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St. Vincent de Paul Georgia Challenges Community to Pay It Forward Many Who Fall Through the Cracks of the Relief Package Need Help

ATLANTA (April 16, 2020) – St. Vincent de Paul Georgia is challenging the community to think about the needs of those who need it most, especially those who fall through the cracks of the \$2 trillion relief package passed by the federal government last month.

Beginning this week, individual taxpayers will receive a \$1200 direct cash payment. These payments will decrease for higher-income Americans, and some above certain income thresholds will not receive any relief funds. A [new poll by Gallup](#) found that 3 percent of Americans intend to donate their funds, as those with household incomes of \$90,000 or more may hold jobs that have converted to remote work and their budgets might not be impacted by the crisis.

While the emergency legislation passed was aimed at helping people get through the challenges of the COVID-19 outbreak, not everyone qualifies for one of the payments. Many people ages 17 to 24 who hold lower-paying, entry-level jobs, have less secure housing arrangements and often struggle with student loan debt were claimed as dependents in 2019 so they will not receive any funds. And there is one key part of the original bill that was missing from the final draft: direct relief for our most vulnerable populations, those working in nontraditional sectors of the economy, who often do not qualify for unemployment benefits because of their immigration status.

SVdP Georgia's COVID-19 Response Fund directly assists Georgians in need who are experiencing hardships that are above what is covered by the relief checks, or due to a lack of receiving a check at all. For many Georgians, every dollar could be an essential lifeline for keeping their families fed and housed during the outbreak and economic turmoil.

“There are many people hurting and I think this is a way to help”, said Jane Hamman. “If you haven’t lost your job and can work from home, and you’re still making the same income as before, think about those who could benefit from these unexpected funds.” Hamman encourages those who are fortunate enough to be able to do so, to donate a portion of their stimulus checks once they arrive. “Both of us are still fully employed and since my son’s daycare has closed, we haven’t had to pay that bill so we’re actually saving. It’s like we never had this money so it doesn’t cost us anything,” Hamman said. “There are so many people struggling to make ends meet, it’s just the right thing to do.”

With the implementation of social distancing and the closing of non-essential businesses due to COVID-19, SVdP Georgia has experienced a 70% increase in requests for assistance from this time in 2019. Food and housing assistance continue to be the greatest needs.

From March 1 to April 10, they have assisted 2858 Georgia households:

- 910 households were assisted with rental assistance, 50% of those noted COVID-19 as an underlying cause for their need for assistance.
- 731 households were assisted with food bags, food vouchers, or grocery gift cards
- The remaining households were assisted with utility bills, healthcare/medicine, transportation (MARTA/gas cards) and other basic necessities.

SVdP Georgia says that if you are one of the fortunate ones who don't need this unexpected cash to tide you over until this outbreak passes, this may be your opportunity to pay it forward, and change - perhaps even save - a life. Just half of a \$1,200 check will:

- Feed 251 people facing hunger with a meal
- Provide 2 families with safe and clean shelter for a week
- Clothe 134 adults and children who don't have adequate clothing

The CARES Act provides a \$300 above-the-line deduction for cash contributions from individual taxpayers who take the standard deduction.* That means people may donate up to \$300 cash to SVdP Georgia with a corresponding reduction in taxable income.

SVdP Georgia has moved all emergency services to telecommunication instead of in-home case management. With the closing of 11 of 12 of its thrift stores and all churches, revenue for direct-aid financial assistance has abruptly stalled. In addition, food donations to supply their 38 food pantries are also running low due to the additional stress on grocery retail partners and lack of food available for recovery. The non-profit's staff and volunteers have been creative in organizing parking lot food bag pickups and independently purchasing food to ensure that needs are still being met. All means for people in need to reach out remain open: website, hotline, and reaching out to individual Conferences.

If you would like to pay it forward and donate toward the SVdP Georgia COVID-19 Response Fund, visit www.svdpgorgia.org/respondfund or text SVDPGA to 243725. To learn more about how SVdP Georgia is responding to COVID-19, visit www.svdpgorgia.org/response.

If you are in need of assistance, please call the SVdP Georgia assistance line at 678-892-6163 to be connected to your local Conference for available resources.

**Disclaimer: The CARES Act information is intended as guidance and does not constitute legal or tax advice for any specific individual or organization. Please consult your financial professionals.*

ABOUT ST. VINCENT DE PAUL GEORGIA

Respecting the dignity of each person, St. Vincent de Paul Georgia brings hope and help to those in need so they may achieve stability and move toward self-sufficiency. Through partnerships and collaboration with others, St. Vincent de Paul Georgia offers financial, material, educational and spiritual support to develop and deliver programs and services to those in need throughout the state.

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