

the three D's

Dear Friends,

We are going to make it to Spring, have faith! In between this brutal weather and the slalom of potholes on our roads, people didn't venture out much this past Winter. Some people cleaned closets or began home improvement projects. Others reconnected with families and also huddled down together to brace the weather, watching the Olympics.

At SVSF, we took a moment to catch our breath and tally some of the amazing accomplishments that were achieved in 2013, which are detailed later in this newsletter. In looking at this list of milestones, I began to wonder how we were able to do so. Of course, we didn't do it alone and the successes would never have been possible without the fantastic support of volunteers, donors, and our community partners, working together with us as a team.

While watching the Olympics myself, I was reminded of a friend from my old neighborhood who was a cross-country runner. He wasn't the fastest and didn't break any records. But he was known to everyone in the area for his positive attitude, remarkable persistence and ultimately became a well-respected coach. He was interviewed in the local paper and was asked about the personal mantra he had, that led to his success. The interviewer noted that he was able to achieve success as a coach, which he had not achieved as an individual athlete.

His answer was simply that he kept in mind The Three D's – dedication, drive and determination. Dedication in that he was devoted to his passion, which kept his focus clear. Drive in that he wanted something that he did to matter, to make a difference. And Determination came in the form of getting up after stumbling and finishing the race, no matter how many bumps and bruises he had. He understood these principles and passed them on to his team, which was his real success.

It occurred to me that this is a formula that is inherent in all great athletes... or great organizations. As with anything worthwhile, success does not come without disappointments and frustrations. It is the obstacles that you overcome and the wisdom you earn that is the true achievement. We may have accomplished a lot in 2013, but we learned even more.

One of the things we learned is that our efforts still have a long way to go. Our increase in enrollment tells us that there is an enormous amount of people who need our help. So, we may have gotten to the top of one hill. But our plateau is not meant to turn around and go back down, but instead has given us the vantage point of seeing the next, bigger hill. Our objective is clear, that our team of volunteers, partners and staff are going to take a deep breath and remember The Three D's as we start the next leg of our journey.

Yours,

Diane Renaud

Diane Renaud
Executive Director/CEO



2013 . . . How We Kept Busy

The Results Are In!

SVSF saw a record year of enrollment for both programs, across the four campuses. Working with approximately 400 active students, enrollment increased 64%! Again, without amazing volunteers and staff, this simply would not have been possible. But what is more astonishing is that the Adult Program, while maintaining its 90% first-time pass rate, had an incredible increase in GED certifications, by an increase of 104%! Why is that so significant? High school/GED graduates in general earn more than dropouts. In fact, the lifetime earnings of these additional graduates equates to a potential economic impact of \$7.9 million. This startling number does not take into account the residual effects of setting an example for the next generation, less reliance upon assistance, and the potential for higher education and even higher earnings.

The Expansion

As highlighted in our Fall, 2013 Newsletter, St. Vincent and Sarah Fisher Center acquired additional space from our partner, Christ the King Elementary School. This additional wing opened up a whole new world for our students, children and adults alike. With the new wing:

- The number of Children's classrooms have doubled, enabling the Center to expand its program to include fourth and fifth graders
- 3 of the Children's classrooms now have "Cozy Corners" (See below)
- Parents now have their own secure entrance and waiting room when picking up their children
- A new Children's "Sick Room" was created for troubled tummies or some time away from the other children
- The Adults have two more classrooms, which include a Computer Lab and space for assessments and practice testing

This has been a labor of love and we are grateful to the following for their donations and help in making this vision a reality:

The Man Who Made It Happen!

The new spaces have been expertly renovated and updated by Rick Cochran. Rick has been a loyal supporter of the Center since 1996 and is literally the one who made our expansion possible - no task was too small. He repaired ceilings, installed insulation, custom built radiator covers, painted, remodeled the Children's Wing kitchenette, moved furniture, cleaned, put up dry wall, and the list goes on and on. He is a one man crew and worked extremely hard to make not only the new wing, but the new adult rooms comfortable, safe, and inviting to our students. We owe the beauty of our facility to Rick and count our blessings for him every day!



