

SVDP Story - June 28, 2020

"We haven't had milk for a week," the grandmother said. "I have one can of ravioli for my three children," a woman told the SVDP volunteer. Our parish, Bellarmine Chapel in the oasis of Xavier, is surrounded by hundreds of apartment buildings, homes for thousands of our African-American neighbors. They live in a food desert and in places where no school lunches are available. Now, many have lost their jobs and have no health benefits and no money to pay rent and energy bills. Before the pandemic, SVDP members each Saturday visited fourteen neighbors, assisting them with food, Duke energy bills, rent, beds, and vouchers for furniture and clothing/household needs. Now, the visits are done by phone; vouchers are mailed out, and some volunteers deliver Kroger cards to neighbors who meet the volunteers at their cars. The downtown food pantry for St. Vincent de Paul pre-packages food each day, but many of our neighbors don't have cars or money for a bus trip so ten volunteers from the parish drive to Bank Street at least twice a month to pick up food for those who can't get there on their own. Because of your generous donations, individuals and families have been helped with rent, Duke bills, and water bills. "God hears our prayers," and "I am in tears. When I am financially stable, I will give back to you guys," are just two of the responses to this help that the volunteers have heard. Poverty, inadequate housing (40,00 units short in Cincinnati), lack of health and decent-paying job opportunities are sucking the breath from many of our neighbors. Thank you for helping SVDP help our neighbors, for providing "breath" to them. If you wish to volunteer, call parishioners Jim Doerger at 617-2085 or 378-8548.