



YOUNG SVP  
Newsletter

East Region





welcome

Welcome to the fifth edition of the Young SVP East Region Newsletter. This publication is a space for young people who are engaging with the Young SVP Programme to share their work, receive recognition and see the projects their peers are undertaking around the region.

These projects highlight the hard work and dedication of young people working towards social justice in Ireland.

I hope you enjoy reading about the fantastic ideas that the young people in the East Region have come up with.

Maybe they will inspire an idea for your group? Creating a Winter Wonderland in your school, raising awareness through poetry, building links with older people in your community or your local primary school, organising clothes drives, creating your own workshops and much more.

This newsletter is circulated to members and schools & centres in the East Region.

If you would like to find out more about the Young SVP Programme please don't hesitate to get in touch.

Clare Mander, Youth Development Officer- East Region

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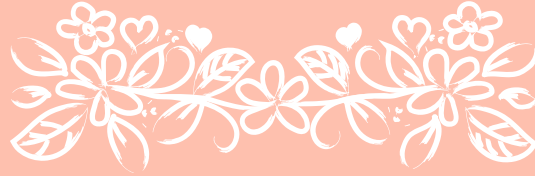
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# GIVING OF OUR TIME AND TALENTS

Clare Mander- Youth Development Officer (East Region)



As Youth Development Officer for the East Region of the Society of St Vincent de Paul my role is to work with young people in schools, colleges and other centres to support them to learn about SVP and Social Justice and to explore ways they can take action in their own communities.

This year I have had the privilege to work with hundreds of young people (and their teachers/leaders) in a range of different settings. Each young person and group is unique and brings something special and creative to the Young SVP programme.

Over the course of the academic year Young SVP members have taken time to learn about Social Justice, to consider the needs in their communities and worked together to make sure their actions were effective. All of this learning, research and planning has resulted in a wonderful array of Young SVP projects:

Befriending projects: for example a social morning for local older people

Education projects: one group organised a peer led mental health workshop

Direct Aid: like the Winter Wonderland fundraising event arranged by a school

Research & Action: one Young SVP conference raised awareness about homelessness through poetry

You can read about these and the other fantastic work undertaken in this edition of our newsletter.

185 years ago SVP was founded by young people who looked at their community and decided to take action and try to make a difference. Young SVP members today are continuing this work by giving, as Blessed Frederic Ozanam asked, of their time, their talents, themselves.

At our Young SVP East Region Youth Day this year we asked the attendees to share their thoughts on being part of Young SVP. They had some very insightful feedback which will help us with planning for the future. I would like to use this space to share some of their words with you:

"Young SVP benefits young people in many ways. I learned things I never knew and was given a chance to help people. I don't feel helpless anymore"

"Young SVP made a difference to my self esteem"

"Young SVP means not only helping yourself but helping others and feeling good and proud when it is done"

"Young SVP gave me a greater understanding of Social Justice"

"Young SVP is very encouraging, involving and welcoming"

"Young SVP helps young people further their education about problems in Ireland. They allow people to take part and help out"

From everyone in the East Region of SVP, we wish all the Young SVP members and the teachers who support them a lovely summer. We are looking forward to working with you next year!



# Lessons from the Society Founders

## Reflection

We are fortunate in the Society of St Vincent de Paul to have the legacy of our founders to draw inspiration from. During his life Blessed Frederic Ozanam wrote extensively on a number of topics. His writings contain important lessons for us today.

Frederic asks us to treat everyone with respect- "I ask that ... we take care of the people who have too many needs and not enough rights and who justly demand a fuller role in public affairs"



He encourages us to think about our responsibilities as young people today- "I tell myself...that the mission of a young person in society is very serious and very important...I rejoice at being born at an epoch when perhaps I shall have to do much good".



He reminds us to work together as a community- "I wish that all young people might unite in head and heart in some charitable work and that there be formed, throughout the whole country, a vast generous association for the relief of the people".



He encourages us to be thoughtful, do our research and plan carefully- "No work is great unless it is organised".

