



MEMBRE DE LA SOCIÉTÉ
DE SAINTE-VINCENT DE PAUL



SOCIETY OF ST VINCENT DE PAUL

News in Brief

June 2016 | Issue 12

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 an event coming up or a story you would like us to share, please email it to us at: national@svdp.org.nz

SOCIETY'S APPEAL FOR FIJI

Cyclone Winston Fiji

Funds raised to date from New Zealand Vincentians totals \$155,000. The donations are administered through Council General International and will assist in the work of rebuilding the lives and homes of those affected. This work will continue with local and international aid and assistance.



**\$155,000
RAISED TO
DATE!**

Society of St Vincent de Paul National Council
Bank Account Number: 02-0528-0208598-27
Reference: FIJI

Honouring Long Serving Vincentians

At the Vinnies Commissioning Mass long serving Vincentians Courtney and Bill van Dam were farewelled and honored for their work with the Society of St Vincent de Paul. At this mass they were also given a special blessing by Bishop Patrick Dunn and presented with the Mercy Cross by Kevin Mulcahy on behalf of the National Board. The Vinnies Youth also presented them with Mercy Cross Plaques carved by one of the Vinnies.

Peter Courtney

Joined the St Benedict's SVDP Conference in 1985 and in 2004 became the President for 26 years. He also became the President of the Auckland Metropolitan Central Council president for 6 years from 2008 - 2014. In this time he was also elected on the National Board where he served one term from 2009-2011. In this role he travelled Sri Lanka, Samoa and Tonga to support the SVDP partnership program (Twinning's) work there.

Peter Courtney has always been an avid supporter and advocate for the work of

St Vincent de Paul. His volunteer work as a SVDP member included work in Sunday liturgies in Mt Eden Prison, Auckland hospital, food parcels and rest home visits. Also Angel tree Christmas appeal for children of prisoners and providing resources to support schools in the Pacific.

In Auckland Peter has also been one of the most active and avid supporters of the Vinnies Youth program and invested a lot of time to work alongside mentoring and affirming them in the work they do. He will be missed by the youth.

Story continued...

Bill van Dam

Bill joined as a SVDP conference volunteer in the early 1980s. His volunteer work included the SVDP St Benedict's Conference Night Patrol van in support of people who were sleeping rough in the vicinity of city. They went out regularly to visit people and also give practical support.

He visited Paremoro Prison ministry on a regular basis assisting with Programs and also leading Sunday liturgies for residents. Alongside this work was the coordination of food support for families, and his significant role with the Liston Hostel Trust and the Airedale Shelter a dedicated service to provide overnight beds to rough sleepers in the Auckland City area.

Bill managed the Airedale shelter for many years and also oversaw the finances and personnel at James Liston Hostel. In addition to this work he also supported the Refugees who were then housed 2 St Benedicts Street.

In the late 1980s the AMCC ran a little operation based out of a small shop/office in Symonds Street Centre where they ran a small op shop, foodbank and a small office to support the work of the area councils. Bill was officially employed by the SVDP Auckland Metropolitan Central Council as their secretary in 1992. In this role he supported the work of the different Auckland area councils and coordinated assistance for those who were homeless and the different people coming in for various types of assistance.

Another significant part of Bill's work was in support of the Samoa St Vincent de Paul Conference. He travelled many a time in the early 1990's to assist in the setting up of the Samoa youth program and also to build connections with the Vincentians there. In addition to this is his work with the Auckland Vinnies program. Bill was one of the founding members of the Auckland Vinnies Youth and still today continues to passionately support this works of service.

We wish to thank and honor these two Vincentians for their amazing contribution to the works of the Society of St Vincent de Paul and those they seek to serve.



Bill and Peter receiving their blessing from Bishop Patrick Dunn

Napier Vincentians Honoured

Two long serving Napier Vincentians were recently presented with Certificates of Appreciation and the Works of Mercy Crosses. The certificates were awarded to mark their retirement as shop volunteers and ending an almost 50-year membership of St. Patrick's Conference.

Pauline van der Peet

Pauline was a member of the St. Thomas More Conference for many years acting as President and Treasurer at various times, and also as Secretary of the Napier District Council (as it was known then). Long before the Conference went into recess she began volunteering at the Maraenui Opportunity Shop in the back room doing all those tasks that keep an Op Shop going.

Margaret Minehan

Margaret was the last member of the St. Patrick's Women's Conference and was Vice-President of the combined Conference for many years. She has been a stalwart of the Napier Opportunity Shop almost since it opened, working the Saturday morning shift. Due to ill health her presence is very much missed by customers and the other staff.



