



"Inspirations from our Founders and Patrons"

Society of Saint Vincent de Paul *Honours its founder in Ontario*

George Manly Muir (1807 -1882)



Most Vincentians quickly learn that our Society was formed in Paris, France in 1833. However, have Ontario Vincentians ever wondered when did the Society start in Ontario and by whom? George Manly Muir, who was born in 1807 in Amherstburg, Ontario, resided in Montreal where, in 1833, he met and married Sophie Place, who belonged to an English family from Quebec City. George had an increasing hunger to deepen his own spirituality. He had a profound devotion to Jesus in the Eucharist and to the Blessed Virgin Mary. He became a member of the Society in 1848 in Montreal, the year the first Conference was founded there, through the inspiration of Bishop Bourget. The bishop had heard about the Society on a visit to Paris and brought back with him a copy of the Rule and Manual of the Society. In 1849, when Mr. Muir's work brought him to Quebec City, he requested admittance to the Quebec City Conference and was unanimously admitted. He used to visit the Quebec City Jail. One day, when he invited a woman prisoner to turn her life around. The woman told George "What's the use? Even if we tried to live a better life, we'd never make it. Once we're in trouble, there's no way out, and no one wants us around. When we get out of jail, there's no place to go except back to our old haunts...."

George Manly Muir (1807-1882) Initially the idea of helping women being released from prison was not well received. However, Mr. Muir managed to get support from his fellow members in the Society of St. Vincent de Paul and opened a shelter for women who, on leaving jail, expressed the wish to lead a Christian life. In 1850, Muir's employment took him to Toronto, and he was asked by the Quebec Council to try and found a Conference in Toronto. Having arrived in Toronto, Mr. Muir attended daily Mass at St. Michael's Cathedral and noticed several other men who also attended Mass and received holy communion daily. One by one, he approached them, and they agreed to meet to discuss the founding of a Conference. As a result, the first Ontario Conference (the Conference of Charity of Our Lady of Toronto), was formed at St. Michael's Cathedral in Toronto, on November 11, 1850. Mr. Muir was soon transferred back to Quebec and was elected President of the SSVP National Council. He remained in Quebec until his death in 1882. The Society continued to expand in Ontario with the establishment of the Conference Notre-Dame de la Merci (bilingual) in Ottawa in December 1860. Three years later, the first francophone Conference was founded at the Notre-Dame du Bon Secours Parish (now Cathedral-Basilica) of Ottawa. The Society expanded to many other Ontario communities. Today in Ontario the Society has some 5,000 members in over 335 conferences that reach out to over 66,000 families. By learning more about our Vincentian ancestors we see where we have come from and why we do what we do. We ask their intercession as we look forward and pray that their dedication to Christ by serving His poor inspires us to do the same in our Vincentian work.

Deacon John Girolami, ONRC Spiritual Advisor

Hamilton Particular Council

Celebrates

Long Service Awards with Vincent/Ozanam Dinner

It was my privilege to be invited to and attend Hamilton Particular Council's 11th Annual Vincent/Ozanam Dinner during which they celebrate some of their members with Long Serving Awards. The event was held on Saturday, September 9th. The dinner was preceded by their Annual Mass for Hamilton deceased Vincentians. The Mass was celebrated by Bishop Wayne Lobsinger, Auxiliary Bishop of Hamilton. The Bishop reminded us that it was the Feast day of Blessed Frederic Ozanam who founded the Society in 1833. The Bishop complimented the award recipients for their unwavering commitment to serving the most vulnerable in our community and that their dedication to improving the lives of the

poor is nothing short of inspiring. He further complimented the recipients in recognizing the countless hours of volunteerism, the donations from generous hearts, and the lives that have been transformed through their initiatives. He extended his "warmest congratulations on the outstanding work with the poor to all members of the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul". At this writing, I would also like to congratulate the award recipients as well as all other Vincentians here in Ontario as they continue to reach out to those in need. It is an undaunted task for which we all volunteer and it is worthy on occasions like this to recognize this work. I was thrilled to participate with about 100 Vincentians, family and friends in the awards ceremony for those receiving awards that night.



L. to R.: Ann Massel, Guido Kelly (30 yr.), John McKay (10 yr.), Frances March (30 yr.), Bishop Wayne Lobsinger

Here is a list of those that received awards for their years of service shown in brackets after their name:- Frances March (30), Guido Kelly (30), Allan MacDonald(20), Andrew Burns (20), Sharon Springstead (20), John Savelli (20), John van der Zalm (15), Mary Parke (15), Tony Bernar (15), John McKay (10) and Anthony Valiaveetil (10). A celebration of 205 volunteer years shared among the eleven individuals that were honoured. Well done!!!