He asks us to remember that we are united by our desire to work for social justice - "Justice is a fixed star which human societies try to follow from their uncertain orbits. It can be seen from different points of view, but justice itself remains unchanged".

He encourages us to meet people's immediate needs as well as work to address the root causes of injustice- "Charity is the Samaritan who pours oil on the wounds of the traveller who has been attacked. It is justice's role to prevent the attacks".

He challenges us to use our gifts to give back to our community - "Yours must be a work of love, of kindness; you must give of your time, you talents, yourselves".

Frederic was supported by Blessed Rosalie Rendu. Already working with people in Paris who were experiencing poverty, she helped Frederic and his friends find the families most in need of their support. Rosalie reminds us of the importance of love, compassion and kindness- "Be kind and love, for love is your first gift to the poor".

Inspired by those who had gone before him Frederic learned from St Louise de Marillac. St Louise encourages us to work for justice through our words and actions - "Justice consists of love, which in words, actions and attitudes, I am obliged to render to my neighbour. Thirst for justice must lead us to desire greater things".

About a year after they began meeting together as a group, Frederic and his friends were talking about how inspired they were by the example of St Vincent de Paul. They adopted him as Patron of their organisation which then became the Society of St Vincent de Paul.

Frederic tells us- "The work of Vincent de Paul never grows old: who would not wish to continue it".

Saint Vincent de Paul reminds us to stay passionate about our work - "If we have a vocation of setting the whole world on fire, if it is so, then how much I must myself burn with the fire"

May we continue to burn with a fire and a passion to create a more fair and just society for all. Today we remember the vision of the founders of SVP and how they continue to inspire our actions.



# Young SVP East Region Youth Day 2018



## Social Action Superstars Young SVP East Region Youth Day 2018



On the 12th of April 200 young people, their teachers and members of SVP gathered together for the Young SVP East Region Youth Day 2018.

The event was an opportunity to acknowledge the hard work and dedication of the young people involved in the Young SVP programme in the East Region. It was a chance for them to meet young people from other schools and centres and to share ideas.

The theme for the day was 'Social Action Superstars' based on a quote from the founder of SVP Blessed Frederic Ozanam who said that "Justice is a fixed star" and also to acknowledge all the ways in which Young SVP members have been Social Action Superstars this year.

On the day the young people: set up their own interactive display stands; took part in fun activities, learned more about SVP, listened to speakers, gave presentations, took part in workshops, received certificates of achievement, visited the reflection space and had lunch together. In the afternoon there was a talk and Q&A with our Key Note speaker Joanne O'Riordan. This was a fantastic experience for the attendees and Joanne received a standing ovation.

Our group photo (above) highlights what a fun and positive celebration and learning opportunity this was. Thank you to everyone who attended, supported the event and made the day a success!







We made wonderful display stands to present our fantastic work this year and to share our ideas!



We took part in activities & learned more about the work of SVP







**We took part in workshops & learned from each other!**



**We listened to Joanne O'Riordan & had a chance to ask questions**



**We gave presentations, received certificates of achievement & made some great memories!**





# Interview with an SVP Volunteer

## 1) Can you describe your role within SVP?

My role in SVP is primarily to support volunteers who visit prisons with the requests for clothing they receive. Additionally, I volunteer in the Vincent's shop in Sean McDermott Street, Dublin<sup>1</sup> where I work on the cash register, sort/tag/price/display clothing, answer the phones and carry out other duties when requested by the shop manager and other team members.

Interview with Ray Brennan who volunteers with the Vincent's Shops!

## 2) Why did you decide to join SVP?

In December 2015 I retired after 34 years with an Garda Síochána. A friend of mine had volunteered with SVP (as part of a Corporate Social Responsibility scheme with her job in a bank) and she said that I should apply-so I did! I want to give back to the community by volunteering. For me it is a 'win win' as I gain so much from being here.

