

“The poor will teach you many things. Honor them as you would honor Christ himself.”

— **St. Vincent de Paul**

FROM THE HEART

Dear Friends,

This Easter season reminds us that transformation is always possible: from darkness comes light, from despair comes hope, and from brokenness comes new life. That commitment to transforming lives is what brought the Daughters of Charity to Santa Barbara in 1858. Through housing, education, meals, and the dignity of being seen, St. Vincent's continues to meet both the physical and spiritual needs of the poor.

Welcome to **Since 1858**, our newsletter celebrating the heritage and heart of St. Vincent's Santa Barbara. In 17th-century France, St. Vincent de Paul and St. Louise de Marillac founded the Daughters of Charity - now one of the largest religious orders in the world, serving in every country as educators, nurses, and pioneers of compassionate ministry.

The Daughters came to Santa Barbara in 1858, just eight years after California statehood, to open the first English-speaking school. Once here, they saw beyond their original mission: opening an orphanage for abandoned children, the first children's infirmary, Santa Barbara's first daycare during WWI, and the first school for special-needs children.

Today, St. Vincent's continues this legacy. We operate Santa Barbara's largest affordable housing campus. Our Family Strengthening Program is the region's only 27-month supportive housing program for single mothers, breaking cycles of poverty. Our Early Childhood Education Center prepares children for success. In 2019, we opened the Father Virgil Cordano Center: Santa Barbara's first daytime resource center for our unhoused neighbors.

Since 1858 brings you inside this work — the people who make it possible, the families finding their path forward, and what happens when a community chooses compassion. Thank you for being part of this story.

- **Rosa Paredes President & CEO**

THEN AND NOW



The Daughters of Charity have always brought care, dignity, and hope.

A Legacy of Personal Care

Details matter: this photo from our archives shows a Daughter of Charity helping a student look her best in the 1950s. Today, Sr. Oanh continues that legacy at the Fr. Virgil Cordano Center.

In addition to her beautician license, this year Sr. Oanh earned her Bachelor of Science in Nursing from Azusa Pacific University while serving full-time, her third nursing credential in 25 years. With support from the St. Vincent's community, she persevered through the challenging online program.

Whether it's a haircut that restores dignity or wellness checks that ensure health, the Daughters of Charity continue bringing care and love to those who need it most.



A Place of Welcome: Fr. Virgil Cordano Center

Every morning, nearly 100 of our neighbors experiencing homelessness line up outside the Fr. Virgil Cordano Center (FVCC) until the doors open at 9 a.m. What began as a conversation over coffee between Sr. Margaret, a Daughter of Charity, and Fr. John, a Franciscan Friar, has become Santa Barbara's first daytime resource center — a sanctuary of dignity and hope.

The center honors Fr. Virgil Cordano (1919–2008), the beloved Franciscan priest whose decades of service enriched our community. Fr. Virgil embodied unity and selfless dedication, profoundly believing in inclusivity and interfaith dialogue. His legacy lives on in this space.

The most important thing we do happens when someone walks through our doors: we greet them by name, with a smile and often a hug. For a few hours, they can safely relax, get a hot meal, and access the help they need.

Our staff and 40 volunteers make this possible, providing more than breakfast and lunch. Each week, we wash 45 loads of laundry. Sr. Oanh provides first aid and haircuts, helping people look their best for family reunions or job interviews. We safeguard mail for 140 members: letters from home, housing notices, vital documents. We hand out deodorant, toothbrushes, and much-treasured dry socks.

Homelessness is complex, and each person's path here is different. It sits at the intersection of public health, housing affordability, mental health services, and gaps within social service systems. Addressing this requires commitment from local, state, and federal agencies and organizations like FVCC all working together.

Case managers connect people to ID cards, Supplemental Security Income (SSI) applications, mental health support, and housing lists. They navigate bureaucracies, make phone calls, fill out forms, and advocate for each person.

This is what Fr. Virgil would have wanted: a place of belonging, where kindness meets practical help, and where people are welcomed exactly as they are. At the days end, we send people back into circumstances we can only imagine; we tuck sandwiches into backpacks and promise: *"We'll see you tomorrow."*

BY THE NUMBERS

Love Administered Every
Month at FVCC

4,557

MEALS SERVED

173

HAIRCUTS GIVEN

217

GALLONS OF COFFEE

195

LOADS OF LAUNDRY

"For a few hours, they can safely relax, get a hot meal, and be welcomed exactly as they are."

