



MEMBRE DE LA SOCIÉTÉ
DE SAINTE-VINCENT DE PAUL



SOCIETY OF ST VINCENT DE PAUL

News in Brief

March 2015 | Issue 6

Welcome to our first edition for 2015, which is crammed filled with events and updates. In this issue, we not only report on what has happened in the last couple of months but also what events will be coming up soon.

If you have an event coming up or a story you would like us to share, please send it to the Communications Officer jamparker@xtra.co.nz

Lent, 2015 - The globalization of indifference

A Message from Pope Francis

Make your hearts firm

As we approach the beginning of Lent for 2015, let us respond to the words of Pope Francis to confront the 'globalization of indifference'.

"It is my prayerful hope that this Lent will prove spiritually fruitful for each believer and every ecclesial community. I ask all of you to pray for me. May the Lord bless you and Our Lady keep you." *Pope Francis, Vatican.*

To read the full letter visit our website: www.svdp.org.nz

The Catholic Diocese of Auckland are walking for St Vincent de Paul

A 'sponsored walk' to raise money for food banks and other SVDP services in the Auckland region (North, South, East and West) is being co-ordinated by the Catholic Diocese of Auckland. The event encourages all those in the Diocese to join them on a sponsored 5km walk on Saturday, March 21st starting at Pompallier House and ending there with a sausage sizzle.

For more information, registration and sponsor forms please visit:

www.aucklandcatholic.org.nz/the-catholic-diocese-coordinated-sponsored-walk/

or call Una Daly on (09) 378 4380.

2015, International 'Year of Vincentian Collaboration'

'Together in Christ we Vincentians made a difference'

As Vincentians, we have been asked to read the letter from Superior General, Father Gregory Gay outlining the events for 2015 and to answer three questions. All responses can be sent to svdp.national@xtra.co.nz with the subject heading '2015, Year of Collaboration' before 21st of April, 2015.

To read the full letter visit our website: www.svdp.org.nz

2017 - St Vincent de Paul in NZ 150 years

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: Keith Norton, Christchurch Area President, PO Box 26007, North Avon, Christchurch 8148

New Welfare Centre and Vinnie's Op Shop Opens in Timaru

The Society's new Timaru shop was declared officially open on Saturday 31st January, 2015 by the Deputy Mayor of the Timaru District, Mr Richard Lyon, in front of over 100 guests, including the Hon. Jo Goodhew, MP for Rangitata, the National President Des Mulhern, representatives of donor organisations, members and volunteers.

Fr Brian Fennessy of the Holy Family Parish, Timaru led prayers of blessing.

The ribbon was cut by long-term members Noeline Brennan and Gerald Brosnahan who have over 110 years of service between them, and Young Vinnie James Kissell.

Rushton Architects designed the new charity shop, welfare centre and food bank, and Timaru Construction completed the building on time and on budget. The new building replaced the old shop, which was assessed as an earthquake risk.

The Rebuild Committee received generous support from all sections of the local South Canterbury community, as well as from local and national trusts, the National Board of St Vincent de Paul and many dedicated volunteers.

In his opening address John Foley, Chair of the Rebuild Committee and President of the Mid and South Canterbury Area Council, paid tribute to all the volunteers who were behind the project who 'contributed their enterprise, zest and generosity'. He also said, "This working shop will reflect the humanity of God, and we wish that for years to come it will act as a beacon of charity in the midst of South Canterbury."



At the official opening: Janine Tindall-Morice, Rebuild Committee publicity; Richard Lyon, Timaru District Deputy Mayor; Des Mulhern, National President; Fr Brian Fennessy, Holy Family Parish, Timaru.



Cutting of the ribbon: Noeline Brennan, Gerald Brosnahan, James Kissell.

New shop, Karori

The recently opened Vinnie's Op Shop in the Wellington suburb of Karori is part of the newly established Otari Conference.