On another note, I invite all Vincentians across Ontario Region to join our hosts, Windsor-Essex Central Council, by attending the Annual General Assembly on April 26 – 27, 2024 in downtown Windsor. We are planning an event that will provide informative workshops and engaging speakers. More information regarding registration and guest room bookings will be published shortly. Please continue to check the ONRC website (ssvp.on.ca) for details.

*Ann Massel
President, Ontario Regional Council*



Ann addressing attendees at dinner.

"Without humility of heart, all other virtues by which one runs toward God seem – and are – absolutely worthless" . – Blessed Angela of Foligno

"Milestones in our History" (Individual)

An Interview with Agnes Turley, one of Halton's 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 for over 35 years. I started as an Auxiliary Member at St. Francis of Assisi Conference in Mississauga when our children were young. I then became a fully active member, and it was very humbling and gratifying to help our Friends (brothers and sisters in need). When I assisted our Friends, I truly felt that I was being Christ to them and that I was experiencing God's love in action. It was an overwhelming feeling.

2. Since being a Vincentian is a vocation, who or what motivated you to join the Society? As a child growing up in Ireland, I saw how my father assisted SSVP in our local Parish. I was later inspired by my late husband Oliver, who was a member at St. Francis of Assisi Conference in Mississauga for many years. When I saw how much he loved serving our Friends, I became an auxiliary member as I was busy raising our 6 children. When the time was right, I felt I needed to put more of myself out there by becoming more active and it was beautiful to work with volunteers who truly felt called to give of themselves to assist our Friends.



Agnes Turley

3. As Vincentians, we serve with "Love, Respect, Justice and Joy". Which of these motivates you the most? Why? – It is hard to choose just one, but Love reigns. We choose to become Vincentians because we love God. We bring this love to His children who may be less fortunate in material needs. By being a joyful person and treating everyone with respect, we become Christ-like, who judges no one but embraces everyone. I love the feeling I get every time I help a family and see the appreciation and happiness on their faces and sometimes relief because we have lifted them up out of an untenable situation.

4. What leadership positions have you held with your Conference or Council? Of which are you most proud? Why? Throughout my years with SSVP, I have served as Secretary of a Conference and a Particular Council, Treasurer for the Ontario Regional Council and President of our Local Parish Conference here at Holy Rosary in Milton. I enjoyed all these experiences because I was working with like-minded Catholics, people who gave of their time and talent without looking for anything in return. I loved attending the meetings and spreading the joy I felt at being able to serve. Each position brought its own unique experience. Through these roles, I learned that I could be a leader and be responsible for providing guidance and encouragement to my peers. I always received much more than I gave.

5. Drawing from your vast experiences over the years, what aspect continues to motivate you in your Vincentian work? I feel very blessed by all that the Lord has given me. Although I am unable to be as active as I once was, I still benefit greatly from the assistance I still provide. As a priest friend once said, "The poor are hard taskmasters". Because we know how it is hard for our Friends to ask for help, by the outpouring of our empathy and humility, we allow them to maintain their dignity. Again, God's Love in action. During the "Covid" outbreak, we found ways to work around the precautions to help these Friends. The resilience of our volunteers was and is awe inspiring.

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? The poor will always be among us, and we cannot turn a blind eye to them. We need to step out in Faith and embrace the gifts and talents God gave us. Do not be afraid as God will provide the courage you need to meet them where they are. We have to remember that we are offering our Friends a "hand up" and not a "handout" – there is a big difference here. By become a Vincentian you are embracing some of the Corporal Works of Mercy. We are not there to judge them but to offer them a hand given in love. You will not be disappointed as your will gain many graces and blessings and a sense that you have heard God's call and acted upon it. Here I Am Lord! 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.

When it is in your power to do good, do not hold back! - St. Polycarp

St. Mary's Conference, Lindsay

Celebrates 150 plus years of SSVP Service

The community of St. Mary's Church, Lindsay began in a small log building in 1840. The first Mass in the present brick building was celebrated on Christmas Eve 1859. Many of the building supplies were donated or transported by



