Society of St. Vincent de Paul Board of Directors Announces Selection of New CEO

The Society of St. Vincent de Paul’s Board of Directors recently announced that Gary Sole has been named Chief Executive Officer effective August 10, 2021.

After a 30-year career as a financial services executive -- which included two decades at National City Bank -- Sole most recently served as SVDP’s Chief Operating Officer. He was selected for the CEO position after a subcommittee of the Board conducted an extensive search. Sole will lead the central office in supporting the Society’s 2,300+ members and volunteers across the Diocese of Cleveland’s eight-county service area.

Sole joined SVDP’s staff in 2019 as a liaison to its 59 Conferences. In his new role, he will continue to focus upon supporting, retaining and expanding these groups, in addition to strengthening relationships with current community stakeholders and cultivating new partnerships, according to Ed Leszynski, Board president.

“I look forward to partnering with our Board of Directors and our Vincentians to expand upon programs that empower people in need so they have the tools necessary to improve their quality of life.”

Sole has served in executive roles at several other institutions that include Lakeshore Community Credit Union, Inc., Steel Valley Credit Union, and CIT Group Inc. He holds a Bachelor of Arts in Economics from Baldwin Wallace University. He is a Vincentian with St. Ladislas Conference and resides in Westlake with his wife, Kristine, and daughter, Alexis.

As CEO, Sole said that he will work closely with the Society’s Conferences to foster more collaboration and the exchange of ideas, especially in regard to systemic change. “I look forward to partnering with our Board of Directors and our Vincentians to expand upon programs that empower people in need so they have the tools necessary to improve their quality of life.”

“In addition to his financial acumen, Gary has a deep personal commitment to the Society’s mission, which was especially evident during the pandemic,” Leszynski explained. “Since the onset of the health crisis, Gary’s leadership was critical at our hunger centers as he worked closely alongside volunteers and staff to make certain that we continued to safely feed neighbors in need. He exemplifies Pope Francis’ call to ‘bring the healing power of God’s grace to everyone in need, to stay close to the marginalized and to be shepherds living with the smell of the sheep.’”
Society of St. Vincent de Paul Annual Blanket Sunday October 9-10, 2021

Last year, funds from the appeal were used to purchase in bulk 4,500+ new winter blankets that were provided to the homeless and 179 beds/mattresses for low-income individuals and families throughout Northeast Ohio. These items were given directly to people in need through our Ozanam Centers, Catholic Charities agencies, and homeless shelters in the Cleveland, Akron, Lorain/Elyria, and Lake/Geauga metropolitan areas. Please help us promote this important appeal at your Conferences. Donations can also be made securely online: https://donate.svdpcle.org/blanket-sunday-donations/.

Checks may be mailed to: St. Vincent de Paul Society Blanket Sunday, 1404 East 9th Street-3rd Floor, Cleveland, OH 44114.

Join us for Our Akron District’s Friends of the Poor Walk/Run September 25

Make a difference for those living in poverty. Join us rain or shine on Saturday, September 25 at 10 a.m. for the Annual Friends of the Poor® Walk/Run. Held at Wood Hollow Summit Metro Park, 2121 Barlow Road in Hudson, the fun-filled event will raise funds to help people in need throughout our Akron District. Click here to register or donate online today.

The Friends of the Poor® Walk/Run is a national event to provide local SVDP Conferences and Councils additional funds to help support their special works. The event has raised more than $27 million across the United States since 2008.

Prayer Corner

Please keep the following individuals in your prayers:

Bernie Scheidler
Ken Trenner
Kelli White

St. Vincent de Paul, pray for us.

Please submit special intentions to Natalie Schrimpf: nschrimpf@svdpcle.org

“A let your reasonableness be known to everyone. The Lord is at hand; do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.” - Philippians 4:5-7

Learn More About & Experience Core Principles of SVdP: Spirituality, Friendship and Service

A Vincentian is dedicated to growing in holiness through personal service in friendship.

St. Vincent de Paul
Ozanam Orientation Training
Saturday, October 9 - from 9 am to 2 pm
In St. Mary’s Parish Hall — 527 Beall Ave, Wooster
(Lunch will be provided.)

Would you like to grow closer to our Lord and help your neighbors in need?

Would you like to know more about & experience the core principles of SVdP: Spirituality, Friendship and Service?

Then Join Us for an In-Person opportunity to learn and share the joy of being part of the St. Vincent de Paul ministry.

For more information and to Register, call Cheryl Davis at 330-264-8824.

Whether you’re a seasoned Vincentian who would like a refresher course, or a novice seeking more information, please join us Saturday, October 9 from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. for an in-person Ozanam Orientation Training. The event will be held at St. Mary Parish hall, 575 Beall Avenue in Wooster.

To learn more or register, please call Cheryl Davis at 330-264-8824.

A Message from Our Spiritual Advisor

by Sister Cheryl Keehner, CSA

Now that restrictions have been lifted and you have met again in your Conferences, I suspect you have discovered that our operations have morphed into “the new normal.” I offer you this psalm prayer as we all continue to get back into familiar routines and welcome the new.

O Giver of life’s journey
Be our companion along the way;
Then we will recognize your face in everyone we meet.

Guide us into wholeness and harmony and Balance, that we may each be a peaceful presence.

Let us witness your Way
That others may grow in trust and truth.
Bring us all together into your Presence,
To love and serve according to Your will. Amen.
Young Volunteers Spruce Up Father Michael Wittman Ozanam Center Hospitality Room

The hospitality room at our Father Michael Wittman Ozanam Center was recently given a much-needed “face lift,” thanks to a group of dedicated young volunteers from Church of the Saviour United Methodist’s mission outreach team.

The youth and their supervisors worked diligently to remove old, worn-out carpeting and replace it with new laminate flooring, change the rusty utility sink, and repair and paint the surrounding walls. They also cleaned the food bagging area, which involved heavy lifting and the replacement of broken tiles, according to Rose Speers, one of the hunger center’s nine managers. She added that in addition to Cleveland Diocesan parishes, the Church of the Saviour partners with the center on a regular basis by sending volunteers to help.

Located at St. Philomena Church at 13824 Euclid Avenue in East Cleveland, SVDP’s Father Michael Wittman Ozanam Center is open Saturdays from 10 a.m. to noon and provides emergency food and clothing to local residents in need. The volunteer-operated hunger center will celebrate 15 years of service at a special mass at St. Philomena Church on Sunday, September 26 at 10 a.m. All are welcome to attend.

Some members of our newly-formed Associate Board at a recent planning meeting. We're very grateful that they're willing to share their faith, time and talents to engage the community in the spirit of service, culture, history and faith of the St. Vincent de Paul Society. Our members are following in the footsteps of our founder, Blessed Frederic Ozanam, who was a young professional himself.

Our Essential Friendship Video from National

According to the Society of St. Vincent de Paul’s mission, we are “A network of friends.” But what does this truly mean?

SVDP USA dives deeper into the concept of the essential element of friendship with this “Fred Talk” video:

https://vimeo.com/548990783