## 3) What does being part of SVP mean to you?

It means fulfilling one of my retirement goals, which was to assist others. I have gained so much as well personally: working with people from all over the world and learning from them. I volunteer Tuesday to Thursday and I can't wait to come back to the shop to volunteer on a Tuesday morning. Being part of SVP also means treating people with empathy and kindness, for example, when I interact with the donors bringing in clothes and the customers in the shop.



## 4) What motivates you to volunteer?

It is such an enjoyable experience. I attended the Young SVP East Region Youth Day this year and I met young people who had a genuine interest in helping SVP, their classmates and people in their communities. When my son Neil was 13 he wrote an essay for school that said, "My Dad is my hero as he has taught me to laugh with people and not at people". I could see this in the Young SVP members I met at the Youth Day.

## 5) What else would you like to say to the young people in the East Region?

Life will throw people many challenges. SVP will allow you to get involved in a network that will support you through these challenges. I simply couldn't describe the benefit of being involved- learning about others helps you to develop as a person and learn life skills, in a positive, practical and fun way. I have found that we have so much more in common with others than we sometimes realise.



# Did you know that SVP is actually the third largest retailer in Ireland, by the number of outlets?

If your school/group would like to find out more about the Vincent's shops & how you can get involved, please get in touch!

Mark O'Brien - East Region Retail Development Manager



We have more than 225 shops, branded as 'Vincent's', each of which is at the heart of the community it serves. Walking into one of our shops for the very first time brings with it a sense of surprise and wonderment – surprise at how different a shop it is from what many people expect, and wonderment at the wide array of great stock that's available for an incredibly reasonable price.

Our shops are a virtual Alladin's cave, where all manner of treasures can be found on our shelves, or on our rails. Everything we sell has been donated by members of the public, who entrust us to sell their previously loved goods in order to raise much-needed funds for our charitable work. Most of the items that people donate are second-hand, but we also receive an incredible volume of brand-new items – often these are unwanted gifts, or books that the donor never got around to reading, or clothing that they bought on a whim and never actually wore! Whether used or new, all donations go through a rigorous process of sorting and checking, and only the very best quality goods makes it our shop floor, which allows us to give our customers the best bang for buck!

Apart from the great offerings of reasonably priced stock for our customers, our charity shops also serve many other vital functions and are at the heart of the communities they serve. For example, we have a professional manager running each of our shops, but most of the people who work in our shops are volunteers. We have an average of about 30 volunteers in each of our shops, and most of them do 3-4 hours per week, although some love it so much that they work many more hours! Many people volunteer in our shops to improve their confidence and to make friends, some volunteer simply because they enjoy the experience of working alongside people from a wide variety of ages and backgrounds, and of chatting with their neighbours and friends in a warm and welcoming environment. Whatever the reason for volunteering, all of our team members get a lot out of the experience. It provides an opportunity to engage with different people within our community who we mightn't otherwise get a chance to interact with – for many, it provides valuable work experience in retail, and many of our volunteers have used what they've learned in our shops to gain employment in the retail sector.

Our shops also provide a crucial benefit to the environment – by promoting the re-use of goods, we give a second life to goods that would have otherwise been destined for landfill. Fast fashion is one the world's most polluting industries, and people who buy lightly used clothing reduce the demand for yet more new clothes, which is a little kinder to our planet!

The final benefit which our shops bring is that every cent of profit goes back into our community. Our shops are a vital fundraiser for the work of SVP, and the proceeds of our work is used to fund our work to support some of the most vulnerable people in our community, and for the creation of a society that is more fair and just for all



# Bremore Educate Together



## Secondary School

### Bremore's winter wonderland!

*We are really looking forward to working with SVP in the future, this is only the beginning!!*

A project that was constructed by a 2nd year class in Bremore Educate Together Secondary School in Balbriggan which included; A Music Video made by students, Bake Sale, Charity Work ( Fundraiser for SVP), a Glee Club Performance and an organization of a Concert that was held in the school in December 2017.

The event was planned and prepared over a period of 4 classes (4 weeks in total).