Ms. Eva, Director of Children's Education and Judy Dunn at the dedication of Rita's Room February, 2014

Rita's Room

One of the Center's most ardent supporters is Judy Dunn. A member of the Investment Committee, Volunteer, Donor and past Board of Trustee, many people know that Judy was responsible for the Wine and Garden Parties that SVSF held at its former location in Farmington Hills, which were extraordinary fundraisers for the Center. Judy's faith in the mission of the organization has never dimmed and has always been committed to SVSF. Upon seeing the efforts being made to renovate the new Children's Wing, Judy saw that still more

needed to be done, that was simply not in the budget and it would take a long time before the Center would be able to accomplish all it wanted for the Children. With the most gracious of hearts, Judy made a generous gift that allowed the completion of the renovation of the wing, so that the Children could start enjoying a safe, beautiful environment as soon as possible, in time for the beginning of the Winter Semester. It is with the deepest gratitude that we dedicated our 5th Grade Classroom in February, 2014 "In

loving memory of Rita and Al Dunn, by their daughter Judy, whose generosity made this Children's Wing possible."



Peggy J. Owens Tribute

Peggy J. Owens grew up as an active part of the St. Vincent and Sarah Fisher community. Born in 1933 as Peggy Joan O'Connor, Peggy was one of 13 children. She was orphaned at 6 years of age, after the start of the Great Depression and went to live in the St. Vincent and Sarah Fisher Home at the age of 6. She remained there until she graduated at 18.

Peggy married and raised four children while teaching herself to cook, sew and make beautiful art. She also invited two beautiful foster children to be part of her family, welcoming them into her home. She was actively involved in the school parent/teacher association and provided leadership in all kinds of community and church programs. She pursued a degree in accounting and served at many fine companies, including Stanley Tools and Blue Cross/Blue Shield.

Peggy passed away on July 15, 2013 after just turning 80 years old. She had fond memories of the Sisters at St. Vincent and Sarah Fisher Home and credited them with helping her greatly in her youth. Peggy was survived by 4 children, 9 grandchildren and 7 great-grandchildren.

Peggy overcame the difficulties of loss of family and severe economic times to thrive and offer a great deal to her family, church, school, work and community. She believed in God, knew that He



Peggy Owen's daughter, Dawn Paduganan and Keyonnie Lewis



Keyonnie's daughters on the day of the dedication in one of the Cozy Corners

had made a way for her with the help of the St. Vincent and Sarah Fisher community and genuinely desired to see other people who were attempting to overcome tough odds succeed.

In honor of this remarkable woman, her family created the Peggy J. Owens Memorial Scholarship in 2013, awarded to recent GED Graduate, Keyonnie Lewis. Further, Peggy's family created a lasting tribute to Peggy through the generous funding of the Children's Cozy Corners, where

children are able to embrace reading for pleasure, which were dedicated in January, 2014.



Thank you to Edibles Rex for donating the food for the Children's Wing Open House. Edibles Rex has been a great partner to SVSF and provides the daily meals for our Children's Program, both after-school and in the Summer. Their food tastes great, is nutritious and fresh and we are grateful to them for giving our kids a healthy meal each day! Especially when the Winter weather has caused so many cancelled school days, Edibles Rex accommodated us in every way possible!

To see more amazing pictures of our transformation, like us on "Facebook"!

April is Volunteer Appreciation Month!

The Center wouldn't exist without the tremendous support of our volunteers.

Volunteer of the Year – Martha Doty

Dedicated and enthusiastic volunteers are a blessing to every organization and SVSF is honored that of all the outstanding volunteer opportunities in Metro Detroit, Martha Doty shared her talents with us. A graduate of Michigan State University, Martha came to the Center after having retired from the West Bloomfield School District, where she taught for 32 years. There, she worked with children from kindergarten to fourth grade and special education students. Martha has considerable experience in teaching reading (especially to children of families where English is a second language).

Having found us through her church bulletin, Martha has been a dependable, passionate part of our Children's Education Experience and is greatly valued by our students and staff alike. "As a volunteer, I have witnessed and have been a part of helping children build on their reading, writing and mathematical skills. I have been able to help them with their personal challenges and struggles, and to witness their accomplishments and emerging personalities."

Congratulations Martha and thank you for the impact you have made upon the children of our community!

Welcome to the Board – Dennis Sayles

In 2010, SVSF welcomed a volunteer who had worked professionally for approximately 16 years as a public school teacher, Dennis Sayles. Since then, Dennis has been one of the most reliable and devoted volunteers for the Center, having worked with both the Children and Adult programs. But more than that, Dennis is also an enthusiastic advocate for the Center and its mission, believing strongly in our mission. Wanting to do even more than what he was doing already, Dennis has stepped up as the newest member of the Board of Trustees, bringing his educational acumen and implicit understanding of our programs from the volunteer level, to the Boardroom.