We are currently planning a larger, more effective FVCC. To learn more about our HOPE STARTS HERE campaign, call (805) 683-6388 or visit frvirgilocordanocenter.org

Claudia Lash and Pat Lupo: The Basket Ladies

Every year, sometime around late summer, Claudia Lash's home begins to fill with baskets. Carefully assembled over months — each artful collection of gifts, experiences, and treasures is a reflection of the woman behind it: generous, thoughtful, and deeply committed to the families at St. Vincent's. By the time November arrives, Claudia and her longtime co-founder Pat Lupo have created anywhere from 70 to 100 of them, each destined for the silent auction at what has become one of Santa Barbara's most beloved charitable traditions. The story goes that a Daughter of Charity planted the seed one day: *"you should do a fashion show."* In 2009, they did.

At first a modest gathering on St. Vincent's campus — friends, fashion, and a shared belief that the mothers and children in the Family Strengthening Program deserved more support than they were getting. Fifteen years later, that gathering has moved to the Rosewood Miramar Beach. It sells out annually, and has raised more than \$500,000 for families working to rebuild their lives.

Pat Lupo, who co-founded the event alongside Claudia and co-chaired it every year since, has been a steady and devoted presence. Her husband Bill, who volunteered at her side for years, was honored at a recent event, a reminder that this work has always been a family affair. That's the gift Claudia and Pat gave us. And every basket is proof of it.



Claudia Lash and Pat Lupo, co-founders of the Annual Fashion Show & Luncheon.

"Their vision created an event that doesn't just raise funds. It builds community."

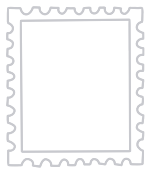
— Rosa Paredes, President & CEO

IN THE COMMUNITY

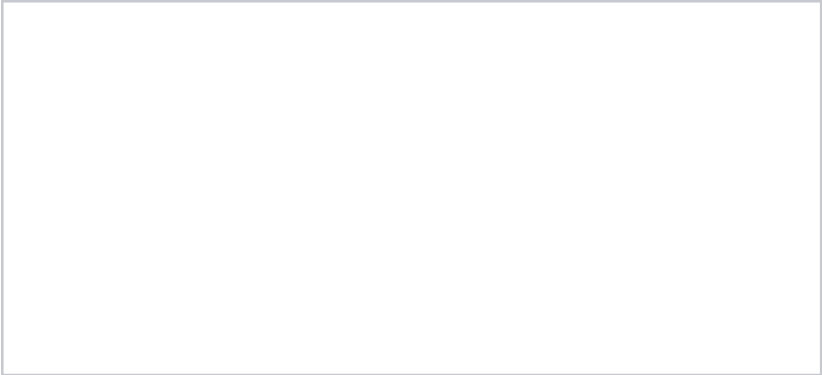


Thank you to A- to-Z Cooking School and the Santa Barbara Newcomers Club for bringing cooking classes to our Family Strengthening Program. Cooking is more than a skill: it's empowerment. Through hands-on sessions, mothers learned to prepare delicious, affordable meals, stretching their budgets while building kitchen confidence. We're grateful for this partnership and excited for more programs like this.

Learn more at atozcookingschool.org



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THANK YOU

For your prayers, your time, your generosity—all of it matters.

Your financial gifts create change:

- \$50 – Classroom supplies and meals for preschoolers
 - \$75 – Housing support for mothers and children
 - \$100 – Daily services for our unhoused neighbors
- stvincents-sb.org/donate

DONATE ❤️



SAVE THE DATE


MONTECITO CLUB
GOLF TOURNAMENT
October 5, 2026
SOLD OUT

ROSEWOOD
MIRAMAR BEACH
FASHION SHOW & LUNCHEON
November 28, 2026
TICKETS ON SALE SOON



To inquire about a corporate sponsorship, silent auction, or raffle donations, scan the QR code or contact us.



Join us for one of Santa Barbara's most beloved charitable traditions, supporting families in the Family Strengthening Program.