

News in Brief

E-news May 2022 | Issue 29

Welcome to our latest e-news, which is filled with stories from around the country from hard-working volunteers and staff who are helping people in a practical way every day. If you have a story you would like us to share, please email it to us at: national@svdp.org.nz



MEMBRE DE LA SOCIETE
DE SAINT-VINCENT DE PAUL



The Paradox of Humility and Good Example



I love the humble nature of the members of our Society. It's a large part of how we define ourselves.

We have never as a Society blown our own trumpet, sought national recognition for our work or proclaimed our works from the heights. This type of behaviour isn't in our nature and definitely wasn't in the nature of Blessed Frederick Ozanam and our early founders.

In Peter's Letter he says, "Wrap yourselves in humility to be servants of each other". (1 Peter 5:6) That's more our nature, to be humble servants. But we are also called to be servant leaders, bringing Christ's love to all, as we have been commanded. "Go out into the whole world; proclaim the good news to all creation". (Mark 16:15)

This is the paradox of our calling. The modern world doesn't value humility or pay much attention to humble people. Twitter, Facebook, Tik Tok and other social media outlets reward brash, self-proclaiming behaviour with far more likes, comments and followers than we gain from our humble actions of service. But I think the social media messages fade rapidly, like morning mist under the gaze of the sun, whereas the example of humble service continues on and grows like a mustard seed. We constantly hear comments about how Vinnies helped families many years ago and the children of these families have never forgotten it.

However, times are changing. All Charities in New Zealand are required under new Charity Rules (PRS) to report on their activities and tell their story. From 1 July 2022 we need to collect data on the work we do and provide to Charities Services and the public, a report that tells the story of our work. We have already published a list of the data we need to collect for this and have begun collecting

it from 1 July 2021, to provide comparative data for when we first start formal reporting in the June 2023 financial year. We will join the rest of the Western World Charities in reporting on our activities.

So, is this the end of our days of humble, quiet service? No! An administrative chore like performance reporting is a bureaucratic task that needs to be added to the other compliance tasks we must do to run a national organisation of this size. But it won't change the amount of need, despair and loneliness that exists in our communities. The demand for our work will continue on and we will continue to undertake the work in the same quiet humble way that we have always done. We will however have a more public record of what we do that will be of interest to the many people and groups that follow our work.

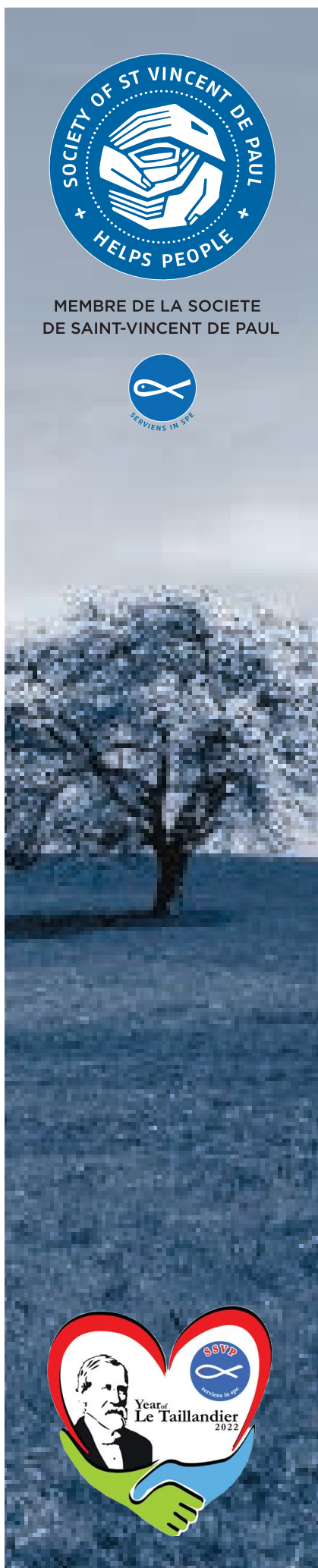
We will be careful however, how we present the message of our work. We will be mindful of Christ's message in Matthew's gospel:

"So when you give to the needy, do not announce it with trumpets, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and on the streets, to be honoured by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full."
(Matthew 6:2)

The paradox of humility and good example is a matter of balance.

God bless

Terry Jordan
National President





Since the early 1900s, young people have been involved with the work of the Society in New Zealand and are still a vital part of the work we do.

They are not just the future of the Society in New Zealand – they are the Society. It's well worth remembering that most

of the group that founded the Society in France were teenagers.

The youth arm of the Society makes Young Vinnies aware of the needs of many in our communities who struggle to cope and it provides ways for them to get involved and respond. It calls them to action as a direct response to the Gospel message to love your neighbour as yourself.

The Young Vinnies programme, built on Vincentian values, introduces thousands of students to the spirit and work of the Society. It inspires and encourages those within primary and secondary schools, as well as tertiary institutes to give their time to volunteer, sowing the seeds of a lifetime of service. At the same time, Young Vinnies enrich the Society as a whole with their energy, enthusiasm and compassion for others.

The past year has been one of major uncertainty and disruption as New Zealand has responded to the Covid-19 pandemic. Our youth coordinators have taken up the challenge to keep their programmes relevant and engaging. In normal times, an important aspect of our youth work is visiting rest homes, but this has been curtailed because of Covid-19. Instead, students have focused on mailing cards and gifts to the elderly which has been very much appreciated.

