

The Vincentimes

Volume 1, Issue 2

Winter 2012

St Vincent Place: “A Labour of Love”

St. Vincent Place is a homeless men’s shelter, food bank, a soup kitchen and thrift store in Sault Ste Marie. It was created by the Society in 2003.

The 2-story building is located on a busy street in the center of the downtown area close to the bus depots. It contains offices, bedrooms for 24 residents, a large hall, a kitchen and dining hall and the Thrift Store.

Two Society conferences provide support as a source of volunteers, food and funding. In fact, St Vincent Place consumes nearly all of their charitable efforts.

The organization is an incorporated charitable institution. At least two of the directors must be Vincentians.

The General Manager, Nat Chiccelli, is responsible for the Shelter, building operations and the Thrift Store. Staff include a bookkeeper-receptionist, Thrift Store and Shelter Supervisors, 4 full-time attendants and a cook.

The food bank and soup kitchen are contracted to the local Sault Ste Marie Particular Council. Vincentians form the core of the over 100 volunteers assembled in teams from Catholic parishes and other faiths.



A group of volunteers help out with a food drive September 29, 2012

The Shelter, open 24/7 all year, houses an average of 10 men per night.

The food bank operates Wednesday evenings from 6-8 p.m. and Saturdays 1-3 p.m. to assist over 3000 people each year. Many are repeat visitors.

The Soup Kitchen serves a free full dinner to about 120 people each Wednesday and on Saturdays serves lunch for about 90.

The Thrift Store is open from 11.00 a.m. – 3 p.m. Monday to Friday.

Securing sufficient funding is a constant struggle. Government programs and donations from charitable foundations are a crucial source of support. Fund-raising events and food drives are regularly organized. Corporate, parish and individual cash donations make essential contributions. The reputation of the Society brings great credibility to our requests.

St Vincent Place is a vibrant example of faith in action and evidence of the benevolent influence of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul.

~ Mike Barker, Sault Ste Marie Particular Council

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And The Winner Is...

With the vast majority of votes going to The Vincentimes, we would like to give a special thank you to Heidi Minuti of Simcoe County PC for submitting the winning name for the newsletter. She was presented with a surprise prize pack, which included a copy of Apostle in a Top Hat.

Coming in second place was Helping Hands (26 votes); the SSVF Times came in third (18 votes); with Manna coming in fourth (4 votes).

We thank all of you who made submissions as well as all of you who voted.

~ The Editorial Team



Geraldine Campbell with Heidi Minuti

A Great First BAM!

On the weekend of September 28th 2012 youth groups representing the young Vincentians of the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul came together for the first annual BAM (Big Awesome Meeting).

The retreat, which focused on the importance of helping the less fortunate, was held in London, Ontario. Youth groups came from various places in Ontario including: Val Caron/Sudbury, Chatham, Windsor, Waterloo and of course London.

The youth met that evening and partook in various games and activities and capped the night with a movie, *The Way* starring Marin Sheen.



Some of the youth performed a short play about the Society's founders.

The second day consisted of more games and activities as well as workshops of which the topics were the history of the Society, systemic change and a spirituality workshop.

Marieke Creese, age 20 Waterloo. Had this to say about one of the workshops:

"It's great to see so many enthusiastic youth! We learned about systemic change which is a great initiative that will be helpful in the present and the long term."

Aidan Bruneel age 14 summed up the weekend, "It was fun. I liked the food and the games were mostly fun. I learned a lot about Frederic Ozanam, the founder."

~ Joshua Linley, Val Caron/Sudbury

Father Tom Vermiglio - BBQ Fundraiser

In addition to being a pastor and chaplain of the Kitchener Particular Council, Fr. Tom Vermiglio has a sideline - BBQ chef!

The amiable priest, who serves St. Joseph's parish and is a member of the Comboni Missionaries, is well known in the Kitchener-Waterloo area as the man who for a pig roast. His barbecued pork would rival any found in a commercial restaurant and his skills are in great demand.

"I learned to roast pigs in Chicago back in 1996 and since then I have roasted 28 pigs, eight of them here in Canada. I have

good helpers," said Fr. Tom.

Fr. Tom cooked for the annual St. Joseph's conference Father's Day fundraiser and for a similar event raising money for the conference. The Father's Day event, which featured a silent auction with products donated by a wide variety of local businesses, saw about 225 people attend and raised approximately \$2,450. The SSVP/KofC event netted the conference \$300.

"We are truly blessed to have such a caring, supportive community in this region," said conference president Theresa

Godfrey.

Proceeds from the Father's Day BBQ provided seven youngsters a chance to attend summer day camp. St. Bernadette's, a parish school, assisted the conference in selecting the children.

~ Gene McCarthy, Kitchener Particular Council

Annual Reporting Timeline

We'd like to give all presidents a little reminder that the new 2012 Annual Reporting Forms will be online at www.ssvp.ca/Forms. A link to the forms will also be on the ONRC website. Look for them in December.

The reporting timeline is as follows:

January 31st 2013 All Conferences should have their Year End Forms completed and sent to either Particular Council or Affiliat-

ed Council Contact

February 28th 2013 All Particular Councils and Affiliated Contacts should have their completed Forms sent to ONRC.

Windsor, Toronto, Huronia, St Catharine's and Ottawa Particular Councils will send theirs to their Central Council.

