

Message from the Executive Director

Jeff Conroy
Executive Director

As I write this message it has only been a few weeks since the most painful incident we've ever experienced here at SVDP and the feeling is still "shock". We never saw this one coming. This tragic event has affected our community, our staff and especially the Samuel family. Our energy, thoughts and prayers go to them.

For 68 years SVDP has been serving this community by providing help ranging from rental assistance to a bag of food. We have literally served tens of thousands of people over the years who have sought aid from us. "No act of charity is foreign to the society" is what St Vincent de Paul is based on. But we have never had a day like that of Monday, March 24, 2014. On that night a family was shattered by an act of violence taking the lives of a father and son.

Everyday we work with people seeking help, in whatever condition they're in. We're not here to judge. Our job is to be a safety net for those who need us. We provide help to get them back on their feet. Many just need a place to stay until a job starts or they need a place to stay until they can save enough money to move into permanent housing. Most just need a hand up, not hand out, while they're going through a rough patch. In every instance St Vincent de Paul has been and will always be here for them. We try never to use the words "no", "can't" or "won't" as in "no we can't help you" or "no we won't help you". By the time people come to us they've already heard that and are often desperate. Our role in this community is to provide hope and serve others the best way we can. And we'll continue to do so.

This incident will never define us. I wish I could say that over the last 68 years we're batting 1,000, but we're not. I wish I could say we've had 100% success with everyone we've ever worked with, but I can't. What we will do is continue to serve our community, helping those in deep poverty, helping those who need of a hand up, and keep working to make a difference in people's lives. That's what we do.

Our hearts, thoughts and prayers go out to the Samuel family who are trying to make sense of what happened. It is truly a tragedy of epic proportions. But we will always be here for them. Our prayers are also going to out to the police who walked into a scene that could only described as unimaginable. Lastly, I have so many prayers going out to my staff. You give tirelessly of yourselves to make a difference and sometimes things just happen that we have no control over. Please remember, our lives will be full of defining