



“Inspirations from our Founders and Patrons”

Our Blessed Virgin Mary ***Patroness of the SSVP***



As we approach Advent and the Christmas Season, our eyes are turned to the Blessed Virgin Mary. On December 8th, we celebrate the Feast of the Immaculate Conception of Mary. This teaching of the Church is one of the most misunderstood that we have. This day celebrates the conception of the Virgin Mary in the womb of her mother, Saint Anne.

It commemorates Mary's sinless conception. The teaching of the Church says that from the very first minute of her conception, the Blessed Virgin Mary was kept free from all stains of original sin, even by the singular grace and entitlement of Almighty God, and given the merits of Jesus Christ, Savior of Mankind. Mary was granted this extraordinary privilege because of Her unique role in history as the Mother of God. She is revered as a model for all humanity in Her holiness and Her purity, in Her willingness to accept the Plan of God for Her. Because of this she is a tremendous role model for all of us and especially for Vincentians.

Mary's "Let it be done to me according to Thy Word," in response of the Angel Gabriel's greeting, is the response

required of all Christians to God's Plan. At our meetings we pray the "Hail Mary" prayer. Mary is our patroness supreme. She is a masterpiece who reflects "the beauty of God who is all love, grace and self-giving" (Pope Francis). She is our model of service. She is our counsellor. Mary shows us that the fullness of grace can transform the human heart and enable it to do something so great as to change the course of human history. As Vincentians we try to change the future for the poor. We try to relieve poverty. We try to end generational poverty. Mary aids us in our work under her title, Mother of Hope. By her example, we bring Hope to those that we serve. Ask God to create a new heart in us and give us a steadfast spirit so that we may never tire to serve Him, as we minister to His poor. May we be refreshed by His grace in serving His poor. Seek Mary as your mother. She will guide and protect you. She will always lead us to her son Jesus, our Redeemer.

Deacon John Girolami, ONRC Spiritual Advisor

“From the President’s Corner”

President’s Message

Greetings Sister and Brother Vincentians,

In his Angelus address on November 27, 2022, the first Sunday of Advent, Pope Francis said ***“Let us bear this in mind: God is hidden in our life, he is always there — he is concealed in the commonest and most ordinary situations in our life...He is there, in our daily work, in a chance encounter, in the face of someone in need, even when we face days that seem grey and monotonous, it is right there that we find the Lord, who calls to us, speaks to us and inspires our actions”***. This is a busy time of year for Vincentians. Many of us are working with our sisters and brothers in preparing hampers for families in need; partnering with local schools, parish organizations and others in the community who want to bring joy to those who struggle to find happiness at Christmas. And we are looking after our own family preparations – decorating, shopping, baking treats, getting ready to host or visit. In all this hectic activity do we lose sight of the reason for the season? The Pope challenges us: ***“How can we recognize and welcome the Lord? Do I try to recognize God is present in daily situations, or am I distracted and a little overwhelmed by things?”*** Serving neighbours in need can indeed sometimes be overwhelming. As St. Vincent de Paul said, they can be demanding masters. As we approach Christmas let us look for God



(L. to R.): Ann Massel, Brenda Hamilton (25), Larry Collins (35), Sam Licata (25), Syd Engel (35), John McKay, HPC Pres.

indicating the years of service for these individuals)

I continue to be inspired by the work each Vincentian does to share your compassion and joy as you serve the people in need. Thank you to Conference and Council Executives who share their talents and enthusiasm in leading our Society. And a sincere thank you to the Spiritual Advisors whose spiritual reflections remind us of the purpose of our mission and that God can be found in the everyday things in our life.

Every blessing to you and your families for a warm and joyous Christmas.

Ann Massel, President, Ontario Regional Council

in the spirituality of Vincentians who are serving the Lord through serving the poor, in the smile of the family receiving a Christmas basket, in the light of a candle or the aroma of warm cookies out of the oven, and the times we share with families and friends. These actions all ensure that we would never forget the true meaning of Christmas. I have been privileged to visit Vincentians in several communities in Ontario. One of those visits was attending the Hamilton Particular Council’s Vincent/Ozanam Dinner and Awards event on September 24th with 100 people in attendance. I was honoured to hand out Long Service awards to twenty-four recipients ranging from 10 to 35 years of SSVP service (see photo with the caption

“To change the world, we must be good to those who cannot repay us”.

