



St. Vincent de Paul **Thrift Store**



Volunteer Handbook

Revised 9/18/21

St. Vincent De Paul Thrift Store

1300 Benner Pike, Suite B, State College, PA 16801 814-867-3131

Welcome to the St. Vincent de Paul Family of Volunteers! Thank you for donating your time and talent to our organization. This packet will provide you with information on our mission and operations.

Thrift Store Hours

Monday-Saturday 10:00 AM -4:00 PM

The Thrift Store is closed for all major holidays, and when the State College School District is closed due to inclement weather.

Customer Service and the Golden Rule are of Primary Importance

While we are a non-profit run by volunteers, we are also a commercial enterprise that depends on our reputation to stay in business. **Always** be friendly and helpful with customers and with those donating items.

The Thrift Store is more than a way to make money to help the poor. It also helps to spread the good news that we are all loved by God. The way we treat our customers, donors, and each other is a way of spreading that message.

General Information for Volunteers

- At the start of your shift, check the Volunteer Information Board in the Meeting Room to see if anything is on sale, if certain items are being saved for specific ministries, and other pertinent information. The tag/sticker color to be used for pricing that week is also posted on this board.
- **Student/community service volunteers** must report to the Day Manager at the start of their shifts, and sign in and out with the Day Manager for each time they work.
- Candy, crackers, soda, and water are always available—please help yourself.
- Please park in the far end of the lot—if possible, leave the spaces closest to our front door open for customers.
- The **Resource Notebook** in the Sorting Room includes up-to-date listings of Thrift Store prices, how to hang clothes, sizes (including conversions to international sizes), bedding measurements, safety procedures and other information to assist you in your work.
- **Purchasing Merchandise:** Volunteers may purchase store merchandise. Please pay during your shift—don't wait until the end when the cashier may be busy with last minute customers. If you want an item that doesn't have a set value, have another sorter price it for you. If you would like to purchase unpriced artwork, jewelry, or items for Rosalie's Boutique, put a note with your name and phone number on the piece asking that you be notified when it is priced.

Donation Greeters

- When accepting donations, thank the contributor and offer a receipt.
- **Donation Greeters should routinely do a presort of all incoming items.** Politely ask the donor what is in the bags or boxes—this will help you determine where to distribute the items.
- **Receipts:** Have the donor fill out the receipt—according to the IRS, the donor must complete or attach an itemized list—and sign at the bottom. You must also sign as accepting the item(s).
- Keep the white top copy and give the yellow copy to the donor. If the donor provides a separate list, you may make a copy of the donor's items list on the copier in the office.

- Explain that we cannot accept furniture, large appliances, computers, or hazardous materials (check the list posted in the Donations Room for more information).
- Due to space limitations, in general we cannot accept leftovers from yard sales. Take all bags of clothing, and give the donor one of the cards listing other places that accept donations (such as Goodwill).
- Lists of other places accepting used items are available in the Donations Room that can be given to donors who need to find other options for donations.
- **Fiberfill:** According to the Pennsylvania Department of Labor & Industry, we cannot sell the following items because we do not have the ability to sanitize them: quilts, comforters, and similar items with fiberfill stuffing, even if they are new and in the original packaging. These items may be given away; however, they must not be put out for sale in our store. The item may be put in the volunteer free box in the Meeting Room. If a Pennsylvania Licensing Inspector finds violations of these rules, we could be fined \$100 or even \$500 per item!
 - » Goodwill is licensed to accept these items; good customer service includes helping donors find other options for disposing of items.
- Immediately dispose of bags/items that are moldy or in unusable condition.

Resident Experts/Area Managers

Some items should be set aside to be priced by our resident experts:

- **Designer/high quality clothing, handbags, shoes:** place on the “Rosalie’s Boutique Rack” in the Sorting Room for Arlene to price. Arlene has expertise in fashion and knows which pieces can sell for more; she will price, place, and date these items using purple tags.
- **Books, CDs and DVDs** are placed in the books area of the Sorting Room.
- **Jewelry** should be placed in the 3rd drawer of the file cabinet next to the store manager’s desk for Margaret to clean and price.
- **Crystal, silver, porcelain, antique items, and collectibles** including dolls, should be placed in the white cabinet in the Sorting Room for Betty.
- **Artwork** is placed in the artwork racks in the Sorting Room for Beverly.
- **Neckties:** Put in white cabinet in the Sorting Room for Gladys.
- **Silk Scarves:** Put in white cabinet in the Sorting Room for Betty.
- **Electronics** such as radios, CD & DVD players, etc. go on the table in the Back Sorting Room for Ike.

