

News in Brief

Midwinter E-news July 2018 | Issue 19

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

Holiday House available in Picton

If you know people and families who cannot afford to have a good holiday, please remember the Society of St Vincent de Paul has a holiday house which is available to those in need.

The house was recently renovated and can accommodate a group of up to six. It is located in the heart of Picton in the picturesque Marlborough Sounds, and is operated by the St Joseph's Conference.



"Picton is an ideal holiday spot in summer or winter," says Marlena Hoeft-Marwick, President of Marlborough Area Council.

"It's peaceful and tranquil in winter and in summer the population doubles and it springs into life.

"The house is a wonderful resource which we want to see put to good use. If you

know people who really need a good break for whatever reason but are struggling to afford it, this is a great option to consider. A relaxing holiday gives people a big boost."

People who have used the house have been very enthusiastic about the experience.

"I was lucky enough to spend some time at the Picton Holiday House," says a person who was dealing with cancer. "I needed a break away from my usual routine to continue my recovery in a restful and quiet environment.

"It was the best thing that could have happened to me. I was able to look at my life options and most of all get the rest I needed to help restore my health."

People interested in the holiday house need to be recommended by a local Conference or Area Council President. For further information please contact Maria on 03 5737111 or 0273 536 756



*Marlena Hoeft-Marwick,
President, Marlborough
Area Council.*



The SSVP at the United Nations

The Society was admitted to the ECOSOC (United Nations Economic and Social Council) as a non-governmental organization in March 2012. This consultant status gives NGOs such as the SSVP access not only to the ECOSOC but also to many of its subsidiary bodies. It also enables them to attend international conferences organized by the United Nations.

Blenheim community BBQ group

When a sub group of St Vincent de Paul members worked on the Strategic Plan last year we decided one of the focus areas would be 'Our Work- Supporting those who are hungry.' For this we wanted to reach out to those who were struggling financially, so had planned to have free family BBQ's and send the invites out to the poorer areas. However, council were not keen for various reasons. So we went to Plan B which was having free BBQ's for the elderly in our community who may appreciate this and also enjoy the company,

The BBQ group consisted of St Vincent de Paul members and other Parishioners. We went to various council pension flats speaking to the residents and delivering invitations. We had BBQ's at various Blenheim pensioner sites every Friday night from 5pm till 6.30pm during the summer months. Much of the food was donated and we were able to distribute this among the residents.

The gatherings were well attended and always a fun occasion. People shared stories, met others, we had sing songs, and of course, laughter was always part of the mix. The residents thoroughly enjoyed these evenings,

and it would be fair to say that the Vinnie BBQ group enjoyed it just as much. The people were friendly, appreciative and we certainly saw the face of Jesus alive and well.



Supporting your community

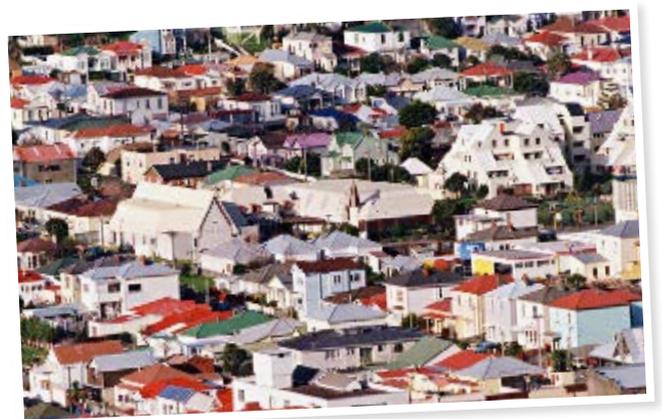
Ray Tuffin, Newtown Community Liaison Officer for the Wellington City Council shares his experience supporting a member of the local community into social housing:

"I have been supporting an elderly gentleman into social housing. He had been living in a local backpacker which was well beyond his means. While supporting him through the process I started to learn about the conditions he was living under. He was offered a City Housing apartment and I questioned him around shifting his belongs to the new apartment. He told me that all he had was three bags of clothes, a mattress and a rice cooker.