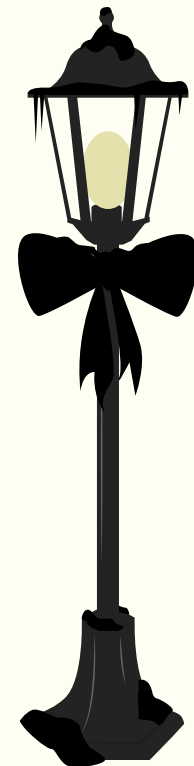
To make sure every student was involved there were 5 different groups; Business Committee, Art & Design Committee, Fundraiser Committee, Music Video Production Team and The Directors & Presenters.

During the 4 weeks of planning, a lip sync music video was produced which included all staff and students, a bake sale was organized for students, staff and parents in aid of St. Vincent de Paul.

The business committee decided to contact SVP and they explained how we were planning to raise money and donating it to their charity, Thankfully SVP replied and agreed to visit the school and talk to the students about the work of SVP on the day of the concert. We were extremely lucky to have Clare Mander come out and speak to everyone about SVP and where our raised funds were going to. We were delighted to hear that the money we raised was going to help so many people locally and that our hard work could make a difference.

€245 was raised for St. Vincent de Paul and most importantly we all had fun in the process! We are really looking forward to working with SVP in the future, this is only the beginning!!

- Molly (2nd Year student)





# St Mary's College Arklow

## Things I Appreciate

You've got to learn to appreciate the little things in life,  
Like a good cup of tea , or a fresh smelling flower,  
We are not our age , or the clothes we wear,  
We are not our weight, or the colour of our hair,  
We are all the books that we read and all the words that we speak,  
We are the future, we have to stand together,  
We will impact this world and we will make it better,  
We are all part of St. Vincent De Paul,  
So lets be appreciative and follow this call.

Charlotte  
Age 14



As part of an awareness raising campaign about homelessness we asked students in our school to write poems. The theme was 'Things I Appreciate'

## Things I Appreciate

I didn't know how much I appreciated you until I opened my eyes and you were gone. I just want to let you know you mean the world to me; no one will ever replace you. I learned that it is not what I have in my life but who I have in my life that counts. You helped me, protected me and thought me with great care. And every time I needed you, you were always there. If I had a second chance I would let you know that I love you and I'd beg you not to go. Nana, you were my guidance, my teacher, my best friend. Sometimes when I am thinking of you, I close my eyes and speak to you in a thousand silent ways. Although I often smile and seem carefree, there is no one who misses you.....more than me.

Mollie  
Age: 15 yrs



# Loreto College Swords



## young SVP School Conference



The SVP school conference had another busy and successful year raising awareness of the valuable work of SVP and raising much needed funds for our local conference. The annual Christmas food hamper appeal was a great success with high quality items being brought to school and over a hundred bags of food being collected. Our local parish was very grateful for the generous donations from our students.

We organised an Easter Giving tree and hundreds of Easter eggs were donated for children in our parish.

We held an evening of entertainment for our Senior Citizens Group with beautiful singing, performing and dancing from the students. The evening was greatly appreciated by all.

An exciting new initiative for our school conference was linking with the parish liturgical group and our 6th classes in the primary school. We are looking forward to working on the confirmation programme with them.

We look forward to another busy and productive year to come.



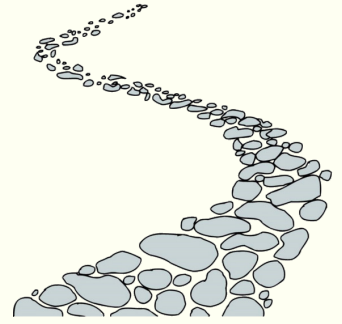
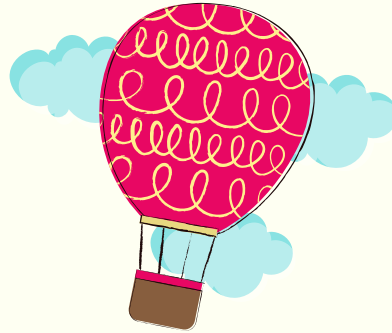
This year one of our Ty groups also took part in the young SVP programme. Here we are with the clothes we collected to donate to the Vincent's shops!