Another ongoing project has been raising funds for our twinning partners. With all the pressures brought about by the pandemic, students have also been encouraged

to look after their own mental well-being and to stay well-connected with their local school communities.

As Advisor to the National Board, I spend many hours supporting and encouraging not only our youth coordinators, but also the many teachers who run Vinnies Conferences in their own schools. Teachers tell me that an enormous amount of time is spent teaching the 'basics' to students who have no knowledge of the practicalities of Catholicism, let alone experienced an encounter with the Holy Spirit. This is where our message of 'Faith in Action' is so relevant, because taking action to serve others can often lead to a spiritual encounter.

Our 'Future Directions' spirituality focus will become an increasingly important aspect of our programmes. I currently liaise on a regular basis with five coordinators reaching 50 schools. There is huge untapped potential to expand with over 200 Catholic schools in New Zealand. However, for this work to flourish, we are dependent on the goodwill of local Area Councils to support the youth initiative.

I must acknowledge not only our coordinators and the great contribution they make to our school communities but also those Area Councils who employ their own coordinators. Due to Covid-19 it has been difficult to access schools in the way we usually would. However, flexibility has been the key over the last year. Our youth coordinators have been invaluable over this time, utilising their unique skill sets and community networks. We are not through the pandemic yet and we know that the situation in schools will continue to evolve. I have every confidence that our youth coordinators will continue to find new ways to undertake their work.

I would like to take this opportunity to extend grateful thanks to all national youth coordinators for the generosity and continued support they have shown over this past year.

YOUNG VINNIES REEFTON

Young Vinnies from the Sacred Heart School, Reefton group preparing to take fruit baskets and greeting cards to elderly people who live alone.

Bernadette Snowden is the leader of this little group and they give much pleasure to the elderly they meet.



CATHOLIC CATHEDRAL COLLEGE

Catholic Cathedral College has been blessed to have a long standing relationship with St Vincent de Paul who have supported the kura and our rangitahi in many different ways over the years for example sponsoring individual students and providing specific support to families. We have long been aware of their wonderful generosity and example of service.

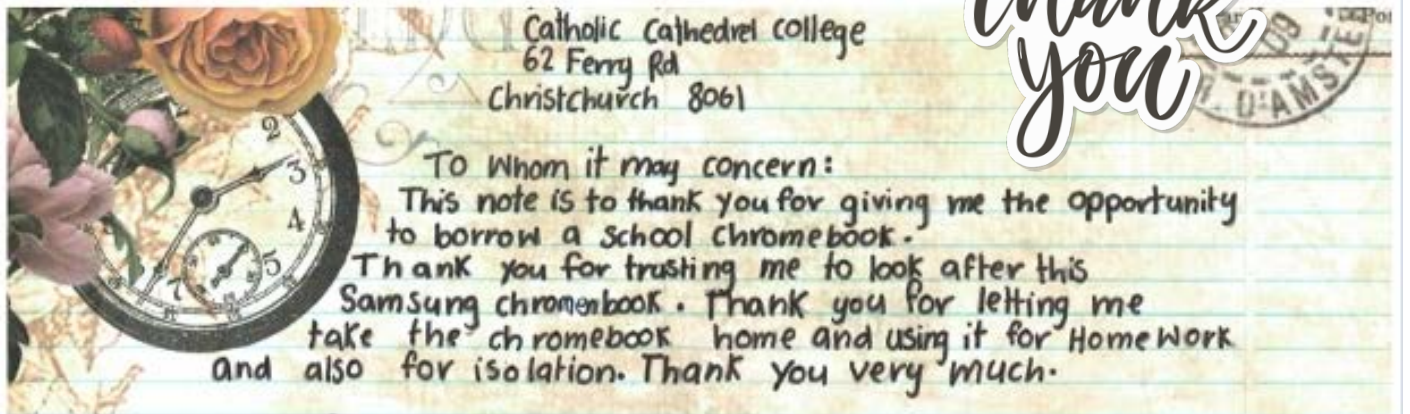
During a chance conversation with Brian Hutching, a member of the St Vincent de Paul team, ex-staff member and also a long term reliever at the college, we discussed the day to day issue facing kaiako when trying to deliver blended learning approaches in the classroom when not all students had devices. We discussed the disadvantages students without their own device faced, not only at school but also at home. Brian said he would have a think about how we could work together to support the students and away he went.

To our delight, the next time we spoke it was for us to be told that St Vincent de Paul had agreed to donate 53 devices to our kura.



“Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh own from God.”

Our kaimahi and rangatahi have been overwhelmed by this wonderful contribution because we know what a positive impact it will have upon our approach to teaching and learning.



Thank you



**International Confederation of the
Society of St Vincent de Paul**



WHERE ARE WE?

The SSVP is present in **153** countries, has **800,000** members in **48,000** Conferences, and **1.5 million** volunteers and collaborators. Every day, it helps over **30 million** people the world over.



Twinning Report

MARCH 2022
By Arthur, NZ Twinning



TONGA

As I prepare this report Tonga has again gone into lock down. I received this from the National President "Since Last Sunday morning the Kingdom has been in Hard Lockdown to counter the continued increase in positive cases. All distribution to villages affected by the tsunami is suspended however, myself and Suli have a pass to distribute small items to families who urgently requested some food items from Conferences outside Nukualofa."

