

*Society of St. Vincent de Paul  
Snohomish County District Council/North Sound District Council*

**HISTORY**

**Formation of the Council**

On February 27, 1977 Msgr. John Mattie, pastor of Immaculate Conception Church of Everett, hosted a meeting of the parish SVDP conferences of Snohomish County. Among those attending were Fred Baisch, Tom Kobayashi, and John Peluso of the [Seattle] Central Council. They offered their aid in forming a district council of Snohomish County. A second meeting on March 10, 1977, at Immaculate Conception, established the Snohomish County District Council and elected its charter officers. Bert Cronin had the honor of being elected president without being in attendance. His conference members nominated him and after conferring with him by phone, Bert said he would accept the first three-year term of the presidency. Elections for the other officers were then held and the council was off and running. Before the store was started, collections were taken at each meeting, and each conference contributed a donation every month. This was later returned to the conferences in the form of a credit at the store, for merchandise they wished to use in their work.

The first year of meetings were held with each parish conference taking a turn hosting the monthly meetings. After the store at 6430 Broadway was rented in January of 1978 the meetings were held there on the fourth Thursday of every month. In January of 1978 the council incorporated itself under the laws of the State of Washington non-profit organizations. At the inception of the Council the conferences were:

St. Mary Magdalen, Everett – Frank Marchi,  
Immaculate Conception, Everett – Dave Kelley  
Holy Rosary Conference, Edmonds – James Shields  
St. Pius X, Mountlake Terrace – Raymond Mohs  
St. Brendan, Bothell – Leo Moore

It was now time to start a SVDP thrift store. In the summer of 1977, Bert Cronin, the acting president of the Council, appointed Harold Knox as a chairman for the development of a SVDP store in Everett. As stores chairman he was to locate a building and organize a store to open on a daily basis. Thanks in large part to a generous \$5,000 donation by Bert Cronin, a building was found, and readied for opening. In December of 1977 the building at 6430 Broadway in Everett was rented from the Columbian Club of the Knights of Columbus in Everett. The early months of 1978 were spent cleaning up and painting the store for its grand opening. In March of 1978 it was opened, with Irv Gaines acting as store manager on a volunteer basis. The store was stocked by means of a Bundle Sunday, conducted at all the parishes. Mr. Gaines continued to run the store until Jim Cain was hired in June of 1978 as the store's first salaried manager. The wooden structure at 6430 Broadway was added onto with a 60 x 40 pole building in the fall of 1978. A lean-to was added on to provide a sorting room in the summer of 1980.

In 1982 the Council hosted its first Annual Meeting, and the following year its first Ozanam School for all members, facilitated faithfully for the first several years by Tom Kobayashi and John Peluso of the Seattle/King County St. Vincent de Paul Council.

***On June 29, 1990 the Snohomish County District Council was formally instituted as a member Council of the International Society of St. Vincent de Paul.***

Through these intervening years, prayer, collaboration, trainings and Council meetings have resulted in the successful extension of member conferences throughout Snohomish County, bringing its total number of conferences to 12 by 1995, including a total of 9 conferences formally aggregated with the Society. Through the dedicated leadership of succeeding Presidents and officers through the years, all conference members were encouraged to grow in their love and knowledge of the Rule, Spirituality and Mission of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul, through trainings and special appearances by Vincentians from the Phoenix Diocese, and Fr. Pedro Villaroya, our Western Region Spiritual Advisor. At the Council Annual Meetings, particular Vincentians were awarded the Council's Top Hat Award for exemplary leadership, dedication and

service to the Council, the Rule, and the poor of our area. In 1996 The Seattle Archdiocesan Council charged the Snohomish County District Council with the inclusion of previously isolated conferences in Skagit and Whatcom Counties to the north into its Vincentian membership.

**Present Conferences of the North Sound Council:**

*St. Cecelia – Stanwood*  
*Immaculate Conception – Arlington*  
*St. Pius X- Mountlake Terrace*  
*St. Thomas More- Lynnwood*  
*St. Mary of the Valley – Monroe*  
*Perpetual Help – Everett*  
*St. Michael – Snohomish*  
*Sacred Heart – Bellingham*

*St. Mary's, Marysville*  
*St. Mary of the Valley, Monroe*  
*St. Elizabeth Ann Seton- Mill Creek*  
*Immaculate Conception – Everett*  
*St. Mary Magdalen – Everett*  
*Holy Rosary – Edmonds*  
*Immaculate Conception – Mt. Vernon*

**Challenges, Divine Providence and Progress**

All the vagaries of thrift stores successes, challenges and progress through the years were experienced by the Snohomish Council through the years... rental issues, opening and closing of additional stores in Marysville, Lynnwood, Monroe and Everett, rises and declines in the economy, all had their impacts on the Stores Operations through the years. Under the dedicated leadership of Vincentian officers and members, the Council was able to purchase its original Broadway store property by 1990-1991.

In 1997, at a very challenging time for our Stores and Council financially, St. Vincent's trust in Divine Providence became even more present to our Council Vincentians. While mourning the death of our beloved Spiritual Advisor, Msgr. John Mattie, the Council learned of two bequests left to the Council. The first was a bequest of a double-wide mobile home by a 90-plus year old gentleman who was completely unknown to the Council. Officers and members were very grateful and immediately organized work parties to clean and refurbish the double-wide and its lot in a mobile home park to ready it for re-sale. The resale netted the Council \$35,000. Following on the heels of that gift, the Council was informed that our late beloved Spiritual Advisor, Msgr. John Mattie, had bequeathed \$45,000 to the Council in his will.

Those two gifts made it possible for the Council to begin a Capital Campaign to build a new 8,000 square-foot thrift store across the parking lot from our first Broadway store. The campaign, dubbed "A Home of our Own" as it would include office space and a board meeting room in our own building, was headed by then Executive Director Bill Cramer and Co-Presidents Chuck Seider and Mike Mallahan. The goal was successfully reached with the help of a mortgage loan through our bank, a gift from our Archbishop, a loan from our Archdiocese, and numerous gifts from parishioners, members and community businesses. Our new thrift store was opened in January, 1999. The mortgage and all loans were fully retired by the fall of 2000.

The Council purchased property from Value Village and adjacent to their store in Lynnwood in 2003 through a mortgage loan and a grant from the Washington State Trust Fund, built a new 12,000 square-foot store and celebrated its grand opening in February of 2005. With the ownership of our two properties, and dedication of the Board and staff, our Council looked to increase our present ministries to those in need in our 3-county area. A Needs Assessment Committee has been formed and is holding discussions with many community, county and non-profit organizations as well as our conferences to determine how we can continue to best bring the message of Christ's love to those in need in our region.

Presently in addition to our Conference ministry to those in need through home visits, our Council maintains a "Friends of the Poor Fund" which serves extra-ordinary needs of Conferences and the needs of the homeless walk-ins at our Everett store. We also maintain a grant-funded Bed Program for Children for our Conferences who receive requests from those they visit in homes.

Our history as a Council is short and modest, but blessed by God. With your attendance at this Western Region Meeting—another historic marker for us—*you* are part of our humble journey with the Society of St. Vincent de Paul.

We thank you and welcome you with our hearts and the love of Frederic and Vincent!