# Dominican College Sion Hill



"Smile and let the world wonder why"- Mickey Mouse

"Think of happy thoughts and you will fly"- Peter Pan



"Do what you have to do until you can do what you want to do"- Oprah Winfrey

On Friday, the 27th of February 2018 our class, 4 Sapphire, ran a workshop for 4th-year students. We wanted the workshop to be about mental health but we didn't want to be confusing or upsetting people, we wanted it to be more positive and easy to understand. We wanted everyone to be feeling more positive and relaxed and we wanted to make the short time we had beneficial rather than a chance to miss class.

We had about an hour to do this workshop so start with a short introduction explaining what we going to do that day. After that, we had a game of musical chairs to try and relax everyone and then one of our classmates, Aoife, spoke about signs of mental illnesses and how to deal with stresses that students have. Leading on from that we had a game called 'throw worry away' which is where you write a worry or worries on a piece of paper and throw it away. We showed a short video and had two more classmates, Jesvin and Susan, speak, one spoke about understanding mental health and the other one spoke about relaxation tips. To finish the day we had a game of Bang and a short meditation, we then handed out sweets and our home-made positive mental health cards. After we sent out a survey which came back mostly positive.

At the end of the workshop we felt like we had achieved our aims and objective and learned many new skills. We are excited to continue working with St. Vincent de Paul next year and hopefully make this workshop a yearly event.





# Mount Anville Secondary School

## Mount Anville SVP clothes collection

On May 1st, 2nd and 3rd last, students and staff donated good quality clothes to SVP.

Clothes give one dignity. They are required.  
They are also part of our identity.

Style for SVP raised awareness of the work of SVP...Social Justice in action.

All items were collected and will be sold in local SVP shops.

Thanks to all who contributed clothes.

It is very much appreciated.

### MTA SVP



we organised a clothes collection in our school!





# Conference Corner!

In this latest edition of Conference Corner we are delighted to hear from Loreto High School Beaufort who have had a busy & exciting year! This article has been put together by the conference PRO Clodagh

## Loreto High School Beaufort

This year was an extremely busy year for the SVP Conference in Loreto Beaufort. We started on the very first day of 4th year, we were told about the roles we could go for like President, PRO, Secretary etc. We had to write a one-page essay on why we wanted to join SVP and why we would be good for the role. We then had to stand up in front of our year and give a 3min speech on why we were suitable for the role we were applying for. Our year then voted for the positions.

I heard about SVP from the years above us. I saw them at reception every year selling tickets for their raffle. In 1st, 2nd and 3rd year students came in and did peer teaching with us about SVP as a charity and the work we do for SVP in our school.

We began preparing for SVP Awareness week straight away. We began collecting prizes for our raffle and we organised peer teaching for the week. We decorated reception for SVP Awareness week, we handed out blue ribbons for all the students and staff to put in their hair and we sold tickets for our raffle every day. We then had our raffle on the Friday. We also ran a hamper appeal from late November till mid-December and we gathered loads of food from everyone in the school. We were so happy with the turn out of food.

We had a Christmas Party for disadvantaged children with the money we raised from the raffle. We had fun activities for the children to do like gingerbread making, face paint, Christmas card making and so much more. They had an assigned student with them for the day which was called their Big Sister, this was someone they could spend the day with and talk to. They all got to meet Santa and every child got a present. It was such a fun day and all the children had a great experience!

Our senior SVP had a Christmas Party for the retired Nuns in Abby House. They made cakes and biscuits and lots of goodies for them.

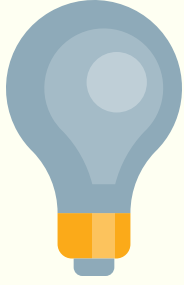


They performed and sang Christmas carols for them. They spent the evening with them and everyone had a great time.

