

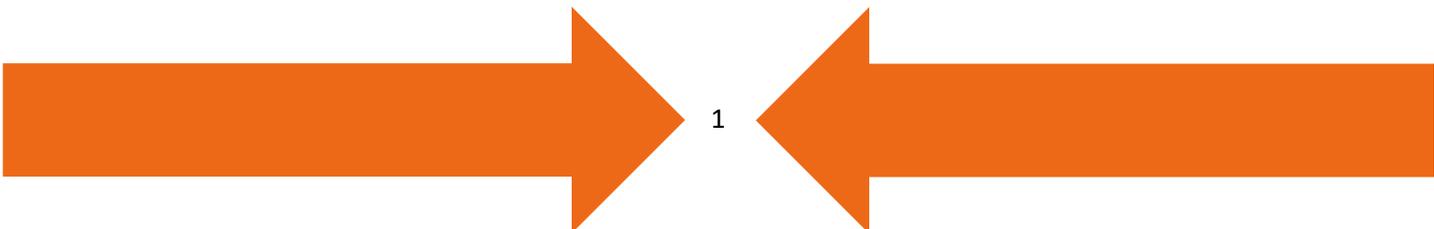
St. Vincent De Paul Young Adult Center



Retreat to the Street

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Initial Information Guide



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From a Catholic perspective, the **St. Vincent de Paul Center** grounded in Vincentian Spirituality, seeks to help participants recognize their responsibility to the poor and vulnerable in their own community, and communities around the world.

The St. Vincent de Paul Youth Center experience is formed around four key components: service, education, reflection and community.

Through **Service** students are given the opportunity to have experiences and meet people that they would not typically encounter in their day to day life. At the center, we view service not as something we do **for** others, but **with** others. Service is a two-way evangelization process where we are given the opportunity to spend time with and learn from those living on the margins. We serve out of, and because of, our love and care of others.

Flexibility is crucial. Important questions to ask while at the Center: What is service? Are we just doing service or being of service? At a few of the sites we won't be doing much, other than striking up conversations and listening to people talk about their experiences; while at other sites we will be cleaning, organizing, tutoring, playing, etc. Be open to doing whatever the agency needs of you. We are there for them and their needs of the moment.

Education is key in making the experience at the center, transformative. While students are encountering people and situations they may have never encountered first hand before, we strive to give them the historical, political and sociological context of these situations. This way students are equipped with the context to think deeper about their own complicity or role in systems that oppress the people in our neighborhood.

Therefore, **Reflection** is a vital part of the experience here at the center. We desire to give students the chance to reflect inwardly how each person, service site, and educational activity impacts them. We strive to create space where students can openly and honestly discuss these inward thoughts and feelings with one another, and work towards levels of greater compassion and desire to protect those most vulnerable.

Prayer is a time where we can remind ourselves of the presence of God, and center ourselves in the moment. Our prayer is from the Catholic perspective, but we aim to create prayers and prayer space that is relatable, inclusive and comfortable for people of all faiths, religions or belief. We open and close our days in prayer.

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Community life is significantly important to the center, as it is strong communities that build a thriving world. We build community by serving, praying, reflecting, working and having fun together. Additionally, it is about recognizing and celebrating one another's strengths, as well as being understanding of one another's weaknesses.

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Simplicity/Stewardship – In an age of modern convenience, we challenge

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ourselves to consider those things which clutter our lives and cloud our vision. Therefore, the center asks participants to use our resources (water, food, paper products, electricity, etc.) sparingly and thoughtfully. By being mindful of our consumption, we are able to not only live in solidarity with the communities we are serving, but also to consume responsibly, in order to protect the natural world.

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We live out this catholic tenant of Stewardship in the following way::

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- Being conscious of our consumption- food, water, use of paper products, use of energy, etc.
- Conscious of the justice issues around water we will not have bottled water (or beverages) of any kind. **Please bring your own re-usable bottles! (AND please do not bring cases of bottled water.)**
- **Challenge ourselves to live simply for the time we are here, without cell phones and other electronic devices (ipods, computers, tablets, etc.)**
- Reusing and recycling- packaging like plastics and paper
- Using and taking only what we need, in regards to linens, paper/plastic products and food.