The shop has one manager and six volunteers and does a roaring trade in woman's fashion, in particular business attire or name-brand clothing. Well-maintained antique furniture is also quick to sell out. The staff have many regular shoppers return so have made it easier for them by adding a rack for new stock and a sales rack for older stock.

The Vinnie's Op Shop has established good relationships with the surrounding shops, who often donate goods to them. The shop fits in well with the boutique stores that line the street of Karori and with plenty of passing trade, is operating very well. Funds raised from the shop support welfare programmes, such as food parcels, social work, free budgeting advice, pregnancy assistance and more.

Want to help?

The shop is always looking for good quality donations, such as clothes, furniture, books and bric a brac. Please call the manager during store hours on (04) 476 9325, or to arrange pickups of larger items, please phone (04) 389 7122. If you have some time to spare, the shop is always looking for reliable volunteer help. Please call the manager or pop in for a chat.



The new Vinnie's Op Shop located in Karori.

New signage for Dunedin Vinnie's Op Shop

When Lynlea Forbes, Area President, Dunedin, read the booklet on how to paint your SDVP Op Shop, she was not expecting to see the two Dunedin stores featured under the heading of 'how not to paint your shop'.

She and her team are now hoping that the George St store will again feature but this time as an example of 'how to paint it the right way'. A spruced up George St store is now getting plenty of great feedback from customers and from volunteers, and the South Dunedin store is just about to undergo a similar transformation.

Lynlea said, "The final design of the stores was a collective decision made by all shop volunteers. The combined decision means that everyone owns the new look."

Volunteers also wear SDVP name badges, which help customers of the shops and the foodbank identify more clearly with who they are working with. It also helps volunteers to feel part of the organisation.



Vinnie's Op Shop, George St, Dunedin with new paint and signage.

Valentine's Day Garage Sale, Sharing the Love - Palmerston North

Valentine's Day was made extra special with a garage sale held at the Vinnie's Op Shop, 252 Rangitikei St in Palmerston North. The sun shone and the bargains flowed, with everything priced at three items for \$1.

Volunteers set up trestle tables outside the shop, which were filled with bargains. The garage sale began at 10.30 and for the last hour bags were sold for a \$1. Many compliments were received about the quality of the stock.

Any unsold goods were bought inside so shoppers had the chance of purchasing bargains throughout the week.

Their next event will be a 'Collectables Sale' in June, followed by a 'Winter Fashion Parade'.



Boxes of stock ready to be sold in the Valentine's Day Sale at Palmerston North's, Rangitikei St Vinnie's Op Shop.

Valentine's day sale was a great success, with volunteers and shoppers enjoying the morning sunshine.

St Matthew's, Hillcrest, Hamilton - supporting housing projects in Sri Lanka

The conference members of St Matthew's, Hillcrest in Hamilton answered the call to raise funds to help with building houses in Sri Lanka. Throughout the year their fundraising has paid off, with the conference raising over \$2700 to donate to this project. The money was raised through donations from parishioners, a cake stall, soup day and a number of garage sales. Conference Treasurer, Barry Thompson reported, "The conference was greatly assisted by members of the St Matthew's parish as well as the parish priest".

Fred Dyer - Central Hawke's Bay Civic Award

Waipawa resident and SVDP past president, Fred Dyer was recognised for his contribution to the Hawke's Bay community with a Civic Award from the Central Hawke's Bay District Council.

In his award citation, it reads that, "Fred has always helped others and this is reflected in how highly he is regarded within the community."

As a youngster, Fred suffered from polio but this temporary set-back didn't hold him back from helping others. In 2004, he became involved with SDVP becoming president in 2006 for three terms.

He has also contributed to St Patrick's Parish Council, school boards and many other social service providers in the region.

Fred has worked tirelessly to help others and is known for the way in which he is non-judgemental and compassionate. Fred still cuts and delivers fire wood to those who need help with heating in the winter and gathers donations of food and household items and distributes them to those who need a helping hand.