– Pope Francis

"Milestones in our History" (Individual)

An Interview with John Woolcott, one of our HPC longest serving members. By Guido Kelly

1. How long have you been a Vincentian? and how much have you enjoyed this aspect of Vincentian work?

- I have been a Vincentian since 1970, when I became a member of the Regina Mundi Conference here in Hamilton. This was a true growing experience for me, being in my early 20s, working alongside my new Saint Vincent De Paul brothers and sisters who were all so dedicated to serving the needs of the less fortunate in the community of the Hamilton Particular Council.

2. Since being a Vincentian is a vocation, who or what motivated you to join the Society?

Growing up as the youngest member of five siblings, we were blessed to have very loving parents. They always provided for us and most times in a very generous way. As my teen years went by, I grew to appreciate their efforts as a true blessing. More and more, I felt the urge to reach out to others that were not as fortunate as we were. My parents, then, were very instrumental in ensuring that my siblings and myself were exposed to all aspects of our faith. They taught us that we should share these gifts and blessings with others who needed help. This calling manifested in me and soon recognized that I should use these blessings from God to take the step to serve him by becoming a Vincentian.

3. As Vincentians, we serve with "Love, Respect, Justice and Joy". Which of these motivates you the most? Why?

- I feel the most difficult and important motivational tool of these is respect. We should always have the greatest respect for those we serve as well as for our brother and sister Vincentians. The other three, love, joy and justice will naturally follow.

4. What leadership positions have you held with your Conference or Council? Of which are you most proud?

Why? I have served as President of the Regina Mundi Conference. During my tenure, I was able to reach out to many members in our community and help those in need as well as nurture new Vincentians that joined our Conference and advocate for the Society. I introduced more ways and means of helping our Conference members as together we were very involved at the grass roots level with some of the needy in our society who were absolutely destitute.



John Woolcott

5. Drawing from your vast experiences over the years, what aspect continues to motivate you in your Vincentian work?

As the years have come and gone, I have noticed how our Saint Vincent De Paul Society continues to grow and expand in so many different ways and directions in which to help and reach out to our brothers and sisters in need. This aspect of our work continues to reach out no matter what race, creed or colour. By this continuous striving to reach out to more and more of those in need, I believe that this will attract more people to join the Vincentian ranks as it has inspired me to continue as a Vincentian for over fifty years. I have been a member of the Annunciation of Our Lord Conference for the last twenty years and hopefully for many more years to come.

6. What advice do you wish to share with "new" as well as "not so new" Vincentians as they respond to the wide-ranging calls for their service?

I would encourage my fellow Vincentians as they approach each encounter with those in need, that they should always recognize the great joy in helping others and being a true reflection of Jesus Himself to those being helped. Also, always pray that God will grant them the grace to have a positive attitude in responding to their needs.

St. Patrick Conference, Niagara Falls

Celebrates

60 years of its Aggregation

Since its foundation date, January 18, 1961 the Saint Patrick Parish Conference of the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul has been helping our less fortunate brothers and sisters, by carrying out our mission statement " **living the Gospel message**



St. Patrick Church, Niagara Falls

by serving Christ through our neighbours in need with love, respect, justice and joy". Our Conference was aggregated on January 7, 1963, which now leads us into our 60th anniversary year of aggregation in 2023. Our conference membership has grown from 10 to 25 members. Ten of our members each have over 20 years of service and they keep the rest of the members grounded and committed to the core purpose of the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul. We have a longer term plan to cross train members and implement a succession planning strategy. Our conference is a major supporter to the Project Share (food bank) Christmas Food Program, through financial assistance and our Vincentians working with members of Project Share to distribute aid. This summer, in partnership with the Saint Catharines Central Council and East Niagara Particular Council, 35 Elementary School children from the Region made lifetime memories as they attended summer camp. The conference also provides gift cards for clothing and food to those in need of emergency assistance in Niagara Falls downtown area. In the past, we have also assisted with the purchase of appliances for families and mobility aid for people with disabilities. The conference has liaison people working with the four (4) downtown Elementary Schools (both public and separate school boards) by which we