We also have managers for certain areas and procedures:

- **Window displays:** Themed window and other displays are occasionally set up throughout the Store. Please do not make changes to the displays without consulting your Day Manager. If you would like to help with displays, see Janet.
- **Surplus:** Mike and Bill track the accumulation of and arrange for pick-up of surplus items.
- **Store repairs** should be reported to your Day Manger. We can request help from our landlord’s facility manager, Gary.

Sorting Donations *“Put out the Best, Recycle the Rest”*

- At the start of each shift, Sorters should check racks and shelves in the store to ensure that clothing is hung correctly, housewares placed neatly, and that there are no broken items or hangers on the floor.
- When opening bags, be cautious of sharp or broken objects. Rubber gloves are available if needed.
- Items of value found in purses or other donations, such as money, keys, ID or credit cards, jewelry, etc., should be given to your Day Manager.
- We get many, many donations, so we can afford to be fussy— only put out items that are in excellent condition.

- **Religious Items:** Religious figurines and similar items should be placed in the corner shelf behind the cashier. We offer these items at no charge, but encourage customers to give a donation if they wish. Put rosaries in the bin in the Sorting Room behind the white cabinet.
- **Jewelry:** Place all jewelry in the third drawer of the file cabinet next to the day manager’s desk.
- **Toys:** We don’t sell toys on a normal basis, so we are currently not accepting toy donations.
- **Fabric/Craft Materials:** Place fabric and all kinds of craft materials in the bin marked “Fabric & Crafts” on the pallet shelves in the Sorting Room.
- **Eyeglasses and Healthcare Items** go in the Lions Club box in the Sorting Room (large items may be placed in the Back Sorting Room). Rick will arrange for a pick-up as needed.
- **Cosmetics/Bath & Beauty Items:** Dispose of any open or used cosmetics, soap, shampoo, etc. New, unopened items may be distributed free of charge to volunteers, or place them in the bin marked “Centre Safe” (formerly Women’s Resource Center) behind the white cabinet; Lesa will deliver these items.
- **Free Box:** The minimum price for any item in our store is 25¢. Any item worth less may be placed in the Free Box by the front door. Please limit this to usable items: no hangers, paper products, or messy items.
- **Paper Plates/Cups/Napkins:** Place in our kitchen for volunteer use.
- **Seasonal Items:** Throughout the year, good quality Christmas or other holiday items may be saved—place in marked boxes. VERY good out-of-season clothing is saved in the marked boxes.
- Occasionally you may find an item you want to take home to clean or repair. Please inform your Day Manager of your intentions, and bring the cleaned/repaired item back the next time you volunteer.
- **Bag Recycling:** Put bags in the bin under the sorting counter; at the end of each shift, a volunteer should sort out the good bags for re-use at the cashier and take the others to a grocery store for recycling.

Pricing and Placing Items

- The price list in the Resource Notebook includes normal prices, and prices for new items with tags (usually at least twice our normal price).
- Occasionally, items may be priced higher according to their quality and/or desirability.
- If you are unsure as to how to price or place an item, ask your Day Manager or an experienced volunteer.
- **Store Layout:** A current store layout is included in the Resource Notebook (although this changes with seasons and as needed). When putting out housewares, please place items in areas with similar pieces. Clothing should always be carefully placed according to size.
- Sheets, blankets and tablecloths should be labeled with their size or measurements.

Inventory Control System

We have an inventory control system for all merchandise in the store. Clothing and houseware items are labeled with colored tags and stickers based on a Tag Color Schedule posted on the Volunteer Information Board in the Meeting Room. Every item must have a tag or sticker. The system runs on a six week schedule: items with tags or stickers that have been in the Store for five weeks will be sold as clearance at 50% off; signs at the cash register and posted throughout the store inform customers of the tag/sticker color that is on sale that week. At the end of the sixth week, clothing with those color tags/stickers will be removed and placed in surplus. The Catholic Daughters remove housewares items that are out of date.