Fred Dyer recipient of Civic Award from Central Hawke's Bay District Council.

Photo courtesy of Central Hawke's Bay Mail



Wrap-up for Christmas

Christmas is always a busy time for our members as they prepare thousands of Christmas food parcels, make special home visits, collect goods for their local Vinnie's op shop, and help in whatever way they can in the build up to this busy time. And last Christmas was no exception. Here are a few activities that some of our conferences were involved with for Christmas.



Stunning Christmas Window Displays

The Christmas-themed windows of the Vinnie's Op Shop on George St, Dunedin are always a crowd pleaser. Shop Manager, Kate Tanner puts together their annual Christmas display windows.



Whangarei - Christmas parcels delivered in the North

The St Francis Xavier Conference, Whangarei gave out 95 Christmas parcels to families. Ten volunteers packed the parcels, made up of Christmas presents, Christmas food and a food parcel, and eight volunteers distributed them to families from Waipu in the south, to Moerewa in the north. The majority of the presents were donated by the parishioners of St Francis Xavier Church and members of a local craft group.

Winning Christmas Nativity Float - Palmerston North

A nativity-themed float won \$500 in the annual Palmerston North Christmas Parade. Conference members from Palmerston North and students and teachers from Our Lady of Lourdes School won the educational section of the parade ahead of 11 other floats.

The aim of the float was to 'Keep Christ in Christmas' so the children dressed as Mary, Joseph, angels, wise men, shepherds and barn animals.

Higgins Contractors kindly provided a low loader truck and driver free of charge.

The prize of \$500 was shared between St Vincent de Paul and Our Lady of Lourdes school.



Local children donate gifts at Christmas time - Hastings Vinnie's Op Shop

Some local pre-schoolers in Hastings got to experience first-hand what it is like to make a gift to others. Children from Lollipops in Hastings and their care-givers, arrived at the Hastings Vinnie's Op Shop with gifts and food parcels to donate to families in need for Christmas. The children were asked to choose a gift to bring along to the shop but for some the parting with the gift was quite difficult. The Vinnie's staff were overwhelmed by the generosity of Lollipops and hope that the memory of helping others will be something that remains with the children.



Children from Lollipops, Hastings choosing gifts to donate for Christmas to Hastings Vinnie's Op Shop.

Picton House – SVDP Holiday Home Available for Hire

Do you know a family or someone in your conference who could benefit from a holiday in Picton? The Picton conference manage a holiday home that is open to all conferences to provide a place for those who might never afford a holiday. Now might be the right time for your conference to think about who you could support to make the best of this wonderful asset. Hire is very reasonable and in most cases conferences also assist with travel expenses, as many cannot afford to get there.

For bookings, a referral needs to be made by an Area Council or Council President. In some instances, where bookings allow, weekend travellers may use the house but the same referral is required.

If you would like further information, please contact Ron Peters on (03) 573 7472 or the National Office on (04) 499 5070.



Marie Palmer – 2015 New Year’s Honour Recipient



53 years ago, a few days after her husband had been hospitalised in a hit and run, Marie Palmer answered a knock at her door.

It was a moment that changed her life.

The two visitors standing at her doorstep were from St Vincent De Paul and

they had come to deliver a Christmas hamper and toys for her 10 month-old baby and support if she needed it.

“I’ll never forget that day,” Marie said. “And I made a promise to them and to God that I would dedicate my life to SVDP when I retired. And after twenty years as a hospice nurse, that is what I did.”

After following the ‘passion in her heart for helping people’, Marie has been awarded a Queen’s Honour in this year’s New Year Honour’s list for her contribution to St Vincent de Paul and the other social organisations she supports in Hawke’s Bay. In May she will be invested at Government House.

Marie believes that this honour is a wonderful opportunity for others to hear about the work of St Vincent de Paul.

For Marie her contribution through the Sacred Heart, Hastings Conference and the Hawke’s Bay Society Area Council, the other organisations that she works for, and her work as a JP, comes from a wish as a six year-old to help others. “If there is a need, then you go. It becomes a normal part of your daily life.”

