

MEMBRE DE LA SOCIETE DE SAINT-VINCENT DE PAUL





STAY SAFE BE KIND SOCIETY OF ST VINCENT DE PAUL

News in Brief

E-news August 2020 | Issue 25

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

Huge appreciation for food parcels

Food parcels from St Vincent de Paul have been enthusiastically welcomed by schools and communities in Kaikohe, Northland.

Thank you so much for your ongoing support for our vulnerable whanau, says Rene Hapeta, Nga puhi lwi social worker in schools.

"As a school we try to support our families as best we can. The food St Vincent de Paul has provided has made a huge difference to our tamariki and their ability to learn."

The St Vincent de Paul food parcels have been distributed to many needy families in the community. The parcels contained essential food commodities such as potatoes, cabbage, apples, onions, carrots, rice and pasta, chicken and sausages, porridge, baked beans, sweet corn, fish, fruit, tea, sugar, long life milk bread and a spread.

On some occasions packets of sandwiches have also been provided to the schools.

The circumstances of disadvantaged families vary greatly. In one case, grandparents are raising their eight grandchildren, aged from three years to 14.

"To those responsible for the kai parcel, thank you so much for your generosity and support. We are a one-income whānau and this has been a huge help for us all. Our mokopuna are grateful that they are able to eat a good meal."

Another family reports great excitement when the food arrived.

"Thank you so much for the kai. The kids are all excited we have food and I can feel a huge weight lifting off my shoulders. They asked where we got it from and I told them that it came from caring people in Whangarei."

And this from another family:

"The whānau literally ran out and took the kai as I was lifting it out of the van. I could see the tears welling up in their mother's eyes as she stood at her front door, mouthing the words 'thank you'."

In the Northland community unemployment and redundancies are a major cause of deprivation.

"Thank you, thank you, thank you to your team who thought of me and my whānau during these challenging and stressful times," says a mother of four whose husband has been made redundant. "Nga mihi kia koutou katoa."

From grandparents to children, the arrival of a St Vincent de Paul food parcel is cause for celebration.

"Thank you so much for your awhi," say the grandparents who are raising four mokopuna. "it is times like these you know who your friends are."

"The children were happy to see the kai parcel, they reckon there is enough food now for everyone to eat and mum is not going to growl."

If you would like to support struggling families and communities through the St Vincent de Paul Covid-19 National Recovery Appeal, you can donate online at: **donate.svdp.org.nz**



SVDP NATIONAL RECOVERY APPEAL 2020 Give Kiwis struggling another choice.

donate.svdp.org.nz

Northland Area Council Appeal

APPEAL UPDATE - 6th August 2020

At the recent meeting of the National Council 6/7 March 2020, it was agreed that an appeal be launched to fund the continuation of the work in Northland, one of the most marginalised areas in New Zealand.

Donations received from Councils and Conferences to date amounts to \$36,492.00.

The Northland Area President sincerely thanks Conferences and Councils for their generosity towards assisting the ongoing work of the Society in Northland.

Recently, another school has asked for assistance with lunches - that equates to 9 schools altogether, with close to 1800 sandwiches supplied each week. Two schools have also increased there sandwich requirements. Two families have been assisted after house fires in Whangarei and Kaikohe. Food, clothing, bedding and an extensive range of kitchenware has been supplied. Blankets are being collected for whanau in Kaikohe for families returning home from Auckland due to lack of work opportunities and unemployment. In some situations there are up to 15 children living in one house sharing beds, clothing and food. A Vincentian from Whangarei transports a van full of food and clothing to the far north each week.

In Kaikohe a person has volunteered to assist with budget advice for families most in need – this is working well.

Any further donations towards the appeal may be forwarded to bank account number: 020585 0084069 000 or, alternatively, transferred from funds that Area Councils hold in the Common Fund.

Terry Jordan - National Treasurer

ASHBURTON Inner Wheel show support

ASHBURTON COURIER - July 2nd, 2020

Recognising a community need, members of Inner Wheel of Ashburton have given food supplies and \$200 to St Vincent de Paul.

