

New Decade – *New Directions*

Dear Friends,

We've entered 2020 – a new decade. With that, comes for many the resolution to try to achieve new things in our lives. Some will try to lose weight, get healthy, get a new job – but how many people consider changing their thinking? That's perhaps the most challenging thing of all, to set aside our preconceived notions and look at things from a different perspective, without judgment, without bias. One of my "go to" ways of encouraging myself and others to test our beliefs is to ask "Would you or I still feel the same way about a topic, if we were born into a different zip code (or more specifically, a different economic level)?" In other words, if we were born in a different area, to different parents, and different family culture – would our viewpoint be the same? Would you have gone to college, married, had a family, what would your job be, would you be economically stable?

Looking at a topic through this lens usually produces some interesting responses and often indicates whether we are willing to learn something about ourselves, perhaps challenging our own long-held belief systems. I've witnessed so many affirming surprises as a result of this conversation. For example, I asked these questions of someone who was wondering what value they could bring to our students through volunteering. They were surprised to realize that they unconsciously assigned blame onto the students for their disadvantaged position in life, instead of admiring them for their commitment to improving themselves. It was wonderful to see them truly consider the questions and have a key insight into their motivation: "Wow – I didn't realize that I was judging the people that I want to support and here I am thinking I can help them. Maybe they can teach me."

That's a really hard revelation – to take that raw look at yourself and hold yourself accountable. To change is one of the hardest things to do in life. But it's a healthy choice and it's a choice that we have embraced at St. Vincent and Sarah Fisher Center. We are looking at who we are, what we want to do for the community and to perhaps change our perspective in order to grow or find new directions.



One of our new directions came to us through our friends **Stephen Ellis and the Stratford-Cambridge Group**, who purchased tablets and a locking storage case for the Children's program. The purpose for the tablets was to introduce a new curriculum, that has been exceptionally productive, helping the Center to more specifically pinpoint learning elements for the kids and provide a well-rounded approach.

Some other new directions for the Center:

- Scootpad technology was incorporated to engage the kids on a different level and make the personalization of their programs, that much more effective.
- Communication tools have been implemented to connect more directly with parents, helping them to become more engaged in assisting their children with at-home studies.
- We have also changed our **Celebrate the Center** event to reach more people about the efforts of SVSF. (Details are located in this newsletter.)
- Added the ability on our website to establish monthly donations to the Center, making financial support easier.
- Revised our Summer Program for kids to provide more convenient options, focused upon preventing summer slip and serving more children.



We are excited about these and other new directions that we are taking in 2020 and we hope that you will join us!

Warmest regards,

Diane Renaud, Executive Director/CEO

Super Student!



In January, the Children's Program was thrilled to select **Crystinn Loone** as it's Winter Semester **Super Student!** Crystinn set the goal for herself to achieve this special recognition, when she enrolled in the program in the Fall.

She has improved more than one grade level in reading and three grades in sight words. Her math skills also improved significantly by mastering three new math concepts in only one term. She set the bar high for herself and worked really hard to achieve it!

We are so proud of wonderful Super Student,

Crystinn!

Holiday

Once again, the children and families served by the Center benefitted from the profound generosity of some amazing donors: **Doug Barr and Friends, Comerica**



Bank, Marion High School, and Rooted Volunteer Team from Compass Christian Church in Livonia. Our families thank you for the wonderful Holidays that you gave to all of them.

GIVING!

Recognition from

THE CITY OF DETROIT



A Year-end wrap up meeting was held for all recipients of Community Development Block Grant Funds. (We receive a CDBG grant for our Adult Program.)

There was a new Certificate of Distinction awarded to only five of all of the CDBG recipients from across the City. **St. Vincent and Sarah Fisher Center was chosen as the Educational Recipient!** It is a certificate from the Director of HUD Funding for the City of Detroit recognizing: "Distinguished Service from the City of Detroit: For demonstration of exemplary program management, implementation, and distinguished service." It was a tremendous honor to be celebrated in front of all of our colleagues by the City for being the benchmark in program and grant management.

This is an enormous recognition of the amazing team that we have – not only the Adult Education Team, but also the Administrative staff that write, facilitate and do all of the reporting for the grant. So we would like to acknowledge our fantastic team members who made this honor possible:

**Michelle Delvo,
Steve Dunbar,
Steve Goodrum,
Tracie Peller,
Renee Pouget,
Nancy Skula, Sharon Wheeler,
and Aubrey Williams.**



Well done everyone!



Thanks to Our New Partner

Alliance Catholic Credit Union for

raising money for the Center through their Employee Jeans Day. They also showed their support by giving presentations to our students (Budgeting 101 and Basic Dollars and Cents). *Thank you for supporting our students!*



in Loving memory..