Marie spends a day a week at the Vinnie’s shop helping to assess those who need food parcels, as well as those who require more support.

On a Tuesday, along with Brother Bryan, a Champagnat Marist brother, they visit those who have been referred by the shop, schools, parishes or social agencies. Visits are not just one-offs but are repeated until they can see some stability in the home. For many, these visits are marked in the calendar and are something to look forward to. And for some it may be the only outside visit they receive.

Marie believes that there is a lot of loneliness in the community. She and Brother Bryan believe that many people trust them because they are non-judgemental, they build up trust and they make repeat visits. Marie says that the work is very rewarding and that it’s good to see a smile on a sad face of someone in despair.

“Life is great ... you learn something from somebody every day. You can always find a positive thing in a grim situation, even if it is just a thank you from a grateful person or family,” she says.

Marie has always been an advocate for those struggling and trying to do their best on very little. She says that she knows what it is like for many families, as she had to cope with a husband in hospital for three years, a baby to look after and very little to live on.

“I think it helps that I can remember what it was like to really struggle,” she says.

Like so many volunteers in St Vincent de Paul, Marie wishes to continue her work for as long as she can.

“I’ll burn out, not rust out,” she says. “And I might retire when I’m 105.”

Photo (courtesy of Hawkes Bay Today): Marie Palmer from Sacred Heart Conference, Hastings. A 2015 New Year’s Honour recipient.

REST IN PEACE

Joan Barry Norris

Joan began her dedication to the Society shortly after she joined the Raglan Street St Vincent de Paul shop in Mangere.

With foresight and persistence, she was instrumental in opening the Vinnie's Op Shop in Mangere Bridge after noticing that the local bank had vacated a prime spot in the township. This shop, after becoming freehold, was, in the main, able to provide the necessary finance to purchase the SVDP Centre in South Auckland, as well as continue to assist in the societies many other activities.

Joan was ruthless when sorting the items being donated, only the very best going into the shop. Prices were set so that those with little money were able to afford quality items; items that they could

perhaps have only dreamed of owning. This soon drew people from all corners of Auckland.

Joan was in the shop every day of the week and even on weekends could be found putting out new stock and discarding the old.

She will be so missed by the way in which she was there for people when needed. She quietly offered a shoulder to weep on or a sympathetic ear to listen to the problems that people brought to her. She will truly be missed sorely by many.

Joan was a true Vincentian, epitomising the words 'Helps People'.

May she Rest in Peace to receive the rewards of her work.



16 July 1931 - 2 December 2014

REST IN PEACE

Peter Lamont

After retiring eleven years ago, Peter Lamont generously spent his free time volunteering for the Westport conference. Six of those years were spent as president.

Peter attended St Joseph's and St Cancie's School in Westport, and enjoyed his rugby days. About three years ago he put his building experience to great use and set up the new Vinnie's Op Shop. He also worked two days a week doing pickups and deliveries and drove the wheel chair bus once a week.

Peter will be huge loss to the Westport conference and will be greatly missed.



7 February 1942 - 2 January 2015

Spiritual Reflection

Karen Englebretsen, Palmerston North Conference

"God is not only the great Geometer, the great Legislator, he is also the great Artist. God is the Author of all poetry, he has spilled it in waves throughout creation, and if he wished the world to be good, he also wished it beautiful."

Frederic Ozanam in a letter to his friend Alexandre Dufieux
Frederic's deep insight found in this one sentence quote reminds us gently the reason we [as Vincentians] are here. To pass on

love to our neighbour with the beautiful gifts the Artist has given us, even if that is simply a phone call to check on someone, giving a food parcel, stopping to listen -doesn't matter how small the act is or how big. If every person did one small act we would be following Frederic's insight into making the world good and wishing it beauty.

To read the full reflection please click here www.svdp.org.nz



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