The appeal for funds for the Tsunami produces an outstanding result NZ\$63,240.00. A big thank you to the councils, conferences and individuals who contributed. To date we have spent NZ\$45,991.00. The balance will be utilised in key request areas over the next 2 to 3 months.

Expenditure to date has been in material aid requested by the National Council of Tonga. It has included food, water, clothing, safety equipment, tools and equipment to aid in the dust clean up, household items and medical to name a few. We have also had a link with an organisation Learning Resources for Villages who provided books for distribution to primary schools in Tonga. To date 2 x 20' containers have been shipped. We are expecting to forward 3 or 4 pallets of goods later in April.

All the consolidation, loading and dispatching of the containers has been out of the Vinnies Hub in Onehunga. You have all contributed so much. Thank you.

The shop planning and design is making good progress after having to be delayed due to the tsunami. We are currently re-evaluating the location due to climate change factors. Two 20' containers will be utilised to create a shop, approximately 6m x 9m, which will deliver what we want to achieve. Hopefully operational by the end of June.

SAMOA

I have been in contact with the National Council with regards to the recent Covid outbreak to see if any assistance was required. To date they have not requested any help.

There will be discussion with them with regards to any proposals for 2022.

SRI LANKA

Communication with the National President and National Twinning Coordinator is ongoing.

We have just approved funding for a project in the village of Aligambay in the eastern part of the country. We are funding a potable water supply project which involves a new well and a pump which will supply water to the village of 2000 people. Currently they have no safe water supply.

Hardship in Sri Lanka has deepened due to the country's debt crisis. Food and fuel are suddenly unavailable or exorbitantly priced. This is putting pressure on our Society members to assist those in need. The World Bank estimates 500,000 people have fallen below the poverty line since the beginning of the pandemic, the equivalent of 5 years progress in fighting poverty.



First container



Haapai Aid



Loading Vinnies Hub Onehunga



Vinnies Hub Onehunga



Sopu village (top photo) - presenting aid to the Tongatapu MP and Kolomotu'a Town Officer

Presenting aid to the Chairman of the Village Council and Town Officer of Sisia (bottom photo)



ST JOSEPH'S CONFERENCE

An inside view into the life of one Vincentian Conference

If you can be in New Plymouth early on a Tuesday morning, if you are a Vincentian, or interested in becoming one, if you want to know what the active life of a Conference might look like, then contact the Conference Secretary of St Joseph's New Plymouth and arrange to visit what should be one of the most celebrated organisations in this beautiful seaside city.

One sunny morning in late October 2021, this was the experience that awaited Annette Orchard and Diane Bourke from St Joseph's Conference in Hawera, when they asked if they could come and take a look at the work of St Joseph's Conference in New Plymouth.

There's no doubt that Tuesday is the best day of the week, because that's the day on which the Whare Kai (communal cooking experience with Mum's who need a hand up with food preparation) and the Community Meals take place in New Plymouth.

An early morning car ride from Hawera to New Plymouth delivered Annette and Diane to the city around 9am and by 9.30am they were standing in the hall of St James Church Hall in Moturoa. Bob Goodyear had been there since before 9am. Bob manages the team of 7-8 Associate members who assist the Mums with cooking.



The day before, a volunteer had done the shopping for ingredients then Bob had spent some hours sorting the ingredients into large paper bags - each bag containing the ingredients and a recipe for a family meal, tailored to suit the size of each family. In October we were working with 9 Mums

who had 45 children between them. That's a whole heap of food and a whole lot of cooking. The women come in two groups - one at 9am and another at 10.30am.

This particular Tuesday the first of the Mums had arrived and was chopping up onions and vegetables ready for a chicken meal, which was to be cooked in electric fry pans. Tea and chocolate biscuits were being enjoyed by others as they discussed the recipe of the day with one of the helpers. The informal banter and camaraderie at the Whare Kai is at least as important as the cooking. Over cups of tea we build trust and confidence and discover the myriad of ways in which we can make a difference for these women.

Diane and Annette chatted with the women and talked about the dish they were making, and observed the process. That particular day, we had been donated a large quantity of kiwi fruit, so the Mums were helping themselves to bags full of goodness for their families.

After a quick cup of tea, our guests were whisked off to visit Ray Gaffaney in the used furniture shed - hub of the distribution of second hand furniture, available for delivery to those in need. The team can furnish a whole house, if necessary, with these donated goods. With the beds comes the requisite bedding, household linen and kitchen utensils, supplied by the Vinnies shop in Fitzroy - run and managed by the Our Lady Help of Christians Conference.

Many of the women helped are clients of New Plymouth Women's Refuge. There's a team of around 15 Associate Members - who call themselves "Dads Army". They work week after week to re-home the goods from the shed, and give a family a new start. Our Vinnies van with its helpful tail lift is well used.

Ray keeps track of all the furniture comings and goings. Another member organises the teams of movers. In 2021 this team made 114 deliveries and picked up 113 loads of donations. That's a lot of work for a team of volunteers.



Annette and Diane at the start of a busy day



Used furniture shed



Our Vinnies van

Continued over page...

ST JOSEPH'S CONFERENCE

Report continued...

