



SOCIETY OF ST. VINCENT DE PAUL
COUNCIL OF LOS ANGELES

STRATEGIC PLAN
2008 - 2013

STRATEGIC PLAN

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A. PURPOSE

The purpose for developing this strategic plan is to provide a comprehensive guide for the Board and Staff of the Society through the next three to five years of its operation. The planning process was conducted at the request of the Board of Directors and carried out by the Society's Staff during a 14-month period. The objective of this plan is to improve the focus of the organization by developing:

- Explicit understandings of the Society's mission and values among the Staff, Board and external constituencies;
- A blueprint for action based on current information;
- Broad milestones with which to monitor achievements and assess results; and
- Information that can be used to market the organization to the public and to potential funders.

B. ORGANIZATIONAL STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESS

1. Strengths

- The services we provide, that is we actually provide the services we say we do.
- Respect peoples' dignity.
- We enjoy the work we do.
- Known as a lay Catholic organization.
- Our values
- Society provides employment at a living wage.
- Strive for Social Justice.
- Strong management staff with a commitment.
- Thrift Store is part of the culture of LA.
- Our programs are meeting a real need.

2. Weaknesses

- Public is not very aware of us.
- Identified as a Catholic organization.
- Sometimes we are more humble than we should be.
- The Society does not work together as a National body.
- Only have one store.
- Need to expand the department skills represented on the Board.
- Lack of expansion of our programs.
- Not enough staff in all departments.
- Members of the Society are beginning to age, so we need to attract more young people.

C. PROGRAM SUMMARIES AND NEXT STEPS

1. The Cardinal Manning Center

For 50 years now, the Cardinal Manning Center has been a constant, reliable presence for homeless people in need in the Skid Row District of Downtown Los Angeles. The primary goals of the Center's programs are to enable homeless men and women with children to: 1) stabilize their life circumstances; 2) regain their self-sufficiency; and 3) find permanent housing and employment. The Center accomplishes these goals by providing its clients with: 1) case-management; 2) employment counseling; 3) group discussion sessions; 4) budgeting and financial counseling; 5) individual therapy; 6) email and voice mail boxes to help with their housing and/or job searches; 7) transportation assistance to work; and 8) client advocacy and referral services for accessing permanent housing and other crucial social services. The Center programs can accommodate a maximum of 73 men, five women and seven children on any night, and consist of: a **Day Services Program** that is utilized by both men (in the mornings) and women (in the afternoons), and furnishes restroom and shower room facilities, a computer room, telephones, areas for watching television or playing board games, and case management; an **Emergency Shelter Program** where clients may stay 28 days and receive dinner in the evenings and lunch five times a week, case management, employment counseling, and referrals to appropriate social service and housing agencies; a 18-month **Men's Advancement Program** that serves homeless men who are employed and helps them improve their vocational skills and find permanent housing; and an **Emergency Family Shelter** that is a transitional housing program set-up to help women with children, who currently are living on the street, find employment and permanent housing. **In fiscal year 2005-06 the Center's programs and services provided 27,264 shelter nights, tallied 108,659 drop-ins for day services and supplied 63,035 meals to homeless children, women and men in Los Angeles County.**

How should this program grow?

- Be more sophisticated with better trained and educated staff.
- Be able to implement newer best practices with the homeless in the area of job coaching and training.
- Need to move the Family Shelter away from Skid Row to a better location and provide these families with more services.
- Develop the Family Shelter into permanent housing with supportive services and have a one to six month emergency shelter. Raises the question as to: "How much affordable housing stock is actually available?"
- Add more advanced job counseling, training and referral to the Center's programs.
- Hire a "hands-on" psychiatric consultant to help develop an innovative mental health program at the Center for more resistant clients.

2. Ventura Winter Shelter

The Ventura Winter Shelter is a safe haven that assists homeless individuals and families during the coldest months of the year. It was started in reaction to widely publicized reports of homeless men and women freezing to death on park benches and heating grates. Consequently, this program operates from the beginning of December to the end of March, during the hours of 5:00 PM to 5:00 AM, and furnishes approximately 8,000 "shelter nights" to between 300 and 400 unduplicated clients during the months the Shelter is open.

