

St. Vincent Times News Article -

Support program seeks funding help

St. Vincent reentry initiative could end; sponsors and donors needed

PRAVINA KHADKA

TIMES-NEWS

TWIN FALLS — St. Vincent de Paul began a reentry program to help those who were released from prison stay out. Now, the program needs help to keep helping.

"One of the challenges is when these gentlemen get out, they have nothing," Pat Cox, manager of St. Vincent de Paul in Twin Falls, said. "It's hard to start all over again and start back in the middle of winter, which is why the program starts."

St. Vincent received an Idaho Gives grant to begin the reentry program, which includes using the funds to ensure that the individuals are satisfied. Donations are necessary to provide food, clothing, hygiene items, clothes and other essential resources are addressed through the program. However, the grant has since expired, and St. Vincent is operating with a small budget and less than two months into the program, St. Vincent is struggling to continue.

While this is specific to the Reentry Support and Education program (St. Vincent's REAP), for 17 years, St. Vincent in Boise has been operating this program successfully.

Doja S. St. Vincent chapter manager in Boise, is part of a team that facilitates this meeting in Twin Falls every two weeks to help them start settling back to life and reestablishing a foundation for the future, such as building soft offers.

"The goal is that these gentlemen start working with the people that come through the door," Doja said. "So we're hoping that they become independent, as well as learn the life skills they need to survive."

One of the challenges St. Vincent is facing is to provide released people with basic goods if they fall under Reentry Care services in Twin Falls.

"We don't know if it's God or something bigger that is happening," Manager Shari Knarr said. "It's overwhelming."

Brad Knost at St. Vincent's in Twin Falls said, "I love this job and I love working with the people that come through the door." Knost walked them through Brad's experience.

One of the most immediate needs for these gentlemen is boots and shoes, according to Shari Knarr's experience. Through experience in St. Vincent's social service department, they have learned that as these gentlemen start working, they need to provide for the needs of people who struggle with economic and financial hardships that are reflected in their boot pockets.

"Sometimes they don't have shoes or boots, when they need them," Stot said.

The reentry program for people getting out of incarceration has been around since 2017, and Cox said the program had something to get them started, whether it's food or soap or basic necessary items are the things they must have in order to survive in this community.

The need is not only for boots, but Stot also said the need is for all types of gear. The need is to fulfill all the immediate needs, because the organization cannot pay for a standard set of regular boots, steel-toe boots might be required for work.

"And without a support system, they struggle to find everyone," Stot said.

"So that's why we're looking for sponsors or donors to help these gentlemen on their feet and with the other needs they have."

Without the funding, it becomes difficult to help everyone.