Margaret Minehan (Left) and Pauline van der Peet (right)

Thank
YOU

New Plymouth Community Meals

The idea for the Parish to provide Community meals came from a Caritas Social Justice meeting organised by St Joseph and Fitzroy SVDP conferences in 2015.

We've had an amazing response to the request for volunteers. Thirty-four people from St. Vincent de Paul Society, Catholic Women's League, other parishioners and students from Sacred Heart Girl's College and Francis Douglas Memorial College have volunteered their on-going services.

These we have formed into two groups to provide free meals on 2nd and 4th Thursday of each month in St Joseph's Hall Supper Room, 151, Devon Street West between 5:30 and 6:30pm.

The Parish kindly provided the Supper Room free of charge whilst St. Vincent de Paul Society has provided items so as to be able to serve sixty meals an evening, as well as reimbursing the cost of the food where required. Our first meal was held on 14 April. Twenty-four volunteers from the two groups started the evening with prayers. Twenty people came for the meal and were joined by the volunteers. A spirit of generosity and great fellowship was evident among the volunteers. A number of those who came for the meal commented about the friendliness and good will they found there. Body and soul were fed in equal measure. On 28 April the second Group provided and served food for 28 people.

We expect numbers to increase not only by word of mouth but by advertising the Community Meals in the Parish News Letters such as St Mary's Cathedral and City Life Church. There are other New Plymouth Churches and groups providing community meals including Food Bank, Men's Shelter, Prisoners' Aid and Rehabilitation Society and Alcoholic and Narcotics Anonymous organisations.



LET YOUR STORY BE MY STORY

St Peters College Vinnies visit to Family Refuge

Today marked an important occasion for the Vinnies and staff of St Peter's College Auckland as they were welcomed and embraced by the staff and youth of the Mother of Divine of Mercy Refuge for families seeking refuge from domestic violence.

The purpose of the visit was to meet these families, create relationships, and hear about their stories on Domestic violence.

The St Peter's students also brought with them a gift collected food they had gathered at their school food drive.

The mother of Divine Mercy Refuge was established in the early 1990s under the leadership of their humble and inspirational matriarch Susana Fiu. They have nurtured hundreds mothers and their children and reconciled relationships.

Today many of these youth have returned and dedicated their lives to sharing their testimonies through prayer, service, music and dance and getting the message out there about the dangers of Domestic Violence. Today this groups works closely with the St Vincent de Paul Youth as an affiliate member to support families in the community and also provide awareness workshops for young people on domestic violence.

Following the programme both collectives came together to share in Eucharist.



We need Saints



Pope Francis - World Youth Day 2013
(Inspired by Pope John Paul II)

“We need saints without cassocks, without veils - we need saints with jeans and tennis shoes. We need saints that go to the movies that listen to music that hang out with their friends. We need saints that place God in first place ahead of succeeding in any career. We need saints that look for time to pray every day and who know how to be in love with purity, chastity and all good things. We need saints - saints for the 21st century with spirituality appropriate to our new time. We need saints that have a commitment to helping the poor and to make the needed social change. We need saints to live in the world, to sanctify the world and to not be afraid of living in the world by their presence in it. We need saints that drink Coca-Cola, that eat hot dogs, that surf the internet and that listen to their iPods. We need saints that love the Eucharist, that are not afraid or embarrassed to eat a pizza or drink a beer with their friends.



We need saints who love the movies, dance, sports, and theater. We need saints that are open sociable normal happy companions. We need saints who are in this world and who know how to enjoy the best in this world without being callous or mundane. We need saints.”

Testimony: The Usefulness of the Home Visit

“The home visit is a unique experience that can only be learned or taught with the heart, and in response to a call from God to ever greater generosity.

During every visit, we are learning alongside the poor. We have the opportunity for this intimate contact with God. The visit to the person in need in their home is one of the most important in the life of a Vincentian.

This moment must be an occasion for learning and for mutual exchange. We should make it a moment of prayer. Let us be ready to listen, let us be calm and generous as we seek to understand the difficulties and the limitations of the person receiving our visit.

We must not be intrusive during our visits. We have to know how to respect the private life of people in need no matter where they live.

We should not confuse our role with that of an investigator trying to find out everything about the person or the family in a short time. Relationships need time to build.

This time is necessary so that the people we visit can feel confident to share their problems, their stresses and their dreams with the Vincentian.



We must always take care not to judge those we help. Our judgment is often based on our own reality forgetting that the reality and condition of each person are different from those of anyone else.”