Inner Wheel president Margaret Rickard said members were aware of people struggling in the current Covid-19 climate and wanted to help.

Their donation was welcomed by Vinnies president Michael Hanham who said the foodbank service was experieencing high numbers of people reaching out; one day last week eight families had made contact in one day for assistance.

Last month the organisation said i was keeping its ear to the ground for any families that were struggling, but too embarrassed to come forward.

"It's quite hard to ask for help and so we listen and pick up on families," Vinnies shop manager Donna Collins said at a time.

"Sometimes families get referred by other family members and that's good and we help where we can."

Anyone in need, or looking to refer other families or individuals can text or phone 027 607 0107.



Left: St Vincent de Paul Ashburton president Michael Hanham and shop assistant manager Pauline Marsden with Inner Wheel's Margaret Rockard and Carolyn Nelson.

Taranaki Area Meeting

Taranaki held their Area meeting in Stratford recently – six months since they last met face to face, so it was a reunion for the Area team.

"Annette Orchard was commissioned as new area President, in a lovely ceremony led by Freda. Bob was thanked and received a certificate and crucifix. And of course we had an afternoon tea to surpass all afternoon teas!"

Photos: Taranaki area members enjoying afternoon tea. Bob Goodyear and Annette Orchard.





Successful food drive

For a month New World gave our paper bags for members of the public to purchase and donate food items to St Vincent de Paul through their shop collection box.



Paul Thomas receiving goods from New World supermarket in Ashburton.

CHRISTCHURCH

Young Vinnies

Young Vinnies in Christchurch have kept our presence strong over the past few months. During the Covid-19 lockdown we released several well-being worksheets for our students and continued an active presence online.

Before lockdown we were part-way through our Lenten appeal, '40 bags for 40 days' which asks students to donate items to St Vincent de Paul that they no longer need. Several of our schools are continuing the appeal with a focus on warm items for use in the winter months. We have continued opportunities for our youth to volunteer at our op shops.

In July we celebrated International SVDP Youth day. Activities included holding a mini Faith-in-Action Day and an inter-school zoom call and prayer network for the future of the Society.



NEW PLYMOUTH

"I was hungry and you gave me food"

The St Joseph's Conference of St Vincent de Paul in New Plymouth was delighted to be able to re start regular "dine in" Community Meals on Tuesday June 16th. – Well, with a few extra precautions in the form of lots of hand sanitiser, a level of social distancing and a contact tracing register.

The re start came after six weeks when the "dine-in" experience was missing. At Levels 3 and 4 the meals became "take away". People came into the hall one at a time and collected food to be eaten at home. Lots of our regulars were missing. These were the people who come mainly for the happy atmosphere, the acceptance and the social experience.

June 16th was a big step forward. The tables were set. Our regular pianist was first through the door. His beautiful playing creates such a welcoming atmosphere. Our cooks and helpers did a great job in setting up. The food was wonderful – and there was lots of it. Hot, nourishing and delicious.

Our post meal delivery service to those who cannot attend, re started the same evening.

We have a lot to be thankful for. The numbers at the meals are building again and it is clear that our service is needed and appreciated.



'Thankyou St Vincent de Paul. Really appreciated the awhi and the aroha.'

On the frontline of need and deprivation, support from St Vincent de Paul can make a huge difference to a family and community. Here is some feedback from families desperately struggling through the Covid-19 crisis.

"Thank you for helping my whanau. The kai parcels have helped H and me and our kids through a bit of a tough spot. We had no water – and you got us some water, we were cold, and you got us some blankets, my kids were cold and you got them some jackets, and when we had no kai – you got us some kai . I don't know what to say, because it has been overwhelming. Thank you."

"Big mihi to you fellahs. I feel useless because I can't get out to get the kai for my whanau. Thank you St Vincent de Paul. Your kai came when we needed it."

Dad is undergoing cancer treatment.

"Thanks so much for the kai awhi. It came at a time when we needed kai. We have a big whanau and five teenagers who are always hungry. The vegetables and the chicken is greatly appreciated. Thank you St Vincent de Paul."