I was shocked and didn't know where to go for the support he required. I approached Saint Vincent De Paul and was told that they would support where possible. An appointment was made with Kim, Newtown's Social Worker where we sat around a table to discuss this gentleman's circumstances. Kim was caring, cheerful and provided the ability for the gentleman to keep his self-esteem which is so important. Kim reviewed his financial situation, offered budgeting support, and made a list of furniture, bedding, cooking instruments that he needed. The experience with Kim empowered the gentleman with hope and confidence.

Our second visit with Kim was the selection process for the various items needed for the move into the new apartment. Again, the kindness and respect Vinnies provided made a difficult task for those in need a whole lot easier. Kim went the extra mile and took the gentleman to another store to make sure he got everything he needed, and the delivery team finished off showing our man kindness and respect at all times.

This experience has provided me with a new understanding of the work Saint Vincent De Paul do for our communities. They are wonderful team providing great support for those in need, well done.



Samoa, Tonga & Sri Lanka

Twining Report July 2018

There has been considerable activity over the first 6 months of the year.

Cyclone Gita that hit Samoa and Tonga during February 2018 and challenged us in contributing in the best manner. We need to recognise and thank the Area Councils and Conferences in New Zealand for the fantastic response to our request for financial aid, \$75,618.00. We also note the contribution from the National Council of Australia, AUD\$10,000.00, to be directed to education/school needs. This has allowed us to contribute to key areas of assistance, with guidance from the National Councils of Samoa and Tonga. SSVdP International, through Maurice Yeung, IVP Special Projects, and Bruno Fabre, CIAD, made contact re the need for emergency funding but we did not need to take up the offer.

As reported in April, Samoa got off relatively lightly with most of the damage being flooding and some roofs ripped off mostly at the western end of the main island, Upolu. There was also considerable damage to crops, breadfruit and bananas. It will be 6 months before crops will be reproducing. Damage to a drinking water supply on the island of Savaii also occurred. There will be in the next 6 months the affordability issues re the meeting of school fees and activities costs and we will continue to monitor closely with the current National President. Samoan aid has been both financial and material. The initial aid of NZ\$3,000.00 was followed up with a further NZ\$15,000.00. As reported by the National President of Samoa this has been utilised in helping one family rebuild their fale and another family build a small fale to replace the one destroyed in the cyclone. They are also buying 2 water tanks for two families. They also plan to help 6 year 4 students from Don Bosco Technical Centre who have not been able to pay their school fees even for term one yet. They will help them with term one and two. The parents are farmers and lost their crops to the cyclone and so are unable to

pay their sons' school fees. We also shipped 70 boxes of food and clothing. The food will be distributed to the most needy to help them better celebrate Mother's Day. In the last few days we have released NZ\$5,000 for funding property repairs on the island of Savaii.

Tonga as we know suffered considerable long term damage to property and crops on the main island of Tongatapu and neighbouring Eua. Initially, in Tonga, we focused on financial aid, NZ\$10,000 for health and hygiene product. During this period we have also shipped clothing, household goods and food. Currently we are in the process of arranging a shipment of school desks, tables and chairs for 5 primary schools and kindergartens. This is where we will be utilising the Australian donation. Furnware Ltd who are the school furniture supplier have also donated a large number of chairs and assisted with freight for Tonga. We need recognise the efforts of Richard and members of the SVdP Hornby are also arranging a shipment of computers and servers to replace equipment lost during the cyclone. This is being managed in Tonga by both the SSVdP and an education/schools contact. They currently land shipments in Tonga at little or no cost. We arranged a meeting with the NZ Embassy in Tonga for the National President and we have been advised that we can through application from the SSVdP Tonga apply for funding to assist with specific educational/school needs. This is being assessed. We also need to record the donation of a substantial quantity of vegetable seeds from Yates NZ Ltd which have been sent to Tonga. The assistance and guidance afforded by Del Soti and her Auckland helpers needs to be recorded. Aid will continue to be managed for the next 6 months. The cost of the 2 current projects will be cNZ\$25,000.00. We have had donated 19 WC pans and we are currently working with a NZ supplier to identify suitable cisterns and seats. These will be shipped with the school furniture later in July.