Can you imagine what your life would be like if you didn't know your parents? What kind of parent would you turn out to be? In the case of Veronica Marie Patrishkoff, you would turn out to be a loving mom and warm tribute to the human spirit. Born in 1930, Veronica spent the first 13 years of her life as a resident at St. Vincent and

Sarah Fisher Center, raised without knowing her parents, then became a foster child when she was 13. She told her four children about her happy times riding bicycles, climbing trees, going to the Brighton Summer Camp, and being raised by the Sisters in a close and caring environment. Those years were formative for her, and she learned that God's love was everlasting. Even when life delivered other blows, this inner love for others sustained her - such as meeting her birth mother in her 30's, only to find that she was "the secret". Feeling rejected again, she could have turned bitter, she could have turned inward. Instead, she went on to be the devoted and loving wife of Lawrence and the beloved mother of David, Daryl, Valerie and Violet. Before we lost this beautiful woman in December, she was a loving grandmother to 11 and great grandmother to 12!

Throughout her life, Veronica was known for her giving spirit, which she said was instilled in her during her years at SVSF. She loved to travel, spend time with her family, support her church, fill the house with music, and invite anyone and everyone over for meals and laughter. One of her other qualities was generosity of the heart. She raised her family to believe in the power of giving back to others. If someone asked for a \$1, she would give them \$5. For 89 years, she was a vibrant and spirited example that even though life could occasionally be tough and cold, inner warmth and genuine love for others will sustain you. So, even though she didn't know her parents, she turned out to be a parent and grandmother that exuded love - even into the many generations that will follow. And through that legacy, she will always be here. We are grateful to the Veronica Marie Patrishkoff Trust and her family for the generous gift she made to the Center in honor of how she learned to love and carried it throughout her life.

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 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 – 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 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.**

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.

Special thanks

to our wonderful and generous long-time supporter, Easttown Distributors, whose employees raised money to purchase a Kindle Fire Tablet for each student in the Children's After-School program, along with personalized cases and bags of other gifts.

We are so grateful for their continued giving hearts!





2020 *Celebrate the Center*

Join us for a family movie day showing

Willy Wonka & the Chocolate Factory

4:00 p.m. – Saturday, April 18, 2020

Redford Theatre

17360 Lahser Road, Detroit, MI 48219

*Pre-movie entertainment featuring the
Historic Redford Theatre Organ*

Movie tickets: \$5.00/each (general seating)

VIP tickets: \$40/each includes:

- Movie Ticket
- Private, kid-friendly reception with refreshments (starts at 6:00 p.m.)
- Private tour of the Redford Theatre
- Priority seating (arrive to theater at 3:15 p.m.)
- Keepsake picture with Detroit's "Willy Wonka"
- Check-in at VIP table to receive wrist band for reception

Tickets can be purchased at:

[https://redfordtheatre.com/events/
willy-wonka-and-the-chocolate-factory-special-event/
or at the door](https://redfordtheatre.com/events/willy-wonka-and-the-chocolate-factory-special-event/)



SVSF Center Graduation Ceremony

A new addition to this year's Celebrate the Center will be a Graduation Ceremony for

2019 Adult Education Program Graduates
(who obtained their GED/High School Equivalency).

This ceremony welcomes all family, friends of our graduates and those that support this important achievement to join us in Celebrating them! 1:00 p.m. at the Redford Theatre

(Attending the Ceremony does not provide entry to the movie.)

- VIP Guests: Check-in at VIP Table in the theatre lobby to receive wristband, for entry into VIP Reception
- Doors open at 3:30 p.m. (3:15 for VIP guests)
- Brief Program highlighting St. Vincent and Sarah Fisher Center (before movie)
- Cash only at concession stand, benefitting the Redford Theatre
- Guests that come in costume (children or adult) will be part of a contest to win 4 VIP tickets and a feature in the Fall SVSF Newsletter (awarded after movie)
- 50/50 Raffle (awarded after movie – must be present to win)
- First 300 guests receive a free chocolate bar (one lucky winner will find a "Golden Ticket" to win 4 VIP tickets)

★ Special Anniversaries ★

svsf St. Vincent and
Sarah Fisher Center

Valuable Volunteers

The Center would not be able to explore new directions, without our amazing volunteers. Nor would we be able to serve the more than 1,000 families that we help each year — they make it possible! Their commitment and caring for our students is a daily reminder of how a simple kindness to another, can make a lifetime of difference. We are enormously grateful to our volunteers, who are celebrating special anniversaries of giving from the heart!

5 Year Anniversaries

David Camilleri

Eva Essex

Lorraine Hunter-Rooks

Toniya King

John (Jack) Mills

10 Year Anniversaries

Thomas Gross

Fr. Philip Paxton

Terry Shannon

25th Anniversary

Stephen Goodrum These days, it's unheard of to be with a company for more than two decades! It's also very difficult to find a synergy between a great employee and an organization — especially when that relationship has lasted for 25 years! SVSF Center is honored to recognize a valued and devoted team member, who is celebrating 25 years with the Center. Stephen Goodrum has been here through a lot over the years with SVSF, but has always been an utterly devoted advocate and pillar of the organization. He has always had nothing but the welfare of those that we serve and their best interests at heart. Steve is part of the reason that the Center evolved through its transition back to Detroit and has been a faithful leader. Your contributions have been immeasurable!

Thanks for 25 years, Steve!