"Thank you so much for the kai pack. Really appreciated the awhi and the aroha."

"'Whaea, thanks for the kai', and then he came over to hug me. Then he says – 'I probably shouldn't have done that but my whanau really appreciates it ... And that was from all of us.' "

"We are really grateful for the food assistance from St Vincent de Paul. In a rural area, the stress of going to do the shopping is huge – especially with a big whanau. You have no idea how much the delivery of the kai meant to us. Thank you."

Dad has a heart condition and the youngest daughter of seven children is asthmatic.

"Sandwiches were passed out at Northland College during interval and lunch time, nothing went to waste."

"Thank you for thinking of us and dropping by with the kai and a chance to have a korero." 90-year-old with grandchildren who had all arrived and locked down in his home.

A volunteer says...

"As a little girl growing up, I used to ride along with my parents doing the same thing. Today one of my daughters rides alongside me. Many years ago, as a young single mother, I too needed and received help from the Society of St Vincent de Paul. Today is a profound day, I am able to give back by serving with Vinnies Youth, it is definitely a full circle life moment for me. Made more special by the fact I now get to do it regularly with my aiga and friends."

Donna - Vinnies Auckland



Choice-Based Food Bank Story

In the ever-busy Wellington Central food bank, is a Vinnies team working as hard as ever to support the most vulnerable in their community. However, here they work a little bit differently. The food bank here runs on a choice based system, whereby those in need can pick what food works best for them.

Emma, the regional Welfare & Service Co-ordinator sees this as the most "dignified way of providing our services." As it's based on cultural, practical, as well as preferential needs, this system provides people with more of what they do need, and what they don't need can be provided to someone else. With a 380% increase in demand for Vinnies service in the Wellington region, it's been essential nothing has gone to waste during these times!

Every St Vincent's food bank relies on the generosity of everyday Kiwis. If you have any spare food for donation, find your local store here: **www.svdp.org.nz/our-shops/**



That's a 380% increase on last year!



Above: Emma - Regional Welfare & Service Coordinator, Vinnies Wellington

NAPIER

Supplies for schools in Tonga

A huge thank you to our Young Vinnies from St Patricks school and Office Products Napier.

Students from St Patrick's School Napier, with the help of the lovely and supportive Principal Jurek Wypych, fundraised to buy school supplies for St Vincent de Paul to send to Schools in Tonga. All the supplies were brought from Office Products in Napier.

Once they heard what it was for, they decided to jump on board and donate as well. Thank you to both St Pats and Office Products for your kindness and generosity, you are all such a blessing to many School children in Tonga.



AUCKLAND

Faith in action

Since March, Vinnies Youth Auckland and their volunteers distributed thousands of food parcels to communities throughout Auckland. When the city went back into Level 3, the demand for their services surged to 650+ parcels per week.



GLENFIELD VINNIES Spotlight on some of our wonderful volunteers



Irena's story

86-year-old Irena cannot stop herself from getting emotional while speaking about her experience as a volunteer with Vinnies, Glenfield.

Even though the store was established in 2014, Irena has been associated with Vinnies for the past thirty-years. She calls it 'payback time', a way for her to give back to the people who welcomed her with open arms in 1944.

She notably calls the atmosphere of the store 'nice and friendly'. Looking back at her experience, she says she is now used to helping out wherever she is needed in the store.





Logan's story

The impacts of COVID-19 are being felt everywhere, and it's bringing out the best in many of us. After being made redundant due to the pandemic's ongoing impacts, Logan is spending his downtime volunteering at his local Vinnies store.

"What mainly attracted me to work here is that I kind of learnt to appreciate community and connection. that's a really important part of well-being and human life." Logan's resilience in the face of COVID-19 is helping both his community, and his own mental wellbeing. A truly great **VOLUNTEER** is hard to find difficult to part with and impossible to forget



Many in our community are facing not only financial impacts, but also impacts on our mental health. Vinnies is here so no one faces this alone. You can also help your community by donating today at:

donate.svdp.org.nz

A foodbox recipient says...