Clothing Sorters “Put out the Best, Recycle the Rest”

- Put out only current season clothing which is clean, spot-free, attractive, in good condition, and in fashion.
- Carefully inspect each piece! Ask yourself, would I wear this, or would I give it to my family to wear?
- Place clothing that is worn or that has spots, stains, rips, tears, or pilling in the large containers for surplus. (These items are picked up by a group of Mennonites who clean or repair them, put them to use in other projects or send them to countries in need.)

- Surplus bags should only be filled 3/4 full (overfilling them makes them too heavy to lift).
- Tags should be placed in the middle of the back waistband of pants, skirts, and shorts; and at the back of the neck for tops, shirts, dresses, coats, etc. Put the fastener through a label or on a seam. **Do not put the tag where it can pull out and leave a hole in the item!**
- Label each piece with a color of the week tag (shown on the Volunteer Information Board in the Meeting Room). Put the size on the tag, but only list the price if it is different from the normal price for the item.
- Men's pants sizes on the tag should include both waist and inseam numbers.
- A list with both regular and "new item with tag" prices is included in the Resource Notebook.
- If you determine the value is greater than the usual price, write the increased price on the tag.
- Women's blouses and coats have buttons on the left side, men's shirts and coats have buttons on the right.
- **Hangers:** Hang items on proper hangers (we never use wire or all-plastic hangers). A chart is included in the Resource Book as guidance. Tubular plastic hangers may be bundled and sold.
- **Designer or high quality** current season items should be placed on the "Rosalie's Boutique Rack" in the Sorting Room for Arlene to evaluate and price. The Resource Notebook in the middle sorting room includes a list of designer names to watch for.
- Rosalie's Boutique items should be something really special in excellent condition. Very high priced items may be sold on our EBay site or included in one of our auctions.
- **New items:** Anything that is new—with tags! (but not special enough for Rosalie's Boutique)—should be priced according to the pricelist (generally twice our normal price) and placed in the "New with Tags" area in the store. Cross out the bar code on the item tag(s).
- Very good out-of-season items should be placed in boxes marked "Good Summer" or "Good Winter."
- Only new undergarments and socks or like new will be put out for sale.
- Any piece of clothing that is soiled or badly worn should be put in the trash.
- Secure sock pairs with a gun tag, unrolled so the entire length can be seen.
- Hang only the best t-shirts (vacation destinations, sports teams, Penn State, etc). T-shirts, polo shirts, and jackets with company logos go into surplus.
- Discard shirts or other items with inappropriate messages.
- **Shoes:** Put out only clean, gently used, or new footwear. Badly marked or dirty shoes should be thrown away. Shoes placed in surplus should be still usable with no heels over 2"—bear in mind that these shoes will most likely be shipped to Africa or other global needy areas; select surplus shoes accordingly.
- Color dots must be placed on the soles of shoes (or inside the heel if they won't stick to the sole), not on the outside of shoes as they will pull off the material when removed and ruin the shoes.
- Shoes may be held together with a rubber band, never masking tape, as tape can ruin the material of the shoe. Please place them side-by-side so they are clearly displayed.
- Very good out-of-season footwear should be placed in surplus boxes designated in the sorting area.
- **Handbags** may be priced according to quality and condition. Use only hang tags to price, never masking tape as it may damage the material.

Housewares Sorting

- For housewares, use color-of-the-week stickers and clearly print the price.
- Items are priced according to value—ask our resident expert Margaret or an experienced volunteer for help. You may also check for prices of similar items on line or in the Store.
- All houseware items, except glasses, mugs, and stemware, must be priced—even pieces such as small plates and bowls, salt and pepper shakers, or similar items. Cross off the bar codes on new items with pen or marker.
- Watch for vintage, antique or collectible items that should be passed to our Resident Experts for pricing.
- Wipe dirt and dust off items—no one is going to buy glasses or dishes with dead bugs in them!
- Do not put broken frames or used candles out for sale; throw them away.

