



St. Vincent and  
Sarah Fisher Center

SPRING 2019

# *Happy 175<sup>th</sup> Anniversary!*

Dear Friends,

We did it! St. Vincent and Sarah Fisher Center has made it to our 175th Anniversary! That's right, since our inception as St. Vincent's Academy in downtown Detroit; we have been serving the community in a variety of ways. And when the Daughters of Charity founded us in 1844, they started us off on the right foot, as one of the pillars on which we still stand – providing free education and support to those in need.

Countless families have been touched by the many loving hands that have helped the Center to survive and thrive through the years. Maybe you took the hand offered to you in assistance or wiped away a tear. Maybe those hands held you when you were small. Maybe those hands were clasped in prayer for strength, forgiveness or guidance for the Center. Maybe those hands hammered a nail, pulled a weed or wrote a check. Or maybe the hands helped with the numerous tasks that have been fulfilled by thousands to keep the Center operating and serving all of these years. If your hands were one of the multitudes that have either accepted help or gave support, you helped to make 175 years possible. This is your anniversary too, so use those hands to give yourself a pat on the back or to clap for a remarkable accomplishment.

And an achievement it is indeed! There are only a handful of institutions in Michigan that has been in continuous operation since before the start of the Civil War. Or before the invention of the light bulb, the telegraph, toilet paper, umbrellas, and paved streets. Since our humble origins in a small wooden building where the Millender Center currently sits, we have been committed to meeting the needs of our community. To exist this long demonstrates a devotion to our mission and dedication to evolving as the world changes. It also proves that the extended family of SVSF has grit and determination to always be here for the residents of Southeastern Michigan.

We sincerely hope that you join us on April 10th at our *Celebrate the Center* event (see the back of this newsletter for event information). We will take a look back at some of our history, as well as how we are working towards completing two centuries of services – with the help of a whole lot of hands.

Yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Diane Renaud".

Diane Renaud  
Executive Director/CEO





# Bridging the GAP

Through the expansion of the adult program services, SVSF is now providing a **GAP** Program. **GAP** stands for Graduate Acceleration Program. It is intended to provide our GED/High School Equivalency graduates with the support and resources to take the next step to self-sufficiency.

For example, Mykia is one of the 2018 Graduates. Now that she had her GED, she wanted to move on to the next phase – to become an LPN. But she discovered that even though she had done well on the GED, preparing for the entry exam to the LPN program still had its challenges. The test was geared towards the nursing profession and she needed some more support to take the leap.

So, as part of SVSF's GAP services, we purchased the preparation book of the nursing test for Mykia. Then, we tutored her, just as we had done for the GED. When she was ready, we paid the testing fee too. We are very happy to say that she is currently enrolled in a nursing program.

We wish Mykia all the best and know that we will see great things from her in the future!



Mykia King

**MADONNA**  
UNIVERSITY

## *Celebrating* 5 years of **STEM**

SVSF has had an ongoing joint project with our deeply valued partner, Madonna University, for many years. Many of you are aware of all of the effort that their Nutrition Network provides to us each year, managing our Children's Urban Garden. They also teach our young students the importance of good nutrition.

But this year, we are celebrating five years of our STEM program in association with the Biology Department at Madonna as well. SVSF has had the extraordinary pleasure of working with Dr. Veronica Riha, Interim Chairperson, Biology Department at Madonna in creating and running this program.

Essentially, Madonna provides a science based curriculum to our Children's Program for 3rd – 5th graders. Through weekly science specific sessions, the children learn about a particular area of science. In Spring 2019, the focus will be a celebration of Women's History Month. The children will be doing projects about women who have served as international leaders in scientific discovery throughout history.

Then, the parents, guardians and families are being invited to Madonna University to **"Women in Science: Presented by Your Child."** The children will have created boards, featuring what they have learned. Then they will gain the unique experience of public speaking, but presenting those Boards to the audience at the event.

Finally, they will come back and present their Boards to the children in the 1st and 2nd grade classes. In this way, it requires a true understanding of the material that they have covered in order to explain it to a younger child.

We can't believe it's been five years and we are so grateful to Madonna University and Dr. Rhia for her extraordinary patience and commitment.



Think of  
**SVSF** when you think of Spring!

We could use your help to make our grounds more beautiful! While you are out buying your Spring flowers, think of SVSF and pick up an extra perennial!

We are looking for both shade and sun loving perennials. If you would like to make arrangements for your donation, please let us know by calling **(313) 535-9200**.



# DECADES of DONORS

In this special anniversary year, we want to take a moment to thank some special generous donors who have consistently supported the Center for 20 years or more! Their steadfast commitment to the Center is a stabilizing force that has helped SVSF to transition as the community needs have changed.

We especially want to recognize the  
**St. Andrew Catholic Community**  
*for more than 30 years  
of support for our services.*

We salute these organizations and say "Thank You!" from the bottom of our hearts!

## Corporations

Eastown Distributors

Hal's Auto Clinic

Sheraton Detroit Novi

Dana Sample from Sheraton Detroit Novi shared  
"SVSF is such a worthy organization  
and gives back so much to the  
community. We are happy to help  
SVSF help our community."

Thanks Dana!

## Foundations

B.J. and C.L. Cebelak Foundation

Myrtle E. & William G. Hess Charitable Trust

The Thomas Foundation

The Village Club Foundation

## Partners in Faith

St. Andrew Catholic Community

St. Edith Church

St. Kenneth Church

St. Regis Catholic Church

# 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.**

**AmazonSmile** – Think of SVSF when you are shopping and Help Our Students! Amazon will donate 0.5% of the price of your eligible AmazonSmile purchases to St. Vincent and Sarah Fisher Center whenever you shop on AmazonSmile (smile.amazon.com).

**Charity Motors** – Donate your vehicle and you can designate the proceeds to SVSF. Visit [www.charitymotors.org](http://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 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 Center 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](http://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 designation** – If you or your company participate in the annual United Way campaign, 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](http://www.svsfcenter.org) and learn more about how  
You Can Contribute to **Change**.**

**Like us on Facebook**

**Follow us on Twitter**



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!

## 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](http://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.

I enjoy SVSF because I get a snack  
and I get to learn new things.  
I just love it here! Who ever made  
this place, you are so good.  
from, Jayda