

A Chance to Change the Future

At a recent VinCare planning session regarding our organization's future growth, Jack Gullahorn, our board chair, used an analogy that is pertinent to the life and times of VinCare Services and those we serve. Remember the Rubik's Cube? That toy born of the 80s? My children had one ... or two. You or your children probably did too. It could be puzzling. Frustrating. Time-consuming. But, if you ever solved it ... immensely gratifying.

Getting one face of the Cube all the same color wasn't too difficult. And most of us were happy to stop there. Progressing beyond that one beautiful side meant losing part of our hard-earned completed face, thus losing what we'd accomplished – or so we thought. But, by clinging to what we'd already accomplished, we were really sacrificing our chance to change the future. In this case, the other sides of the Cube.

We have a beautifully completed face to our Cube at VinCare Services. Examples of our success in 2006 include:

- **19 female-headed families were sheltered at St. Louise House (SLH);**
- **More than 800 meals were served to homeless youth through the Outreach to Street Youth;**
- **Nearly all residents of SLH received high school diplomas, learned job and life skills and attended college;**
- **Homeless youths were sheltered and fed on 14 freezing nights in Austin.**

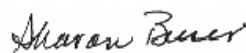
The majority of this success stemmed from your generous contributions to VinCare Services. More than 56% of our income comes from you. Volunteers contributed more than 700 hours to SLH, by furnishing apartments, providing child care, offering technology support, and hosting individualized tutoring and parenting sessions – a value of more than \$12,000 that was spent where it was needed the most ... on the families.

As one of the smallest nonprofit agencies in Austin, it would be easy for us to rest with one side of our Cube completed. But, we serve one of the largest and most rapidly growing segments of the homeless population in Austin. Therefore, we can't cling to our accomplishments of the past six years.

In the tradition of St. Vincent de Paul and St. Louise de Marillac, we must expand to meet the needs of homeless families in Austin. We must continue to touch more lives affected by homelessness and work to eliminate its root causes. We must look to the future to bring our Cube to a colorful completion.

As I write, VinCare Services of Austin seeks new property for the expansion of our transitional housing program. We look forward to sharing the details of our growth with you in the very near future.

Thank you for your support,



Sharon Bieser, Executive Director



Who We Are...

Incorporated in September 2000, VinCare Services currently operates two programs that address the basic needs of two underserved homeless populations-homeless street youth and homeless families with young children. The Outreach to Street Youth Program serves homeless street youth between the ages of 12 and 22 in collaboration with university-area churches and Lifeworks. St. Louise House serves homeless families with children in a unique transitional housing program that has on-site supportive services. The apartment style design of St. Louise House promotes independent living while encouraging community participation.

...serving homeless women with children and homeless youth.

An Introduction to St. Louise House

What is it?

St. Louise House is a community providing transitional housing for members of the nation's fastest growing homeless population – single women with children. It provides a safe, secure, and supportive environment where residents can focus on obtaining long-term housing, stable income, and self-care.

Motivated by a spiritual call to serve the poor, a small community from a local Catholic Church pooled its resources and opened St. Louise House to five families in October of 2001. Since that time, St. Louise House has been home to 66 families.

Who lives there?

It is currently home to 33 residents (11 mothers and 22 children). Mothers and children who have experienced homelessness within the past month are eligible to apply for housing.

Where is it?

The community is centrally located and consists of eleven apartments, a private playground for its residents, laundry facilities and on-site case management. Its physical location is kept private for the protection of our residents.

Why is St. Louise House such a special place?

The staff and volunteers of St. Louise House work closely with all residents so that families have all the tools needed to become self-sufficient. So far, all residents have increased their education or employment status upon exiting

the program. The overwhelming majority have established positive rental histories enabling the families to move into permanent or stable housing.

Austin lacks transitional housing for the population served by St. Louise House. Few resources exist for families who cannot remain in emergency shelters, but have not obtained permanent housing. St. Louise House is working to fill in that gap.

How can I help St. Louise House serve these women and children?

A gift of...	provides...	for...
\$21,399	housing and all support related services for an entire year	one family.
\$15,157	housing and all support related services for an average length of stay (8 1/2 months)	one family.
\$5,349	housing and all support related services for one family for 3 months	one family.
	OR	
	transportation (courtesy the SLH Van) to: job interviews, doctor's appointments for sick children, permanent housing interviews, daycare, etc.	all 11 families.
\$2,000	school supplies for one year	all children.
\$1,783	housing and all support related services for a month	one family.