Contact has been re-established with the Tokelau's and we will continue to

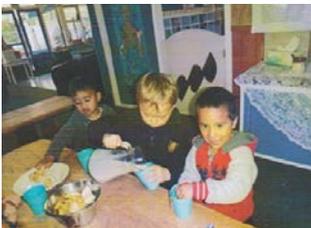
monitor and assess as the need arises. Sri Lanka Twining is going well. The new structure has been accepted, NZ AC's and Conferences Twinned with an Area/Deanery/Diocesan Area Council and its Conferences. The result is funding is been directed to the areas of greatest need. The areas of assistance include, food, shelter, medical, educational and footwear. The challenge of getting reports from the various areas continues with 10 received to date. We have also received some photos of their activities through the utilisation of funds received. The National President and National Twining officer in Sri Lanka are both well aware of the need for reports and they continue to communicate with their councils. Several factors are involved but I am confident they will overcome their challenges and deliver. To date for the current financial year we have forwarded NZ\$59,000.00.



Thermal Lands

Catherine the Full-Fill Mobile Van Coordinator out in the field with a new initiative - providing lunches to pre-schools and primary schools in selected areas of Rotorua. 6 schools are visited each week a team of helpers make lunches or prepares the fillings for the sandwiches – otherwise known as stack building, great fun!

Wednesdays is a special day at Fordlands. We are getting our lunches delivered by the Full-Fill van from St Vincent de Paul. They are delivering the bread, fillings, milk, milo and fruit and our tamariki are hayour own lunch box' day each Wednesday. This is a neat kaupapa as it teaches our tamariki great life skills and self-help skills around food preparation/food hygiene and nutrition. This is such an awesome community engagement opportunity too.



School lunches in Northland

The Whangarei Conference has been very busy providing school lunches for children in low-decile areas in Northland. Lunches are prepared and delivered to eight low-decile schools in the area.

The initiative has been welcomed by the schools and the demand has rapidly increased. This term, the request from one school has gone from 35 lunches to 75 lunches.

Northland has among the worst rates of child poverty in the country. In many cases children are brought up by grandparents and aunts. In one case we are aware of, an aunt is looking after 11 children of extended family members under the age of 10 years.



45 years of Service

Marlena Hoeft-Marwick, Area Council President of Marlborough presents a certificate to Yvonne Connor who has been a member of the Society for 45yrs.



Left - Margaret Schultz, President St Mary's Blenheim Conference

'Reflection on the Vincentian spirit'

Said Trudy Stead, "The Vincentian spirit has not changed since the days of Blessed Frederic Oznam and Saint Vincent De Paul. It has merely shifted to reflect poverty in a different light. *Adaptation to a Changing World* 1.6, pg 22, 2014 St Vincent De Paul Handbook 2014."

Vincentians' work makes a difference in the lives of vulnerable families more than ever today. Saint Vincent De Paul Society (Vinnies) can be seen actively providing support in the following ways:

Payments to clear out car debts, car repairs; warrant of fitness; car registration; and petrol vouchers.

The provision of snapper cards for adults and school children's transport; (these families have experienced high debt and sometimes have four or more children to ferry to schools).

Payments have been made for GP, hospital, and specialist for families in financial hardship.

Driver's licences for teens that have learned the road code and are not driving legally on the roads, this applies to parents as well. With a driver's licence, these teens can support the family by helping out with transport of some of the children with school, ferrying some of them to sports activities or buying the groceries, while mum looks after the other children at home.

