

Voice of the Poor ~ St. Vincent de Paul Society of Marin

We believe in the dignity of every person. We speak for the families and individuals in our community who are not in a position to speak for themselves: the working poor, the homeless, the incarcerated, and all people living on the fringe of our community.

The Voice of the Poor is a committee of the District Council of Marin County that addresses the needs of the poor and advocates for solutions.

We have chosen to join the Marin Organizing Committee, a group of diverse congregations and institutions working to affect change at the public policy level as a way to fulfill our Voice of the Poor responsibility in Marin County.



“The science of charity reform is not transmitted through books and at assemblies’ tribunes as much as by climbing stairs in the home of poor, kneeling at his bed, suffering from the same cold as he does, and discovering the secret of a grief-stricken heart in the course of a friendly conversation. When we have accomplished this ministry, not for months, but over long years; when we have thus studied the poor at home, at school, at the hospital, not only in one city but in several, and also in the country, in whatever condition God placed him, then we can start to know the formidable problem of misery, then we are entitled to propose serious measures...”

Blessed Frederic Ozanam, 1848

**St. Vincent de Paul Society
District Council of Marin County
Voice of the Poor Committee**

Purpose: (1) To encourage positive change for the future of Marin County. (2) To keep the members of the Society informed about issues that impact those we serve. (3) To help Society members actively engage in advocacy that will call attention to the needs of homeless and low income individuals and families in Marin County. (4) To identify issues that cause poverty, suffering or exclusion. (5) To help sustain a healthier community by lending our voice to those unable or afraid to speak for themselves on poverty issues. (6) To gather the stories of the real people and situations that we encounter and share them with the larger community in order to shine a light on the real effects of poverty in our community. (7) To examine the bigger social and economic picture in Marin County to put in perspective the impact of home visits and emergency assistance. (8) To act to promote long-term and effective assistance without endorsing political parties or candidates.

Structure: The Voice of the Poor (VOP) Committee will be made up of conference members and Society volunteers. VOP will meet as a group on a monthly basis to work together and strategize about how best to fulfill our mission to bring social justice issues to the attention of our members and act together for positive change.

Format: The District Council of Marin County has chosen to use membership in the Marin Organizing Committee (MOC) to promote the VOP. This requires relational work that is internal to the Society. MOC work is based on one-on-one relational meetings and small house meetings. It is the goal of the VOC committee to provide opportunities for this relational work. Another important aspect of MOC membership is interacting with members of other MOC institutions to speak out on the needs of those we serve. A relationship with other faith-based institutions is critical in getting the word out about the poor and needy that we see every day.

Support: District Council staff will be available to help guide and support the VOP Committee. Organizers from the Marin Organizing Committee are also available for training and guidance. Contact information is listed below.

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