Extract from a training document from Society of Saint Vincent de Paul in Brazil (CGI website)

CONFERENCE OF ST JOSEPH, PICTON

Holiday Home

The St Vincent de Paul Holiday Home in Picton is situated at **110 High Street** and is close to all amenities. The house has **two bedrooms that will sleep six people** comfortably. The cost is **\$25 per night or \$150 per week**.

This holiday house is made available for the use of families in need. Families recovering from mental or physical illness, people under stress or pressure, or those in need of help through financial difficulties. People who qualify for the use of the house would for one reason or another not be able to have a holiday otherwise.

The house is made available only through direct representation from a conference of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul. In order to qualify for the use of the house a family or individual must be recommended by a conference. Also a written confirmation of this must be made to the representative of the Picton Conference. When a firm booking is made by a conference we ask that payment accompany the letter.

The Picton Conference welcomes guests to enjoy the pleasures of Picton.

More details and forms are available on application.

Ron Peters **03 573 7472**

Morris O'Callaghan **03 573 7299**

Young Vinnie's to benefit from Charity Bike Ride

The Central South Island Charity Bike Ride covers 365 kilometers of spectacular South Canterbury countryside and has raised over \$1 million for South Canterbury charities since beginning 12 years ago. The Society of St Vincent was fortunate to be chosen as a beneficiary in 2015 and 2016.

Last year Fr Joaquin Camano the newly appointed assistant priest to Timaru and Waimate parishes came fresh off the plane from the Philippines. Accompanied by local Vincentians they drove to Twizel to provide lunch for the 150 riders, drivers and supporters. Inspired by the riders' commitment and the majestic South Canterbury landscape Father Joaquin resolved to attempt the ride himself. South Canterbury parishioners and the Filipino community sponsored Father over \$2500 for the three-day journey. Funds given to the Society are allocated to the re-establishment of the Young Vinnie's in our schools. Thank you Father for your efforts.



SEATOUN & MIRIMAR CONFERENCE

Opening our arms to refugees

In February 2016 the two St Vincent de Paul Society Conferences in the Holy Trinity Parish of Kilbirnie, Miramar and Seatoun in Wellington led the call for assisting new refugees from Syria mostly and Afghanistan and Columbia.

Over 30 volunteers put their names down to help as and when required. \$2,000 cash was donated at Masses, which equipped a household in our area. Initial food and toys were donated and tireless efforts of some volunteers sorted and selected the household lots at the Wellington distribution Centre.

They prepared a house the day before the arrival of the family. What a joy it was for the refugee families to be greeted by fresh fruit on the table, food in the cupboards, beds made, and the basic necessities in place to start their new lives in Wellington.

At the end of April 2016, parishes welcomed another 13 refugee families into the Wellington region. The overwhelming generosity from the first intake of goods in February 2016 meant that there was less to do to this time around. There were surplus household goods, cash and commitments for help available for April. Each intake ahead will require a different effort and we are up for the challenge!

A small group has been formed from amongst our splendid volunteers to coordinate and sustain our urgent parish response every once in a while. We keep these refugees in our prayers, that they will feel safe, and will see the face of the Lord in the welcoming support of our Conferences and parishes.

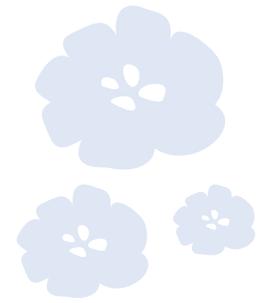
~ Brendan Quirk



Members and parishioners setting up the house

PETONE VINNIES SHOP

Re-Opens After Eighteen Months of Engineering Studies & Earthquake Strengthening



On Sunday 9th May 2016 the Hutt Valley Area Council had the pleasure of re-opening its shop situated at 316 Jackson Street, Petone.

This followed an eighteen month planning and development that started with Seismic investigations which revealed the sub ground-level status of the land on which the shop stands.

This was followed by detailed drawings from both the Structural Engineers and our Architect.

We then had our Quantity Surveyor provide us with an estimate of costs which then led to tenders being invited from selected building contractors to perform the contractual requirements for the building's earthquake strengthening.

The original estimate of time and cost was gradually extended as the true condition of our building became clear as various parts of the building were revealed during the demolition of some walls and floor areas.

What was originally set-out to take 4 months finally ended up taking 10 months.

In 2012 we added a permanent storage building attached to the back of our shop to provide clean and dry storage for the Whiteware and other donated goods that needed a to be kept protected from the elements.

At the same time the shop was re-carpeted, painted and generally spruced up.