have provided clothing, hygiene items and financial assistance to students in an effort to lessen the stigma of poverty. In photo at right, some of our members deliver coats to the Principal to hand out to some of the school children. The work the liaison people have done is leading to other programs that will benefit the school children. Our members have prepared and served food at the Niagara Falls Community Outreach (Soup Kitchen) for 25 years. Our conference is indebted to the parishioners of our church for their generous donations. We also get support with monies raised through OLG at Delta Bingo, as well as partnerships with other Service groups and small businesses. The key to our continued success going forward would be expanding partnerships with other stakeholders in the community. Currently, we have partnerships with the Carmelites, the Knights of Columbus 1652 Council and the Stamford Centre Volunteer Firemen as well as a few local businesses that have been keen to support the conference, especially with programs at the Elementary Schools. Our members also volunteer at the SSVF store in Niagara Falls. This store is run by the Particular Council. On occasion, we provide vouchers to those in need to shop at the store.

Cliff Sexton, President, St. Patrick Conference



(L.to R.): Clara Fisher, Maria Solomon (St. Mary Principal), Shirley Wallace, Josie and John Maclean with coats.

Saint John of the Cross Conference

Mississauga

Our Conference represents the outreach of the St. John of the Cross (SJOC) parishioners and parish which is located in the north-west corner of Mississauga, Ontario, the nation’s 7th largest city by population. Our Conference is one of six that are under the umbrella of Peel North Particular Council which in turn falls under the jurisdiction of the Greater Toronto Central Council (GTCC). Our members



(L. to R.) Claudette Samson, Godfrey Louzado and Michelle De Sousa at the POD

meet every 2nd Thursday of each month. Our Conference was started on September 4th, 1990 and plays a vital role in carrying out the missionary works of the Society. Our 35 members are committed and faithful to the Vincentian mission and ideals, and we serve approximately 75 families in our local community in a variety of ways. In 2021, our members made 342 family visits and gave out 696 Mi-Way (Mississauga Transit) bus tickets as well as \$18,295.00 worth of grocery cards. In addition, our Conference is involved in Bundle-Up Weekend collections in April and October each year. We were engaged in Thanksgiving Food drives – the Catholic Schools in our Parish give generously to this Food Drive. We also pack Christmas Hampers for our neighbours in

need that we serve throughout the year. Our Conference is twinned with Our Lady of the Angels Conference in Kingston, Jamaica and we keep regular contact with them via email. In September this year, we launched the Registered Education Savings Program (RESP) / Canada Learning Bond (CLB) project under the Seeds of Hope (SOH). Two weeks ago, we treated our parishioners to coffee and cookies after each of our 5 weekend masses. At this time, we also launched our fundraising raffle, with the top prize being a 50” Samsung TV ; all proceeds will assist us with our Christmas hampers. Our Annual Summer Needathon, a fundraising event eagerly participated in by our parishioners in support of our Back-to-School assistance to families has been on hold since 2020. The event is a 3/5/10 kilometer-family fun walk and cycle along Lake Aquitaine and Lake Wabukayne both man-made scenic lakes right in our neighbourhood. Our Conference was recognized in February 2021 by the City of Mississauga for its outreach to those in need in the peak of the pandemic and received “The Covid Hero Award” for our efforts. We continue to make drop-off deliveries in lieu of home visits for families on the margins since the onset of the Covid pandemic. That being said, we are hoping to soon go back to in-home visits. We are thankful for the unfailing and ardent generosity of our parishioners. We are also grateful for the support of the Our Lady of Mount Carmel Knights of Columbus Council, all the Catholic Schools within our parish boundaries and our parish pastoral leadership.

Wendy Rostant, President, Saint John of the Cross Conference



(L. to R.): Valerie Fernandes, Theresa Egerton, Wendy Rostant, Marlene Babu at the cookies table

“Whoever has a heart full of love, always has something to give”. – St. John XXIII

St. Peter’s Conference **Goderich**

Goderich is the county seat of Huron County. It is located on the eastern shore of Lake Huron at the mouth of the Maitland River. Visitors as well as townsfolk are amazed at its superb sunsets as viewed looking west over the Lake.

