

Donations, docks, and dinner

[Business](#)



“ All right then! If you have any questions come find me!” With those words the man in charge walked away, and I turned to my group unsure of what exactly we were supposed to do here. It was my first time volunteering at Phoenix’s St. Vincent de Paul.

When we arrived, we made nametags and were escorted outside to work on some docks. As the people in charge talked and explained I looked around in wonder at the huge trucks and the piles upon piles of mattresses, machines, and miscellaneous objects. As such I didn’t hear the instructions, and so I simply looked around with wide eyes like a lost puppy. The workers opened up the backdoors of the trucks, and I got my first view of the task ahead of me. The insides were jam-packed with furniture, boxes, and bags. The job we had willingly signed up to do was to unload, unpack, and sort everything we could.

Each group was given a truck to work on. Several hours later, we finished and had to return to school. My group pretty much finished our truck. There had been couches, bed mattresses, and refrigerators that we had to carry to their appropriate place. There were also smaller things like books, paintings, and kitchenware. There were also many types of electronics.

There were piles of computers, keyboards, and music players. But most of all there was clothes. Tons and tons of clothes. We were wading on a sea of clothes. I had donated old clothes before to donations, but I’d never realized the scale of how much clothing was donated to the less fortunate. Most of the time was spend unpacking clothes and dropping them into large bags

that were taken away once they were full and then we would start the cycle again.

A lot of the clothes and shoes looked really good and sometimes new, that some of the girls joked they wanted to steal some items. Overall it was mostly simple tasks but it was still it was tiring work. Most of the people were exhausted by the end. Others did not actually do much and weren't tired because they spent most of the time standing around chattering like parrots. Even though we didn't see the people who the donations would benefit I still felt proud that I had helped in some small way to provide people things they needed and otherwise would probably not have. I've gone back to St.

Vinnie's to volunteer on the docks a couple more times because I liked working there and making a tiny difference. The most recent time I went with Interact we were supposed to work serving the people at the shelter, but we ended up being divided into two groups. The guys worked outside on the docks and the girls were the servers. Once we were done we went inside to where the girls were serving the meals. My eyes bulged as I saw just how many people had come there to have their meal.

The room buzzed with all the people there. Entire families were there and many had little kids with them. My heart broke for them knowing they did not have the resources I have and had to come to the shelter for a meal and probably a roof. One of the women working there asked, "Would you boys like some food after working so hard?" One of the guys and I responded "yes" and we got a tray of the food they offered. I ate a little bit of the food but not much. It honestly did not taste that well.

I bet some people realized that but most did not care and were simply happy to have something to eat. I feel horrible for people who need help from shelters and food kitchens and they should be helped but also we should give them a sense of purpose.