"Here is something I made to hang in your window to catch the sunlight each morning and remind you of the hope we have in one another. My daughters and I don't have much to give but we really want to say thank you. I make little things I can sell online as I have little work at the moment and my health isn't too great because of the stress. I want you to know that these foodboxes literally saved us through those weeks. It's been really hard for my girls because like me, it runs in the family. They are both immuno-compromised as well and the Lockdown has been especially tough on them as they see their friends working as essential services. They want to be out there too. They feel powerless and excluded from it all..."



Lena – Auckland

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Encounter with Cynthia

Paul Bailey describes how a visit to a rest home became a memory to treasure.

The visitations we do in the name of St Vincent de Paul often throw up interesting situations. We can let the experience fade into obscurity or it can be shared as a reflection. I have chosen to share this experience because my life was enriched by this encounter. To let it die in my memory is not the way to treat such a treasure.

It started when I was out walking on a beautiful Hawke's bay morning, when I walked past a local rest home where I believed an old classmate was in residence. As it turned out, he had been shifted to a more appropriate facility because of deteriorating health.

While I was speaking to the manager, she said to me: "Can I ask a favour of you? It is rare for a charity such as yours to come in cold like you have, so would you mind visiting a member of our home who rarely gets visitors, and who seems to have no close family?"

She took me through to a lounge where there were 12 to 15 elderly people, most watching TV, some reading and a couple knitting. Away in a quiet spot was an elderly lady reading a large book without glasses.

The manager introduced me as Paul from St Vincent de Paul. The elderly lady said, "Sit down Vincent" whereupon the manager said "no, Cynthia, this is Paul." "Okay" she said. She then said, "I'm Cynthia with a 'y' and you're Paul and it doesn't matter where you are from, but it does matter that you have come to see me."

Cynthia was well-spoken, with a slight accent, and with a presence that made me suspect there would be no short-cuts in this conversation.

She said, "I am 93 years old, I am in reasonable health apart from a seething anxiety about becoming old and being cooped up in this home."

I said, "my mother lived to be 93 and died on Christmas day, 1994."

Cynthia leaned forward and said "Careful, young man, nobody in here uses the 'dying' word. The only time I use it is when my hairdresser comes and gives me a rinse."

"Christmas Day eh," she said. "What a wonderful gift for you and your family." She said, "you know, Paul, the last time I had a visitor was on Valentine's Day in 2012, 14 Feb you know. I was sitting in this very chair and I noticed this well-dressed, old man coming towards me carrying a boater hat. Now my mother, bless her soul, said always be wary of men carrying hats, especially if they are making eye contact."

"What happened?" I asked.

"He looked at me and said 'Margaret, would you like to go for a coffee? I know a nice spot just down the road."

I replied, "Let's set some ground rules before I move out of this chair. For one, I am not Margaret. And if we decide to go, how are we travelling?"

He said, "I have a brand new side-by-side mo-ped out the front, very safe and not fast."

"Listen here Buster," I said. "I don't care how new your mo-ped is, I'm not shifting."

"I'm not Buster," he said.

"I know you're not but it will do for now."

With that he went and tried someone else.

"The cheek of the old coot," she said.

I realised I was dealing with one feisty lady who I guessed by this time was odds-on an Australian.

The manager came back and told Cynthia she had another visitor.



Encounter with Cynthia continued...



"You're kidding me," she said. She turned to me and said, "Paul, don't you move. This next bloke could be an imposter and I might need your help!"

With that a priest joined us and said, "hello, Pat how are you?"

"I'm fine John," she said.

"I'm not John," he said

"And I'm not Pat," she said.

After things had settled, the priest said, "Cynthia would you like to have confession?"

"Not likely," she said. "Look at them over there. As soon as they saw you they started to turn their hearing aids up and they even turned the TV off. Another day, Father, and anyway it would probably take two hours to hear my confession!"

With that out of the way, we said a Hail Mary and Father left.