While our parish was established in 1834, the SSVP St. Peter’s Conference was not established until 1983 and our Conference has been serving the needy of Goderich since that time. Once we opened the doors to the church basement on Saturday mornings, we just grew as an organization. In 1990, we celebrated the grand opening of our brand-new Thrift Store. As our store thrived, our services also expanded to branch out in our service to the needy. We established a food bank which has grown in size and scope over the years as we assist more and more people. For instance, each month, in 2021, we served approx. 300 individuals, all from the Goderich area, through the food bank. In 2013, we opened a second store, Parsons Used Furniture. At Parsons, our patrons may shop for furniture, appliances, lamps, and other household goods while the Thrift Store location offers Family Services, clothing, linens, books, etc. We run a Soup Corner out of our Thrift Store and have served over 1000 people in one month prior to “Covid”. We are now happy that we have been able to get our “Soup Corner” restarted. Sales from both stores support our special works projects such as the food bank, daily soup pot, fire & domestic violence support, emergency assists of heat, hydro, shelter, clothing, dental, furniture, and clothing. We also have a Health Care



St. Peter's Church, Goderich, ON

Aids Loans Cupboard that loans walkers, wheelchairs, crutches, shower chairs, etc. for as long as needed. Christmas Hampers, “Ring & Run” programs and the Walk-A-Mile Shoe Program are some of our favorite services! The “Ring & Run” is when we have learned of a family who needs help but will never ask....so we get lots of goodies together to meet their needs (could be clothing, food, etc.), sneak it to their door, ring the bell and RUN! They never know where it came from or how it came to be (we love secrets!). Budget and life skills support are available, which includes everything from new recipes to time with a financial planner. Christian items such as Bibles, pictures, etc. are always free. We constantly strive to renew ourselves and be adaptable to the specific needs of those that do turn to us for help and to meet each one where they are. We understand that poverty does not necessarily involve needing material goods as one can be poor in spirit, support, family, or health.

We are immensely grateful for the many volunteers that give of their time and talents and their heart to keep the mission possible! They really are the backbone of our ability to serve in the community, while our faith in God remains our cornerstone.

MAY YOU ALWAYS BE...

A MIND THROUGH WHICH CHRIST THINKS.

A HEART THROUGH WHICH CHRIST LOVES.

A VOICE THROUGH WHICH CHRIST SPEAKS.

A HAND THROUGH WHICH CHRIST HELPS...St. Augustine

Mary Barry, Food Bank Manager, St. Peter's Conference



Furniture and Appliance Sales Store



Ozanam Education Fund

Ozanam Education Fund (OEF) background:

The Ozanam Education Fund is an Ontario Regional Council program that is focused on helping people to rise out of the cycle of poverty by providing them with resources so they can upgrade their education with the goal of obtaining a decent job. One of the key factors that contributes to generational poverty is the lack of an education. The main obstacle is the lack of funds for tuition, computer equipment, food, transportation, and other necessities. Ten years ago, ONRC recognized this fundamental need for help to break out of poverty and as a result created the [Ozanam Education Fund](#). Because our Vincentians are in direct contact with people in these situations, they are in a unique position to help us in identifying worthy candidates.

The program works on a referral basis. Our Vincentian members identify situations where individuals are struggling financially to obtain further education or training needed to obtain a decent job. This may be expenses for attending University, College, trades, or other skills training. The program promotes taking an overall review of the personal funding capability for the person in need. The Fund application and the associated worksheet assists in this assessment. Applications are submitted by a Vincentian sponsor to the Fund committee for review. Supporting submissions are made by both the Vincentian sponsor and the applicant. Review is done by the committee making awards to the applicants as best as they can with the limited funds available. When awards are made the funds are “passed down” to the appropriate SSVF conference or council for local administration (paying bills). Applications should be made by the Vincentian most familiar with the situation. The full [Application-Award-Tax process](#) is detailed on our ONRC website.

Who we have helped:

The ONRC Ozanam Education Fund has been in operation for 10 years and has made 342 awards providing over \$657,000 of assistance for help with people’s education. Most of those we have helped are from families that are living in poverty with burdens of debt, medical problems, job loss, and the like. A significant number are from single parent families where the parent has young children, and they are trying to move from a low paying (often part time job) to one that allows them to live with some dignity. We have also helped many single mothers get an education so they could move on to a better paying job and better living conditions.

Impact:

We have received many thank you notes from the people that we have helped explaining how the financial assistance has made a difference in their lives in helping them get an education. We have also received feedback from sponsors that have noted the positive impact that the program has had on their families in helping them work their way out of poverty.

