

## Head Start's Role in Breaking the Cycle of Poverty

When Melissa first came to Head Start, it was at the peak of the pandemic. She was trying to navigate the process of homeschooling her children when a friend recommended St. Vincent de Paul. Although everything was still virtual at the time, she was eager to enroll her son Damian into a structured early education program. "I didn't have to worry about anything," she said. "They already have the curriculum." But as soon as her son was enrolled, she discovered that a relationship with SVDP Head Start offered more than just a quality academic plan.

"They have workshops that help you—as a parent—work alongside your child in these developmental years," she explained. A conscientious mother, Melissa eagerly threw herself into home learning programs, participated in Safety Circle, and attended Mommy and Me workshops. When Damian was diagnosed with a speech delay, she received help navigating the process of getting support and setting up an Individualized Education Plan for him. She also appreciated the meals and extra support she received during the holidays. "We didn't have to worry," she said. "The program was there to help us."



*Melissa with her daughter, Isabella, Head Start scholar at Patterson Park.*

Studies indicate that Head Start early education programs are making a big difference in the lives of lower-income children. With supports that extend beyond the classroom, Head Start programs are not only associated with higher test scores and graduation rates for scholars, but also improved health outcomes and financial stability for their families.

"Because barriers to child development don't just occur inside a classroom, SVDP takes a holistic approach to improve economic and health outcomes for our Head Start families," explained Terah Turrentine, Senior Family Services Supervisor at St. Vincent de Paul. "By addressing these needs when children are still very young, we are laying a foundation of stability that families can continue to build upon for years to come."

Poverty can impact families for many generations. *The Whole Child/Whole Family* model for Head Start changes the trajectory

*Continues on page 4*

### Teachers Needed

SVDP is currently seeking accredited teachers and assistant teachers for several locations throughout Baltimore. If you know someone who would like to make a real impact in the lives of some very special children, email Cody Selbert, Director of Talent Acquisition and Compensation, at [cody.selbert@vincentbaltimore.org](mailto:cody.selbert@vincentbaltimore.org). Interested in adopting a Head Start classroom? Visit [vincentbaltimore.org/adopt-a-classroom](http://vincentbaltimore.org/adopt-a-classroom) for more information.

### SPOTLIGHT



2 Equinox

3 Partner Spotlight

4 Conference Spotlight

4 Empty Bowls

5 National Assembly

6 Adopt-a-Family

6 Volunteer Spotlight

7 Employee Spotlight

7 Nourishing Neighbors



# Equinox 2022

*Great Music, Food, and a Beautiful Setting Combined to Make the Second Annual Equinox a Success!*

A tremendous thank you to everyone who helped make Equinox 2022 a success! Guests enjoyed a memorable evening of great music, spectacular lights, and delicious food against a picturesque view of the Baltimore Harbor. Denise Koch, WJZ-TV Evening Anchor, energized the crowd as the event host. There was plenty to do across the Baltimore Museum of Industry campus, as party-goers explored the exhibits in the Museum, danced under the pavilion, and created some pretty memorable videos with the 360° selfie camera at the water's edge. We truly appreciate everyone who supported Equinox and helped make this event successful, and look forward to building on this success in 2023! Approximately \$50,000 was raised to support our shelters and supportive housing programs.



*A beautiful evening with spectacular waterfront views provided the perfect backdrop.*



*This was the first year with WJZ-TV as our media sponsor. Guests really enjoyed meeting Denise Koch and other favorite broadcast journalists.*



*Old friends and new joined together in fellowship and support for a great cause.*



*Reverend Smackmaster and the Congregation of Funk brought party-goers to the dance floor all night long.*

## A big thank you to our sponsors! We couldn't have done it without you!

- M&T Bank
- WJZ-TV
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- Image Engineering
- Law Offices of Peter T. Nicholl





# Corporate and Individual Sponsors Bring Shelter Clients Together for Food and Fun

## Sunday Breakfasts Sponsored by The HERD

For over 17 years, Sarah's Hope families have been coming together twice a month in the dining room for a delicious, home-cooked breakfast prepared and served by members of The HERD, a group of long-time friends who volunteer together to help those in need. "We do it because we love it," explained Wayne Ruth, Co-Founder of The HERD. "The people are so nice. St. Vincent de Paul does a great, great job."