In 2014, following the Christchurch earthquakes of 2010 and 2011 a directive from National Office required us to ascertain our earthquake rating expressed as a percentage of the New Building Standards (NBS)

With a low rating we were left with no alternative than to go ahead with the earthquake strengthening of our building that now rates at a full 100% of NBS.

SUNDAY 8TH MAY 2016

On Sunday 8th May a group of people consisting of our Area Council members, shop staff, Fr Michael and Terry Comber gathered to celebrate the occasion with a blessing of the shop by Fr Michael.

Mike Driscoll our President gave a very interesting speech providing a history of the development of the Area Council from its inception in the Hutt Valley leading to various sites on which it has operated leading up to the purchase of the present site in Jackson Street.

Terry Comber our National President graced us with his presence and spoke to the gathering and also complemented us all on a job well done.

Bruce then had the pleasure of introducing Ngaere Hailes and announced that Ngaere is retiring on Monday 9th May after a very notable and commendable volunteer service that spans over 22 years. Naturally loud applause followed.



Mike Driscoll - Ngaere Hailes - Bruce Reeves

To the President and Council

Hutt Valley & Wairarapa Area Council we extend a hearty congratulations for taking the plunge and moving into uncharted waters and coming through with a building that should last for many years to come providing a safe and comfortable work place and also a place that provides for a pleasant shopping experience for our many customers.

- Bruce & the team at Vinnies, Petone.

On behalf of Mike and the committee a very big thank you to the National Office for all the support with this project from receiving our first proposal and giving us the encouragement to go ahead and do it.

Hamilton storage facility answers needs

St Vincent de Paul in Hamilton has opened a new storage facility to help manage donations made to help it cope with increasing donations.

Previously donated goods were stored in several buildings as well as at its Frankton shop. The new, \$180,000 storage facility was named after Gertrude Hannah Alexis Kelleher who left a legacy enabling the building to go ahead.

The opening on April 14th 2016 saw the building blessed by Hamilton Bishop Steve Lowe. Bishop Lowe connected St Vincent de Paul's work to the Year of Mercy and asked: "How can we think of going to heaven if we ignore people."

Brian Bennett the president of the Hamilton area said it was a big day for the organisation. Founder Frederic Ozanam would be looking down and saying "this is exactly what I wanted you to do."



Pictured: Hamilton President Brian Bennett

ST JOSEPH'S CONFERENCE, HAWERA

A Man's Shed for Trinity

Our Conference has a long-standing and strong affiliation with Trinity Home and Hospital. The former name was Calvary Hospital when the Little Company of Mary Sisters had ownership. A charitable trust has taken over their good work.

Our affiliation is strengthened by the care some of our former members and Parishioners receive in the Rest Home and by some of our members who volunteer there.

The other side of this affiliation is the great generosity Trinity Management have shown to our Conference when they have been upgrading both furnishings and furniture.

In the attached Dementia Unit a wish was expressed for a 'Man's Shed.' The idea was a place to provide a change of scene where residents could go and enjoy practical and enjoyable activities. It is a destination in its own right and also a place to potter. Our Conference was enthused in helping with this project

The shed was a kitset that was assembled off site, painted and then transported to the enclosed area at Trinity. Some of our members and parishioners helped with the assembly, painting and transporting of the shed. We are very grateful for the generosity of these volunteers who used their manpower building the Man's Shed.



On the day the above photo was taken we had our monthly meeting at Trinity followed by a delicious afternoon tea. Then we went to view our Man's Shed. We were delighted with how special and welcoming it looked. Mrs Jan Dunlop, one of the directors of Trinity, spoke with enthusiasm of the project and the pleasure it would provide to residents and thanked our Conference for their involvement.

St Marys College Vinnies Wellington

Every year the year 12 girls at St Mary's College learn about food insecurity.

This year the Vinnie's were able to start off their unit by giving the group a talk about our food bank and the type of people that we help. You'd be surprised as we have a wide range of needs. Some individuals only need quick one time help while others work closely with us for several months. The goal of course is always to get them back on their feet and be self-sufficient. After hearing the talk the St Mary's girls put on a food insecurity food drive! We really depend greatly on donated food for our food banks. We were so happy to receive all these boxes of food. They will certainly help those in need in the area. *Thank you girls!*



Neighbours Day in Lyall Bay

This year the Wellington Area Council got involved with Neighbour's Day. We joined forces with Housing New Zealand and took our team of volunteers to Lyall Bay.