St. Mary's Church, Lindsay

parishioners with over 600 bricks hauled to Lindsay in buckboards. Parishioners have had a long history of serving their Church and their community. Our SSVP St. Mary's Conference was started about the 1870's serving our Neighbours in Need through a variety of support systems and activities. We now have seven teams of two which operate on a rotational basis and make the home visits when called on. We assist with a variety of needs for food, shelter, health or education. Our members also volunteer in a local soup kitchen and the local food bank on a regular basis. Financial support of both a local shelter for the homeless and a pregnancy centre is ongoing. Members meet to weave milk-bag mats for the Canadian Food for Children's mission. Students are supported through our Back-to-School program and offer \$500 bursaries to two graduating secondary school students who have triumphed over trials. In addition, we assist financially with help for students to attend camps, World Youth Days, school excursions and with the Seeds of Hope program (RESP). We also reach out to our four parish schools offering additional (up to \$1,000) financial support for unseen needs of the

students (such as eyeglasses or snowsuits). Monthly collections at each Mass and bequests have provided the base revenue for the work of St. Mary's Conference. For over 25 years, St. Mary's Conference has offered a Christmas program to assist families and individuals to celebrate with good food. The program initially provided turkey or ham, bags of fresh and canned groceries, bread, milk and potato chips. Since 2001, Lindsay paramedics volunteered to deliver the food to families in partnership with St. Mary's Conference and they continue to do so. We engage our parishioners to provide a new clothing item and/or a toy for a child through the Be-An-Angel program at Christmas by taking a child's request from our tree. This has become a very popular item



*Glenda Klein, Past. Pres., presents
20 yr. award to the ER team*

with our parishioners who have been very generous since its 2003 start. An Adopt-a-Family program attracted additional businesses and families to provide gifts for each member of the home. Members and secondary students assisted with loading the ambulances with gifts for delivery throughout the town. More than 400 individuals were served this year through the Christmas Cheer Program. We extend an invitation via a written Christmas greeting to each with their choice of attending one of the Christmas masses on the schedule which we provide. We are truly blessed to have 36 active and 21 auxiliary



View of the altar at St. Mary's

members who assist us in our ministry. They serve the needs of our community with empathy, humility and generosity. It takes a village to raise a child or family, and we are forever grateful to each one of our parishioners and our community partners for their help. *Joanne Hough, President, St. Mary's Conference, Lindsay*

Holy Rosary Conference, Milton

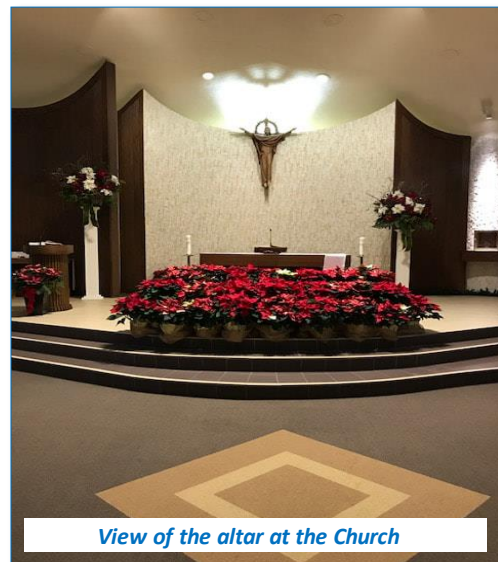
Celebrates

40 plus years of its Formation

Our Holy Rosary Parish in Milton was established in 1936. As the Town of Milton grew, so did the number of families that the parish served and continues to serve today. We are 7000 families strong. The Society of Saint Vincent de Paul has been active at Holy Rosary since the 1980's. Like all organizations from that era, there have been many changes. When we started out, we would bring some toiletries, dish and laundry detergents and non-perishable items to our Friends in Need along with a food voucher to one of our local grocery stores, thus enabling them to purchase fresh fruits, meats and vegetables. Initially, we did not experience many families seeking assistance. However, as Milton began to expand after the year 2000, the number of families needing assistance also grew. We soon realized that many of those that we helped were more of a multicultural population. This changed the needs of some of our families as the food items we usually handed out were not the same as their customary diets. Hence, we continued with providing toiletries but the donations of nonperishable foods that we received and handed out were not being used. We then



decided that we would not hand out these items but continued with toiletries and handed out vouchers to the grocery store instead, so our friends may make their own food choices. We are blessed with very generous parishioners and one of our families holds a Family Skating Day to celebrate Family Day every February. During that time, they ask the



participants to bring toiletries to assist the families helped by SSVP. During the Covid crisis, we had to re-evaluate our assistance to the families in need. We are a steady Conference with 14 members(13 full, 1 aux.). We average 10 to 12 calls weekly. During the past year, we assisted a total of 139 families thru 531 total visits comprising 185 adults and 85 children. Each August, we provide school supplies to the families with school-age children. This past Christmas, we assisted 85 families (50 children) with food, gift cards and fresh produce donated by a parishioner. We are also twinned with two Conferences, one in the mountains of Peru and the other in Dominica. Last year we helped our Dominica twin with a special agricultural project there. All our members continue to serve our friends in need with unlimited time and lots of energy.