On Sunday, September 18, The Herd had two additional helpers on their crew. Vic Carter, WJZ anchor, and Kelsey Kushner, WJZ reporter, helped prepare breakfast and serve the clients. Both had a great rapport with Sarah's Hope residents, while Vic was particularly good at making the scrambled eggs in the kitchen. Many thanks to The HERD for their dedicated service and for bringing the families of Sarah's Hope together for food and fellowship on Sunday mornings for almost 20 years!

## End of Summer Celebrations!

Fun events sponsored by the Rotary Club of Pikesville-Owings Mills and TAI Engineering were held for the clients of our family shelters to celebrate the end of summer. On September 15, the Pikesville-Owings Mills Rotary Club hosted a cookout for the families of our Interim House family shelter, and on



September 22, the residents of our Hannah More family shelter were treated to a cookout hosted by TAI Engineering. Everyone enjoyed lawn games, yummy food from the grill, and beautiful weather. It was a wonderful way to celebrate the end of summer. Thank you Rotary Club of Pikesville-Owings Mills and TAI Engineering for the summer send-off, and for all you have done over the years for SVDP family shelter clients.

## Friday Night at the Yard, Cheering on the O's

On September 2nd, family shelter residents from Sarah's Hope, Hannah More, and Interim House were treated to an Orioles Baseball game by a long-time donor. The generous donation included bus transportation to and from Oriole Park at Camden Yards from the shelters, a game ticket, and a food voucher. More than 150 adults and children had a great time, and the win against the Oakland A's was the perfect way to kick off Labor Day Weekend.



If you'd like to learn about ways to sponsor an event for our shelter families, please contact Kelsea Guckin, Asst. Director of Development at [kelsea.guckin@vincentbaltimore.org](mailto:kelsea.guckin@vincentbaltimore.org).

# St. Joseph, Fullerton SVDP Conference

Being a St. Vincent de Paul Conference means helping to combat the effects of poverty on the community level. Nowhere is the Vincentian tradition of grassroots ministry more evident than at St. Joseph, Fullerton — one of the most active and dedicated volunteer groups in the SVDP Council.

Proceeds from the parish's Poor Box and individual donations allow the St. Joseph SVDP Conference to provide short-term financial help to neighbors in need through difficult times. This includes assistance with rent, utility bills, and other life necessities. The conference also provides referrals to social service agencies for anyone requiring more strategic assistance, and maintains a food pantry that is restocked after the second weekend of each month from its "Loaves and Fishes" collections.

For years, St. Joseph, Fullerton has been an unwavering and generous supporter of SVDP programs, providing Sarah's Hope, Beans & Bread, and our employment programs with monthly donations. The parish also provides home-cooked casseroles that are lovingly prepared, delivered, and served to Beans & Bread clients each month. In addition, each fall, volunteers collect, prepare, and distribute food baskets for needy families at Thanksgiving and Christmas.

Thank you to the members of St. Joseph SVDP Conference for your continued dedication and commitment to serving those in need in our community, and the impact you are making, every day!



Members of the St. Joseph, Fullerton Conference team (left to right): Harry Davis, Janet Chance, Rev. Jesse Bolger, and Jane Machin.

Across the region, more than 880 volunteer members at 36 parish-based St. Vincent de Paul of Baltimore Conferences provide a network of support for people suffering from the effects of poverty, serving in a spirit of charity, humility, and friendship. If you are interested in joining one — or starting one at your parish — visit [vincentbaltimore.org/svdp-conferences](http://vincentbaltimore.org/svdp-conferences) for more information or contact Rick Opatick at [Richard.opatick@vincentbaltimore.org](mailto:Richard.opatick@vincentbaltimore.org).



## Save the Date for Empty Bowls 2023

The 17th Annual Empty Bowls will be held on April 22, 2023, at the Maryland State Fairgrounds. All proceeds benefit St. Vincent de Paul of Baltimore hunger programs. If you'd like to get involved, please contact Victory Ram, Empty Bowls Coordinator, at [victory.ram@vincentbaltimore.org](mailto:victory.ram@vincentbaltimore.org).

## Head Start Cover Story

Continued from page 1

of intergenerational poverty by meeting families where they are with the resources they need for long-term stability.