It was lunch time. Time for a gathering of Conference members for an informal bring a plate lunch at Gabrielle's home. As usual there was a generous array of food, a lot of stories told, connections explored and ideas swapped. So many issues in common, so much concern for others, so many practical ideas to consider, so much enthusiasm for the work of St Vincent de Paul.

Now it was time to visit the New Plymouth Emergency Shelter. The Shelter houses men only and is run by a Trust. The Trust also cares for homeless women. Women are usually housed in motels. One of our members is on the Board of the Trust. The shelter has nine beds. Every Tuesday, nine boxed meals are delivered to the Shelter from the Community Meal. That's one night, that the men don't have to find food for themselves.

Earlier in the year, the Trust was in financial difficulty and received a hand up from two Taranaki Conferences. The Trust Chairperson wanted the chance to thank us. Annette and Diane took a look around the Shelter and came away with a better idea of how the Shelter operates and the issues faced by the Trust. It's a pretty "grounding experience" to see and learn first-hand about the difficulties faced by men coming out of prison, or who are homeless for a variety of reasons.

From there it was on to the Vinnies shop at Fitzroy. This was more familiar territory for Annette and Diane as their Conference runs a similar shop in Hawera. Still there was experience and knowledge to swapped, things to be learned from each other and laughs to be had - and time to marvel at what these volunteers achieve in both places.

And lastly around 4.30apm we headed for the headquarters of the Community Meal, held weekly on Tuesday evenings at St Joseph's Church in New Plymouth.

A team of 50 volunteers is rostered across the month, to cook a dish at home and bring it down to the church hall around 5pm. The dish forms part of a two or three course meal (soup in winter). Prior to COVID it was a sit down meal, with table cloths, set places, and a musician playing the piano or an accordion.

COVID has changed things. It has become a hot take away meal. The food is kept warm in the oven and dished up into take out boxes which are sealed and given out at the door. Between 35 - 40 meals are given out weekly. The dessert has been replaced by fruit and biscuits given out in a paper bag which accompanies the boxed main course. People queue up, masked and socially distanced. They scan in, or sign a register with their details.

After the hall doors close, boxed meals are delivered weekly to people who can't make it down to the hall, but still require food. They may be sick or elderly, or have a family of small children which prevents them being able to make it to the hall.

Tuesday is a busy day. By 6pm on this particular Tuesday, the work was done. Annette and Diane had to make the one hour journey back to Hawera. They said they had had a brilliant day. They were tired, but inspired by what they had witnessed. They reported it all at the next Conference meeting.

If you have been a Vincentian for a while, if you ever wonder if what you do is worthwhile, I'd say:

Sometimes you can get too close to the action. Take a step back, tell somebody else what you do, better still, show them what you do.

The world is an immensely better place for your contribution. Every person you visit, befriend, or help in a practical sense is better off for the connection with you. The work you do is beyond price. Don't hide your light. In sharing it with others you present them with the opportunity to see this too. St Vincent de Paul has given us this gift.



At the entrance of the Men's Shelter



Outside the Vinnies shop in Fitzroy



Hot takeaway meals



AREA COUNCIL UPDATE

Northland

- By Anna Williams

Food run for Christmas 2021 – we supplied to 121 families and 25 single people.

A big thank you to all those who helped achieve this Nimo, Kat, Karma, Mo and Mark, to the Kindergarten and Primary school for being a pickup point for families. A big thank you to the Board of Pompallier Catholic College for allowing us to use their premises to achieve this task and to the parishioners for raising money and donating gifts to the cause.

We are currently working at helping those isolated by Covid. The main areas are Whangarei, Paihia, Kawakawa and Ruakaka.

We are working more and more with families especially those with young family members. They are finding it difficult to purchase the basics in their everyday shopping, this is especially so with fresh food.

Budget services are finding many families who are struggling to pay the bills let alone feed their children. All our schools, bar one, is on the government lunches programme. We are still investigating the distance barrier for one school located in a semi-rural area. We supply food parcels out to schools for grandparents bringing up their grandchildren.

Our biggest schools project is the gathering of food for the families we work with. The young Vinnies at the local Catholic Secondary are setting a challenge for the students and teachers over a 2week period.



Above: Students from Pompallier Catholic College Whangarei had a can week recently. Every student was asked to bring to school one non-perishable food item and they received points for their efforts. Here is the result of their Mahi.

SOUTH AUCKLAND UPDATE

How to keep a St Vincent de Paul shop open and trading after a tenuous six months

This might not be the only way but this is what has happened.

The Society of St Vincent de Paul South Auckland had been served by four shops, Mangere Bridge, Flatbush, Manurewa and Papakura. Back at the beginning of March 2022 the decision was made to close Flatbush, this was due to a variety of reasons with a financial aspect being high on the list. At the same time the viability of the Manurewa shop had been questionable. With a depletion in the volunteer ranks the shop, when trading has been allowed, has only opened three days instead of the usual five days, this of course means a financial hit.

What to do?

Time to source more volunteers. Where to being? Sourcing new volunteers is not easy for a variety of reasons. They are like gems when they are found, but the gems take some unearthing. The fabulous Marist priests at Manurewa welcomed the Society to speak at masses one weekend, the invitation was to a get together to highlight the shop issues. We have been blessed with new volunteers, not quite enough yet to man the shop five days of the week but opening one more day after Easter is planned. This is definitely a work in progress.