It was a really great year for SVP in Beaufort more students got involved and learnt so much. It has been such an educational and enriching experience for everyone involved and we can't wait to do more next year



# St Joseph's CBS



SVP here at St Joseph's CBS



During the course of the school year the TY group here at St Joseph's CBS have been involved with the Young SVP programme.

For six weeks we had Clare come into our double religion class to do workshops on lots of different social justice issues. We as a class felt that these issues were important as some of them are very close to home, due to the location of our school.

At Christmas time we organised a food appeal where students from every year group were encouraged to bring in goods which could be used for food hampers. It was a huge success and we managed to make over 30 food hampers.

After Christmas both the TY classes and the LCA classes here in the school organised the annual Senior Citizens party. Both year groups helped to set up the rooms for a dinner party and fund raised in the local area through bag packing to help fund the event. Local businesses gave prizes so that we were able to hold a raffle on the night.

The TY class also put together a number of power point presentations on the issues surrounding social justice. These power points were then shown to the junior and senior classes in the school. This was used to highlight the social justice issues which are taking place in our local area.

Overall TY students have had a very positive experience with the Young SVP programme. We finished off a great year with a fantastic day at the Young SVP Youth Day. It gave us the opportunity to mix with other schools that have a similar interest in the area of SVP.

Joeys TY class 2017/2018





# Ardgillan Community College

A big welcome to Ardgillan Community College who have decided to set up a Young SVP Conference

We organised a sponsored run & bake sale in support of SVP!





# Presentation Community College, Terenure



For our Young SVP Befriending project we organised a kick ball tournament to get to know the first years in our school better!



We took part in social justice workshops as part of the Young SVP programme



We organised a bake sale to support people experiencing homelessness





# Priority youthreach, Tallaght

The whole Project was amazing!

The whole project was amazing. We took part in workshops about human rights and injustice to make us understand it better. We had a group meeting at the end of each week to write down what we did in the session. We came up with an idea as a team of what we would do to help families in need. Our final idea was an Easter hamper. We made posters, decorated a box and wrote a letter to Paul (our Youthreach Coordinator) to get permission. We did great and raised three hampers full of stuff.

We attended the Young SVP Youth Day in the Red Cow Hotel. It was a great day and full of stories and projects from other schools.

My experience of Young SVP was very enjoyable. It felt good to help others. Our idea of the Easter hamper was a great way to help families in need. I found the group activities were fun and made me enjoy the project more. It was a great experience and a brilliant way to work on my skills as a team. I would definitely do some type of volunteering in the future. I got a great experience out of it and had time to work on my skills. I now know how easy it is to help people.

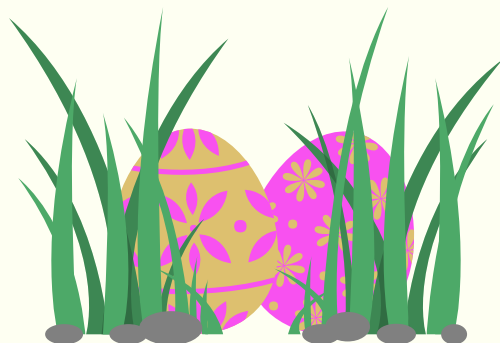
Lisa



We felt a great sense of accomplishment!

Over the course of a couple of months, our class took part in the Young SVP programme. Clare Mander (SVP East Region Youth Development Officer) would visit our centre on a weekly basis and facilitate workshops with us based on the topics of charity, social justice and poverty. We then decided to ask our fellow students and staff members to donate chocolate for an Easter hamper that we then gave to SVP in West Tallaght. This helped many families in our local area and we felt a great sense of accomplishment after this. To finish the programme we were invited to the Young SVP East Region Youth Day with other schools that had completed the programme as well. We took part in workshops, listened to guest speakers and were able to see how the other groups chose to do their projects.

