



SOCIETY of ST. VINCENT de PAUL OMAHA

*Supporting our neighbors in need through spirituality, friendship and service;
providing food, clothing and financial and in-kind assistance since 1868*



Lent 2023

Dear Society of St. Vincent de Paul Friends,

I wish you a blessed Lenten Season.

As you may know, perhaps the most impactful assistance that the Society of St. Vincent de Paul Omaha provides is helping families and individuals experiencing a critical financial crisis to remain in their homes. **The help that the Society offers to your neighbors in need is very often the crucial “hand up” that prevents them from being evicted from their homes and falling into homelessness.**

Anna Rose and her husband, Ben, had been married for four years when their son, Luke, was born. After Luke's birth, Ben continued full-time as a dock worker for a small trucking firm. Anna Rose, who hasn't been able to work for a number of years – the result of chronic mental illness/bi-polar disorder – was thrilled about being a stay-at-home mom. Living “paycheck to paycheck”, this little family's finances were always tight, though they were able to pay their bills.

Shortly after Luke turned two, Ben began to experience stomach pain. After first dismissing it as nothing, both Ben and Anna Rose became worried when he lost his appetite...and then a good deal of weight. Ben didn't look or feel “right”, so he made an appointment to see a doctor. After a number of medical tests, Ben was referred to an oncologist. It wasn't long until he was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer. **Ben died less than five months later.**

Understandably, Anna Rose was both devastated and depressed. And, not having close family ties, a few friends from church reached out to provide emotional support...and a little monetary assistance. That help – plus the little savings the family had – was enough to pay rent and other bills for a couple of months, but not longer.

After Ben's death, Anna Rose felt like her world was crashing down, as she reflects: ***“Things kept getting harder until I reached a point where I was so weak and drained that I didn't know how to move forward with my life with Luke.”***

With no savings left, and not knowing where to go or what to do, a friend of a friend suggested Anna Rose contact the Society of St. Vincent de Paul Omaha. Anna Rose was initially unsure about doing so, sharing: *“Asking for help from a stranger isn't something I ever had to do, and it makes you*



feel so low. However, the possibility of being homeless is one of the scariest things you can face, and that's where I found myself, as I had gotten behind on paying the rent and utilities."

A volunteer for the Society was able to provide Anna Rose with immediate financial assistance to cover her back rent, as well as worked with the utility companies to prevent service from being turned off. The volunteer also put Anna Rose in touch with an agency to help her apply for Social Security Disability Income (SSDI), related to her mental health issues.

Anna Rose continues: "I am so incredibly grateful to St. Vincent de Paul for their kindness, understanding, and comforting reassurance. The good people at St. Vincent de Paul made it possible for Luke and me to stay in our place, while my future situation is being sorted out. Their generosity is so encouraging, and a true example of Christians doing the work of Jesus in a sometimes very dreary world."

We continue to be in touch with Anna Rose, in order to ensure that she progresses forward with her SSDI application – and just to make sure that she and Luke have everything they need, including complete information regarding our SSVP Food Pantry and thrift stores.

This Lenten Season, will you please consider making a gift to the Society of St. Vincent de Paul to help us provide our basic human services to the thousands of families and individuals we serve each year – like Anna Rose and Luke? When Anna Rose's life was turned upside down, and homelessness seemed inevitable, Anna Rose really didn't have anywhere else to turn. We are very grateful to have been able to provide our crucial assistance to the two of them, when they needed it most.

Please use the enclosed envelope and send your check today. You can also donate securely online at SSVPOmaha.org or by scanning the QR code, below. In addition to helping the Society of St. Vincent de Paul Omaha provide our critical services to so many families who turn to us in crisis, your gift will also provide them hope for a brighter future.

As donations are very much down right now, please know that your truly meaningful offering this Lent will make a real difference to SSVP Omaha, and especially in the lives of so many of your Omaha neighbors in need. Frankly, we cannot provide our services and assistance without the support from caring and compassionate friends of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul, like you.

God bless you for your gift, and I wish you a peaceful Lenten season.

Gratefully,



Jill Lynch-Sosa, Executive Director



P.S. Please accept the enclosed prayer card/magnet – with its simple, yet profound St. Vincent de Paul reminder – as a very small token of our appreciation for your support.

Gifts to the Society of St. Vincent de Paul Omaha are used to care for the people who turn to us during their hour of need and are greatly appreciated. All of our services are provided at no cost. All gifts made to SSVP Omaha are tax deductible to the full extent of the law. Our donor information is kept in strict confidence. Our donor lists are never rented, shared or exchanged with other organizations. The stories in our letters are real. Identifying details have been changed to protect the privacy and therapeutic interests of those we serve. For more information about SSVP Omaha, or to include us in your estate planning, please contact our ED, Jill Lynch-Sosa, at (402) 779-8499.