Easter Blessings from St Vincent de Paul South Auckland.



Western Bay of Plenty provides support in our local community non-stop.



Our combined shops revenue has increase substantially in the last year - by over 30% in one shop, this is enabling us to make the difference to those most in need, and each month we are provide extra food support though our registered foodbank located in our Support Centre, averaging over \$46,000 dollars of food each month, a 200% increase for us since Covid began.

Average rents in WBOP are now \$700.00 per week making it impossible for many to survive, therefore helping with food provides a release of funds for families to budget on utilities and other essentials. Conference members are busier than ever due to needs and stresses on families.

We are also a first responder assisting the police/WINZ for domestic violence/out of hours help - have helped 65 women gain support and homes. We also provide 24hrs access to the social workers at Tauranga Hospital for babies needs when and where necessary.

19,000 people have been helped by us in the last year, we have clothed families with over 18,000 pieces of clothing, and 356 families have had access to medical needs.

We never sell beds or whiteware to ensure they are readily available for use (after being electrical tested and run). We also provided families with all baby equipment, cots, bassinets etc, a full range of disability equipment, a store of furniture (FREE) to those who need it the most and if someone needs a mobility scooter, we have a fleet we loan out with full breakdown help and upkeep.

We provide hundreds of trailer loads of firewood each year through our Waihi Conference, who also run a sustainable food bank.

Our conference members cook hundreds of meals for the elderly or those not able to cook for themselves - this work is fast becoming more hectic due to the fact that some elderly do not have family to support them, but rarely complain about their situation.

We have learnt over the last year to look after each other - volunteers, staff and Vincentians first, something that takes time and effort, and we have worked very hard on a healthy environment. We can proudly say "we have the best team ever," - how can we help others if we dont help those close to us who may be in need.

We are at the Heart of all community organisations and agencies, we are here to "Help People" and that is what we do well, here in the beautiful Bay.



The Dove (Holy Spirit) is painted on the wall of our Support Centre and can be seen 2kms down the road.



Ross Rowan and Kerry Elmiger picking up food donations

New Directions in Kapi Mana

The Kapi Mana area of St Vincent de Paul stretches from Tawa (the northernmost suburb of Wellington City) upto and including Levin in the Horowhenua. About 100 kilometres. It has two large, low socio-economic regions – Porirua in the south and Otaki/Levin in the North. We have one shop in Porirua.

Nearly two years ago when the first Covid Lockdown came about in 2020 our Area prepared itself for a dramatic rise in requests for help, particularly for Food Parcels. In the south the number rose but amazingly in the north, Otaki/Levin, they actually dropped.

In the months that followed we analysed the situation to discover why and we came to the conclusion that the main reason was ourselves, insignificant and unknown outside the immediate Parish church communities. Yes, there were additional reasons; other large providers relaxed their rules, some new ones sprang up overnight and the MSD was more free with grants for food. Our membership was older and less active; too much was being left to the few to carry out and maybe a general feeling of “being there, done that”.

However the fact remains, we were overlooked. In short, we were failing to achieve our Mission.

Further investigation revealed we were focused on welfare and providing practical help and forgetting the “why” we did these things. We were well on the way to becoming “just another welfare agency”.

Was God telling us we needed a renewal, a shake up and reminder of the Mission of the Society?

The message was taken on board. Parish profile was raised dramatically, we contacted other helping groups to explain what we do and the Vincentian way; we made ourselves known to the local Council and the Red Cross to try to become a major helper in assisting refugees to adjust to life in N Z.

Recognition and food parcels numbers are well up. Food suppliers are lining up to help (they are just waiting to be asked!) and monetary donations have increased along with support from our local parishioners.

However, our major effort has been going into the “Vincentian Community Centre”.

The concept of a Community Centre has been a long held dream for the Society in Kapi Mana. Why?

Unsatisfied with being just another welfare agency, Vincentians are called to give personal service to those

in need, those suffering all forms of poverty whether material, emotional, spiritual or physical.

Pope Francis talks of the need “to go out to the margins of need in a concrete way..... which allows you to touch the suffering and want of people.”

In our current times we see many devolving into deeper hardship and need, brought about by the prohibitive costs of living - food, warmth, housing, health, travel - with few, if any solutions currently evident. These people exist today in our own communities, displaced and disconnected while feeling hurt and unwanted. They need practical help and active support for improving their long term situations. They need to be listened to.

Raising the profile of SVdP in our communities is a positive start to furthering the Mission, conforming to the intentions and hopes of our Founder as well as adapting to the changing needs we observe around us.

The Centre will become the Vincentian “Hub” in Levin and the northern part of our Area. All the normal activities of the Levin Conference will operate from here along with a sharing of facilities, foodbank and donated goods around the whole Area. For example, if Otaki has a need for beds for a family but doesn't have any and Levin does, then the beds can be sent/shared to Otaki. And vice versa when the need arises anywhere in the Area. A Vincentian OP shop will also operate on the site.

The Centre will also be open to other assisting groups for meetings and training courses and social gatherings for the elderly and lonely. (Loneliness is another unrecognised pandemic). The Benefit Impact Service, Catholic Social Services and Refugee services will also be invited to operate from our facilities along with other groups who will help us carry out our Mission.