And then Cynthia said, "You know, Paul, that is my favourite prayer, especially near the end where we say 'pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death, Amen.' It lumps us all in together, we share, every one of us, the sins of our life, asking for forgiveness through Mary, the Mother of God."

I asked her how long she had been a Catholic and did she enjoy her life in the church?

"Oh yes," she said. "I became a Catholic by accident. Many, many years ago my uncle was a pastor in the Church of England in a small community on the New South Wales Victoria border. Tragedy struck his family when his wife was killed in a motor accident, leaving the Reverend with his nineyear-old son, Michael. The Reverend stayed on to serve his community for many years and I visited them often to help in their house. My uncle, bless his soul, decided I was by nature a tomboy and many times spoke of a Father Clancy and the nuns who he believed were going to be needed to sort this wayward niece out!

"Lo and behold, one weekend after riding horses and mustering cattle for my uncle's friends, and me basking in the euphoria of freedom, as we made our way back to town he said: 'Cynthia, I have a surprise for you'. This made me sit up straight as I knew not to trust surprise from religious uncles.

"'I have discussed with your parents,' said my uncle, 'and we have agreed that you should join the nuns to finish your education. Your uniform is waiting for you when you get home.' I thought what a shrewd display of passing the buck by my parents, as who was I to argue with the clergy.

"So the nuns took on the responsibility of educating me, of giving me a faith I have loved, and making me into a young woman. It was a wonderful experience and the nuns will remain in my heart for the rest of my days. "Before you go, Paul, I must tell you the conclusion of my life in Australia. My uncle was a practical man and when he had to bury people he entrapped his son to be the altar boy. It was my cousin's job to walk in front of the coffin at the cemetery with the holy cross. His reward for doing this was a day off school and during this time until he left secondary school, he estimated he was the cross-bearer at over a hundred funerals.

"At the graveside he and his Dad recited Ode of Remembrance off by heart:

I am the resurrection and the life, said the Lord.

He that believeth in me, though he were dead

Yet shall he live; and whosoever liveth and

believeth in me shall never die.

For I am persuaded that neither death, nor life,

nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present,

nor things to come, not height, nor depth,

nor any creature, shall be able to separate us from the power of God.

Earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust,

In the sure and certain hope of resurrection to eternal life.

Amen

They then packed up and left for the after-match function. My cousin never went back to school after a funeral and he told me they always had a very light evening meal on funeral days.

Many years after this time, when she was a young woman living in New Zealand, Cynthia received a phone-call. It was her cousin Michael.

"'Cynthia,' he said, 'I have just lost my wife. Would you come over and stand beside me?' At the graveside, after the others had gone, Michael and I recited Uncle Peter's Ode of Remembrance.

It was time for me to go.

"Thank you Paul," she said. "This morning has passed, you have made an old lady tell her life story one more time. Thank you and God bless."

As I left, the manager invited me into her office and told me Cynthia only had weeks to live. Apart from confusing names, she had a remarkable memory. She never married, had no family who lived close. She had graduated from university before the war. She majored in languages, including Russian, and acted as an interpreter for most of her life.

Iwinning Report

We have received reports from our Twins as to how their lives have been affected by Covid-19. These are included in this report.

TONGA

Support for Tonga during Covid-19 included funding of Apifoou College and the making of face masks \$2,000 and assistance with the distribution of sanitiser \$2,300.



In recent days we have shipped a 20' container of material aid from Napier. The shipment included clothing, books, furniture, school desks, chairs, hospital beds medical product and even a piano. We thank all those who contributed from Sacred Heart College, St Marys, St Josephs and St Patricks schools, Eastern Institute of Technology and SVdP Napier, Hastings, Dannevirke and Kapi-Mana. We are in discussion with the NZ High Commission in Tonga with regards to freight assistance.



OCEANIA

A review is underway on Twinning processes with comment and input from the twinning coordinators with in the Oceania region. This will be forwarded to the International Commission for review. President Renato has asked that we enhance and grow twinning worldwide.

SAMOA

During the current Covid-19 pandemic we assisted Samoa with funding for food assistance and support for the Little



Sisters of the Poor Old Peoples Home where they have 50 residents, \$4,000.00.

