

****For Immediate Release****



Diocesan Council, Diocese of Cleveland
Society of St. Vincent de Paul

Contacts:

Alexa New, VP of Advancement
The Centers for Families and Children
216.325.9369 / alexa.new@thecentersohio.org

Natalie Schrimpf, Marketing and Development Manager
Society of St. Vincent de Paul, Diocese of Cleveland
216.696.6525 x.2520 / nschrimpf@svdpcle.org

New Emergency Food Distribution Partnership Announced between The Centers for Families and Children and St. Vincent de Paul Society

St. Vincent de Paul Society to Assume Ownership and Operation of Three Cleveland West Side Emergency Food Centers

CLEVELAND – March 31, 2016 –The Centers for Families and Children (The Centers), one of the oldest and largest human service organizations in Northeast Ohio, is proud to announce a new partnership with The Society of St. Vincent de Paul (SVDP), Diocese of Cleveland, a human service and welfare organization that has been serving Northeast Ohio for more than 150 years. Effective April 1, 2016, the Society of St. Vincent de Paul will assume ownership and operation of three Cleveland west side emergency food centers previously operated by The Centers: **Brookside**, 3804 Pearl Road; **Community Corner**, 8302 Detroit Avenue; and **Near West** (also known as “St. Patrick Hunger Center”) at 3610 Bridge Avenue. One of the largest food distributors to families in need on Cleveland’s west side, the three facilities collectively provide 750,000 meals annually.

SVDP currently operates one of the larger networks of hunger centers in Northeast Ohio through its five main and several smaller parish-based food centers, which feed more than 10,000 residents monthly, and has recently been looking to expand its services on the west side. “As long-term partners with both the Hunger Network and the Greater Cleveland Food Bank, our goal was always to position the centers within a larger network,” said Elizabeth Newman, president & CEO of The Centers. “We are proud that our agreement with SVDP will enable the centers to thrive and continue to meet the need in the community.”

“The St. Vincent de Paul Society’s mission is hunger prevention, and we’ve been able to build a sustainable path for the future operation of these three additional food centers,” said John Litten, executive director of SVDP. “We look forward to building upon the great work accomplished by The Centers.”

Established by West Side Ecumenical Ministry (WSEM), the three food centers have been owned and operated by The Centers since 2011, when The Center for Families and Children merged with WSEM and El Barrio to expand its services to more than 25,000 Northeast Ohio residents each year. In addition to distributing emergency food, hot prepared meals are also served at the Near West center, and Community Corner offers a resale shop to clients.

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St. Vincent de Paul Society's five main food centers are located at: 2145 Broadview Road, Cleveland; 6001 Woodland Avenue, Cleveland; Holy Name Church, 8328 Broadway Avenue, Cleveland; St. Philomena Church, 13824 Euclid Avenue, East Cleveland; and Visitation of Mary Church, 93 Kent Street, Akron.

While emergency food distribution will be transitioning to SVDP, access to food, especially nutritious food, remains a priority within The Centers' work. "The Centers operates 25 mobile pantries each summer to distribute fresh produce to clients and community members in need, are continuing to incorporate nutritious foods and eating habits in our early learning, parent engagement, and health and wellness services and are identifying new ways to expand and more fully integrate these efforts to better serve our clients, children and their families," said Elizabeth Newman.

The Centers and the Society of St. Vincent de Paul are committed to ensuring continuity for the clients served by these locations. "Throughout the transition, food services and hot meals will continue as they currently operate at all three food centers without any service disruption to the families," said John Litten.

About The Centers

We believe lasting, positive change begins with access to opportunities. We bridge the opportunity gap by connecting as many people as possible to effective health care, education, workforce development and essential human services. The Centers is one of the oldest and largest nonprofit organizations in Northeast Ohio, serving more than 25,000 people annually in our community. Visit TheCentersOhio.org to learn more.

About the Society of St. Vincent de Paul

Established in 1865, the Society of St. Vincent de Paul, Diocese of Cleveland, is a local human services and welfare organization of neighborhood volunteer groups residing in participating parishes ("Conferences") throughout the Diocese of Cleveland's eight-county service area. Volunteers ("Vincentians") provide emergency direct assistance to those in need, regardless of their race, ethnicity or religious affiliation. Last year alone, some 260,000 low-income individuals received nearly \$5 million in aid, which included food donations from SVDP's multiple food centers, clothing, back-to-school supplies and assistance with utilities and rent. For more information, call 216.696.6525 extension 3150 or svdpCLE.org.

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