- **Electrical items** such as toasters, curling irons, hair dryers, lamps, etc., must be tested before being put out for sale. Mark “works” on the tag and put your initials.
- Items that can’t be tested, such as bread and coffee makers, should be marked “As Is” on the tag.
- Electric cords should be neatly folded and bound with rubber bands or cord (masking tape breaks too easily).
- Single glasses, mugs and water bottles with business logos may be put in the Free Box.
- **Knives** are not put out for sale; save good ones in the designated box in the Sorting Room. Very good knives in a rack may be placed for sale on the shelves behind the cashier.

Cashiers

- Cashiers will be trained to use the cash register.
- Test all \$50 and \$100 bills with the counterfeit pen provided in the register drawer.
- **Taxable vs. Nontaxable:** Our new cash register automatically charges tax when required. In general, clothes are nontaxable and housewares are taxed.
- Ring the bell if you need extra help or a price check. **If an item does not have a price tag, always ask the Day Manager to price the item.**
- When window, mannequin or other display items are sold, do not replace with cheaper merchandise—replace with a piece of similar value.
- If a customer would like to shop in the store after choosing a jewelry item, hold the item at the cash register counter until the customer is ready to check out.
- Our watches have new batteries and have been checked to ensure they are in working order. We have no guarantees, but do our best to provide affordable, usable watches.
- Give broken jewelry to Day Manager.
- Ask to inspect backpacks if you suspect the customer may have filled it with store merchandise,
- **Do not resist a robber**—simply give him/her all of the money in the cash drawer. After the perpetrator leaves, lock the door and immediately inform the Day Manager, who will call 911.

Store Maintenance

- Volunteers are expected to help with store cleaning and minor maintenance issues.
- A cleaning service vacuums and dusts the retail space in the store, and cleans our restrooms every week.
- Spot vacuuming may be needed at the end of a shift if there are soiled areas or leaves have collected inside the entrance areas.
- Our Store windows and especially the front door should be washed as needed.
- Please empty the trash and move full surplus bags to the Donations Room at the end of each shift.
- Corrugated cardboard boxes should be flattened and placed in recycling behind the building.
- We also recycle paper and paperboard, cans, and plastic bottles in bins outside the back door.
- Volunteers should vacuum the Sorting Room and Meeting Room as needed.
- Plastic bags should be sorted at the end of each shift: tote bags should be neatly folded and placed under the cashier’s counter; collect smaller bags and leave in the Meeting Room for folding; and bags that have holes should be taken to a grocery store for recycling. Volunteers may take home garbage bags from the recycled bags.

End of Shift

- At the end of your shift, complete the items you are working on and clean up your area. Please do not leave clothes on racks or housewares on counters in the sorting room.
- Record the number of hours you worked on the clipboard below the Volunteer Information Board.
- **Community Service Volunteers** must enter their hours in the notebook in the Manager’s Office.
- If you volunteer regularly and expect to be away, please mark your absences on the Vacation Reporting board in the Meeting Room.

Store Safety/Evacuation

Store Safety/Evacuation

- Unruly customer: If you experience verbal or other abuse from a customer or client in the store, notify your Day Manager immediately. Do not attempt to handle the situation yourself.
- In the event of robbery: Do not resist a robber—simply give him/her all of the money in the cash drawer and any jewelry or merchandise. After the perpetrator leaves, lock the door and immediately inform the Day Manager, who will call 911.
- The designated “Safe Place” in the store is the Society Office with both doors closed and locked.
- **State College Police non-emergency phone number: 234-7150.**
- Should an evacuation of the store be needed, all personnel should immediately leave the building by the nearest exit and meet in the parking lot of the building on the Bellefonte side of our building. Location map is posted on bulletin boards and included in Resource Books in the sorting room.
- In the event of a tornado warning, all volunteers and customers should shelter in the Men’s Room located next to the retail area.

First Aid

- The first aid kit is located in the Meeting Room on the low cabinet near the outside door.
- **When in doubt if someone falls or is hurt, call 911 for an ambulance.**
- Detailed first aid information is posted in the Sorting Room and included in Resource Books.
- Day Managers will complete accident/injury reports for all incidents in the Store.