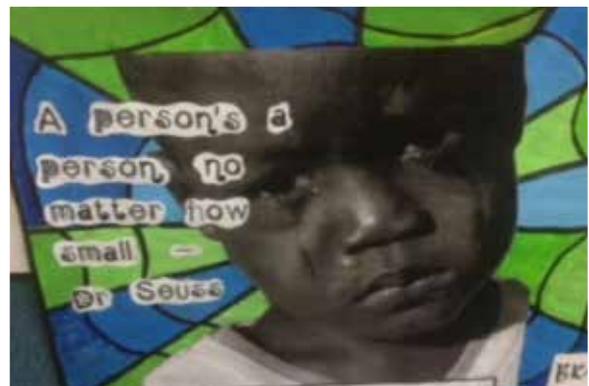
Along with a large group from Youth for Christ we got to work clearing rubbish from homes, washing windows and clearing communal areas that had become very overgrown. Alice Daniel-Kirk from Housing New Zealand said "knowing your neighbours, especially in emergencies, is so important. We had a great reaction from tenants, who were really pleased with the work. Volunteers from the St Vincent de Paul Society filled three skip bins with rubbish and cleaned so many windows that it motivated the tenants to start cleaning the inside of their windows!"

Thanks to all our fantastic volunteers that took part in the event, you really made a difference to the community in Lyall Bay!



Southland Vinnie's

Two Young Vinnie's from St Thomas Aquinas Primary School, Winton, Southland - Alex and Briar - created this poster last year after the school began to embed the philosophy of St Vincent de Paul into the whole curriculum.



St Thomas Aquinas's principal and staff are very committed to embedding the meaning of Catholic Education into the whole educational program.

The school is proud of the Filipino members of their school who share their culture and deep faith who have immigrated to work in the diaryfarms as well as in other areas.



Vincentian day of Reflection on the Works of Mercy

The St Vincent de Paul Conferences of Levin and Otaki held a Day of Spiritual Retreat on Friday 11 March at the Parish Centre, St Joseph's, Levin.

The day was planned in response to the publication by the Pontifical Council, Cor Unum, of the Holy Father's wish that those working in the Church's charitable service hold such a day in Lent of the Year of Mercy.

During the Retreat there was time for prayer, reflection and discussion as well as Holy Mass and the opportunity to receive the sacrament of reconciliation.

About twenty parishioners attended from both the St Vincent de Paul Conferences and other organisations in the parish and enjoyed the chance to reflect on the spiritual aspect of their work. They also planned to organise further activities inspired by the lives of St Vincent de Paul, Blessed Frederic Ozanam and the Corporal and Spiritual Works of Mercy.

In 2017 we will be celebrating our 150th Anniversary as a Society in New Zealand and we need your help!

If you have any old photos, newspaper clippings or any archival material that we could use in our celebrations then please contact:

Mike Daly - Interim President
Christchurch Area Council
PO Box 26007, North Avon, Christchurch, 8148.



Rest in Peace

Margaret Patricia (Patsy) Dwyer

Margaret collapsed and died suddenly while visiting her beloved husband's grave on Saturday 16th April 2016.

Patsy became a member of the Howick conference in February 1997. She did a stint as secretary of the conference for 2 years early on. In time she took over the reigns as president - a position which she competently held until her death. In the early 2000s Patsy was the secretary of the South Auckland District for 5 years.

Until fairly recently Patsy had been on the selection panel which chooses students to receive Saint Vincent de Paul scholarships at McAuley High School. This was something she was passionate about and loved doing. In fact, Patsy was passionate about the SVDP society - she lived and breathed it. Given half the chance, she told anybody and everybody who cared to listen about the works of the Society and what it is to be Vincentian. Patsy worked tirelessly for the society - visiting the sick and bereaved; cooking meals; taking people to hospital/doctors' appointments.

There are many many people in the parish of Our Lady Star of the Sea, Howick who have been on the receiving end of Patsy's generosity in these areas. She also organised and oversaw with a very fine tooth comb, the weekly distribution of food parcels. She was a perfectionist when it came to making up food parcels and stocking the supplies cupboard - woe betide any of us if we got it wrong!

For Patsy, being a Vincentian was really just an extension of her faith. She loved the Lord and she loved helping people. She truly lived out the words of The Servant Song: 'Brother, sister, let me serve you. Let me be as Christ to you'.

May Patsy rest forever in the peace of Christ. She was indeed a good and faithful servant.

Libby Giddey On behalf of the Howick conference

Kevin Lange

Kevin sadly passed away on 23rd May 2016.

Kevin was the former South-Mid Canterbury Area Council Secretary and dedicated and long-serving member of the Society for many years. Kevin was also known as a peacemaker and for his gift of compassion.

May he Rest in Peace.

News in Brief

Society of St Vincent de Paul in New Zealand

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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, email: national@svdp.org.nz