March 20th 2013 All Central Councils will

have completed forms into ONRC

April 30th 2013 ONRC will have the completed forms into National

NOTE: All Affiliated Contacts, Particular Councils and Central Councils must list exactly which Conferences they are reporting on, also making sure they add any work that they do to the reporting forms. Please list those who have not reported.

ONRC AGM, Peterborough

The heavy downpour and grey sky outdoors were in sharp contrast to the warm atmosphere inside the Knights of Columbus Hall where 68 Vincentians convened to nurture old friendships or to forge new ones. There is always something special about when a promising mix of well intentioned people meet to share their experiences. The meeting was well organized, capably hosted and competently coordinated with timely presentations.

Space does not permit me to summarize the reports which can be read on the ONRC website.

Suffice it to say that presenters had a common theme, namely that the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul should endeavor to rekindle the ardor of previous generations of caring and compassionate Vincentians. Deep within Ozanam's heart was a pro-

found respect for the poor. How can we change the blighted lives of those who seek out assistance?

The answer is to move away from mere alms giving to social justice issues all the while maintaining the unassailable, sacrosanct core of our Vincentian vocation:

Catholicity and confidentiality. A lively discussion ensued when the idea was floated to "team-up" with other social agencies to assist people in need. It proved difficult to re-calibrate Vincentian ideals so as to reconcile these with the harsh realities of

what it means to raise families with insufficient income; to pay for what Western society deems indecent to do without. Comparisons were offered of what constitutes relative poverty versus absolute poverty.

Coffee breaks and lunch are, in

my opinion, a wonderful opportunity to engage in informal conversations with fellow Vincentians. Most of those I spoke to expressed disdain for power-point presentations because generally speaking people prefer stories to "bullets". The best speakers at the meeting gripped their audience with evocative tales of people laid low. No blurry figures moving aimlessly across a screen, only words well spoken to touch the soul.

Such gatherings are also moments of insightful comments. One Vincentian I spoke to did not like the word "*client*" to be used in connection to individuals who seek assistance. He said that the word *client* comes from the *consumer* model which turns our brother/sister in need into a profit/loss proposition. Vincentians need to always interact with the poor in a spirit of love because the ultimate poverty is the loss of human dignity.

~ Heidi Minuti, Simcoe County Particular Council



Geraldine Campbell tours Peterborough's unique food pantry with pantry manager, Kevin Ross

President's Pen

I'd like to take this time to thank everyone involved in our recent BAM youth weekend in London. It was inspiring to see the turnout and interest on the part of our youth members. 2013 has been designated as the Year of the Young Vincentian as we initiate a program aimed at education and recruitment of young adult and youth members to the Society. Remember that young adult members can be up to 35 years old. I ask everyone to be open to accepting youth into the Society and give them the same trust you would to all members. I also believe if we use the model of Frederic Ozanam, both his words and actions, they can provide us with a great resource for youth recruitment.

I'd also like to encourage you to check out our website and the systemic change programs we currently provide. Please consider using one or more of these programs in your area. We have designated funds for systemic change which are there for your use. Perhaps you can develop a systemic change project? Contact the committee chair, Jere Hartnett for advice and assistance.

Finally, I would like to extend condolences to the family of Priscilla Cullen a Vincentian in Sault Ste. Marie on her passing. Also to Valerie Butterfield, Chatham Kent Council president on the death of her husband Ron. Lorenzo Mostacci of Hamilton is recovering from successful surgery

and I thank you for all of your prayers. Please let us know of any members who have passed away or are in need of prayers.



~ Jim Paddon

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The Society of Saint Vincent de Paul

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 the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul 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.

Accomplishments

Rosemary Herrington was presented with the first ever Volunteer Achievement Award by the Peterborough Particular Council.

The Kent Deanery would like to share the following accomplishments:

Joe John was presented with a 50-year Volunteer Certificate;

Alphonse Charron was presented with a 40-year Volunteer Certificate;

Gerard Laevens was presented with a 30-year

Volunteer Certificate;

Brenda and Jo Kormendy were also presented with a 20-year Volunteer Certificate, as well as Past President Certificates for them both.

Jack Guiry after a long tenure as a Peel PC Executive, Vice-President, President, TCC Board member, has decided to resign his current position as Peel PC V.P. We thank him for his tremendous support, guidance and

knowledge during the many, many years of service to the Society. He will continue to be an active member of his conference St. Joseph's, Streetsville.

The **All Saints Conference in Strathroy** has been re-activated and will be under the Sarnia Lampton Particular Council. Welcome back 😊

Upcoming Dates

December 1, 2012 – Kick off date for the Year of the Young Vincentian

January 15, 2013 – Deadline for newsletter submissions (please note: we cannot guarantee all submissions will make the next issue, but will do our best to include in upcoming issues)

January 31, 2013 – Conferences to submit annual reports to Particular Council or Affiliated Contact

February 28, 2013 – PCs and ACs to submit annual reports to ONRC (or Central Council if applicable)

March 20, 2013 – CCs submit annual reports to ONRC

April 20, 2013 – ONRC GM in Cambridge

April 30, 2013 – ONRC submit annual report to National

June 26-29, 2013 – National AGA in Ottawa

September 14, 2013 – ONRC AGM in Val Caron/Sudbury