He too has changed the lives of many students and we are delighted to have you Dennis – welcome a-Board!

Students Helping Students

As always, SVSF has received extraordinary support from our partners in higher education and we are most grateful for their students that have come to us in a variety of ways, including Health Sciences, Biology, Social Work, and Service Learning to name just a few of the Departments from Madonna University, Oakland University, Wayne State University and University of Michigan.

Special initiatives have been launched this Spring by some of the students in Biology programs at Madonna and Wayne State Universities and we will be excited to share the outcomes in the Fall Newsletter!

We also would like to say thank you to our year-long interns who have provided enormous program support to SVSF since the Fall of 2013. Melissa Gush and Robin Rutledge-Clark came to us from Madonna University and Jennifer Reddick, through Wayne State University. Each of them have been tremendous assets to our team and we are most grateful for all of their hardwork! We wish them farewell when their placements end in April and all the best for the bright futures that lay ahead of each of them.

easy ways to Help make a **Change**

It's easy to be part of all of the positive changes in the Center and help in ways you may not have considered before.

Like us on Facebook!



Facebook is a wonderful way to stay connected to all of the announcements and activities of the Center. Help us expand our social network by "liking" us!

Charity Motors - Donate your vehicle and you can designate the proceeds to the SVSFC. Visit www.charitymotors.org for more information.



Ask your employer – Does your employer have an Employee Giving/Matching Gift program? A volunteer group? Give grants to non-profits? Or are there employee activities such as a jean day that raise money? Ask how St. Vincent and Sarah Fisher Center can be included.

Check with your place of worship – many faith communities have funds that they designate to community efforts.

Designate us for Busch's and Kroger Community Rewards programs – log on to their websites and select St. Vincent and Sarah Fisher Center to receive a donation from your grocery shopping.

Leave a Legacy – Consider St. Vincent and Sarah Fisher in your estate planning, to leave a gift that keeps on giving. We can help. Call Nancy Skula at (313) 535-9200, extension 3110.

Monetary donations – We rely on donations to operate. Your contribution is not only tax-deductible, it also directly supports our programs. Your gift will help our kids to succeed in school and make our adults more employable, which has economic impact for our entire community – both now and in the future. We are able to accept secure donations on our website too!

In-kind – Visit our website at www.svsfcenter.org – We have a variety of needs. Something as simple as a roll of paper towel or batteries can help off-set operating costs.

United Way or CFC designations – If you or your company participate in either the annual United Way or CFC campaigns, you can designate your gift toward St. Vincent and Sarah Fisher Center.

Volunteer – It doesn't take a lot of time to make a difference. And we have a variety of ways that you can help. Whether it is tutoring, administrative assistance, or publicity and marketing, your assistance is appreciated.

Call us at (313) 535-9200 or visit www.svsfcenter.org and learn more about how you can contribute to change.

Thank you! We couldn't do it without you!

We need your help! Please consider volunteering – we have a variety of ways you can support the Center and our Community. Contact Sr. Marie Judith Haupt at (313) 535-9200 x3104 or visit www.svsfcenter.org for more information.

St. Vincent and Sarah Fisher Center

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**For more information, please
call us at (313) 535-9200
or visit www.svsfcenter.org**



Our Mission -

We provide educational programs, basic skill building and academic enhancement for at-risk children and adults, designed to build self-sufficiency skills for academic

and employment success, personal achievement and dignity.



WINDOWS OF OPPORTUNITY UPDATE!

As announced previously, the Detroit Historical Society has generously donated the use of their Community Gallery for St. Vincent and Sarah Fisher Center's Windows of Opportunity exhibit, which opens to the public on October 11, 2014 and runs through December 28th. "The Detroit Historical Society is pleased to partner with the St. Vincent and Sarah Fisher Center and share their story with the Metro Detroit community," said Bob Bury, Executive Director and CEO of the Detroit Historical Society. "Our Community Gallery at the Detroit Historical Museum is made for bringing exactly these kinds of stories to our audience."

Plans are still in the works and more details will be shared in a Special Edition Summer Newsletter. Watch your mailbox and be sure to "Like" St. Vincent and Sarah Fisher Center on Facebook, so you can receive ongoing information on the exhibit itself and other activities.