The presence of the Holy Spirit is truly alive among our members as we ensure that our families do not go "without". What Frederick Ozanam started in 1833 in Paris, France, continues to bloom today in Milton, Ontario.

Holly Marshall, President, Holy Rosary Conference, Milton

St. Mary of the Assumption Conference, St. Catharines

Celebrates 65 plus years of SSVP Service

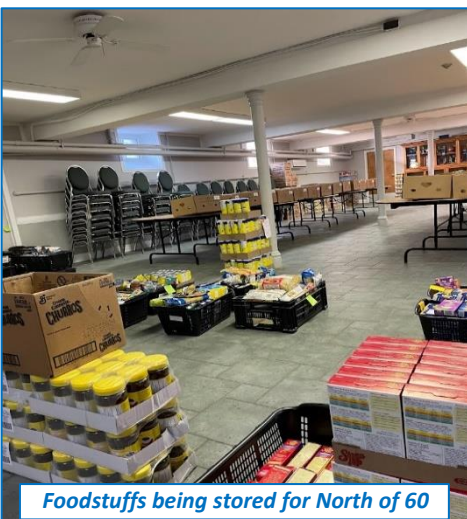
St. Mary of the Assumption Roman Catholic Church was built in 1912 and is located in west St. Catharines. It is truly the Beacon on the Hill, that is “Western Hill” as the neighbourhood is commonly referred to. We are a vibrant Catholic community here in St. Catharines and are a part of the Roman Catholic Diocese of St.



St. Mary of the Assumption Church

Catharines, which comprises the Regional Municipality of Niagara and the County of Haldimand, of Haldimand-Norfolk Regional Municipality. Due to the rising demands from those less fortunate and the need that they were seeking, our Conference was formed in the late 1950's. We use the church basement hall to greet our neighbours in need every Wednesday afternoon. With the help of 10 volunteers involved with the handouts, we offer them assistance with groceries, gift cards and clothing items. The need has never really slowed down. This means that our Conference is kept busy at most times. This past year we assisted 191 adults and 115 children. We offer them assistance due to the immense generosity of our parishioners, food drives by our 4 local schools, clubs, church organizations (Knights of Columbus and CWL), other churches and local businesses. This past year we prepared 84 Christmas hampers

consisting of non-perishable food items, Christmas treats, gift cards (which may be used to purchase turkey or ham), milk, bread, carrots, potatoes, apples and hygiene products. Gifts and gift cards were given to 84 children. Seniors received hampers as well as stockings filled with gift cards, socks, chocolate, hygiene products etc. Within the parish, we gather food items on a weekly basis, collect monetary donations and conduct frozen food drives.



Foodstuffs being stored for North of 60

These methods of collecting the items that we use for the hampers and stockings are required to ensure that we meet the demands. For the year 2024, our priest, who is also our Spiritual Advisor, has suggested that we investigate the supply of Easter baskets to some of the people that we help at Christmas. We have also supported the North of 60 project since summer 2017. For this project, we are assisted by even more volunteers as we gather specific foodstuffs and items requested by our friends in the North. We are partnered with Naujaat, Nunavut and pack and ship a container full of “goodies” for their use. Chez Marie, a temporary home for refugees, is located near our Church. We also assist its residents with the supply of



The altar at St. Mary of the Assumption

groceries, produce and hygiene products. We are very grateful to our Pastor, Fr. Randy, for his consistent and sustained support of our Conference. The work done by our 12 fellow members and our 20 plus volunteers is fantastic and appreciated. *Louise Libroock and Shelley Gilbert, members, St. Mary of the Assumption Conference.*

CHATHAM-KENT PARTICULAR COUNCIL'S CAMP VINCENT

"A SUMMER OF FUN, A LIFETIME OF MEMORIES"



CAMP VINCENT 'welcome'

- Camp Vincent was established in 1971. The Camp operates on 67 acres in one of the largest and most significant forested areas in southwestern Ontario. We are located approximately 10 km east of Thamesville in Bothwell, which is accessible from Highway #2 and is south of London and north of Chatham. We welcome ALL children from ALL walks of life regardless of social, financial, or faith background. It is a co-ed camp and open to children of ages 6 – 15 in four (4) categories of age groups. We strive to encourage, educate and challenge our campers. We stress teamwork and the development of life skills. Campers partake in numerous activities such as canoeing, archery, the arts, swimming, fishing, games and sing-alongs during nightly campfires. The Camp has not operated since 2020 because of the COVID pandemic. However, over the many years of operation we were able to accommodate 700 plus children each

summer. Our goal is to re-open as a children's camp in 2025. In order to achieve this goal, we have numerous vacancies to fill and offer employment for the following positions:- Assistant Director, Program Director, Counsellors, Lifeguards, Kitchen Manager, Kitchen Assistants and Maintenance person. Please follow the links below which indicate how to apply.