How Successful was the SLH Program in 2006?

- 87% moved into stable housing within 18 months of entering the program;
- 96% established a positive rental history*;
- 63% improved their education, which includes ESL classes, GED completion, high school and/or college enrollment and graduation.

Additional St. Louise House Successes

- Served 19 families with 35 children;
- Transitioned 7 families to stable housing;
- Supported 19 women as they furthered their education and found employment;
- Provided transportation for families to 123* doctors' appointments, job interviews, housing appointments, and school-related classes and meetings;
- Created a new staff position of Facilities Maintenance Manager to ensure the safety, upkeep, and quality of the St. Louise House property;
- Upgraded apartments with energy efficient appliances;
- Refurbished the community laundry room with new equipment and flooring;
- Installed new flooring in 8 apartments;
- Installed a new roof on facility.



*from July 1, 2006 – June 30, 2007

VinCare Services of Austin extends a special thank you to our graphic designer, Andrew Allen of A2 Graphics for his work on the 2006 Annual Report. andrew@a2-graphics.com / ph. 512-292-0067.

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VinCare Services of Austin wishes to thank outgoing Board Members **Jennifer Paul, Molly Mooney, Lynda Shanblum, Rev. Jim Wiesner, and Willie Williams** for their outstanding service to the organization.

Outreach to Street Youth

Celebrating Ten Years of Outstanding Service

For ten years, one group of volunteers has shown extraordinary dedication to the homeless youth of Central Texas. Stemming from a deep concern for the health and well being of Austin's homeless youth living in the university-area, a group of one dozen unsung heroes from St. Austin Catholic Parish created the ecumenical Outreach to Street Youth (OSY) in 1997.

Estimates suggest that these volunteers have touched the lives of roughly 9,000 children and young adults in the Austin area.



These men and women, the vast majority of whom are retirement age, realized that children and young adults living on the streets of Austin needed access to nutritious meals, emergency shelter and warm clothing in the winter. Over a decade after its founding, that same group of men and women responsible for the program's genesis are still very much involved. **They have prepared (from scratch!) and served roughly 20,500 hot meals to homeless youth over the course of the group's collective 15,000 hours of service.** More importantly, these men and women have served homeless street youth by creating a compassionate community hallmarked by respect, welcoming smiles, and lasting friendships

Thursday Meal Program

Each week the Outreach to Street Youth's ten to twelve volunteers convene at 1:00 p.m. in the St. Austin Catholic Parish commercial kitchen. St. Austin's pastoral staff and university-area location played a large part in the program's initial formation and continuous



presence in a geographic area of need. The food preparation facilities and serving space enable the volunteers to prepare and serve between fifty and sixty meals in one afternoon. Thoughtfully prepared menus

are nutritious and even include vegetarian options. On a typical Thursday afternoon the street youth might enjoy a dinner of homemade meatloaf (one of the volunteers is an amateur gourmet and shares his secret recipe which the kids adore), gravy and mashed potatoes, broccoli, cheese tortellini, rolls, cakes, pies, and brownies.

Over time, as the volunteers developed relationships with the street youth and learned about gaps in available services, they worked to bring more resources to the youth. OSY volunteers initiated collaborations with local agencies, five other university-area churches, and increased the program's overall sophistication. In recent years, the OSY has benefited from its use of the Capital Area Food Bank, as well as its very own Keep Austin Housed Americorps Member.

The volunteers' deep concern for the youth they serve is infectious. The OSY program is always welcoming new volunteers of all ages. Families, teens, university students, and members of St. Austin's parish frequently support the youth as additional cooks and servers for the Thursday Meal Program, while also sponsoring warm clothing drives in the colder months. The OSY volunteers play a crucial role in our community by motivating others to serve a population that doesn't often receive much compassion or concern.

As a largely volunteer-run program, OSY has provided significant grassroots support to a local social service agency, LifeWorks, that helps youth transition from crisis to self-sufficiency. For a number of years, the OSY offered LifeWorks operating space for a university-area drop-in center. This collaboration allowed LifeWorks to focus on homeless intervention strategies while OSY focused on basic survival services. The work of the volunteers to provide these basic survival services has played a pivotal role in readying individuals for more comprehensive counseling and intervention services.

Freezing Weather Shelter

Another significant contribution made by this group of volunteers has been the creation of and support for the OSY's freezing weather shelter. In 2006-07 alone,

volunteers provided support for 14 nights of shelter. **One hundred twenty nights of shelter have kept 963 youth safe and warm in the past decade.**

Emergency shelters are opened at either St.



