

Vincentians!

Congratulations and thanks for agreeing to take on this Home Visit and to be willing to recognize the person of Christ in those in need. Through you, we become His hands and heart. Please know how important your role is in God's plan of salvation.

To review the process and to give you some idea as to its flow, we've prepared the following:

- 1) Generally requests for help come in through the SMG Parish Center. One member of our group is delegated to retrieve calls everyday and refer them to Larry (or Terry in Larry's absence).
- 2) An initial call is made to gather more information and understand the initial dimensions of the need, which are recorded on the first page of the conference record notes.
- 3) Two members of the conference are designated to make the home visit. Generally, the visiting team is made up of one man and one woman, both Ozanam-trained, although exceptions have been made when circumstances have warranted. They are responsible for setting up the home visit, making the home visit, and assessing the need (which may or may not be the same as the request). While it is appropriate to request to see supporting documents – bills, leases, eviction/legal notices, etc. - to help with the process, it is recommended you suggest (not demand) that the neighbor have them ready for the home visit. Remember, you are making a **friendly** visit in the presence of and person of Christ. This is not an interrogation or investigation.
- 4) After prayer and discussion, the visiting team will fashion an action plan to best handle the need. The Rule specifies that those who interacted with the person in need are in the best position to ascertain the need and its remediation. When uncertain about the best course, they can ask the group for guidance or suggestions. While everyone's voice is important, the opinion of the home visitors who witnessed the need first-hand bears the most significance in the resolution.
- 5) If it is decided that we will provide financial support, the visitors prepare a voucher, using the sample included in the conference record. (Copy as necessary).

Vouchers must include:

- a) The name of the person/agency/company to be paid – this should NEVER be the neighbor directly.
- b) Address of a), if the check is to be mailed
- c) Purpose (heat, rent, food, etc.)
- d) Conference record identifier, found at the top of the notes. The record identifier format is YYMMDD of the date of their call and a letter, A,

B, C, etc., to identify multiple requests on the same date.

- 6) The two signatures on the voucher must include one of the visiting team members and one of the officers. The person preparing the check (usually Ron) does NOT sign the voucher. That becomes our assurance that the process maintains its integrity.
- 7) The signed voucher must be given to Ron (or other designate) who will prepare the check.
- 8) The Home Visit team will be responsible for fulfillment of the action plan, including the mailing/delivery of checks, food cards, or information, unless specifically delegated to another member.
- 9) Members of the Home Visit Team will complete the Conference Record, including voucher information, additional notes, a summary of time spent, number and duration of calls, number of visits and persons present, and mileage driven. Then, they will get the finalized record to Terry for archiving.

Reminders:

These should go without saying but...

- All our work with individuals and families is *confidential*. Even within the group, use of first names only or initials is preferred. When using e-mail, *only communicate with those most directly involved*.
- On those occasions when we need to discuss the elements with an outside agency, it is best practice to get a signed release (included in the conference record).
- Remember, we are called to *serve* the people in need. Don't expect to have all the answers. Leave at home any preconceived notions you might have about the lifestyle of the family visited.
- While it is nice to meet the family members, it is within the neighbor's rights to shield their children (or other household members) from the visit. We are *guests* in *their* home. It is their call, not ours.
- We rarely give cash directly to our neighbors in need. The usual practice is to issue checks to the businesses owed the money and to provide Scrip cards for groceries or other needs at local stores.
- Since St. Maria Goretti Parish has no emergency food pantry, we regularly refer those in need to community food banks, which we support through our monthly food drives.
- All our funds were given to us in trust to be used for the poor. We have no budget or reserve fund.

Everything we have belongs to the poor.

*Godspeed in serving Christ!
Larry, Terry, Linda, Ron and Dan
December 2008*