



MEMBRE DE LA SOCIÉTÉ
DE SAINTE-VINCENT DE PAUL



SOCIETY OF ST VINCENT DE PAUL

News in Brief

August 2014 | Issue 3

Welcome to our third edition of our e-newsletter 'News in Brief'. We have a lot to share with you in this issue: conferences have amalgamated, come out of recess, formed new groups and worthwhile projects have been established to help our young people with computers. These changes are a reflection of the changing needs of our clients and the resources of conferences.

Also read about one Vincentian who has been awarded for 50 years of service and the new group of Young Vinnies who are the first group to be set up in their college, plus lots more.

As always we would love to share your stories. Please forward them to the Communications Officer, jamparker@xtra.co.nz for the next issue of 'News in Brief'.

Conferences Grow in Whangarei

Since the closure of the St Vincent de Paul shop in Whangarei, activity within the Conference has been very lively, with new groups being formed and active recruitment taking place.

A group of ladies, who volunteered at the shop prior to its closure have formed a new women's conference and meet on a regular basis. They make meals for needy families, visit shut-in's and local rest homes, and are hoping to recruit some younger members.

Peter Crawford has also set up a men's group and they visit men in the area. They are also hoping to expand the group by including younger Vincentians.

Members cook meals for needy families and also 30 food parcels a month are distributed. Peter Crawford and a team of five also prepare and deliver 200 school lunches each week to seven schools in Whangarei and outlying areas.

A youth group at the school, run by a group of motivated year 12 and 13 students is continuing to operate and the youth Mass is working well. This term they hope to expand this into the parish.

Donated Computers: Giving Young People the Chance to Succeed

A scheme originally started by the Hornby Conference in Christchurch has been modified to suit the community needs in South Auckland. A small group of young men, some ex-Young Vinnies, attached to the St Therese Conference in Mangere, have started the project to get computers in homes so pupils are not educationally disadvantaged.

At present, the team has installed or are in the process of installing some 70+ computers, either donated locally or through the support of the Hornby Conference, which are then overhauled.

The project hopes that the computers will help pupils benefit from a sound education that will ultimately lead to a successful and rewarding career in the workforce.

Initially, four schools were approached to test the scheme. Through subsequent discussions with them, a number of additional benefits to the scheme were uncovered. One such benefit was that teachers would have the ability to use the computers to give work to pupils who needed extra help or the chance to catch up.

While the project is basically aimed at assisting school-aged pupils, consideration will be given to caregivers, grandparents, community and church groups, who provide after-school care where the children do their homework. Those less mobile or who are living alone could also benefit from a computer to keep in touch with family and friends overseas, or in other parts of the country, through the use of Skype.



Expanded Conference Building in East Suburbs of Wellington

The Seatoun Conference, which has been operating for 60 years, now includes the Miramar Conference. The expanded Seatoun/Miramar Conference will now address the needs of more people in the district and will fit well with the direction of parish amalgamation which is being developed this year.

After a successful recruitment in both parishes over the last three months, the expanded Seatoun/Miramar Conference now includes 11 active members and 27 associate members from both St. Anthony's and Holy Cross Parishes.

Brendan Quirk, President says:

“Our big challenge now is for our members to find and respond to the needs of people across the three suburbs [Seatoun, Strathmore and Miramar], especially in Miramar.”

Over the last six months the Seatoun/Miramar Conference has responded to some of those needs. They've assisted around 50 clients, making around 150 visits to individuals, families and rest-home residents. Many new members have turned out for street day appeals. Some students at the local Catholic primary schools have been supported with uniform items, activity lessons and stationery.

A successful appeal was also held at Pak 'n Save, Kilbirnie in May this year, which showed the generosity and compassion of eastern suburbs shoppers donating food and cash for the St Vincent de Paul Society Foodbank at its Wellington Area Centre in nearby Newtown.