For the year 2024, we plan to lease/rent our facilities for summer camps, day camps, sports camps, church groups, youth groups and family gatherings. We are offering all interested parties the opportunity to enjoy this one-of-a-kind camp space during the



"Having FUN at Camp Vincent"

months of May to September 2024. Camp Vincent offers a beautiful, natural

environment including cabins, kitchen/dining room, pool and many other amenities. Short term leases are available on a first come, first served basis. A wide variety of rental packages are available from private parties to monthly rentals. For more information please phone: 519-359-0342 or please contact us by email henkdewit@yahoo.com

As can be expected, a number of our facilities have deteriorated and are now in need of repair. Our camp operates as a not-for-profit entity, we are presently seeking monetary support and looking to our Vincentian friends and family as well as private business patrons/owners and/or past attendees at our camp to contribute to the cause. Here are the main links by which to contact us and/or read about some of our past camps.



"We love the ice cream at Camp Vincent."

<https://www.instagram.com/campvincent/>; <https://www.facebook.com/campvincent21/>; On our Camp Website - <https://campvincent.ca> please page down and "click" on the "gofund.me" link in order to donate. We have many repairs that need to be completed so we can hopefully run a full camping season in 2025. We need the help of Conferences and Councils across Ontario to help us continue this important work and reopen Camp Vincent in 2025. We ask that you donate what you can afford and THANK YOU on behalf of those prospective campers who we wish to WELCOME TO CAMP VINCENT in 2025 and watch them participate in the activities as well as enjoy our ice cream at the CAMP. **Members, Kent Deanery**

"Clothing the Naked" (Store related activities)

Sarnia PC operates five (5) stores in Lambton County

Sarnia Particular Council, Society of Saint Vincent de Paul operates 5 thrift stores, 1 warehouse and 1 year-round food bank throughout Lambton County. We proudly serve the communities of Petrolia with



East Street Store, Sarnia

a thrift store as well as Forest township and the Corunna township. The city of Sarnia is served by 2 local thrift stores, a warehouse and food bank. As Sarnia/Lambton grows and welcomes newcomers from other parts of Canada and also from across the globe, the SSVP retail thrift stores of Sarnia/Lambton offer everyone with high quality household goods, clothing, furniture, and electronics. As more and more people focus on sustainable retail practices as well as the cost of goods, they may find a variety of gently used and new items available at our stores. At our warehouse, our staff and a few volunteers

are continuously sorting and preparing donations received for the retail stores. Damaged and/or irreparable are set aside and sold as bale. By donating good quality items to us for reuse, they stay out of landfills, and our clients are the winners as they get the chance to enjoy good as new quality household products, furniture, and electronics. Our food bank makes sure that everyone, regardless of their social status, is able to enjoy the experience and essentials that our SSVP stores have to offer through our voucher program. The 5 retail stores and warehouse are



Club Monaco display at Vidal St. Store, Sarnia



Sue at cash, Tyler restocking at East St. Store

proudly managed by Particular Council President Rudy Terpstra and Ryan Robertson providing opportunities and employment to 26 store employees working across many jobs such as retail, warehousing, and transportation. These dedicated employees are hard at work 6 days a week serving our local community through listening to customers, stocking shelves, sorting and testing donated items as well as making sure every store is properly stocked and filled with household goods. During the summer months, we have high school students that volunteer at the stores. Our "stores" management team truly appreciates the

contribution of our staff personnel and our volunteers in helping us in serving our clients.

Ryan Robertson, Stores Manager, Sarnia/Lambton SSVP Stores

"He will provide the way and the means, such as you never have imagined. Leave it all to Him, let go of yourself, lose yourself on the cross, and you will find yourself entirely". – St. Catherine of Siena

Saint Louise de Marillac Youth Conference, London

Celebrated World Youth Day 2023 in Portugal

Our excitement was through the roof as we prepared for this WYD adventure! On July 27th, our team of 4 youths and 2 adults, Shelby, Victoria, Jenna, Barbara (youth from Windsor), Mary and Lil boarded the flight