I am currently appraising with Leota the National President a project addressing domestic water supply. Detail on this will be available later in the year.

St Vincent de Paul in Christchurch recently provided goods to a container being shipped to Apia by the Pacific Island Hope Mission Rangiora. We thank Jason and Sandy Watson for their support. These goods are for the various people assisted within Samoa by SVdP.

Goods shipped included school furniture, household goods, hospital beds, office furniture and other material aid.

The cost of the containers transportation was met by assistance Jason and Sandy received from the NZ High Commission in Samoa.

SRI LANKA

As like NZ they have had restrictions on travel etc. at their request we forwarded \$5,000 to assist with food parcels and family aid. The Twinning designated funds \$29,036 were also forwarded. A detailed report on activity is expected by the end of September. Next year we are in the 60th year of Twinning support for Sri Lanka. I will be putting out a report on this milestone.

INTERNATIONAL

The new Twinning Policy Manual 2020 has been approved by the CGI Board and is to be posted to the CGI website in 4 languages, English, French, Spanish and Portuguese.

At the request of the CGI Board and Treasurer General there has been a review of all funds transfer procedures due to incidences of fraud. New policy has been issued with a target date of 30 June 2021 for full implementation.



CHRISTCHURCH

"God will provide"

During Covid-19 lockdown, the Society's Christchurch Board was faced with the challenge of continuing to provide assistance to our welfare clients, while keeping our staff and Vincentians safe, in the face of zero income from our retail shops which were closed.

A former President of Christchurch SVDP, Tony Pemberton was renowned for trusting in providence. He often took a different view to his Treasurer, who would say "Tony, we don't have the money." Tony would always reply, "God will provide, let's do it."

The Christchurch Board remembered those words as we set about designing a contact-free method of issuing grocery vouchers to those in need. We came up with an electronic method of issuing a voucher and sending it to the client's cell phone and a copy to the supermarket. The system worked very well with the client receiving the voucher by text and then able to redeem the voucher at their local supermarket.

The cost was projected to be \$5,000 per week. How could we pay for this? It was suggested we set up a "Give a Little" page online which we did. After one month in level 4 of Covid-19, we had issued over 300 vouchers and spent over \$20,000. During the same period, our "Give a Little" page had received \$14,000 with an additional \$6,000 donated directly to Vinnies. God indeed provided through the generosity of many!

Mike Daly

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Christchurch Area President, St Vincent de Paul

Obituaries

Long-serving, dedicated members may they Rest in Peace

Des Horan – Kapi Mana John Hartley – West Coast Elaine Rushton – Ashburton

Covid-19 National Recovery Appeal

This appeal is about raising sufficient money, food and other resources to enable Vinnies' centres throughout New Zealand to continue providing the social, emotional, and financial help thousands of individuals and families are asking of us as we navigate through these uncertain and challenging times.

Throughout COVID-19 the St Vincent de Paul Society (Vinnies) have been helping the most vulnerable in our communities by providing essential items like food, clothing, and heating. But now we need YOUR help. Vinnies have seen a 400% increase in welfare requests since March, and a 70% decrease in donations.

COVID-19 NATIONAL RECOVERY APPEAL



and need in our community." Cardinal John Dew

We urgently need your help.

In the months ahead the once-in-a-lifetime pandemic will bring severe hardship for individuals, families and communities. **Our goal is to raise \$4 million** so we can be there to help the vulnerable.

Can you help us?

Donate directly to our Appeal Account: **BNZ 02 0528 0208598 027**

Or via our website: donate.svdp.org.nz

St Vincent de Paul is a registered charity – all donations over \$5 are tax deductible.



NEWS IN BRIEF

Society of St Vincent de Paul in New Zealand PO Box 10-815, The Terrace, Wellington 6143 (Freepost 992) Level 1, 35 Victoria Street, Wellington 6011 Email: national@svdp.org.nz www.svdp.org.nz Phone: 04 499 5070 | Fax: 04 499 4563

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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