How you can help:

We call on our Vincentians to help identify someone that may be in dire need of help to get an education that will allow them rise out of the poverty cycle. Investigate the situation and explore how that person may benefit from the OEF program. Financially, the program is funded by “pass-ups” to ONRC from Conferences and Councils identified for the OEF. We encourage donations from Charity Foundations, Corporations, or personal donations. If you know of a Charity Foundation or a Corporation interested in contributing to our program, please reach out to them. Most donors like the fact that we have zero overhead expenses, and all contributions go directly to support those in need. We encourage both your financial donations to this worthy cause as well as your efforts to reach out to someone in need of an education; it will change someone’s life.

Jere Hartnett, Chair, ONRC Ozanam Education Fund ozanamfund@ssvp.on.ca

***“Arm yourself with prayer rather than a sword;
wear humility rather than fine clothes” - St. Dominic***

“Clothing the Naked” (Store related activities)

New Store for Ottawa

The new Blossom Park store in Ottawa opened on December 02, 2021. I had the opportunity to visit this store and meet with the Scott Morrison the Retail Manager. The Ottawa store committee and Marilyn



Manager Scott Morrison and Sue

Powell Executive Director said, “we were actually looking for space to relocate our warehouse when we came across this space. The rent and location were perfect for a new store and although we were not looking to expand, we decided that this opportunity should not be missed”. This is something that was just meant to be. As Ottawa expands with new developments in the south end of the city, they felt this would be a good location for both donations and shoppers. This enabled them to hire more staff and put people back to work after a few really bad Covid years. Their in-store surveys really showed that shoppers



A look inside the store

Sue Mazziotti-Armitage, ONRC Director / Chair, ONRC Stores

appreciate and liked the new store. Their commitment to their communities will continue with hopefully another store opening very soon. Huge CONGRATULATIONS to Marilyn and the Store Committee who took this on and made this bold venture a great success. If you are ever in Ottawa, please drop into one (1) or all three (3) of their stores...should you venture in, I would guarantee that you will not be disappointed. Marilyn also took part in a National Committee initiative of rebranding of all the SSVP stores. The committee consisted of SSVP store managers

and members

from coast to coast. If you did not see the power point presentation on the rebranding and naming of the stores. The new name was “Chez Vincent” and Ottawa was the first place across Canada to put this name on their trucks. My thanks to Marilyn, Scott, Tracy, Gareau, Chris and Pierre, the driver of their truck (now sporting the new “Chez Vincent” name) driver for their warm welcome. An added note that the new name and branding available to all stores across Canada.



The front of the new store

“Humility does not disturb or disquiet or agitate, however great it may be; it comes with peace, delight, and calm. . . . The pain of genuine humility doesn’t agitate or afflict the soul; rather, this humility expands it and enables it to serve God more” - St Teresa of Avila

SSVP – A Call Out to our Youth

From Sophia Mutuc, Youth Rep, SSVP National Council

I embarked on my journey with Saint Vincent de Paul Society by saying "yes" to an invitation to volunteer with other youth and get my high school volunteer hours. Then it evolved, into actually bringing ME joy and it became a sort of hobby. There are, and always have been, so many distractions in our world and



*Sophia with the Mary Mother of God new Youth Conference
in Oakville*

especially for the developing minds of young people, but these distractions, as silly as they may be, do have merit. I invite you to think back to your sojourns while in high school or better yet, go find your high school yearbook and skim through those pages. Think about what used to be important to you back then. Was it dating? Was it sports/music/trends? Was it grades? Or was it simply hanging out with your friends? Whatever it was, it shaped you into who you are today. My 'distraction' was SSVP because it brought me out from being buried in the hole that was never-ending homework. I must admit that as I progressed through high school, SSVP has guided me and still does as I have moved on to higher learning. The SSVP

is probably not going to be the main focus for a lot of young people today and THAT IS OKAY. We are not trying to shape the lives of young people - we want to open their eyes so that they see the beauty of volunteering and community outreach through the SSVP and the spirituality that is awakened in the process. Our part, within the Society, and life in general, is to do our best and shine light towards anyone we come across. I think it is important to remind you all that there is not just one way of doing something. While we may have provided an outline of how it has worked for us does not mean that it will necessarily work for your location. There are important variables to consider, such as consistency, joy, patience, and a willingness to accept change. As youth, we should study the approach of our founder, Blessed Frederic Ozanam, as he started the Society. I am so grateful to the many people that I have come across within the Society and all the opportunities and stories that were presented to me because it has helped me become a better person and a better leader. I know that in the future I will be helping so many people because I have learnt from the people before me as examples of how much difference a simple gesture, word or thought can make. As you read this, especially if you are a Vincentian, know that you are an inspiration to so many people around you - your friends, your family, and the people you help. YOU ARE AMAZING! For youth resources or updates please visit the website or keep up to date by 'liking' our Facebook/Instagram pages @ssvp.youth.ca. I put out monthly newsletters on different ideas to get youth involved with the Society. Please email me if you need any assistance regarding youth initiatives at youth-jeunes@ssvp.ca



