

News in Brief

June 2015 | Issue 7

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 send it to the Communications Officer, jamparker@xtra.co.nz

Update on Appeals for Vanuatu and Nepal

Thank You

Thank you to all conferences for donating to our two international appeals. As of 25/05/2015 we have donated \$16,050.00 to the Vanuatu appeal and \$39,120.00 to the Nepal earthquake appeal to help rebuild these communities after these devastating events.

Update on Year of Vincentian Collaboration

The Year of Vincentian Collaboration was officially launched on the feast of Pentecost, 24th of May, 2015. In previous e-news we asked for your feedback, which was sent to the International President General. Your reflections and those from Vincentians around the world have now been collated into a summary document. For this summary and updates on the Vincentian Year of Collaboration "In Christ, we Vincentians can make a difference", please click on the following link:

<http://en.ssvpglobal.org/News/CGI-news/Year-of-Vincentian-Collaboration-the-SSVP-s-response>

Loneliness - why we as Vincentians, reach out to the lonely

This year the National Board will focus on the theme of loneliness and how we, as Vincentians, can reach out to those in our community - our neighbour, our colleagues, or a new settler family at Mass, and extend the hand of friendship. A simple act of sharing a cuppa with an elderly neighbour, or a visit with a lonely teen or an isolated new settler family can make a world of difference to them.

Over 200 years ago, our Founder Frederick Ozanam encouraged members of St Vincent de Paul to go out and visit and befriend the lonely. That need is still great today, with many people in communities up and down the country struggling with loneliness.

As a volunteer for St Vincent de Paul reaching out to others can have a profound positive affect on those who are isolated and socially alienated.

During 2015, let us reach out to all who are lonely and make the time to personally visit, just as Frederick Ozanam did so long ago.



"The knowledge of social well-being and of reform can be learned not from books, nor from the public platform, but in climbing the stairs to the poor person's garret, sitting by their bedside, feeling the same cold that pierces them, sharing the secrets of their lonely hearts and troubled minds."

Blessed Frederic Ozanam - the Society's Founder

Auckland Catholic Diocese Walks for SVDP

A personal thank you from Una Daly, organiser of the Auckland Catholic Diocesan Sponsored Walk

“On 21st March, approximately 75 people walked 5km to raise funds for the food banks of St Vincent de Paul in the Auckland diocese. Just before we set off, Owen Knock, West Auckland Area President, shared with us how the money we raised would help the people that St Vincent de Paul helps. It was good to be reminded about what our walk was all about.

With that in mind, we walked, talked, prayed, made friends and God provided the sun and breeze. The generosity of people was outstanding, from those who did the walk, to those who prayed for the event or encouraged it to happen, volunteers who assisted joyfully on the day, and those sponsoring the walkers. The Auckland Catholic Diocese says a big thank you to everyone who was involved. We were overwhelmed by people’s generosity.

We were delighted to raise \$8200. We pray this money will help many people in need have food, something we often take for granted.”



Una Daly, organiser of the Auckland Catholic Diocesan Fundraising walk, Owen Knock, West Auckland Area President and volunteers help to raise funds for SVDP, Auckland.

Reaching Out to the Lonely

Christchurch Young Vinnies: the young reaching out to the old

The Christchurch Young Vinnies are reaching out to the lonely in their community by hosting morning tea in four schools for elderly residents who live in their own homes. A mini bus from Age Concern picks up around 10 people and brings them to the school where the children host them for a morning tea and chat for around 45 minutes. The Young Vinnies plan what they will do for their guests and their guests, most who live alone, really enjoy the chance to get out of their homes and have some company.

This initiative works particularly well in Christchurch, as after the earthquakes many schools no longer had a local rest-home they could visit.

Reaching Out to an Old Boy

Young Vinnies, Silverstream

The Young Vinnies from St Patricks, Silverstream, Wellington raised \$500 to help an old boy of their school who is now a tetraplegic and in Wellington’s spinal unit receiving care. Mike O’Leary, the co-ordinator for the Old Boy’s Association, receives the gift on behalf of the family.



Why does St Vincent de Paul Help People?

In New Zealand the motto of the Society is “Saint Vincent de Paul Helps People”.

Vincetians work in a caring and practical manner to promote human dignity and justice through personal contact with those in need.