Porirua St Vinnies shop

Discussions are underway with the Organisation who hold the Government contract to assist with the resettlement of Refugees in Levin. The Centre will have adequate storage and sorting areas for the furniture and donated goods for refugees and we have agreed to handle this on their behalf. We will supply Volunteers to do this and selected Vincentians will do the necessary training for refugee contact. Such Members will be able to maintain contact with the refugee families when the "official agency" assistance ends after 24 months.

Longer term, as needs become identified in the community we envisage it as a Centre from where other services can be provided, e.g. young first time mothers, budgeting, elderly drop in centre, youth worker and Young Vinnies and assistance with life skills.

The feasibility of such a centre has been under consideration for nearly two years; the events above in Levin gave it new life. The main obstacle has been finding suitable premises and after searching for nearly

12 months we were on the verge of giving up when we were led to a property near a prominent business. It was not suitable but the one next was also for rent and it was perfect. It needed a lot of work but the Landlord was very cooperative and a lease was signed in December. Cleaning, painting altering to suit is all underway with plenty of assistance from all the Area Conferences and some very enthusiastic Levin Locals.

We see this as the new way forward for the Society in its goal of bringing the love of Jesus to the Poor. Of being an Evangelising society, of having the Poor experience the love of Jesus through us and for us to meet Jesus in the Poor.

As Pope Benedict XVI said, *"Being Christian is not the result of an ethical choice or a lofty ideal, but an encounter with an event, a person, which gives life a new horizon and a decisive direction."*

Vinnies Youth Christchurch

This year the Christchurch Young Vinnies and Vinnies Youth have continued with our annual Lenten Appeal, 40 Bags in 40 Days.

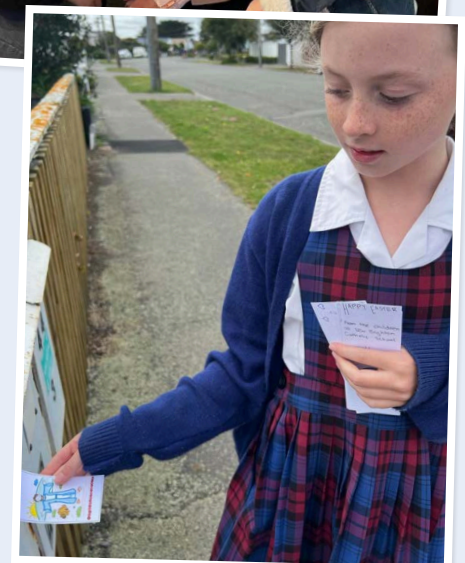
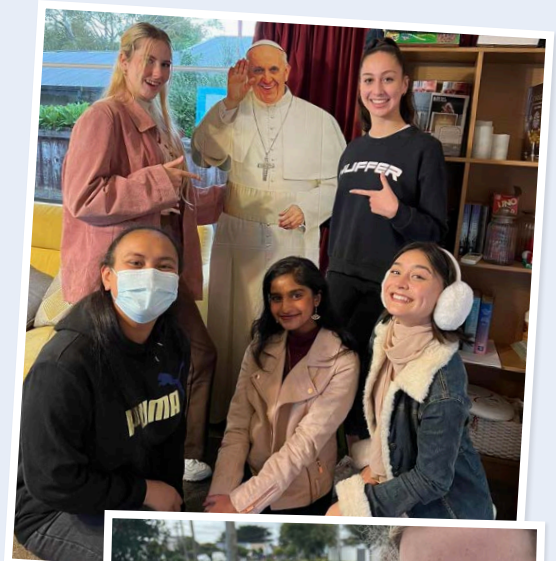
This appeal has great engagement and contributes thousands of essential items to the Society. Despite Covid-19, schools from across the city have participated, and helped us to help others. The generous donations which have already been collected from Our Lady Star of the Sea, St Anne's, St Joseph's Rangiora, St Joseph's Papanui, St Bernadette's, Our Lady of the Assumption, Marian College and St Bede's have made an amazing contribution to our foodbank, welfare, and op shops.

As well as donating items, some groups have given their time and talents to brighten the days of others. One example of this is our Young Vinnies group at New Brighton Catholic School who made beautiful Easter bookmarks which we dropped off in the letterboxes in the surrounding school neighbourhood. It was lovely to hear such positive feedback from the Young Vinnies about this experience, and for them to know the practical difference they can make in the lives of others.

Young Adults BBQ

On April 6th we also held a barbecue for young adults and encouraged them to join the Society of St Vincent de Paul. It was a great turnout from university and year 13 students, and we even have a few people who are already wanting to assist at their local foodbank.

It is inspiring to see the positive changes that our youth have been making in the lives of others!



ST JOSEPH'S CONFERENCE - NEW PLYMOUTH

Salad Days

When we first met Andrena, she had never handled or tasted broccoli.

At present we can't hold the cooking sessions because of omicron - so we are delivering ingredients and a recipe to the Mum's each week.

It's important to maintain the relationships we have established.

- Gabrielle Carman



Pope Francis Calls for Action and Unity

On the 50th anniversary of Earth Day, Pope Francis called for greater protection for the planet.

During his weekly general audience, the pope described humans' failure as guardians of the Earth, as seen in our exploitation of resources and damages to ecosystems.

"Because of our selfishness, we have failed in our responsibility to be guardians and stewards of the Earth," he said. "We have polluted and despoiled it, endangering our very lives."