Sophia and Lil with a Youth Group in Windsor

Sophia Mutuc, Youth Rep., SSVP National Council

May you be content knowing that you are a child of God. – St. Teresa of Jesus

"The Gains from North of Sixty"

Coral Harbour - Serving in Hope: What an opportunity – our St. Francis Xavier Conference, Stoney Creek was thrilled to take the lead role in packing a seacan for shipment to Coral Harbour, a community in the North of Sixty program. It was our first solo endeavour to fill a sea container with non-perishable items for the community called Coral Harbour, situated on Southampton Island on the North coast of Hudson Bay. This area has a population of about 1100 and typical of most northern communities more than 60% are youth and children. Because of their location on the open waters of Hudson Bay, Coral



Anna Lemmen and Carol Pin (volunteer)

Harbour endures more turbulent weather than communities on the mainland. They had been waiting several years for a St. Vincent de Paul Conference in the south to ship them foods that are usually unavailable and unaffordable on the island. The process and the journey from receiving the container in May to its departure late August and arrival to Coral Harbour November 8, 2022. Our first step was to obtain a 20 by 8.5 feet sea container (seacan) which was purchased by Ontario Regional Council. The seacan was inspected for holes and cracks that could cause water or rodents to enter and spoil the goods. Next was deciding on a safe and accessible central location for conferences in both Hamilton and Hamilton West's conferences. We received a list of what were essential goods and what were "niceties" for the children's after-school programs. Like all communities in the North, they only receive one shipment a year. The journey takes 2 months but this year it took considerably longer because of snow, wind and lack of ice that calms the choppy waters. Turbulent seas prevent ships from sending out barges loaded with food to the island. This shipment was a joint effort among the conferences of Hamilton and Hamilton West Particular Councils. Each conference chose the items and mode of support. Some donated money, some purchased the goods and other approached their parishioners to donate these goods. As the goods were collected, they were stored in a member's garage for later sorting and packing. Several hours were spent by many helpers finding the best way to secure the boxes on the skids. Finally, the seacan packing day of Aug 3rd was upon us. All the stored boxes were trucked to the parking lot of St. Francis Xavier Church in Stoney Creek. The buzz of animated Vincentians, cars, and trucks permeated the neighbourhood. It took many hands to pack, wrap, and pull the pallets jacks in place.

The charged atmosphere, the ringing church bells, and the chatter added to an incredible feeling of elation, camaraderie, and hope for a safe journey to Coral Harbour. The seacan would soon leave Stoney Creek for trucking to Montreal, where it would be loaded on a ship, and transferred to a barge near the coast of Coral Harbour. The shipment was scheduled to arrive October 24. However, due to the weather elements of wind, snow, and lack of ice to calm the rough waters of Hudson Bay, the ship was detoured to a community much further north and finally arrived on the shores of Coral Harbour on the 8th of November. The photo (right) shows a happy group of recipients enjoying the gifts sent from the south. Our thanks to all donators and packers. GREAT JOB!!!!

Maria Scattolon, President, St. Francis Xavier Conference, Stoney Creek



Sharing in the Joy of the Seacan's arrival in Coral Harbour

Feeding the Hungry in Goderich

at our “Daily Soup Pot”

by St. Peter’s Conference

As we approach the New Year of 2023, we will mark our 40th year of the founding of our SSVP St. Peter’s Conference in Goderich in 1983. Our food bank started feeding the needy of Goderich and area in 1985.



Volunteer Veronica Hotchkiss serving up soup from the Soup Corner of the store.