Overall the Young SVP programme was a very positive experience for me and taught me a lot about the organisation. I hope to volunteer many times for SVP in the future.



# St Aidan's CBS

## Transition Morning



The first involved students learning how to use the combination locks for the lockers and how to read a timetable. The second activity was a talk on the different clubs you could join in St. Aidan's and how to make new friends. The third activity was a tour of the school. Here students got to meet a number of teachers in their classrooms and got to walk around the school while class was going on. The fourth activity involved a chat about any worries they might be having coming in and ways to overcome these worries. Finally, the fifth activity was a penalty shootout competition, which everyone enjoyed!

We found from the evaluation sheets we gave out at the end that students really enjoyed the morning. We discovered that most worries or concerns that they were having were now gone! They were also happy that they would know us when they came in next year as a friendly face. We really enjoyed the morning and were delighted that it was a big success.

By Conor Burke & Alex Murray, TYPW



We decided to do a befriending project as part of the Young SVP programme we were doing as part of religion. On Thursday the 26th of April, 6th class pupils from Larkhill Holy child B.N.S. came to St. Aidan's C.B.S. for a transition morning. The aim of the morning was to give the 6th class students a feel of the school and to make them more relaxed for when they come in September. The students were involved in a number of different activities throughout the morning.

We walked to Larkhill and collected the students along with two of their teacher. When they arrived in St. Aidan's they got a short talk from our teacher Ms. Lyne about what to expect and the rules for the morning.

The morning began by breaking the students and ourselves up into mixed groups and did a number of different ice-breakers with them. After that they took a break and got to eat lunch in the General Purpose Area. When they had finished their lunches they were divided up again and rotated through a number of different activities. These activities would hopefully make the transition into secondary school a bit easier next September.

## Cake Sale & Brass Band Concert

For our Young SVP project we decided to create an event for older people in our community.

We held a Brass Band Concert in our school hall. On the day we also had a cake sale in support of SVP.





# Donabate Community College



Donabate Community College Transition Year McAleese and Geldof classes hosted a coffee morning in collaboration with Saint Vincent de Paul in Donabate Community College. The classes welcomed a group of senior citizens to the school for a tea and coffee morning which was followed by live music and a game of bingo. The students really enjoyed the live music session and the McAleese class took this opportunity to donate the €412 which was raised by TY students throughout the year to the charity. Overall it was a very successful morning and was enjoyed by everyone. A huge thanks to the Donabate TYs for organising this event and to all our visitors for coming along and providing great entertainment for us all.





# Intervarsity 2018

Siofra Dempsey-College Support Officer



*Trip to Newgrange*

This year's annual Intervarsity weekend took place in the middle of April at the Newgrange Lodge hostel. University students from all over Ireland came together for the weekend to share their experiences with Young SVP, to take part in workshops, and to have fun!

People came from Trinity College, UCD, DCU, IT Tralee and NUI Galway, and it was wonderful to have the chance to all get to know each other. We've all spent the year working with SVP and it was really valuable to have a chance to share those experiences. Each college has a slightly different focus and works in their own way – Trinity run a lot of activities with young people and students, in UCD they work more with homelessness, in IT Tralee the focus is on student life and student welfare, the list goes on. Given that everyone works on such different things all year, it's great to be able to come together and learn from each other – and find the common threads running through everyone's different activities! Over the course of the weekend, we also had different workshops organised, so we could all learn more about the issues we're engaged with through SVP. Tricia Keilthy, the Head of the Social Justice team here at SVP, got us all thinking about poverty in Ireland and what different standards of living look like for people and families. From her workshop we learned that living is about much more than just surviving and that having a good quality of life extends much further than just being able to cover the necessities!

