and the volunteer service of medical professionals like the dedicated dozen from the Arizona College of Nursing, there might not be anyone there for these underserved patients.



### T.W. Lewis Foundation gives generously to feed, clothe, house and heal

Thank you so much to the T.W. Lewis Foundation for \$100,000 to feed, clothe, house and heal. And thank you for the additional \$100,000 committed for next year! SVdP will use the funds across its mission by serving the vulnerable people who visit our dining rooms and food banks, who seek clothing at our Resource Center and thrift stores, who need housing support with shelter and rent assistance, and who find healing at our medical and dental clinics. SVdP is able to serve thousands of people every year thanks to generosity like yours!

SVdP enjoyed hosting Tom Lewis (at right), founder of T.W. Lewis Company and its foundation, for staff and donor events where Mr. Lewis shared personal insights and words of wisdom from his recently published book "Solid Ground: A Foundation for Winning in Work and in Life."

# THE SOCIETY OF A THOUSAND THANKS



## The Arizona Lottery supports services for the most vulnerable this summer

Thanks to the Arizona Lottery for \$50,000 in support of SVdP's Water Truck during the month of July as the truck made routes throughout the Valley to deliver water to unhoused people far from resources and social services. Additional thanks for the \$100,000 the Lottery gave toward SVdP's rehousing efforts. These matching funds helped support residents moving out of our Washington St. shelter with essential items, including work clothes, boots, and more.

## APS aids with heat relief, supporting shelter and utility assistance

Arizona Public Service graciously gave \$100,000 to the startup of SVdP's new Washington St. shelter to help get people off the street, out of the heat and into shelter. Thanks to community support like APS', SVdP's shelter was able to get up and running quickly, and 200 people were off the streets within weeks of the shelter opening.

An additional \$150,000 from APS went to SVdP's Resource Center to fund summer heat relief efforts and keep people's air conditioning and electricity running. Keeping current on utility bills helps families avoid eviction and bolsters SVdP's efforts to prevent homelessness. Thank you, APS! SVdP is always grateful for your support and appreciates your monthly volunteer groups as well. We love to have APS volunteers join in our mission!



## Fry's Food Stores is driven to bring food to the hungry

What goes vroom-vroom? The new van that Fry's Food Stores donated to SVdP for the Washington St. shelter! Thanks to the new ride, SVdP is able to transport meals from its central kitchen to the shelter, keeping residents fed while they regain footing and look for housing. The van also helps shuttle guests to appointments, interviews, trainings and more.

Beyond meeting that special need, Fry's donated a whopping 807,994 pounds (!!!) of food to SVdP's Central Food Bank this year and contributed \$41,000 to food services, all helping SVdP feed vulnerable families and individuals across the Valley. Thank you, Fry's Food Stores, for being such a generous partner.

## ACF Animal Rescue helps SVdP keep people and their pets sheltered together

Pets can be the main or only emotional support for people experiencing homelessness. Often, connections with their pets can be so strong that people won't enter shelter if their furry friend isn't allowed in with them. Thanks to a \$20,000 gift from ACF Animal Rescue to SVdP's Companion Animal Program (CAP), SVdP's new Washington St. shelter is better set to support pets living in shelter with their owners. Donations to CAP provide resources such as pet food, pet care, beds and toys.

## Second Chance Bike Drive sees another successful year!

ABC15 and Earnhardt Auto Centers paired up to get 977 bikes to SVdP this year for people in need of affordable and reliable transportation. That effort proved especially needed as gas prices soared and more families and individuals turned to SVdP for help with wheels to get to work and school. Thank you, ABC15 and Earnhardt, for stepping up and supporting the community in this unique way!



### Albertsons and Safeway step up twice to care for hungry families and cancer patients

Albertsons came through again this year with a generous donation of \$320,000 in grocery gift cards to SVdP's Central Food Bank. Thanks to them, SVdP could distribute hope to families and help them afford groceries during this difficult time of inflation.

Albertsons also gave \$50,000 to SVdP's Virginia G. Piper Medical Clinic for cancer patient care. With this kindness, SVdP is able to better care for people who are uninsured, connecting them to specialty care and helping support patients through a tough diagnosis and treatment plan.



# Feed THE VALLEY

**Albertsons and Safeway join forces again with FOX 10, KNIX, and SVdP to help Arizona families facing food insecurity.**

For nearly two decades, Albertsons and Safeway has partnered with SVdP over the holidays to help feed hungry families across the state. This year's hunger campaign kicked off Nov. 1 and runs through Dec. 31. Thanks to media partners FOX 10 Phoenix and 102.5 KNIX, along with the Super Bowl Host Committee, this year's campaign is expected to feed over one million in need.

You can help support the campaign by visiting any Albertsons or Safeway location statewide and **DONATE AT THE CHECKOUT**. Every donation allows SVdP to continue feeding families this holiday season and into the new year!



**DONATE NOW. Scan QR code or donate online at [stvincentdepaul.net/give/campaigns/feed-valley](https://stvincentdepaul.net/give/campaigns/feed-valley)**



— Foundation —





# VINCENTIAN CONNECTION

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