

Hello All.

The Pope has declared 2025 the Year of HOPE. I don't know about you but sometimes I find it hard to have hope? Today is grey and rainy, I have a cold, the news, whether near or far away, is unsettling and scary. HOPE? Where?

Well, it isn't all that far away, actually! I started to re-read the 2024 Youth Reports that Peter Giordano submits to our Council and instantly I felt JOY, HOPE, and OPTIMISM for our future. So, I knew that I had to share them with you – they will give you a positive outlook as we enter into 2025. Enjoy!

February 2024:

Teacher Paul DeKeers and his students at Our Lady of Providence school held a very successful book drive on our behalf. Over 1200 books were gathered and categorized according to age group in support of the book's component of our Bed for Every Child Program.

Danielle Beccari, the fashion teacher at Assumption College, had her students make book pages for us in support of the book's component of the Bed for Every Child program.



April/May 2024

Assumption College held their **"Assumption Cares"** event on April 14th. Students spent the night sleeping on the gym floor and solicited sponsors to do so. Rob Campbell, Jeanette Lee, and Peter Giordano attended the event presenting a slideshow to the students outlining the workings of the organization. Rob, Jeanette, and Peter were presented with a cheque for \$9000.00 in support of the Bed for Every Child Program.

Teacher Krystan Tchegus and her students at St John's College put on a play called **"The Blues"** which highlighted the plight and stories behind some homeless individuals. In lieu of an admission charge, they asked for food, personal care items, or cash donations. They donated the monetary proceeds to Nova Vita and we were the recipients of the donated food and personal care items. Read the Brantford Expositor article:

<https://www.brantfordexpositor.ca/news/local-news/students-perform-blues-in-support-of-nova-vita-and-st-vincent-de-paul>

Pencil Case Project: This project started over 3 years ago. Donations of pencils, pens, colour markers and pencils crayons, paper and binders were collected and organized by various student groups over the 3 years. The Brant Haldimand Norfolk Ontario English Catholic Teacher’s Association also donated binders and on May 22, 2024, 25 boxes were sent to the island of Grenada in support of underprivileged students.

Assumption College Dress Down Days: A cheque for \$3000.00 was given to SSVP Brant. This money was raised predominantly through the student dress down days at the school.

St. John’s College Lenten Food Drive: Chaplain Andy and students from SJC ran a very successful Lenten Drive. They donated both food and cash. SSVP Brant was able to purchase grocery store gift cards with the money. Gift cards, along with non-perishable food items, are given to our neighbours in need.



October 2024

Assumption College students, in conjunction with the Burford Lion’s Club, set up a desk at Sobey’s and collected donations for SSVP Brant. The Burford Lion’s Club donated \$300.00.

The primary students at Saint Gabriel school organized a toy drive so that they could share their good fortune and blessings with others their age who may not be so fortunate. i.e. the children of the families in need that we are working so hard to help. In many cases, students agonized over which of their treasured toys they could part with. In other cases, their parents went out and bought some new gifts and donated them to the drive. There were also several boxes of books donated. A mini toy land was set up in the community room at the Store and neighbours in need could pick out toys and books for each of their children.



“I believe the children are our future; teach them well and let them lead the way; show them all the beauty they possess inside; give them a sense of pride to make it easier; Let the children’s laughter remind us how we used to be.” (Greatest Love of All, by Whitney Houston)

A very special thank you to Peter Giordano for his work as VP of Youth, helping to create such a strong bond between the youth in our community and SSVP Brant, and for sharing these stories of HOPE with us all.

If the children bring us HOPE, then it is within us all to pass on that HOPE to those who need it most. I leave you with another story shared by Lorraine Good, our liaison for Reception:

This past week, while I was working at reception, I met a very vulnerable lady who had never used our services before. She was obviously upset that she needed to use our services. I explained to her that she was not alone. There are many working poor that use our services. I took her hand and told her that this is why St Vincent de Paul is here. She said that things need to change. Her husband works hard, and it just isn’t enough. She brought tears to my eyes. My heart broke for her. Volunteering at Reception gives me a new respect for all our neighbours in need.

To Everyone: Merry Christmas and a happy and HOPE filled 2025!