

## **Service to Terminal Aids Patients (Madrid, "Our Lady of Amparo," Spain)**

**Participants** St. Vincent de Paul Society  
Daughters of Charity  
Congregation of the Mission  
Franciscans  
Third Order Franciscans  
the laity in various parishes

**Place** Casa "Nuestra Señora del Amparo"  
C/San Pedro, no.3, planta 4a - MADRID  
The national and provincial headquarters of the confraternities of St. Vincent de Paul are located in this same place.

**Social Context** The ancient part of the city, with its old buildings is presently undergoing renovation. The population in this area is mainly retired people and those in the lower economic level. This area of the city does not receive social services for AIDS patients. Here, 36,990 people live on the threshold of poverty. They can be classified as follows:

- extreme poverty	2,930
- serious poverty	4,810
- moderate poverty	20,000
- financial instability	9,250

The mean income per person is 28,170 pesetas. The unemployment rate is 63.5%. The rate of drug and alcohol abuse is 1.8%

This area is near the Atocha train station. It is an area which is high in drug activity and prostitution. In our work, the AIDS victims find themselves in distressing situations and abandonment because of the marginalization they suffer from their illness. They suffer rejection because they live in a world of drugs, homosexuality, and prison. These sick people have no financial resources and cannot find

work because of their illness and the social rejection they suffer from it. Many of them have no family or social support. The existing resources for the AIDS victims are generally insufficient, because their needs are so great.

**Target Group** AIDS patients

**Objectives**

*General Objective*

To offer to terminal AIDS patients not eligible for other forms of assistance, a place of welcome where they can receive attention, affection and friendship. This is a means of evangelization by gift, witness and word, endeavoring to render them the respect and dignity they deserve as human persons.

*Specific Objectives*

1. To improve the quality of life of the residents by obtaining:
  - a physical environment appropriate for their needs, nutritional, health, hygiene, social, spiritual, etc.
  - a place attentive to psycho-social needs, where through personal relationships, activities, occupations, and work they can develop a sense of hope toward life.
2. To offer support to the resident with regard to health, psychological, social, and legal concerns.
3. To foster autonomy of the residents through an individualized plan of care.

**Activities**

**Board of Directors**

Admission of residents, establishment of criteria, norms and approvals, finance and administration.

**Director**

Functions include :

- to be the spokesperson for the project
- to coordinate activities

- to animate and strengthen the team and the volunteers
- to plan the meetings and evaluate the project
- to oversee the internal administration of the project
- to maintain an objective attitude toward the residents
- to discipline when necessary
- to coordinate work and vacation time
- to organize educational programs for the team and volunteers

### **Supervisors and support staff**

- to work closely with each resident and be accountable for implementing their individual plan of care
- to foster quality of life
- to be both guardian and friend to the residents
- to coordinate information about each resident
- to be responsible in one area of the project for the recruitment of sufficient volunteers, for organizing the work, and overseeing the accomplishment of the objectives in each area of the project

### **Volunteers**

Responsibilities :

- to accompany and support the residents
- to carry out specific duties in the various sectors
- to supervise various activities as well as household needs and needs of the residents

### **Work domains**

These include major and minor domains necessary for the proper functioning of the project

*a) Household domain*

*Objective*

To assure the daily good functioning of the house

*Methods*

To maintain the cleanliness of the premises. To plan menus for the daily meals. To manage supplies. To organize laundry service.

*b) Health domain*

*Objective*

To carry out a consistent medical and pharmacological regime

*Methods*

To prepare a first aid kit and keep it up to date.

To provide continuing education to the personnel working with the sick. To maintain good relations with the hospital and the care centers.

*c) Social welfare domain*

*Objective*

To facilitate the process to obtain the welfare benefits to which the patients have a right

*Methods*

To carry out the process to obtain welfare benefits.

To help the residents keep their paper work up to date

To settle legal problems

To maintain relations with the various social welfare institutions (INEM, INSERSO, etc.)

To create and keep up to date a resource file which the residents can use to look for work and other benefits

*d) Relationship domain*

*Objective*

To encourage among the residents a spirit of conviviality both within the house and with family and friends

*Methods*

To promote common activities (trips, outings, etc.)

To encourage good relationships among the residents.

To be aware of the needs of residents who are more motional

To promote contact with family and friends.

### **Administrative Committee**

Confraternity of "Nuestra Señora del Amparo":

President, Vice President, 2 members of the St. Vincent de Paul Society, 1 treasurer, 5 volunteers, 2 Daughters of Charity, 1 Vincentian priest, 2 members of the laity.

### **Personnel**

A team composed of one Director, 4 supervisors/support staff, volunteers, members of the Confraternities, Daughters of Charity, Vincentian priests, one Franciscan and members of other institutions.

A professional team composed of one lawyer, one doctor, nurses, one psychologist, one social worker, one sociologist

### **Problems**

*With regard to the young AIDS patients*

The young are suffering physically and psychologically, maltreated by society, abandoned by their families. Some have been in prison, they have lost confidence in everyone and everything. They have no religious foundation on which they can rely.

No one has helped or respected them. These are young people who have had no structure. The slightest limitation that is imposed on them causes them great difficulty. Because of structure, the project itself can be very difficult for them.

*With regard to finances*

In this area we have difficulties because we depend on grants, donations, and the small contributions of the residents.

*With regard to volunteers*

Here we also come up against some difficulties which are related to a lack of responsibility and lack of availability of volunteers because of their own jobs.

## **Plan of action**

The program offered to the young AIDS patients enables them to regain confidence in society and in themselves (self-esteem, sense of their own dignity).

Reintegration is difficult for them on all levels. We share our faith by word and witness. Some of them have returned to the practice of their religion and others are still in the discernment process. We respect their dignity, their freedom, their own development, their slowness along the spiritual path.

On the financial level, we are explaining projects more in depth in order to obtain subsidies and grants.

Observing the work of the volunteers leads us to the conclusion that while placing confidence in them, we must continually remind them of their motivations and responsibilities. We also stress their Vincentian and social formation, as well as their skill development.

## **Financing**

Subsidy from the city

Subsidy from Social Services and the "Community of Madrid"

Donations from the members of the Confraternity

Donations from other individuals and groups

Contributions from the residents: 75% of their income

**Accreditation from civil  
and religious authorities**

The Confraternity of St. Vincent de Paul was recognized under public services April 23, 1972. The House "Nuestra Señora del Amparo" was recognized May 15, 1994 by the Church, independent from the city of Madrid and Social Services.