Austin Catholic Parish or the nearby Congregational Church every night freezing temperatures are anticipated. Volunteers supply blankets,

warm clothing, and food in addition to spending time with the youth in the evenings. The volunteers enjoy movie viewings, conversations, or board games with the youth until the kids go to sleep. Volunteers also rely on the OSY's contract with the Keep Austin Housed Americorps Program to ensure the youth are supervised safely until the morning.

Outreach to Street Youth Volunteers Give Back in Other Capacities, Too!

The Outreach to Street Youth volunteers are all dedicated members of the Central Texas community. In addition to their collective 15,000 hours of OSY service, many of these extraordinary men and women also work with a volunteer health clinic, deliver Meals on Wheels, provide food bank pick-ups and deliveries to St. Louise House and the St. Vincent de Paul Society food pantries, in addition to making in-home visits to families needing material and financial assistance.

Vincare Staff

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A Letter from a Resident of St. Louise House...



“Into everyone’s life, a little rain must fall.”

It’s a true statement, though to some a monsoon is more accurate. This is what happened to me. I’m an average person; not extraordinary by any means. You couldn’t pick me out in a crowd. In the blink of an eye, however, I became one of *them*...

The Homeless.

There are many assumptions about us. It’s an easy generalization. We are alcoholics. We are drug addicts. We are lazy, and content to live “off the system”. We are criminals or ex-convicts. Sadly, in many cases (too many) these things are true. True in many cases, but not all. Not in my case anyway.

My homeless-ness came about as a result of poor choices, starting with my decision to drop out of high school 14 years ago. I left myself with few career options, and never learned how to properly handle finances. When my marriage ended, only then did I realize fully what a disservice I had done to myself. I had nothing to fall back on. I was totally unable to function financially, but I had a child to take care of. I didn’t know what to do, and the bottom fell out.

I spent a total of nine months in two different shelters, and I’m forever grateful for all of the help that they provided. These shelters were not, however, designed for someone like me. I was already employed, and my hours made it nearly impossible to meet the stipulations set forth by the shelter directors and caseworkers. I tried my best, but found myself constantly falling short.

Then came the call that saved my life.

Out of the blue, on a day that I had just about given up hope, I got a call from a caseworker at St. Louise House. I had put in an application months before, but I was afraid to hope. I went in for the in-take interview, and they accepted me! When my son and I moved in, and I realized that the door that I had just closed behind me actually locked, I breathed freely for the first time in almost a year! I knew that I had finally found a home.

Throughout the months I have been here, the office staff has become a family to me. They’ve laughed with me, cried with me, and have listened to me when I’ve needed to talk. When things are good, they cheer me on. When things go wrong, they help me figure out how to fix it. With their loving guidance, the obstacles that had once seemed to be a brick wall to me before, have become gelatinous.

Thanks to VinCare Services, I know that when the time comes for me to move on, I can do so with confidence and self-respect. VinCare Services offers women in my position a chance to become the women they were always meant to be, and gives their children a chance to thrive in a safe, loving environment. There is no greater gift than that.

...serving homeless women with children and homeless youth.



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Annual Report: 2006 Financials

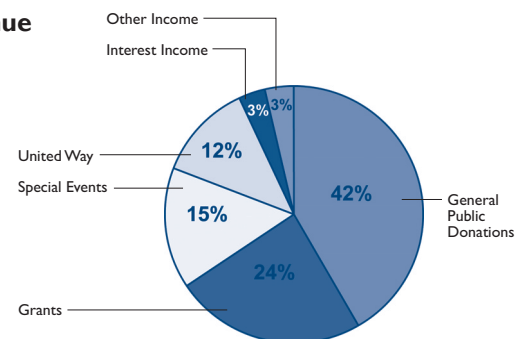
Revenue

General Public Donations	\$101,446.00
Grants	\$ 58,050.00
Special events	\$ 36,712.00
United Way	\$ 30,000.00
Interest income	\$ 8,282.00
Other income	\$ 8,478.00
Net assets released from restrictions	\$ -
	\$242,968.00

Expenses

Program services	
St. Louise House	\$192,988.00
Outreach to Street Youth	\$ 20,493.00
Program Management	\$ 30,251.00
Fundraising	\$ 14,811.00
	\$258,543.00

Revenue



Expenses