Greenhouse gas emissions have warmed the Earth: The last five years have been the hottest on record — and 2020 is expected to be the hottest on record. A warmer globe has been catastrophic for the planet: record wildfires, fiercer hurricanes, megadroughts, displacement of millions.

We must, then, rethink how we approach the Earth. Rather than exploit it for resources, said Francis, we must remember that "we stand on holy ground."

The pope noted, too, that we are capable of global responses. We have seen collective action in our response to the coronavirus pandemic, "by showing solidarity with one another and embracing the most vulnerable in our midst," he said.

Francis cited the necessity of young people taking to the streets, as well as the importance of international negotiation, drawing attention to two major international

conferences coming up — the United Nations Biodiversity Conference and the U.N. 26th Conference of Parties on climate change (COP26), both of which have been postponed due to the coronavirus.

With a nod toward the grassroots activism of Earth Day, the pope also pointed to the benefits of "people at all levels of society [coming] together to create a popular movement."

Join Earth Day, the largest environmental movement, and come Election Day, vote for the Earth.

For more information: visit Earth Day Campaign's Faith Outreach campaign.

www.earthday.org/campaign/faith-the-environment/



INVEST IN OUR PLANET

			GROW THE EARTH'S CANOPY
END PLASTIC POLLUTION			
			BUILD A GREEN ECONOMY
SUPPORT CLIMATE LITERACY			
			RESTORE OUR EARTH
SWITCH TO SUSTAINABLE FASHION			

WESTPORT CONFERENCE

Grant from Foodstuffs

Society of Saint Vincent De Paul Westport were fortunate to be selected to share in a grant from Foodstuffs (S.I.) Ltd.

The Foodstuffs (South Island) Community ReStart Grant was distributed twelve month ago. Each month for the past twelve months “Vinnies” have received a generous supply of New World Gift card vouchers for use to the community.

We have used the vouchers to purchase supplies to stock our food bank This generosity enables us to support the community with generous food parcels. We have also donated vouchers to a couple of the Social Agencies with whom we work. After the devastating flood of July we were able to support Homebuilders with vouchers to distribute to many of their client families who were displaced as a result of the flood. They will once again be supported at Christmas time. You will see from one of the enclosed photos we also donated vouchers to Bev Bade the local CCS Coordinator / Foster Care Coordinator for her to distribute during the school holidays to families who usually benefit from school lunches.

We have also supported many in the community who were affected by the flood including some of our own volunteers whose homes have red stickered and they have had to find alternative accommodation.



Pictured: Julia Hands - Westport Conference President and West Coast Area Council President presenting Bev Bade - Service Coordinator CCS Disability Action Canterbury West Coast with New World vouchers for distribution to families during the school holidays to assist in place of school lunches.

NELSON CONFERENCE

Kindness in Action

- by Elizabeth Owens

Nelson Conference members have been busy supporting an increased number of clients in the community. This year we have become friends with a group of skilled women - the Waimea Area Patchwork Quilters. They regularly donate beautiful quilts to be given to those in need.

It is wonderful to have something beautiful and handmade to give to those who have fallen on hard times, or who are lonely and anxious. We share the background story for each gifted quilt (anonymously) with the group to build understanding of the needs in our community, and the work of the Society.



“A single act of kindness throws out roots in all directions, and the roots spring up and make new trees.”

- Amelia Earhart



Pope Francis

Pope Francis greets 80,000 teens on pilgrimage in St. Peter's Square on April 18, 2022. | Vatican Media



Pope Francis urged 80,000 teenagers gathered in St. Peter's Square on Monday to turn to the Blessed Virgin Mary to find the courage to say yes to God's will.

"May Our Lady, the mother who was almost your age when she received the angel's message and became pregnant, may she teach you to say, 'Here I am,' and to not be afraid. Take courage and go forth," the pope told the teens on pilgrimage on April 18.

From the popemobile, Pope Francis greeted the crowd of young people aged 12-17, who came from across Italy for the pilgrimage on Easter Monday evening.

The youth pilgrimage was organized by the Italian bishops' conference in an effort to reach out to young people whose education and lives were upended during the past two years of isolation due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

In his message, Pope Francis told the teens not to be afraid to reach out to others for help when experiencing discouragement or anxiety, saying *"crises must be brought to light to overcome them."*

"Life sometimes puts us to the test, makes us experience our weaknesses, makes us feel raw, helpless, alone," he said.

"How many times in this [pandemic] period have you felt alone, far from your friends? How many times have you been afraid?" Francis added.

He underlined that people should not be afraid to admit their fears.

"Fears need to be spoken, fears need to be expressed, so that they can be cast out. Remember this: fears must be said out loud. To whom? To dad, to mom, to a friend, to someone who can help you. They need to be brought to light," he said.

"And when fears, which are in the darkness, are brought into the light, the truth breaks out."

During the youth encounter, a girl named Sofia spoke about how she had experienced loneliness during the COVID-19 lockdowns and how a new friend helped her to rediscover hope.

Another girl, Alice, shared her suffering due to the death of her grandmother and how she came to understand redemptive suffering.

Pope Francis also reminded the young people to keep in mind their brothers and sisters who are suffering due to the war in Ukraine.

"Jesus conquered the darkness of death. Unfortunately, the clouds that obscure our time are still thick. In addition to the pandemic, Europe is experiencing a terrible war while injustices and violence that destroy humanity and the planet continue in many parts of the Earth," the pope said.

