

## **Pat Lenz, candidate profile**

### **My SSVP elevator speech**

“Since my retirement eighteen years ago I have been serving with the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul. **How did this start?** After I cleaned out my house (for apparently the first time in thirty years of working), I dropped off stuff at the SSVP thrift store - and never left. **Why did I stay?** I chose to volunteer with others who share my faith journey. But I stayed because of those we serve – through home visits (like the one with a young non-custodial Mom who needed a bed so her daughter could visit on alternate weekends) & Store visits (like the mother of seven who regularly shops for their clothing & the doctor from Nigeria stretching her dollar by thrift store shopping because she is paying \$30,000 for retraining at a local college). And I strive to serve all of these, as called to by our mission, with ‘love, respect, justice & joy’.”

### **Vincentian roles to date**

From ongoing thrift store volunteer service through Volunteer Coordinator, Director of Communications to President and now past-President, working with the SSVP Brant team as we continued and grew our service to those in need in Brantford and Brant County has provided opportunities to apply and enhance skills developed in my 30-year career in Catholic education. Since 2017, service with the ONRC Rejuvenation Committee and, in the current moment, my position as (acting) chair of the National Formation and Training Committee are providing opportunities to share what I have learned – as I continue to be inspired by fellow Vincentians.

### **Skills employed/acquired**

Through volunteer management, Council leadership and the inspiration of fellow Vincentians (locally, regionally and nationally), I have grown in and shared Vincentian spirituality, understanding of poverty issues, social justice, project management, fiscal responsibility, communications, governance, strategic planning, fundraising and more. The experiences giving rise to this growth include, but are not limited to, celebration of Vincentian feasts and milestones as family, relocation of our special work (100% volunteer thrift store), bylaw revision to become compliant with Ontario Not-for-profit Corporations Act, hosting ONRC fall 2019 meeting, establishment of partnerships with more than 25 local agencies, nurturing of a strong relationship with the local Catholic school board, participation in and coordination of formation experiences (locally, regionally and nationally), attendance at regional and national meetings since 2014.

### **ONRC priorities going forward**

*Communication:* Sharing Vincentian news, best practices and responsibilities is key to the strength of our service to those in need. Regular communication, using accurate distribution lists, is essential.

*Support:* The role of higher-level Councils is to support the conferences in their front-line service. This includes simplifying responsibilities to the Society, exploring and sharing best practices, formation in Vincentian spirituality. problem solving in challenging circumstances. In addition to clear communication, regular meetings of Vincentians throughout the region are key to providing this support.

*Governance:* There is still work to be done to put into practice what is outlined in the 2020 ONRC Bylaw. This is work to be completed by the Board so that these issues no longer distract from the primary Board responsibilities of communication and support.