Fire Prevention and Protection

- Location of fire extinguishers
 - » Store: near the front door on the right.
 - » Sorting Room: near the back door.
 - » Back Sorting Room: near the back door.
 - » Meeting Room: on the right side of the exit door.
 - » Donations Room: near the donations door.
- Operation of fire extinguishers: For a good video on how to use a fire extinguisher, go to <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=epGGwjjoISM>.
- Procedures to follow in case of fire
 - » If the fire is very small, try to put it out with a fire extinguisher.
 - » If you cannot control the fire, warn people to immediately evacuate the area.
 - » **DO NOT** attempt to save equipment or objects—you are putting yourself at risk.
 - » Close the door of the area where the fire is located so as to contain it but **do not lock the door**.
 - » Use the nearest exit, as long as it is free from smoke; otherwise, seek another evacuation route.
 - » If there is smoke, crawl out of the building and/or cover your mouth with a clothing item.
 - » Do NOT stop at or near the exit. Leave the way free for other people evacuating the building.
 - » Go directly to the assembly point.
 - » Do NOT reenter the evacuated building under any circumstances until you receive specific instructions to do so from the Day Manager or fire professional.
- Emergency assembly point: parking lot of building next door—location map is posted on bulletin boards and included in Resource Books in the sorting room.
- Smoking is not allowed in our building.

Facility Safety

- Facility maintenance:
 - » Please keep walkways clear. Items should be carefully placed in the store so that aisles are able to accommodate shopping carts.
 - » Sorters should go through the Store at the beginning of their shifts to ensure there are no items, broken hangers or debris on the floor.

- » The Sorting and Donation Rooms should be vacuumed and counters cleaned on a regular basis (we have a cleaning person who vacuums the Store and cleans the restrooms every weekend).
- » We monitor items in surplus and the cage on a regular basis to ensure they are kept at safe levels.
- » Equipment must be kept in working order—if something is not working properly, inform your Day Manager.
- Disposal of hazardous materials:
 - » Don't accept donations of paint, chemicals, fluorescent bulbs and other hazardous materials. If these items are inadvertently accepted, save them for proper disposal by Bill.
 - » Items of concern include batteries and electronic devices such as cell phones, computers, and televisions.
 - » Moldy or damaged donations should be immediately placed in the dumpster.
 - » Detailed information about disposal of these items is posted in the Sorting Room and is included in the Resource Books.

Volunteer Well Being

- Sufficient lighting: Please let us know if the lighting in work areas is insufficient.
- Anti-fatigue mats: Mats are provided in work areas for your comfort and to relieve stress on your feet.
- Instructions for proper lifting of heavy items: Detailed information is posted in the Sorting Room and included in Resource Books.
- Use of ladders: If you are older, please ask a (young) Community Service volunteer to do tasks requiring a ladder (your job is to hold the ladder). Detailed information on the proper use of ladders is posted in the Sorting Room and included in Resource Book. **The rolling stairs provide a much safer option for these tasks.**

Store Leadership & Day Manager Schedule

Janet Haner is the Store Manager. Please feel free to contact her with any questions or concerns you might have: you can reach her by phone, 814-861-1277, or via email, j.haner@comcast.net. She is often in the Store and serves as Day Manager on Thursday afternoons.

Each three-hour shift has a Day Manager (or Managers) as shown in the chart below. Our store leadership and staff are entirely volunteer; we have no paid employees.

The Store Manager and Day Managers are all Vincentians (members of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul). Because of the work we do with those in need in our community, we don't share our last names or contact information with customers or clients; please help us to retain this anonymity.

<i>Day</i>	<i>Morning Shift 10am-1pm</i>	<i>Afternoon Shift 1-4pm</i>
Monday	Aileen	Rosemary
Tuesday	Roberta & Steve	Mary & Bob
Wednesday	Julie	Sally / Rick
Thursday	Bill	Janet
Friday	Arlene	Carol
Saturday	Rich / Sally	
Sunday		Sue
		Pat

Heartfelt thanks for the hours you put in as a volunteer—the Thrift Store could not operate without its dedicated staff! We hope you will enjoy working with us for years to come.