This program furnishes transportation to the shelter site; intake, case-management and referral services; dinner; showers; television entertainment; cots or air mattresses for sleeping; blankets that are assigned to each client and laundered weekly; and a light breakfast. Case management is provided by representatives

from County Homeless Services and from the Mental Health Clinic during the early evening hours every weekday. The Oxnard City Housing Authority assists in securing permanent housing for families and most of the clients have at least an initial contact with the County Health Department.

Staff Recommendations for Program Growth

- Research and establish the shelter needs in the Ventura/Oxnard communities.
- Expand the program from three to five months and add a day person to do case management follow-up.
- Find an appropriate shelter site and expand to a full, year round program.

3. Circle V Ranch Camp

The Circle V Ranch Camp is a one-week resident camp program designed to teach children life skills, improve self-esteem, and meet positive role models, while spending time in a positive and nurturing environment. The Camp's mission is to serve children from low-income communities and give them the same opportunity to attend a quality resident camp program as other children. Some of our campers come from extremely difficult situations at home and the Camp's goal is to show them love, increase self-esteem, teach community values, conservation and the appreciation of nature, and allow them to just be kids during their week at camp. At the heart of the Camp's program are positive role models, counselors, support and leadership staff, which help these young campers see beyond their difficult situations and realize that they can set affirmative life goals for themselves and achieve them. **During fiscal year 2205-06, 1,195 children and youth from the Southern California area attended the camp, 98 percent of whom received camp scholarships ranging from \$245.00 to \$275.00 to cover the \$300.00 cost of the program. Indeed Circle V Ranch is one of only two camps that provide camperships to poor children to this extent in Southern California.**

How should this program grow?

- Continue 8 sessions of Summer Camp with current mission and traditions, and expand to 2 additional sessions.
- Develop at least one full-fee session offered to the Santa Barbara Community as a marketing tool and revenue source.
- Create a year-round camp program through collaborations with agencies that serve at-risk youth.
- Expand outside rentals by developing food service and other activities to increase income.
- Produce a facilities maintenance plan.
- Complete the 10-year Camp Development Plan.

4. Conference Department

The heart of the Society's operations are its conference volunteers – now numbering approximately 1,800 men, women, young adults, and teenagers – who serve people in whatever capacity is necessary to solve the problems they are facing and enable them to re-establish themselves as productive citizens. The most concrete embodiment of the volunteers' mission in the Society is the home visit, where dedicated volunteers work with families and individuals in need to help them overcome the challenges to self-sufficiency that they face. The Society's volunteers also assist with emergency food and shelter programs; conduct food, clothing and toy drives; furnish financial assistance for utilities, transportation or temporary housing; provide referrals to victims of domestic violence, runaways and those in need of medical or dental treatment; aid individuals with filing paper work for government assistance; and visit elderly shut-ins or those in prison. **As a result, the Society through its volunteers, programs and services assisted more than 500,000 people who were experiencing various emergencies and needed food, shelter, clothing, utilities or**

rental assistance, furniture and/or medical or dental care of some kind during the 2006-07 fiscal year.

5. Thrift Store

- St. Vincent de Paul Thrift Store is the largest operating thrift store in California.
- We sell new and used merchandise such as clothing, furniture, large appliances and miscellaneous items at low to moderate prices in order to fund the Society's special works.
- We provide free clothing, furniture and large appliances distribution to churches with SVDP conferences.
- We collaborate with the Red Cross, Catholic Charities and SVDP conferences to provide emergency services.
- Last fiscal year the store distributed \$120,000 of free items to the poor.

How should this program grow in the future?

- Provide more employment for the surrounding communities.
- Provide our new and existing employees with proper customer service skills needed to perform their job efficiently.
- Open additional stores within the location of our conference districts.
- Open additional donation sites in the surrounding communities.
- Establish our Marketing and Advertisement Strategies to attract new donors and customers.
- Upgrade our existing security system to improve customer and company asset protection.