From left to right: Terry Hughes, Ruth O'Brien, John Argue, Aua Frka, John Woods and Tony Giannotti.

All Blacks: Part of the Team in Christchurch

There won't be many Conferences that can claim an All Black in their midst, but at the Burnside (Christ the King) Conference in Christchurch they can boast two (plus a couple who thought they should have been)!

Bill McCaw, current Treasurer and long-standing member, and John (Jake) Burns, are both loyal and enthusiastic Vincentians who represented New Zealand as All Blacks.

Bill, whose main position in the teams was at No.8, played for the Marist club in Invercargill, and went on to represent Southland. He was an All Black between 1951 and 1954, going on tours to Australia, the British Isles, France, Canada and America.

Jake, who played all his career as lock, was a long-standing member of both The Marist Club in Christchurch, and the Canterbury rep team (1964 -71). Higher honours included the South Island team (1968-71) before travelling to South Africa with the 1970 All Blacks.

In recent years, Bill has been part of the prison visitation programme, while Jake has been working with the conference's regular clients, as well as assisting with work at the Stanmore Road office.



From left to right: Bill McCaw, President Austin Kerr, Jake Burns.



CELEBRATING 50 YEARS *of* SERVICE

Gerald Brosnahan has been a member of St Vincent de Paul for over 50 years. During this time, Gerald has played a big part in the running of the Timaru shop, attending to any maintenance work that was needed, as well as delivering many food parcels, and collecting donated clothes.

Gerald has recently retired from voluntary work at the shop to care for his wife, who is in poor health. He will be greatly missed for his tireless and generous support of the shop and the Conference.

The Mid-South Canterbury Area Council and the National President presented Gerald with a St Vincent de Paul Society Award for his wonderful contribution.

Thank you, Gerald.



Gerald Brosnahan receiving his award from Des Mulhern, SVdP National President.

Stalwarts of St Joseph's SVDP Conference depart Te Puna on an extended OE

When looking for new conference members, looking further afield, as St Joseph's in Te Puna discovered, can be hugely enriching and rewarding.

In March this year, members of the St Joseph's SVdP team farewelled two volunteers who have been stalwarts of our conference. Les and Lori Sinton approached SVdP, asking if there was anything they could do to help people in the local community. They had heard of the good work that the group were doing and were keen to help.

Lori quickly volunteered to help young mums who needed a helping hand and ended up working for Magella (a group initially formed to help mothers considering abortion). Lori's 15 years of looking after infants as a CYFS mum, was put to great use, helping mums who were often in dire straits.

The Sinton's involvement with SVdP might have begun with visiting mums but it didn't end there. They quickly worked out that a clearing house was required to sort, wash, and package second-hand clothes and toys for kids. So they volunteered the use of their large shed. Every Wednesday, a group of ladies met up at their shed and processed clothing and vital gear for families. Les would cart it all into town on a weekly basis.

Les became the "go-to" man on anything from carting firewood, to sourcing beds/fridges etc. for needy cases. When practical assistance was needed, Les was the first person to volunteer.

The Sinton's were not averse to making their views known on social issues that "got up their nose". After harassing a city councillor on the living conditions of a client, they were invited to present their concerns to a city council meeting. Time will tell whether their representations will make a difference.

Les and Lori are on their way to Europe for an extended OE. Their enthusiasm, energy and social conscience will be sorely missed by everyone. Some people are talkers, others are doers. The Sinton's were doers.

Young Vinnies – St Patrick's, Kaiapoi

A group of ten Young Vinnies at St Patrick's school in Kaiapoi held a successful bake sale at school, which raised \$120.80. With these funds, they went shopping at their local Countdown for food items to support the SVDP foodbank. Well done, Young Vinnies.



Left to right: Cassidy Fitzgerald, Keely Cooper, Jessica Campbell, Lauren Lock, Tessa McKay, Chessie Cooper, Saffron Brown and Chantal MacDonald.