The girls section in gym during FamVin days

to Portugal. There were over 40 people on our flight on their way to WYD 2023. We arrived in Porto, our first destination, and stayed at a Youth Hostel. Once we settled in, we ventured out for some sightseeing. The city was beautiful and charming, with cobble stone roads and tiny alley ways with cafes and shops. The next morning, we left on the 8:30am train and arrived in Felgueriras around noon. We were then shuttled to the school at which we were to stay for our FamVin Days. There would be 1300 people staying at this high school for the next 4 days. We all slept on the floors of the gyms and classrooms, boys in one area and girls in another. The

arrangement was tight for everyone, and it felt like a camping atmosphere. A true pilgrimage style but these were the best of days since we had opportunities to meet so many different people from 60 countries. The workshops of "Best Practice" were outstanding and beneficial to Vincentians of all ages! The "Candlelight Vigil" on the last night was a glorious sight to see. After our stay in Felgueriras, we made our way to very small city on the outskirts of Lisbon for the WYD activities. Our team was lucky to be billeted by a generous family that took all of us in. Each morning we would start off with Daily Mass and Catechesis. Our Host family made sure we felt at home since none of us spoke Portuguese and the services were not in English. The organizing group that led the morning events



Candlelight vigil, last night at FamVin



L. to R.: Lil, Barbara, Mary, Victoria, Jenna and Shelby on their trek to the Papal Mass

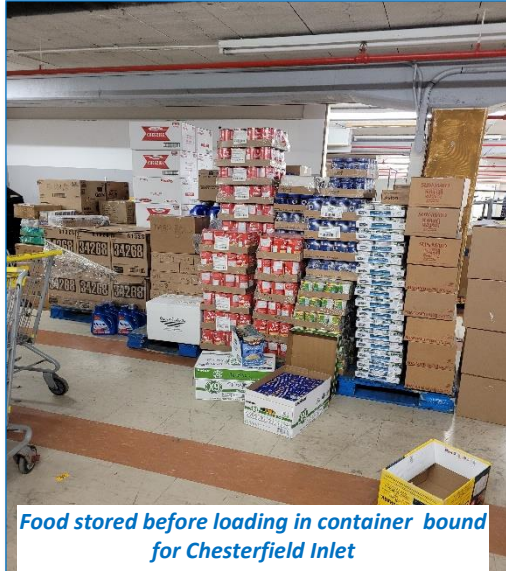
included our youth in the Mass by letting our youth read the Gospel in English. Our team volunteered to sing a song (Open the Eyes of my Heart) on stage along with the other tasks we were offered to partake in. Also, a Priest who spoke English translated the Catechesis session, the experience was reflective and inclusive! Despite the crowds, the gathering of so many young people was refreshing and hopeful for our Catholic Church and humanity. We attended the Adoration along with 500,000 others and our team was blessed to have been on the front lines to view the Arrival of Pope Francis! The privilege of being so close to his Holiness brought so many of us to tears. Two million people attended the Papal Mass. This was a great conclusion to our faith journey. So, with spirits rejuvenated, we returned to Canada on August 8. Thank you to all who supported our youth and made

this experience possible. *The SSV Saint Louise de Marillac Youth Conference, London.*

“The Gains from North of Sixty”

Sailing.... Sailingall the way up NORTH

Hello Sisters and Brothers – Our “North of 60” program continues to operate at full throttle. Summer 2023 was very busy with procuring and packing the goods for our friends in the North.. Two sea containers were packed and shipped to their final destinations in Nunavut by August. The communities



Food stored before loading in container bound for Chesterfield Inlet

of Taloyoak and Sanirajak received their gifts of food in the first week of August. Huge **THANK YOU** goes out to St Patrick Conference in Markham for gathering for Taloyoak and to St. Elizabeth Seton /St John Conference for gathering for Sanirajak.

Communities that also received food on the second crossing from the port of Gjoa Haven were those of Kugaaruk and Baker Lake. I would like to extend a huge **Thank You** to the Windsor-Essex Central Council for their fantastic financial support for Gjoa Haven. I am sure they are surprised to read that there was so much food that could be purchased a sea container had to be bought! Also, **Thank You** to St Mary’s Conference in Collingwood who through their financial support will feed the community of Baker Lake. The community of Kugaaruk has been gifted with food from the amazing financial support received from Peel Particular Council -

again **Thank You!** The third and final crossing at the end of September will carry food, in sea containers, to the communities of **Chesterfield Inlet**, supported by Kitchener-Waterloo Particular Council, **Whale Cove** supported by St Raphael’s Conference, Burlington, **Coral Harbour** supported by Hamilton/Hamilton Particular Councils, and **Nauyasat** supported by St Catharines Central Council. All the members of the Conferences and Councils involved with the containers being shipped to these locations are very busy gathering food items to fill their containers. The support of local merchants in all these areas is overwhelming, I am always surprised by some of the donations. Should any person or business entity be interested in donating to the North of 60 project with financial support, we would welcome such an endeavour.