Power bills (families with high level debts. Power is a basic need). Phone bills and top up phone cards (for families struggling to put food on the table; phone is essential for communications with GP specialist, schools and other).

Food vouchers and Food parcels; (families with high debts and not enough money for food...food is a basic need).

School uniforms, socks, shoes, stationery, fees and other associated with school needs.

Payments have been made to clear out loans; and other debts to ease the financial burden.

It is a fact that most mothers will wake in the morning with the worry of debts to pay. This stress is not conducive to the mother, father or children. These are vulnerable families.

School camp opportunities for children who otherwise due to financial hardship, could not have had the opportunity to experience teamwork, sharing of ideas and aspirations and an appreciation of our environment that is their future.

Our work also involves visiting the sick or infirmed, supporting Migrants and Refugees, the elderly, lonely, and shut-ins; and

Other outreach work, such as volunteers that sell the Christmas cards, positions held by the President, chairperson, treasurer, secretary, and taking minutes to name a few).

As a social worker I have observed that most of the families receiving the above mentioned support are families that have experienced trauma and abuse, mental health illnesses, financial hardships and other forms of discriminatory affliction.

All are very grateful for the love shown by the Saint Vincent De Paul Society.

Kind regards

Trudy Stead

President Waiwhetu Conference

Volunteer Week 17th - 23rd June in the Western Bay of Plenty

Shop Managers and Young Vinnies Coordinator Alex Eagles-Tully, worked together to create an extra special week for their volunteers.

Young Vinnies, students created handmade cards with a personalised message and baked cakes, muffins and slices to drop off to the shops during Volunteer Week. Volunteers were chuffed knowing that they were a special part of the 'bigger picture'.

Shop windows were displayed in bright blue and white and a poster made celebrating volunteers, tearooms were decorated, chocolates were laid out in platters and a heartfelt message from the Managers was written focusing on the effort volunteers go to for Vinnies. Every volunteer in the Western Bay of Plenty received a discount voucher supported from a local hair salon and some hot pool entries too! We love our volunteers in the Bay and believe that we have the kind of volunteers that everyone wishes they had!"



A message from Bishop Owen Dolan



Dear Fellow Vincentians

It is possible that there will not be large numbers of Vincent de Paul members who will quickly embrace Social Justice issues. But the important thing that has happened this year is that these matters are seen to be a part of the Society's Agenda. Catholic Social Teachings are a real part of the Society Agenda (and Blessed Frederic said as much), *"you must study their condition and injustices which brought about such poverty with the aim of long term improvement"*.

So now it is a 'given' in our programme. Perhaps this will take time to be internalised as with any societal change. For instance, we are still coming to recognise accept, some of the teachings of Vatican 2. But it is here to stay.

There will be among the members, some who feel they have neither the time nor the ability to go beyond their present involvement. That is completely understandable. But hopefully, they will support those who do. And, anyway, it is not wise to rush into new things too quickly. Rather, let us learn from, and support those that are already engaged.

Caritas is the Church agency for Justice, Peace and Development. They have the expertise and experience. May they know that St Vincent de Paul stands alongside them.

And it goes without saying, that we affirm and encourage those members and conferences already involved in the Social Justice issues that they recognise in their own communities.



Repurposing her life through volunteering

Story and photo by Richa Kohl and Volunteer Wellington

St Vincent de Paul Society Wellington has another revealing dimension called [Vinnies] Re Sew which happens to be the base for a labyrinth of brilliantly coloured unwanted, discarded fabric and textiles that a community of volunteers is committed to reviving and upcycling.

One of these volunteers is Jade, a sole parent and mother of three, and she's not just repurposing scraps, she's repurposing her life. Jade was referred to Volunteer Wellington's Work and Income programme by her case manager. When she talked about her interest in sewing, Volunteer Wellington helped her connect with Re Sew immediately.