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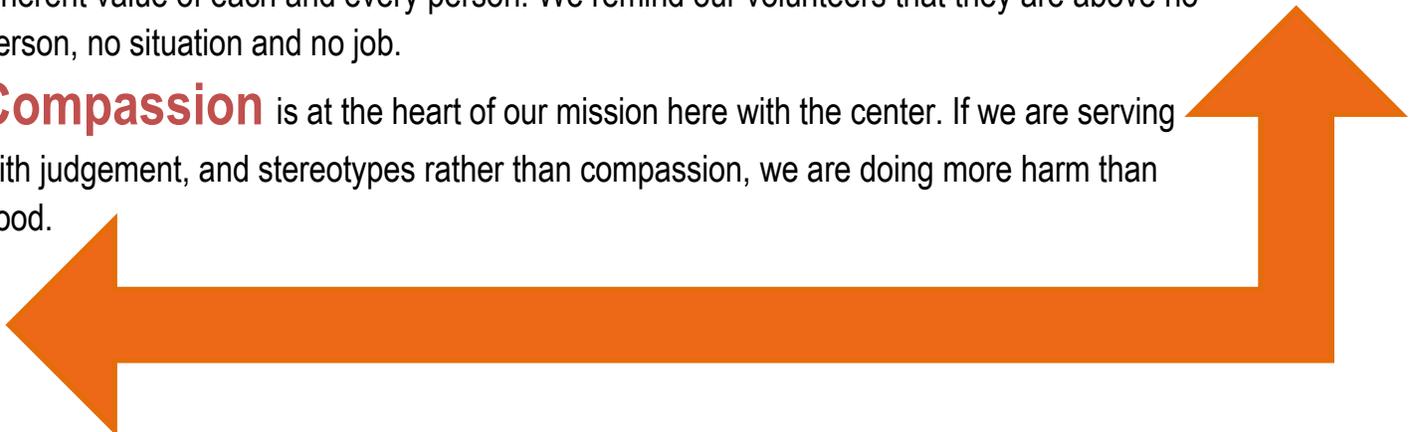
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Consider your time here at the center, as a detox from a culture of consumption and competition. By decluttering our life we are able to more clearly hear and focus on the inner voice of love, and our call to be servants to one another.

Humility (Mutuality) is central to all of our interactions with one another, with our community partners and their clients, and with our neighbors. Doing service is not about "lowering ourselves" but rather, recognizing the truth of who we are – and the equal, inherent value of each and every person. We remind our volunteers that they are above no person, no situation and no job.

Compassion is at the heart of our mission here with the center. If we are serving with judgement, and stereotypes rather than compassion, we are doing more harm than good.



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The St. Vincent de Paul Centers **HOUSING** is comfortable and simple. Students will sleep in bedrooms for one, two or three. Genders will be lodged in two separate sections of the house, each equipped with bathrooms and showers. Our center provides participants with bed linens and towels. The center also has a number of common area spaces, including a rec room, a porch, a dining room, back patio, a kitchen and a chapel.

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MEALS will be provided and prepped by the staff at the center. The center

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strives to live in solidarity with the community that we serve, through the value of simplicity. Participants can expect satisfying meals and made out of simple ingredients.

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The center is dedicated to fostering awareness of those who live without, by using our own resources (water, food, paper products, electricity, etc.) sparingly and thoughtfully.

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Students **SCHEDULE**, each day begins with Morning Prayer or Reflection at 9am. At 9:30 students will depart for their respective service sites. At 2pm students will return to the center to prepare and eat dinner as a community. In the evenings, groups will participate in an educational activity and reflection lead by center staff, which will allow them to think more deeply about their daily experiences, their personal responsibility to those who are marginalized as well as their role in a world that divides between the deserving and the undeserving. We close each night with a prayer.

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Our center is dedicated to serving **PARTNER MINISTRIES** in own community of Germantown. Therefore the majority of our service sites are located less than fifteen minutes away from the center. Students will have the opportunity to serve in ministries including but not limited to: schools and after school programs, adult day care centers, rehabilitation centers, food assistance programs, shelters for those experiencing homelessness, as well as public park/green space maintenance. Depending on the work site, service will range from direct (hands on) service, to the service of presence.

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RESERVATIONS

We require a **non-refundable** deposit of \$200 dollars to be made upon reservation. We will not “hold” dates until the deposit is received. Please take your commitment to the center seriously. As a non-for-profit agency, the fees we charge for the retreat experience do not entirely cover the cost of running the center.

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Due to the resources and boarding used during a groups stay, in addition to the planning and leadership that goes into our trips, the minimum charge to each group we host is **\$280**.

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PRICING and fees are as follows:

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# of nights	Per Person (Mon-Thurs)	Per Person (Fri & Sat & Sun)
1	\$35.00	\$45

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Registration Forms should be received **no later than one month prior to your trip** at the center. The information that you provide to us in the guide is instrumental in building an impactful experience for your students. Additionally, center staff will not be able to schedule service sites if they do not know the size of your group.

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The center requires a 1:6 **CHAPERONE** to participant ratio, for all participants under 18. Chaperones should be female or male based on the proportion of males and females in the in the group.

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Groups must provide their own **TRANSPORTATION**. Therefore, chaperones need to have a drivers license and be willing to drive in an urban area. There is a van available for use at the center.

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If your group intends to have a **NIGHT OFF** to sight see, you must include this information on your registration form. We ask that weekend visitors do not anticipate having a night off, as our time together is limited.

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Please plan to **ARRIVE** 4:00 pm, the day before your first full day of service. On the day of **DEPARTURE** we ask you to leave before noon. Additionally, we ask that you **do not plan to leave or arrive on Saturday**, so that staff members are able to prepare the house for the group on the following week.

**If you are coming from a distance of more than a 6 hour drive please let us know and we can adjust the arrival time.*