Your gift can be designated to a specific community of your choice - I can and will help with that, or it may be directed to any of the numerous project needs. Our transportation needs and costs are the most expensive. Please forward your support to the following address:-
North of 60, 240 Church Street, Toronto, M5B 1Z2.



Volunteers arranging the “loot” at Baker Lake

Pegg Leroux, Chair, ONRC North of Sixty Committee

O Heart of Love, I put all my trust in you. For I fear all things from my own weakness, but I hope for all things from your goodness. – St. Margaret Mary Alacoque

Feeding the Hungry in Windsor-Essex

“STREET OUTREACH to the chronic HOMELESS.”

Agapao Proseuche (Love & Prayer) started with the vision of one man (Joe Ouellette) in the winter of 2021. It began with Joe providing \$20 bills to those he found on the streets experiencing homelessness so that they could buy a hot meal and provide blankets, coats & boots for these individuals. This then built to Joe building meal bags for this community and was able to expand to servicing upwards of 40 meal bags by the spring of 2022. Joe reached out to the SSVP for support of this project and as such the SSVP Street Outreach project was born. With the help of volunteers from the Good Shepherd and St John Vianney



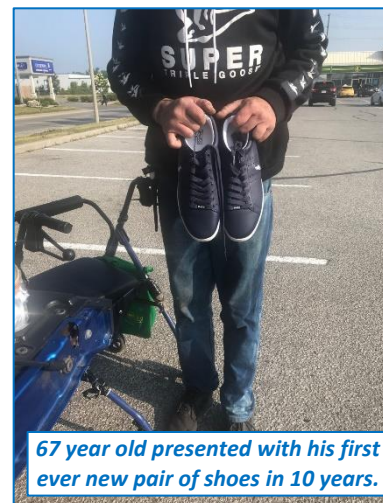
conferences in the packing of bags as well as the Central Council in financial support towards providing food cost reimbursement, we started up. In the summer months the deployment of meal bags increased to 50 meal bags every Sunday and 50 snack bags every Wednesday. By August 2022, this had increased to 60 of each bags. Tents and sleeping bags were donated and then distributed during these months. Joe stepped back from the day to day operations in November 2022 and the SSVP then assumed full control of this project. We are now 36 volunteers across the spectrum

of society and religious beliefs and continue to recruit volunteers to enable us to better serve those people in need of our support. The “Street Outreach WE” developed a “Vision” and a “Mission”. **Our VISION: Act with dignity, compassion and humility to provide to the homeless, with their consultation, security of self, security of property, securing of physical and mental wellbeing and the dignity of private living-space.** **Our MISSION: Encounter with dignity and respect those homeless individuals in need and provide to them, those resources which we have on hand and available at that moment and in that moment.**

A special thanks to the dedicated staff at the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul store on Lauzon Road for sorting all the donations (coats, boots, blankets & sleeping bags) for us this past year and getting them ready for distribution. We thank the many that donated warm clothing and boots as we ensured that the homeless are outfitted for the winter months. We also help individuals to connect with the Windsor Essex Housing and the Canadian Mental Health Association so that they could be added to the Names First listing for housing and receive the needed mental health support. At times, we also help set-up tents by our “boots on the ground” (22 total) deployment team members. A typical bag handout would include water bottle, juice box, Gatorade, homemade cookies, dessert items, granola bars, protein bars, tuna kit, 2 clementines, banana, fruit cup, chips, 2 pairs of new socks, new underwear, gloves, handmade toque & scarf, coffee card, personal toiletries, wet wipes and hand sanitizer.

Year 1 to Year 2 saw a 222.4% increase in the number of food bags we distributed. We will help over 5,000 people for year end 2023 and an even larger number in 2024. Some of our very generous donors include St Pius X students, who decorated over 500 bags, members of St Clements, Good Shepherd, St Anne’s, St John Vianney, Our Lady of Atonement, St Simon St Jude, Holy Name of Jesus SSVP, Windsor East PC and WE Central Council. Also, the St Anne’s CWL for the collection of warm clothing & gift cards. St Louis family (Good Shepherd) for the donation of the McDonald coffee cards. Please contact us at StreetoutreachWE@ssvpwindsoressex.com to donate, etc.

Jennifer Wilson, Chair, Windsor-Essex Street Outreach



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



PUBLIC POLICY DIALOGUE & DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

ONTARIO REGIONAL COUNCIL

Homelessness and Poverty-Can SSVP do more?