"My son is 5 years old and loves to read!" Melissa is proud to share. "I love that they work with the Science Center. They have robotics. And I love their summer camp too."

Three years after she first enrolled Damian, Melissa's daughter Isabella is now also a part of the same Head Start program at Patterson Park. She credits the strong relationship she has with St. Vincent de Paul with helping her build a solid foundation for Isabella's early childhood development.

St. Vincent de Paul Head Start and Early Head Start serves more than 700 children and families throughout Baltimore City, making a lasting positive impact through improved educational and health outcomes.





# Baltimore Hosts SVDP National Assembly

*Baltimore Takes Center Stage as SVDP National Leaders “Come to the Water”*

In September, for the first time ever, Baltimore served as the host city for the Society of St. Vincent de Paul’s National Assembly. The Baltimore Council welcomed leaders from across the country at the Marriott Baltimore Waterfront Hotel. SVDP of Baltimore organized the Host City Event at the National Aquarium in Baltimore, which was especially fitting for this year’s assembly theme, *Come to the Water*. More than 500 guests enjoyed walking through aquarium exhibits and networking with friends and colleagues from around the country. During the three-day conference, approximately 700 Vincentian staff and volunteers listened to speakers and participated in workshops, liturgies, and service projects.

There was no shortage of extracurricular activities on the agenda. Members could opt to take part in special tours to see Baltimore’s Catholic pilgrimage sites, or get firsthand experiences by visiting SVDP Hunger and Housing programs. A large group attended a Baltimore Orioles game, witnessing the home team’s victory. Many attendees expressed that they felt that this year’s assembly was one of the best ever.

The busy week culminated with Mass celebrated by Archbishop William Lori, followed by a banquet honoring the thousands of Vincentians who are helping people in need all over the world. Staging such an assembly was a monumental task. The Baltimore Council provided volunteers to help ensure its success. Volunteers assisted with planning, registrations, the Host City Event at the National Aquarium, the information table, and the liturgies. “We’re so grateful to the local member volunteers who started planning and organizing the various tasks a year ago and helped to make the National Assembly in Baltimore a special and memorable event,” said Richard Opatick, SVDP of Baltimore Member Services Coordinator.



# End-of-year Giving

## *Adopt-a-Family Program Brings Hope and Holiday Cheer*

Most of us look forward to the holidays with a happy sense of anticipation. For our shelter families, however, the season brings a great sense of anxiety when they find themselves unable to provide even the most basic needs for their loved ones. Fortunately, St. Vincent de Paul's Annual Adopt-a-Family initiative is meant to address the needs of marginalized families, brightening holidays all around the Baltimore region.

This holiday season, we are counting on generous donors to lend support to individuals and families living in St. Vincent de Paul shelters, supportive housing programs, and attending Head Start. We match donors with families in need, supplying wish lists for each member of the family that specify ages, sizes, and interests. Donors can select how many individuals they would like to adopt and their preferred drop-off location.

Last year, approximately 200 struggling families totaling 1,031 individuals were served through the Adopt-a-Family program, with holiday cheer shared by recipients and gift-givers alike. "I'm teaching my children that the only thing better than receiving a meaningful holiday gift is giving one," said Alison D., a donor who first adopted a family five years ago. "Now that my kids are a little bit older, we dedicate a day to go shopping, and they



carefully choose each gift for the kids in the family we sponsor. It gives me great joy to see them put so much thought and care into presents for children they have never met. It's now one of the very best parts of our holiday season."

If you are able to share the joy of the season by sponsoring a family, visit [vincentbaltimore.org/adopt-a-family](http://vincentbaltimore.org/adopt-a-family), and register on or before November 15. All items must be new and the suggested spending range is \$50 to \$100 per family member.

## VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT



### Meet Debbie Mitchell, Beans & Bread Food Prep Volunteer

Debbie Mitchell joined St. Vincent de Paul in August 2021. Throughout the pandemic, she couldn't help thinking about the homeless and forgotten in our community. Concerned for those less fortunate than herself during such a difficult time, she was determined to find a way to give back and follow her passion to serve others. As she began to research charitable organizations, the mission of St. Vincent de Paul stood out. So she applied to volunteer at Beans & Bread and has been part of the team ever since. She even went the extra step of obtaining a ServSafe food safety certification! Mrs. Debbie loves to cook for the clients at Beans & Bread and always serves with a smile on her face!