"Often it is precisely your peers who pay the highest price: not only is their existence compromised and made insecure, but their dreams for the future are trampled underfoot. So many brothers and sisters are still waiting for the light of Easter."

The pope said that just as children call to their mother in times of difficulty, so too do Catholics ask for the intercession of *"our mom, Mary,"* who was about the same age when she *"accepted her extraordinary vocation to be the mother of Jesus."*

Pope Francis blessed the young people and said:

"May the risen Jesus be the strength of your lives: go in peace and be happy, all of you!"

Structure of Saint Vincent de Paul

THE CONFERENCE

The SSVP is organised into groups called “Conferences”, which are communities of faith and love, prayer and action. Their members are traditionally known as Vincentians.

They have a spiritual bond, as brothers and sisters together. Their shared mission is to follow Christ by serving in hope those most in need.

Conferences meet weekly or fortnightly, forming bonds which strengthen their unity and friendship. Together they seek personal development and the encounter with Christ in the person of those in need.

THE COUNCILS

Councils serve the Conferences they coordinate; they help them to develop their spiritual life, increase their service and diversify their activities.

The function of Councils is to create new Conferences, help expand existing

Conferences, encourage special works, support training, establish relationships with the Vincentian Family, drive forward collaboration with other organisations and ensure good communications among Conferences and their associated Councils. Finally, they promote the sense of belonging to a Society which covers the entire world.

Conferences are grouped under various levels of Council:

.....
SUPERIOR OR NATIONAL COUNCIL: coordinates and represents the general work of all Conferences in a particular country or geographical zone.
.....

ZONE COUNCIL: represents groups of Conferences from a particular geographical zone, under the direction of the Superior Council to which they belong.
.....

REGIONAL, PARTICULAR, CENTRAL COUNCILS, etc, are other levels of Council which may be established when circumstances require it.

The Society of Saint Vincent de Paul is an international organisation formed of lay Catholics, whose vocation is to follow Christ through service to the most vulnerable people.

INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL GENERAL (CGI)

This is formed of the representatives of each of the member countries of the International Confederation of the SSVP. These vote on the main resolutions which affect the life of the SSVP, and every 6 years they elect a President General, who will appoint the executive board and members of the international structure to support the new President General during their term of office.

The CGI represents the Conference in the world, organises international meetings among countries, distributes information and provides funds for help in humanitarian emergencies. It is also the guarantor of the spirit of the Society, and ensures respect for the Rule. It is also responsible for aggregation of the Conferences and institution of Councils.

COMMISSION FOR INTERNATIONAL AID AND DEVELOPMENT (CIAD)

The CIAD (Commission for International Aid and Development) is the Commission which considers requests for financing projects of the Society around the world.

Its actions are financed by donations from Superior or National Councils and from outside donors.

This Commission channels and coordinates four main areas of action around the world:

- Emergency help in disaster situations.
- Projects to support development.
- Support for expansion and growth of the SSVP.
- Strengthening Superior/National Councils.



From the Archives

Society regrowth and the start of the depression 1925-1931.

From 1919, for a period of three years, New Zealanders enjoyed a euphoria – described as post-war intoxication – believing the war to end of all wars was behind them with a bright new world ahead.

The domestic economy boomed. Returned soldiers took on burdens of mortgage debt, purchasing farmlands. The boom lasted until prices for primary produce fell. Prices rallied somewhat in the period 1923-25, and then fluctuated through the rest of the twenties.

Unemployment was high from 1926. In 1929 far-off New Zealand felt the cold breeze from Wall Street foreshadowing the worst economic crisis of the 20th century.

In the period 1922 to 1932, during turbulent times of the depression and later war years several men's and women's conferences were established throughout New Zealand by Council members. Norman Gusscott, President of National Council from 1965 to 1970 knew a number of these men and had fond memories of them. He pointed out that apart from being active in Society administration and prominent Catholic laymen they were also prominent citizens in business and public administration.



Photo courtesy of Getty Images



Photo courtesy of Te Papa, Soup Kitchen 1931

Obituary



Kathleen Ellen O'Connor (Kath) - Westport

Kath was a loyal and hard working member of St. Canices - Conference Society of Saint Vincent De Paul in Westport for 30 years.

During this time Kath served two terms (6 years) as President. In 2019 Kath received a Long Service Certificate for her work with "Vinnies" Westport.

As a Vincentian Kath visited the sick at Buller Hospital; the elderly at our local aged care home; she made many home visits and distributed Holy Communion each week for those unable to attend Mass. Kath enjoyed her Friday afternoon shift at "Vinnies" shop each week.

Kath had a great community spirit and supported and was a member of many local community organizations.

Kath's husband Eamon predeceased her a number of years ago. Kath is survived by her nine children; 17 grand children and 13 great grand children. During her retirement Kath was able to visit her family throughout New Zealand; Australia and Ireland.

The enclosed remembrance sheet shows Kath spending time white-baiting on the banks of the Orowaiti River opposite her home in Westport.

Our sympathies are extended to Kath's family.
Rest in Peace Kath.



News in Brief

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We'd love to read your stories:

If you have any news items that you would like us to put in our next 'News in Brief' e-newsletter, please send us a short article and a photo (if you have one) to Anne-Marie McCarten: national@svdp.org.nz