Through the food bank alone, we have served up to 100 families (290 individuals) per month in this area. We supply our friends with food hampers when they call on us for help. Each food hamper offers a 7–10-day supply and is always made uniquely for the person(s) receiving it according to their likes and dislikes, allergies, diet, and cooking abilities. We would pack differently for someone who is homeless compared to someone who is legally blind or has a room in a boarding house or motel. Some like to do their own “shopping” while others prefer us to pack for them using a created list that has their preferences and needs. Every hamper offers perishables (bread, milk, margarine, eggs, fresh fruit & produce, cheese slices), as well as a choice of frozen meats (fish, chicken, beef, pork, and chicken). We may also include hygiene products, paper products and non-perishables as to their needs. We

encourage people to try new recipes and sometimes have samples for them to try – like chickpea cookies! Our Christmas hampers are similar, but they also have the choice of the main meat – roast beef, ham, turkey, or pork loin roast along with all the seasonal treats. A small gift and socks or gloves are always included along with a “stocking” of treats. Along the way, we realized that we were still missing a group – the ones who were never going to ask. Thus, the Daily Soup Pot began in 2016. Soup and buns are available in the store to all during the opening hours. A note on the unmonitored donation jar says, “You are welcome to leave a donation for yourself and perhaps a donation for the ones who can’t.” No one knows who is simply enjoying the social “lunch while you shop” or if it may be the only meal they enjoy. This promotes a warm, welcoming atmosphere. At our Soup Corner, we have served over 1000 people in one month. We are very grateful to our donors and our amazing volunteers who continue to give of themselves with their hearts, talents, and time. More than this, we continue to be amazed and humbled by God’s continuing grace, provisions, and blessings.



Justin Smith, Store Manager, at lunch, while Pat Clifford packs a food hamper

Mary Barry, Food Bank Manager, St. Peter’s Conference

“Social Justice Gains” (Highlighting one of these areas)



PUBLIC POLICY DIALOGUE & DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

ONTARIO REGIONAL COUNCIL

Dear fellow Vincentians,

As many of you know, I have stepped down as Chair of our SSVP National Social Justice Committee. Subsequently, the ONRC Board of Directors has appointed me to the position of Chair, Public Policy Dialogue & Development Committee. (PPD&DC), with the mandate to research, develop and communicate advocacy and educational resources to our membership on social justice, cultural diversity (including Indigenous reconciliation), systemic change and the causes and potential solutions to poverty and injustice in Ontario. The PPD&DC is responsible to the ONRC Board.

I am excited about this new revised social justice initiative and grateful for the confidence the ONRC Board has shown in my appointment. We are currently in the committee formation process with our first meeting this November. What this new social justice model will look like will be determined in the next few months but there are major components that shall be part of our efforts, including supporting diversity, inclusion and equity and the splendid work being done by the ONRC Multi Cultural Diversity Committee. (MCDC). We shall also be reaching out to the Indigenous community with our Indigenous Sharing Circle to educate and inform our membership about how you may become involved in reconciliation at your local council/conference.

The name of PPD&D is truly relevant in today's world as we all work to growing our membership and continued works of charity and justice. Dialogue is an important part of any success and the need to communicate with every conference and member about social justice will be one of our major goals. In addition, the concept of giving the voiceless a voice is one we as an organization, can improve upon. We need to use current ways of engagement while looking at systemic changes in our current structure that may enhance this goal. Finally, any success the PPD&D has will depend on the level of support we get from every council, conference, and member. Please include time at every meeting to discuss social justice. Please consider ways you can have an impact at your “grass roots” level. Please pray for our neighbours in need and our own efforts to alleviate poverty in Ontario and Canada.

*Jim Paddon, Chair,
Public Policy Dialogue & Development Committee
ONRC Society of Saint Vincent de Paul (SSVP)*

May you not forget the infinite possibilities that are born of faith

- St. Teresa of Jesus

“Sharing our Wealth” (TWINNING)

THE BENEFITS OF TWINNING (our Story from Antigua & Barbuda)

St. Francis of Assisi Conference is located in the city of St. John’s on the beautiful Island of Antigua & Barbuda which is well known for fun, sun, sea, and sand – most definitely a haven for Tourists!

As a member of the St. Francis of Assisi Conference, my view of the island took on a different outlook as the other members and myself engaged in weekly house to house visitations. We encountered people living in dire circumstances that we never knew still existed. We were of the view that the Conference was in no position to cater to the basic needs of those we visited. However, once we familiarized ourselves with our Vincentian vocation, it then became clear to us that “where there’s a will, there’s a way!”