If you're interested in volunteering at Beans & Bread, please contact Victoria Ezeji, our Volunteer Coordinator, at [victoria.ezeji@vincentbaltimore.org](mailto:victoria.ezeji@vincentbaltimore.org).



# Meet SVDP's new Chief Operating Officer Dr. Jarrell McRae

**W**e're delighted to welcome Dr. Jarrell J. McRae to the St. Vincent de Paul Leadership Team. The Baltimore native and proud two-time Morgan University alumnus brings deep experience in many facets of human services and urban social work. "We are confident Dr. McRae's knowledge, background and his passion for the community will bring positive change to SVDP and those we serve," said SVDP President John Schiavone. "He is joining St. Vincent de Paul with an enthusiastic drive to make an impact within our organization." Describing himself as a "servant leader," Dr. McRae explained what drew him to our

organization: "The SVDP vision proposes a world where there is no poverty, where everyone's potential has the capacity to be maximized and where we all share in the responsibility of addressing issues that plague vulnerable populations. The only way we can strive for such a world and make it a reality is by committing ourselves to the hard work now, and I'm ready."

We are too Dr. McRae! Welcome!

Interested in applying your own skills and talents to further the mission of St. Vincent de Paul? Check out a list of open positions at [vincentbaltimore.org/careers](http://vincentbaltimore.org/careers).



## SVDP Receives Safeway's Nourishing Neighbors Grant

### *Funds To Support Food Security in Baltimore Region*

Safeway's Nourishing Neighbors initiative aims to fight hunger in the communities they serve. St. Vincent de Paul was the recent beneficiary of a grant from the company's fundraising campaign in four Baltimore County Safeway stores in September. The \$8,250 grant will enable SVDP's Good Harvest program to prepare and deliver more than 166,000 meals to Baltimoreans in need.

SVDP's Good Harvest Community Kitchen works to expand access to healthy food for children, adults, families, and seniors in group settings such as shelters, pre-schools, adult daycare centers, and senior centers. The Nourishing Neighbors funds have been earmarked to address the nutritional needs of children in our area.



"We are deeply grateful to Safeway for partnering with us to help fight food insecurity in Baltimore," said Majid Zaghari, Vice President of Good Harvest Community Kitchen. "The effects of hunger are magnified among children, and the Nourishing Neighbors initiative will go a long way toward ensuring that every child in our community has access to a healthy breakfast."

According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, one in five Americans under the age of 18 lives in a household where they are unable to consistently access enough nutritious food necessary for a healthy life. Nourishing Neighbors helps to keep food banks stocked and supports meal distributions in the community through programs like Good Harvest.

For more information about SVDP's Good Harvest Community Kitchen, please visit [goodharvest.org](http://goodharvest.org).



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### OUR MISSION

To ensure those impacted by poverty have the skills, resources, and opportunity to achieve their full potential.

### OUR VALUES

**DIGNITY:** We see God’s image in every person, recognizing their inherent value by offering respect and compassion, and giving special care to those who are materially poor, marginalized, and vulnerable.

**INCLUSION:** We promote diversity and embrace the unique attributes, characteristics, abilities, cultures, classes, faiths, orientations, and races that make people who they are, recognizing that we are one human family.

**EQUITY:** We believe in eliminating systemic disadvantages so that all people are guaranteed fair treatment and have the opportunity to live in decent, safe, and affordable housing, receive quality education, be employed at a fair wage, have access to healthy food and health care, share in prosperity, and reach their full potential.

**EQUALITY:** We see those we serve as our equals in every way, seeking to understand the road they have traveled to reach our door, recognizing they know what is best for themselves and their families, and encouraging them to make their own choices.

**COLLABORATION:** We believe in the transformative power of building relationships and community and in actively engaging partners in our work toward the well-being of all.

**SERVICE:** We humbly recognize service as an opportunity to receive as much as give.

**EXCELLENCE:** We relentlessly pursue the highest standards in all that we do, embracing innovation and best practices.

**STEWARDSHIP:** We use our resources responsibly and efficiently, and we hold ourselves accountable for the highest levels of integrity, transparency, and measurable results.

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