The Mission of the Society implies that as Vincetians, we:

- See Christ in anyone who suffers
- Have personal contact with the poor
- Come together as a family
- Help in all possible ways

The Young Reaching Out to New Settlers

Hawkes Bay Young Vinnies

The Young Vinnies in Hawkes Bay are reaching out to new settlers in their community and learning more about other cultures. New settlers, particularly from the Philippines are settling into the Hawke's Bay area, where many work in the dairy industry. The Young Vinnies are finding out more about their new neighbours by learning about their food and finding out what life was like in their homeland.

A talk was arranged with local priest Father Nathaniel Brazil who told the Young Vinnies about his life in the Philippines, and everyone shared in a Filipino dish called pancit (a noodle dish) that was prepared by the Youth co-ordinator, Paola Minehan.

Other schools in the area also made Filipino food and sold it to the teachers.



Pictured right - 'Pancit' a Filipino noodle dish

A Prayer for All God's People for Young Vinnies of Southland

Every Catholic school in Southland who have embraced the Young Vinnies are using this prayer at their meetings and in their class prayer circles. This is an example of the collaboration that exists in the Vincentian Family while we also dream of a better future for all people who can be authors of their own destiny and not locked out because of poverty. From little beginnings in a stable, Jesus came to our world so we know that change is possible.

We come in many shapes and sizes & different colours too.

Our languages are many and our cultures quite a few.

But for all our variations there is one thing that we all share.

We are moulded in God's image & protected by God's care.

Loving of all people, God's arms are open wide.

To welcome everyone of us, God is always by our side.

When our troubles daunt us, on God's loving help we call.

For whatever colour, race or creed we know that our God loves us all.

May we remember to spread the Gospel of Jesus as we serve the people of the world: in our work as Young Vinnies in Southland.

St Vincent de Paul pray for us and guide us.

Amen

'People Are Gifts' - A Two-year Disability Awareness Programme

Two years of work about young people with disabilities has resulted in St. Paul's Vinnies publishing a book.

People are Gifts features the profiles of eight young people with disabilities such as hearing and vision impairment, cerebral palsy, autism, downs syndrome, dyscalculia, dyspraxia and dyslexia. The book is filled with easy to read information for young people and their peers to understand, and lists of organisations and websites that parents, teachers and the community can refer too. The St. Paul's Vinnies were fortunate to have the support of organisations that cater for young people with disabilities, and charitable trusts in the Nelson/Tasman area who provided information and photos about their services for the book.

As well as publishing their book, the St. Paul's Vinnies have done a variety of activities to assist and learn from people who have disabilities.

These activities have included:

- putting together a week-long interactive display about 'Disability Awareness' that all classes in the school and the wider community could participate in;
- putting on an exhibition of paper mâché creations, paintings and sewing made by people with disabilities from Community Art Works, Nelson;
- buddying up with young people with disabilities and their caregivers to go canoeing;
- creating musical instruments for a preschool group of children with disabilities;
- making hand-painted fabric cushions for a respite home;
- having a variety of guest speakers come to share their experience of having a disability or working with people who have disabilities;
- creating a tactile book for young people and parents who are blind or visually impaired, which was donated to the Nelson Blind Foundation.

The work the St. Paul's Vinnies put together for the school display, went up on the walls of the Parent to Parent office, Nelson. As the result of funding from the Tasman District Council Creative Communities Scheme, the Respect All People Project and sponsorship through Copy Press (a local publishing business) this wonderful work was able to be published in book form.

People are Gifts is a book that celebrates what people with disabilities are able to achieve. To find out more information, please contact philippa@svdp-vinnies.org.nz, or (03) 544 1973 or www.svdp-vinnies.org.nz to see information about this project as it has unfolded over the past two years.



Wrap-up for Easter

Around the country many conferences, Vinnie's Op Shops and Young Vinnies held special events for Easter. Here are just a few of the great things that happened.



McAuley High, Otahuhu – Easter Can-Drive

Young Vinnies from McAuley High School, Otahuhu along with their teacher, John Bower organised an Easter can-drive to help families in their area over the Easter period. SVDP volunteers, Anthony and Keith from the Otahuhu SVDP centre collected all the goods for the Otahuhu food bank.



Students collating the goods for the Otahuhu SVDP foodbank.