Delivering pampers package to a shut-in

So, we embarked on a Monthly Cake Sale held after Mass on the last Sunday of every month and an Annual Pre-Independence Luncheon held on the last Sunday in October every year as the means through which we would service those in need. The monies we made by these fund-raisers did assist us in our efforts to be of service. However, the demand was so much greater that we had to prioritize our distribution.

I can vividly remember our excitement when we learnt about the Twinning Program back in 2012. We immediately applied and were elated when Our Lady of the Assumption Conference in Stoney Creek, Ontario, Canada agreed to be our Twinning Partner. Over the years, our relationship has most certainly evolved. Thanks to technology, we have been able to have “live” meetings (exchanging our Agendas) and to pray the Rosary together. It was fun to teach our Twinning Partners a taste of

our Caribbean fellowship. Over the years, the funds received from our Twinning Partners were most instrumental in enabling us to do the following: ***Built an out-house for Mr. Joseph; provide daily lunches for four (4) Shut-Ins and Two (2) HIV patients; purchase School Supplies for three (3) children; assist a single parent with school fees; assist a cancer patient with medical expenses; host a Christmas party for the girls at the Good Shepherd Home (this is a home for abused girls); provide pampers and bed pads for our Shut-Ins; purchase groceries for an unemployed single mother and an elderly woman.***

More recently, due to the Covid-19 Pandemic and the protocols that were in place, we were unable to engage in all our usual outreach programs. However, in December 2021, we did reach out to approximately thirty-five (35) families with our Christmas Packages. I am enclosing a few pictures which were taken to share with our Twinning Partners.

In closing, let me take this opportunity to express our gratitude to our Twinning Partners from Canada for working along with us to make a positive difference where the need exists.

In the words of St. Vincent De Paul, ***“Our vocation is to embrace the hearts of all men, to do what the Son of God did, he who came into the world to set it on fire. It is true therefore that I am sent not only to love God but to make him loved. It is not enough to love God if my neighbor does not love him.”***

*Karen Crawford, Past President,
St. Francis Of Assisi Conference, Antigua & Barbuda.*



Christmas 2021 packed hampers

What unites us is much greater than what divides us - St. John XXIII

"NOT to be FORGOTTEN" and "Wrap-up"



Lest we forget our brothers and sisters who served His people, please keep them in your prayers....

Matthew Caddigan, St. Peter's Conference, Peterborough. **September 1, 2022**

Ken Trudel, St. Bernard Conference, Ottawa. **October 7, 2022**

Robert Hartlen, St. Anne's Conference, Peterborough. **October 15, 2022**

Joan Cutter, St. Anne's Conference, Peterborough. **November 13, 2022**

UPCOMING DATES TO CIRCLE ON YOUR CALENDAR

December 8, 2022 – Feast of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary, the Patroness of our Society. We encourage you to attend Mass that day and pray for our Society.

December 25, 2022 – On behalf of the Ontario Regional Council Directors and Committees, we wish you a Holy and Merry Christmas and all the best for 2023. **God's Gift to us is Jesus' Gift of Love.**

ONRC – SEEKING YOUR HELP

Our Regional Council is seeking your help/assistance. **The position of ONRC Treasurer needs to be filled.** And looking for a **"webmaster-in-training"**. Webmaster John will train you before he retires. (E-mail is below)

COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE: This Committee has revised the format of the ***Vincentimes***. The object is to be more inclusive in reporting the many SSVP happenings across our Region. The stories in this edition originated from Antigua, W.I., Goderich, Hamilton, Mississauga, Niagara Falls, Nunavut, Ottawa, and Stoney Creek as we attempt to bring our Vincentians together as a family, which is one of our VALUES. HAPPY READING as we share in each other's accomplishments. Feedback is welcome. PLEASE crank up the enthusiasm and get your Conference included by putting your pen to paper. You may submit your stories for inclusion in our ***Vincentimes*** to Shelley at shelleyssvp@gmail.com

SOCIETY OF SAINT VINCENT DE PAUL ONTARIO REGIONAL COUNCIL

MISSION: The Society of Saint Vincent de Paul is a lay Catholic organization whose mission is: To live the Gospel message by serving Christ in the poor with love, respect, justice, and joy.



VALUES: The Mission of our Society implies that as Vincentians we: See Christ in anyone who suffers; Come together as a family; Have personal contact with the poor; Help in all possible ways.

VISIT our website: www.ssvp.on.ca

Email us at: info@ssvp.on.ca