

Let the little
CHILDREN
Come unto Me

Inside this issue:

- Residents Creative Corner 2
- From the Desk of... 3
- Celebrate Staff 3
- Spiritual Space 2
- Mission Statement 4
- Congratulations 4

Ripples from the River

Volume II, Issue I

BREAKING NEWS

As Joe Lavoritano, our Administrator, has said, "Accreditation is a life time commitment here at St. Vincent's." This is a sobering thought, since we have spent the last year working with an accreditation agency in completing a Self-Study which has, among other things, caused us to develop a ten committee Continuous Quality Improvement System; produce a four inch binder re-organization of all Procedures and Policies; and has necessitated a re-write of all programs, job descriptions; and agency mission, goals and objectives.

The accreditation agency, the Council On Accreditation, (COA), was founded in 1977. COA was designed to promote human service organizations' compliance with the highest standards available – standards that would "stand on the shoulders" of state and federal licensing authorities. It is endorsed by, and has relationships with other national accrediting bodies and supporting organizations, including Catholic Charities USA.

Encouraged by the Archdiocesan Catholic Social Services, St. Vincent's began to consider accreditation in 2004. The administration was quickly convinced that in order to remain on

the "cutting edge" of our profession and become an agency driven by planning and not by crisis, St. Vincent's needed to stay current in these changing times in order to be recognized, respected, and utilized. COA is a national accreditation organization specifically designed for agencies like St. Vincent's who provide children and family services.



COA's mission statement is "to promote best-practice standards; champion quality services for children, youth and families; and advocate for the value of accreditation." COA accredits organizations in every one of the fifty States and Canada.

There are four steps in the accreditation process which are: Application, Developing a Self-Study Document, the Site Visit and the Accreditation Commission Decision.

After submitting our Self-Study, a COA Peer Review team reviewed the Document and arranged the Site Visit for December 11th and 12th. Following their interviews with staff, reviews of documentation and a facility inspection, they completed a Preliminary Accreditation Report (PAR). St. Vincent's will be required to respond to all non-compliance

See **COA** on page 3

May we be the change. Right here. Right now.

The boys from St. Aloysius Academy, Bryn Mawr have spent the past several months on a major project for the benefit of St. Vincent's – Tacony. Besides making blankets and scarves for our mothers and babies the students collected children's books, toiletries, snack packs and other useful



items.

In addition, the Student Council President, presented a check to St. Vincent's.

Ms Denena Smithwick and Sister Louise Kane accepted the donations and Ms Smithwick gave a brief presentation of the history of St. Vincent's.

Sister Louise Kane

RESIDENTS CREATIVE CORNER

St. Vincent's Poetry Contest

Over thirty poems were entered in St. Vincent's Valentine Poetry Contest. Our residents' creativity and unique ideas were appreciated. The winners are...

FIRST PLACE

WHEN IT RAINS – IT POURS

by Danielle

When you are around
I feel special

WHEN IT RAINS – IT POURS

The moment you said you loved me
my heart was yours.

When you first kissed me
we fell deep in love,

WHEN IT RAINS – IT POURS.

When our baby is born
you'll see the true side of love
when we are together
there is no bad weather.

Now – we are apart
my beautiful sky just got dark,
pain will come, pain soon to go
in time I'll be home
to watch our beautiful baby grow.

SECOND PLACE

PEACE ON EARTH –

by Shardecia

PEACE ON EARTH!

PEACE ON EARTH IS WHAT WE NEED.

People fight and lie, and never see

The sight of love from eye to eye.

PEACE ON EARTH IS WHAT WE NEED.

We come on earth

From birth

And – that's true, indeed,

If we don't stop this madness

Then God shall forgive me

For doing the outrageous

And – telling him to take my soul away,

So that – I can lay all things to rest.

UNTIL PEACE COMES ON THIS EARTH, AND – I RECEIVE A SECOND

BIRTH. THEN – I SHALL LIVE

FOREVER.

THIRD PLACE

YOU LOVE ME

by Adrian

YOU LOVE ME.

You care for me.

You were there when I
came from the womb.

I see your face
looking at me
from the bright moon.

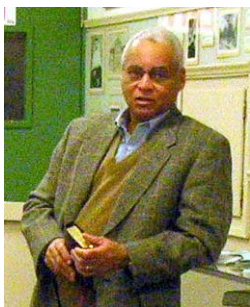
I know you love me
because the Bible tells me so,
I will praise your name
until it is time to go.

You love me, and I love you so!

I say to you Lord – thanks
for guiding me through
(thank you) Jesus.

SPIRITUAL SPACE ECUMENISM, TOLERANCE, AND LOVE

On Monday evening, January 22, St. Vincent's - Tacony hosted an Ecumenical gathering for 18 moms/moms to be, and shared over two hours of prayer, heartfelt conversation, and inspiring words presented by Ed. Lis, Director of Catholic Mission Integration for the Archdiocese of Philadelphia and Rev. Hubert Barnes, Pastor of Star of Hope Baptist Church in Philadelphia.