Spot-light on Invercargill – Young Vinnies

'Dream': Motto for Young Vinnies in Invercargill

The Young Vinnies of Verdon College are holding tightly onto their dream – the motto for their newly formed Young Vinnies group. Verdon College is the first Catholic College in Invercargill to have a Young Vinnies group and we wish them all the best. Thanks to Ross Buxton, Director of Religious Studies, Verdon College. We hope to hear from the group again soon to see how they are 'living the dream'.



From left to right: Victoria Adcock, Oliviana Ward, Jessica Mulrooney, Anne Kennelly, Johnny Lidgett.

St Patrick's Primary School, South Invercargill

The Young Vinnies at St Patrick's Primary School in Invercargill were established a few years ago and are already doing well on the fundraising front. They have so far raised \$600 to help those in their community. Keep up the great work, everyone!

The Richmond Conference: Supporting Families during a Bereavement

In Our Lady of Perpetual Help Conference, Richmond, the Parish Priest lets the members know if there has been a death of a parishioner. The conference members visit the family, taking them a 'Bereavement Basket' filled with goods such as home baking, tea, coffee, biscuits, frozen chicken etc., which will be needed for the many visitors the family will have. They also find out what other needs and support might be needed.

On one occasion, a young couple whose baby had died, asked for a hearse to be provided to help lower the costs of the funeral. One of the conference members put on his best suit, and drove the Vinnie's van that led the funeral procession with the parents and their child as passengers.

If the Requiem Mass is held at the parish church, the members manage the catering arrangements for the cup of tea in the adjacent parish centre.

Prayers are said for the deceased and the family at the next conference meeting.

Do the below paragraphs need their own headings? or a general heading? 'In other news...' or something?

The St Vincent de Paul shop in the CBD of Tokoroa wins awards for its window displays and is actively supported by 18 shop volunteers. The busy shop gets lots of foot traffic, and with the availability of Eftpos, Gerry Portegys (Conference President) believes that turnover has increased by 35%.

Shop display prizes have been won at Christmas, for National Field Days, and for the 'Say No to Family Violence' campaign.

The Tokoroa Conference is also involved with the local Foodbank and Prisoners' Aid.

News in Brief

Society of St Vincent de Paul in New Zealand

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Rest in Peace

Darcy O'Brien, Devonport Conference

It is with great sadness that we hear that Darcy O'Brien died on the 15th July. Darcy was a Vincentian for over 30 years for the Devonport Conference. Right up until his retirement, last year, he was still doing food parcels. For the past year, Darcy lived with his daughter. He will be greatly missed.

Congratulations to Bishop Owen Dolan our Spiritual Director who celebrated his 60th Jubilee on Monday 21st July.

Closing message from Bishop Dolan:

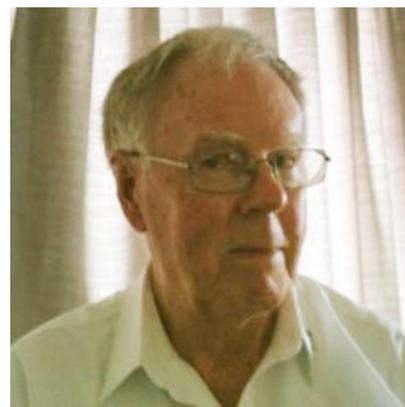
From an economic point of view alone, it is not good for New Zealand to have as many people as we do living in poverty. Nor is it good from the point of view of social stability – nor for many other reasons.

As disciples of Jesus our concern for the poor arises from deeper motives:

"I was hungry, thirsty, homeless...wherever you reached out to such as these, you reached out to me".

Jesus identified with the poor. He gives them his first mercy. And we are called to be part of that. Our concern, our actions for them is action for Jesus Himself.

When our love springs from our faith, may it be that it will move us to support the poor at every level.



Bishop Owen Dolan

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 Ann-Marie Parker, Communications Officer. Email: jamparker@xtra.co.nz