Homelessness in Ontario and across Canada is a growing concern for governments, municipalities, and organizations such as the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul. As Vincentians, we often engage with our neighbours in need in their home, or through a thrift store, food bank or community meal. However, do we seek out those without a home to listen and learn about their challenges finding basic food and shelter? Is there more we can and should be doing? I would recommend we discuss ways we may do more. This may mean collaborating with other like-minded organizations that do provide such outreach services.

We can also do more by gathering existing statistics and related information to educate ourselves about homelessness. Our newspapers and media outlets continuously report on this unfortunate circumstance that is quickly becoming or has become a plague across our province and our country. There are several factors that affect poverty which in turn can lead to homelessness. These include poor education, sudden illness, other health afflictions and lack of proper care. In addition, lack of employment or low paying jobs, substance addictions, trauma from family abuse history, inadequate social services support, and criminal justice issues all contribute to the spider's web of homelessness.

In addition to the factors just outlined, there is an over representation of people who identify as BIPOC (black, Indigenous people of colour) that are affected by the homelessness plague. When racism is an added factor and the burden of discrimination raises its ugly head, it becomes a huge challenge to overcome. This over representation is demonstrated in food bank usage, social services and the criminal justice system. The Indigenous population whether living on First Nations land or in an urban setting, faces many such barriers. This is precisely why we should include systemic racism in our social justice efforts to advocate and act for change. The Public Policy Dialogue & Development committee shall place a focus on homelessness and poverty in 2024. If you would like to be part of this effort, or have comments or questions, please contact us at ssvpjp@gmail.com.

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

Every one of us has been called by the Lord. The important thing is to know when to answer His call. - St. John XXIII

“Sharing our Wealth” (TWINNING)

St. Bernadette Conference in Ajax, ON. celebrates 20 years of twinning with San Luis de Beltran, Dom. Rep.

St. Bernadette Conference in Ajax, ON has been twinned with San Luis de Beltran Conference in the Dominican Republic since August 2004. Our members were thrilled when we received the letter announcing that our twin would



Twinning funds help spread the joy of Christmas.

be a conference in the Dominican Republic. Our familiarity with the Dominican Republic stemmed from the students at our Catholic High Schools, here in Ajax, participating in the social justice trips to this country during their March Breaks and doing various tasks to assist the folks of the country with various projects. So, we were very excited to have been twinned with San Luis Beltran Conference, which is situated in the Sabana Perdida area of Santo Domingo, the capital city of Dominican Republic. We have kept in contact with this conference several times a year, and especially look forward to the pictures they send after each Christmas. As part of an international charity, we want our twinned Vincentians to know that they are not alone in their

work, but are linked to us, as they help those less fortunate in their community. Over the years there have been times when mail was lost or stolen, so we are grateful for the technology that has made it possible to e-mail our twin conference. We make use of Goggle translate and a Spanish speaking parishioner to help with our correspondence. Our conference is always so happy to receive news from San Luis Beltran, and we marvel at how they manage to stretch



Volunteer setting out to repair homes after storm.

each donated dollar. Seeing the pictures they send brings smiles to our faces. They not only provide food for families in need, but medicine, sanitizing materials, medical aid and construction materials to repair homes when storms

and hurricanes hit their island nation. This year at Christmas they were able to purchase toys for these happy children! We recall the words of Saint Vincent de Paul ***“Charity is the cement which binds communities to God and persons to one another”***. We are grateful that through the support of St. Bernadette Parish, our community in Ajax Ontario can reach out to a community in the Dominican Republic, through the Twinning process, to share our wealth and let them know that we care for them and support them in their works.

Members, St. Bernadette Conference, Ajax, ON



Food purchased to share with families.

“Christ acts like a loving mother. To induce us to follow him, he gives himself as an example and promises a reward in his kingdom” . – St. Anthony of Padua

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



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

Lorraine McInnis, St. Alphonsus Ligouri Conference, Peterborough. July 28, 2023

Terry Knuckle, St. Anne's Conference, Peterborough. September 13, 2023

UPCOMING DATES TO CIRCLE ON YOUR CALENDAR

April 26 – 27, 2024: ONRC AGA, WINDSOR(Workshops and Guest speakers) – check ssvp.on.ca for info.

May 25, 2024: ONRC MCDC Virtual Workshop – SAVE THE DATE

June 20 – 22, 2024 – Annual National Assembly – (Meet and Greet, Workshops, Guest Speakers, National Committee Meetings) - check www.ssvp.ca for info

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 Ajax, Chatham, Hamilton, Lindsay, Milton, North of Sixty, Sarnia, St. Catharines, Windsor and World Youth, Portugal as we attempt to bring our Vincentians together as a family, which is one of our VALUES. HAPPY READING! This edition is a late publication of the August issue due to a couple of delays. 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