Easter at Langdon Road Vinnie's Op Shop

Polly Fisher, the shop manager of Langdon's Road Vinnie's Op Shop in Papanui East, Christchurch designed beautiful Easter window displays, and inside the shop lucky shoppers were given a range of special Easter stock to purchase as well.



Auckland Young Vinnies Commissioning Mass

Over 50 Young Vinnie youth leaders from across the Auckland diocese, celebrated their commissioning mass with Bishop Patrick Dunn on Saturday 2nd May, 2015 at St Patrick's Cathedral.

The young leaders, from over 13 Catholic secondary schools, tertiary groups, parishes and communities, were joined by members of the Society, and friends, family and supporters.

Bishop Dunn encouraged and blessed the new leaders as they began their journey of service in 2015. Each leader was handed a candle, symbolising the Light of Christ.

In the opening address, Gene Paul Kiely said, "It is tonight that we honour a legacy almost 200 years in the making – a long tradition started by Frederic Ozanam. A young man himself who gathered other young people around him to serve in hope

of a better tomorrow. It has been moving to see this truth lived out by the many Vinnies youth here in Auckland."

We thank all these young men and women who are dedicated to making their faith real through serving as Vincentians.

Commissioning Mass for Auckland Young Vinnie leaders held at St Patrick's Cathedral with Bishop Patrick Dunn, Bishop of Auckland.



Dannevirke St Vincent de Paul – a personal reflection

Our thanks to Nancy Waayer of the St Joseph's Conference in Dannevirke, who was asked to share her recollections of being a member of the Society for many years.

"The Society of St Vincent de Paul in Dannevirke had been in recess for six years when requests for help were coming in to the then welfare person on the parish council. A group, of which several participants had been previous conference members, decided unanimously to approach our Parish Priest for permission to reopen the books. The reason for the closure at the time was because the need was suddenly not there. There was opposition from some parishioners so we waited patiently until a few weeks later when the need became apparent.

We gained approval in July 1984. During those early days we travelled to Palmerston North to attend Manawatu District Council meetings which were extremely helpful. In Dannevirke we made ourselves known to all community organisations and Church Ministers, meeting fabulous like-minded people and working together from then on.

We discovered some of our elderly parishioners were very lonely so we organised weekly luncheons which were a great success with the ladies. The men, however, associated our endeavours with the running of a soup kitchen but were there en masse at Christmas time to partake of the delicious meal, washed down with some of the good stuff.

To raise funds, we held clothing sales in our church hall once a month. Quite a heavy task unpacking and putting away each time, until we were offered help by our wonderful helpers from IHC. Many friends were made during this activity.

In 1997, we found a small shop for rent and applied for an Eastern and Central Bank Grant of \$2,000.00 to get us started. They must have liked us as they awarded an extra \$100.00 and we never looked back.

Our present shop (three moves later and still not big enough) is run by a dedicated team of unpaid volunteers. Donated goods pass through the door practically non-stop some days, as well as people popping in for a rest or a chat. Since 1984 our Holy Souls list of dear departed conference members and shop workers has reached the total of thirty persons. A powerful prayer force leaving us with many happy memories."

International News

SAMOA

Residents of Mapuifagalele, Samoa, get help from SVDP, New Zealand

A national appeal in New Zealand, launched by SVDP in late 2014 has resulted in much-needed equipment and furniture being donated to Mapuifagalele, a home for the aged run by the Little Sisters of the Poor in Samoa. Now residents of Mapuifagalele have new hospital beds, a dentist's chair and equipment, wardrobes, bedside lockers and stand fans to help them cope with the heat.

After a visit to Samoa in July, 2014, Keith Norton, Oceania representative for Council General International, the governing body of the Society worldwide, launched an appeal throughout the SDVP conferences in New Zealand with great success.

Mother Alosina, superior of the Home, in her discussions with Keith asked if some of the old, worn beds could be replaced. Saint Vincent de Paul were able to purchase several hospital beds locally, as they were exactly the type of bed the sisters needed. The Society still has some funds which it is keeping in reserve to buy more beds once they become available later next month.

A new dental chair and dental equipment were also donated to the sisters and a local dentist has volunteered to visit onsite. The sisters had found that many of the elderly residents had problems with their teeth but that it was very difficult to take them to the hospital dental clinic.