'I love fashion and I want a career in it.' Re Sew is an opportune milestone which fits into her big picture. She has already learnt a variety of skills, especially making clothes for herself and her children.

Jade, who is studying towards a Diploma in Fashion, is brimming with ideas. 'Through Re Sew I'm currently putting together a fashion show for Women's Refuge to be held at the end of the year. I'm managing the whole thing - the theme, collection, doing up outfits, models, lighting, DJ!' she says. Raising funds for the show and gaining a foothold in the fashion industry are her goals.

She acknowledges that she's low on income and has three children to think about, but she's motivated and determined to chase her ambition of being a fashion designer. 'Even when gas is low, I get here. I believe in myself.' Her co-

worker, Sophie, points out how quickly Jade evolved from learning the basics to having plans and bringing the right people together so that her ideas can see the light of day.

Amidst the uncertainties of life, Re Sew is Jade's haven. She loves that she can bounce off creative ideas with her co-workers who are also keen to help with her show. 'Re Sew is my favourite place to come to - besides a fabric store of course!' she says cheerfully.

Paid employment is her end goal. Her strategy has been to find a volunteer role in a community clothing store that is creative and innovative. 'Volunteer Wellington helped me find the perfect role. Volunteering showed me that if you want something bad enough you have to go out there and get it.'

In her community, she finds that women just need a boost. Re Sew is a great initiative that galvanises them, especially young women, into action, Jade says. Her coordinator, Caroline O'Reilly, keeps her up to date about job opportunities.

An unexpected but profound outcome for Jade has been a strong following on her social media pages of young women who draw inspiration from her. They have let her know that they've been more than able to move on from toxic relationships and create purposeful lives.

It seems fitting that Jade has chosen "Warrior Goddess" as the theme for her Women's Refuge show - she won't let her spirit wane.



Wellington Storm

Terry Jordan - 13 May 2018

In the windswept rains on Te Atiawa's plains
In the land of the lower North Island
Where the clouds scud by in the foaming sky
And crash on the Rimataka highlands

The surge of the sea sweeps the surf to me
On the beach by the Hutt River mouth
I brace myself on the river mouth shelf
And confront the assault from the south

As the stormy sea thrusts the swells to me
From the base of the global sphere
The Antarctic bite of the cold wind's might
Cuts me deep as I'm standing here

Every sense is alive as I grasp and strive
To capture the soul of the storm
And seize its strength right along the length
Of the beach in the Wellington morn

As the Ants in town all hunker down
Behind their double glazing
I'm out here in the storm swept air
With my eyes and senses blazing

I'm wildly awake as I stand there and take
The brute force of the southerly storm
But I feel no fear because I have been here
Long ago on a cold April morn

Fifty years ago in that cruel April blow
Nature's fury was fully unleashed
And fifty one died in the fierce raging tide
On the rocks near Pencarrow's beach

On Barret's reef Wahine came to grief
In the heads of the harbour mouth
And rolled on its side in the seething tide
Destroyed by the storm from the south

I sat in the gloom of my puny classroom
As that roof flew off in the gale
And I stared in the eyes of the furious skies
So juvenile, frightened and frail

I learned on that day when a storm comes to play
That a terrible beauty abounds
And a raw tempest's might is a powerful sight
As a roof flies across the school grounds

That storm on its roll blew its way to my soul
And captured my heart with its splendour
Since then I delight in each storm's awesome might
As they transport me back to remember

There's no need for alarm, you'll not come to harm
As the storm tosses on in its play
And gives you a fright with its powerful might
As it welcomes you into the day

The thin autumn sun breaks this storm's sense of fun
As it did fifty years ago
And I laugh in its face, in one final embrace
As its powerful winds start to slow

The harbour then stills as the wind leaves the hills
As the latte sun ventures out
And the ants all smile down the shops golden mile
As they cautiously patter about

The storm is like life where we know joy and strife
And we only see beauty in one
But beauty is there in the hard times we bear
And we're poorer if we only love sun.

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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