We were also honored to welcome Mrs. Evelyn Barnes, wife of Pastor Barnes (who also heads a mentor program

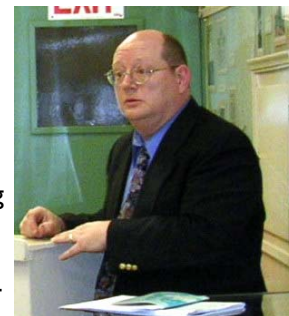
for our moms who are planning to be discharged), Rev. and Mrs. William Bounds, and Rev. James Garvin, all of

whom have been gracing St. Vincent's with their generous presence teaching Bible Study bi-weekly, and conducting Church Services for our residents 3 or 4 Sundays each month.

We believe that this evening opened the door to "many new graces" for for our moms and staff, as it was the beginning of "brainstorming sessions" uniting us to better support our moms and their children.

We owe Pastor Barnes, his associates, and all members of Star of Hope a debt of gratitude for the invitations that have been extended to our Campus - including socials, plays, choir, and mentoring program dinners for our moms and their babies. Serving together has indeed created a "solid christian bond" between us, and we thank God daily for their presence in

our lives. And, last but not least, we thank Ed Lis for his ongoing help, support, and encouragement (often on a daily basis) in our Campus Ministry Program. We could not do it without him!



We praise and thank God who brought us all together to work with our extraordinary youngsters, and together we echo the beautiful words of Christ, "LET THE LITTLE CHILDREN COME TO ME."

Sister Barbara Zurine

FROM THE DESK OF THE ADMINISTRATOR

In the Fall newsletter I spoke about the merger, but did not mention the new employees that have become part of the St. Vincent community. Some positions were eliminated due to redundancy and those employees were either assisted in finding other employment within Catholic Social Services, or received a severance package. However, St. Vincent's employment roles increased from approximately 130 employees to 150 employees, as the program now includes two community group homes

in addition to the campus program.

Many of our clients have symptoms of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), or have other mental health and/or behavioral concerns that interfere with their ability to accept guidance and caring. Staff many times finds their overtures of concern being rejected, only to try again the next day, and the next day, to try to form a relationship with that particular youth. To do this type of work on a day in and day out basis takes tremendous

dedication to the mission of caring for youth.

I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge our staff and their tireless dedication to our residents and to ask all to keep St. Vincent's in your prayers.

Thank you.



Joe Lavoritano

COA

Scores in the Report, after which the PAR and our response will be sent to the COA Accreditation Commission in New York. If all goes well, we should complete the process and receive full accreditation from COA sometime this summer.

Accreditation is a lifetime commitment.

COA returns every two or three years to undertake Accreditation Reviews, which, for St. Vincent's, will include not only maintaining COA standards but also additional Self-Studies and Site Visits to include

the St. Joseph Catholic Home merged programs in a 2009 COA Review.



John Timothy Paul

CELEBRATE STAFF

This month we celebrate one of our long-term employees, Ms. Betty Frazier, who works with the mothers and babies on NI. Betty has worked here at St. Vincent's since 1984, when the children's shelter at St. Joseph's Hall for girls moved here. Betty worked at St. Joseph's Hall from 1973-1984 as a counselor to young girls. Ms. Frazier started her career working with teenagers at Good Shepherd Home on Veree Road and worked there for 2 1/2 years until it closed in 1974.

According to Ms. Frazier, "The most important thing in life is helping people and I'm inspired by being around young people, helping them and seeing them grow physically,



mentally, and emotionally."

Originally from Delaware, Betty enjoys life, especially music. "I like all kinds of music and when I'm home there is always some kind of music playing in my home." To the question, "Will you ever retire?" Betty gave this advice: "Keep working if you feel well and have your health and strength."

We would all like to thank "Ms. Betty" for her commitment to children these past 37 years.

Paul Chick

Newsletter committee

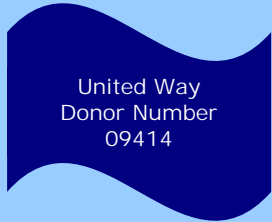
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- Ms Chris Ganz
- Sr. Louise Kane
- Ms Debra Klein
- Mr. Joe Lavoritano
- Sr. Veronica Murray
- Mr. Rick Pytlewski
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Mission Statement

Inspired by the gospel message "Let the children come unto me," St. Vincent's Catholic Home provides services to children, youth and their families. Recognizing the dignity and worth of all persons, we are committed to work together to help families and their individual members to develop to their fullest potential and to experience the fullness of life that is their heritage as children of God.

In this spirit, we accept each individual as Jesus did, and embrace every person of every race and creed in a community of faith, hope and love. Utilizing the core values of compassion, dignity, charity, justice and excellence basic to Christianity and the field of professional Child Welfare, St. Vincent's will continue to impact on social change and advocate for social justice in service to the children and youth and families of the Archdiocese of Philadelphia.

Congratulations

On February 2 we had a grand celebration for one of our most caring and loyal employees at St. Vincent's Tacony. Rosemary Cammarota celebrated her 30th year with us. The celebration was here at Saint Vincent's attended by a number of employees who thanked Rosemary for her time spent with them and wished her 30 more.



We are grateful Rosemary, for all you have done in the past and thanks for all you will do in the future.

Sister Veronica Murray

If you, or anyone you know, would like to be on our mailing list to receive Ripples from the River, please complete this form and return it to St. Vincent's—Tacony.

Thank you for your support.

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