Mother Alosina also commented that, "The dining rooms get quite hot during the daytime, so having large stand fans to blow out the hot air would be fantastic." So five large stand fans were donated and went to work in the dining room as soon they were delivered.

SVDP also donated room wardrobes, so residents finally had somewhere to hang their clothes, as well as bedside lockers, to provide a place to store personal items which the sisters can also use when bed feeding or when dispensing medications."

All the donations were made to Mapuifagalele through the Samoa conference of St. Vincent de Paul headquartered at the Tuutuilelolo Annex, Mulivai. It was a joint effort by both countries to complement the great work done by the Little Sisters of the Poor for the people of Samoa.

Peter Bendinelli, president of SVdP Samoa thanked Keith Norton and all the generous benefactors in New Zealand who made these donations to Mapuifagalele possible.



One of the sisters from Mapuifagalele, the home for the aged run by the Little Sisters of the Poor, Samoa with one of the wardrobes donated by the NZ National SVDP appeal.

SYRIA

Call for Solidarity with Christians in Syria

The following excerpt is from Ella Salhab Bitar, President, Society of St Vincent De Paul, Lebanon.

For the full version please click on the following: <http://en.ssvpglobal.org/News/CGI-news/Call-for-solidarity-with-Christians-in-Syria>

“How beautiful on the mountains are the feet of the one who brings good news, who proclaims peace! Who brings good news, who proclaims salvation! Of the one who says to Zion: your God reigns!” Is 52.7

Christians, persecuted, are fleeing their villages,
Massacred by those who believe only in evil
Those who kill children, women and men
They destroy churches, they wipe away ancient civilisations,
thousands of years old
They plunder and destroy everything in their path

Our brothers and sisters are homeless, cold and hungry, they need...EVERYTHING

They carry their Cross joyfully,
They believe the Resurrection is near at hand
They know that their suffering and their Faith bring them to Jesus
We have to clothe them, feed them, keep them warm, care for them, listen to them and above all, we have to love them
It is not enough simply to pray for them.
Our duty as Christians is to be beside them, and say to them
“We are your brothers and sisters, we share your suffering and your pain”.
Can we stand by, arms folded, knowing they are naked and hungry?
Can we open our hearts to their suffering?
Can we relieve their suffering?

Prayer

Lord, I pray to you for all those who weep and
Those whose tears do not flow
Lighten their suffering
Soothe their fear
Bring them PEACE, Love and Light

- Ella Salhab Bitar



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.



Learning More About the Young Vinnies, St Patrick’s, Nightcaps, Southland

Five students from a small one class school in Southland are reflecting on joining the Vincentian family and the possibility of setting up the first Young Vinnies group in the 119- year history of St Patrick’s School, Nightcaps.

Principal of Trinity Schools in Southland, Anne Canny asked Ann Kennelly, the Young Vinnies Southland Co-ordinator, to come and explain to the seniors the work of the society and the Young Vinnies.

The students gave up their lunch time to listen, learn and ask questions about the work that Young Vinnies do in Southland. Ann linked the 150th Anniversary of the diocese of Dunedin to the idea of starting a new mission in the school with the beginning of a Young Vinnies group.

During Lent the students reflected on some social justice activities that a Young Vinnies group at St Patrick’s School, Nightcaps could initiate, such as creating a vegetable garden so that they can help others in the area who need fresh food, and visiting the elderly and singing a song or reading to them. The students also felt that by praying they were helping the work of St Vincent de Paul everywhere.

If successful, this new initiative will fit the 2015 International



Vincentian Family theme of “Together in Christ, we Vincentians make a difference”. In prayer and action these young people of Nightcaps already show this Vincentian spirit.

Student and staff of St Patrick’s, Nightcaps, Southland Vinnie’s Co-Ordinator, Ann Kennelly and Principal of Trinity Schools in Southland, Anne Canny.

St Mary’s Conference, Nelson

St Mary’s Conference in Nelson remember their faithful members who have recently died. They were dedicated supporters who worked with the gifts they had in the ways they knew best.

Mary Cairns	Desmond O’Regan
Roma Coman	Josephine Persico
Joseph Cotterell	Noreen Rodgers
Christine Gardner	Ronald Shadbolt

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