6. Affordable Housing

The Society's Affordable Housing Program is a new endeavor of the Council to respond to the growing epidemic of limited housing options in the communities we serve by providing affordable housing to the working poor, single women with children, the handicapped, the elderly and the indigent through the purchase of suitable properties in each of our Districts with client management through the Council's Conferences. The Affordable Housing Committee is initiating the formation of District Housing Committees to assess each district unique housing needs that will result in a plan of action to meet those needs. We plan to work and collaborate with other agencies whose main objective is providing affordable housing such as Housing Works, Esperanza Housing, and RAIN. The Ventura District is the first of our districts to form a Housing Committee, conduct a community assessment and purchase property to begin meeting the need. The Ventura District will assume the responsibility of the overall management of the property on a day-to-day basis and the Council will manage the finances until the District is ready to operate the property independently.

How should this program grow?

This is a need for a full-time staff member in order to run this Council-wide program effectively.

7. Administration and Human Resources

Administration acts as an umbrella for the overall management of the Society and provides support to the various departments of the agency in the areas of:

- Human Resources/Personnel
- Accounting & Finance
- Public Relations
- Fund Development

How should this program grow in the future?

- Need more office space; training room; conference room.
- Need additional qualified staff
- Computer & software, standardization, integration and upgrade
- Need more ongoing training
- Develop Master Plan (calendar)
- Develop an organization-wide communication system.

8. Finance and Accounting

This department furnishes the data system for measuring, processing and communicating information that is useful for making financial decisions for the organization. This department provides:

- Accounting function of the Society;
- Financial statements from invoices and other sources; and
- Reports on how business is performing

How should this program grow in the future?

- As the organization grows the department needs more staff;
- Greater sophistication and specialized training of staff;
- Need more space;
- Computer/Software upgrade; and
- Develop procedural desk reference manual for staff

9. Public Relations

The purpose of this department is to inform the public – normally through the media - about the Society's programs, outreach and needs. This department also helps to coordinate special events that benefit the Society's mission and allow the public to become involved with its programs. In addition, the department works with disaster relief or assists with crisis management when or if a negative situation hits the organization.

How should this program grow in the future?

- Additional PR-minded individuals for the staff (at least two with one bilingual);
- English/Spanish newsletter;
- Larger office space;
- Competitive budget so that the organization can grow and compete with other non-profits in the region;
- Bring on college PR interns; and
- Develop a PR committee.

10. Fund Development

In her book Fundraising for Social Change, Kim Klein's gives her definition of fund development as follows: "If one were to ask, 'What is the purpose of fundraising?' many people would think, 'What a stupid question,' and would answer, 'To raise money.' In fact, the purpose of fundraising is to build a base of donors; if you do that you will raise money. . . Focusing on building a donor base means deliberately and systematically diversifying sources of funding, and getting a large number of people helping you to raise money." Consequently, that is why fundraising also has been referred to as "friendraising."

Fundraising proves the popularity of your organization. The organization's programs are the products that I am trying to sell to the community; but not just the programs, it is the impact and benefits that the programs

have for the community that I am trying to sell. **I.E. appealing to the Donor's Self-Interest.** As a result, donations can give you an idea of whether or not a community is impressed by the programs you are delivering.

How should this program grow in the future?

- Expand direct mail and foundation proposal submission
- Hire new Volunteer Coordinator to assist with cultivation of corporations through:
 - Outreach to Corporate Volunteer Groups;
 - Coordination of Community Work Events between Corporations & Vincentians;
 - Development of Special Fundraising Guilds among the volunteers & Vincentians;
 - Recruitment table captains for the "Ask Event"; and
 - Retention/Stewardship work with Vincentians through District-wide events, such as Food & Clothing Drives
- Develop stewardship protocol for donor cultivation
- Grow the Gala and Ask Events
- Screen Donor Database for giving capacity of donors.
- Train Board in fundraising strategies for major gift campaign
- Hire part-time planned giving consultant to develop and implement planned giving campaign.