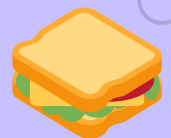


*Reflection Space*

Later that afternoon, Jemma Lee and Lisa Byrne from DePaul led a workshop on homelessness in Ireland. This is something that is very close to all of our hearts and something that most college SVP groups are engaged with on some level, so it was great to learn more about homelessness, what its causes are, and what the reality is of homelessness in Ireland today. Jemma and Lisa challenged us to think about homeless experiences beyond rough sleeping, and to consider how we can best respond to those experiencing homelessness. DePaul run homeless hostels all around Ireland, and some of our volunteers in Trinity College and UCD work at the hostels in Dublin, and we hope to continue this work in the coming years, as it has been a really positive experience for DePaul service users and for our volunteers.

One of our Trinity College volunteers, Andy McLoughlin, gave a workshop on how they had run their Social Justice club this year in Trinity. Social Justice Club was one of their most popular activities, running every week throughout the year. The topic they chose to work on was homelessness, and over the course of the year, the students involved compiled a huge amount of research, learned more than they had expected to, and used that knowledge to plan and execute campaigns. Andy presented their model and got us to team up and think about what topics we would focus on for the year, how we would structure our research, and what campaigns or actions we would run.

The workshops were all really engaging and interesting, and while we hope our volunteers came away from the weekend with a greater understanding of social justice issues and responses, the other important part of the weekend is to have fun! We also fit in trips to the Newgrange passage tomb, karaoke, obstacle courses, and lots and lots of sandwiches. The response to the weekend was really positive, and we hope to build on this and encourage stronger ties between the different college groups in the coming years.





# TAKING PART IN THE YOUNG SVP PROGRAMME



## Getting Started

At the start of the school year you will be invited to attend a school Get Together to meet other students taking part in the programme and learn more about SVP and the opportunities for young people to get involved. You may also arrange for a guest speaker to visit your school to talk about the history and work of SVP and the Young SVP programme. Schools taking part in the programme will then be asked to register.

## Learning about Social Justice

At this stage you might decide to set up your Young SVP Conference/group/class project. Then your Youth Development Officer(YDO) will visit your group to facilitate a series of workshops looking at social justice: Poverty & the Cost of Living, Power & Society, Human Rights, Equality, Campaigning and Social Justice & Social Action.

**THE AIM OF YOUNG SVP IS TO PROVIDE OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE TO ENGAGE IN SOCIAL ACTION IN THEIR OWN COMMUNITIES, ENCOURAGING PERSONAL AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT**

## What is a Young SVP Conference?

A 'Conference' is the SVP term for a committee of volunteers that meet regularly and plan projects and volunteering to give back to their communities. The members elect their own President and other officers and are supported by a Youth Conference Coordinator (for example a teacher or chaplain in your school) and the YDO.

Young SVP Conference should meet regularly at a set time. Meetings are an opportunity for members to reflect together, to share their experiences and to plan actions.

Your YDO will visit some of your Conference meetings throughout the year to support you in setting up & running your Conference, explore social justice issues, plan social actions and reflect.

## Taking Action

As a Conference, group or class you will now be ready to take action. There are four types of project you can choose from: Befriending projects (for example visiting older people in Day Care Centres, hosting coffee mornings in your school, buddy programmes with 1st year students), Education projects (for example homework clubs, paired reading with your local primary school, helping older people with computer skills), Direct Aid projects (for example, fundraising events, food appeals, clothes drives) and Social Justice Research & Action (researching and creating awareness about a social justice issue). Every project should link to the three pillars of the SVP mission statement: Support & Friendship, Promoting Self Sufficiency and Working for Social Justice. You will receive support and guidance from your YDO throughout the project.

## Youth Day

At the end of the year representatives from your school will be invited to attend the Young SVP Regional Youth Day. This is an opportunity for you to meet other young volunteers, to share your ideas, hear about what other schools have undertaken, to listen to speakers and take part in workshops and activities. Your YDO will also visit your group to support you to review and reflect on your volunteering experience.



# Spotlight on Social Justice

Jennifer Thompson, SVP Social Justice & Policy Officer

## The growing housing and homeless emergency – is it possible to sustainably address it?

It seems that almost every week, if not almost every day, there is another article in the papers or on the news about the homeless and housing crisis. The cold weather and storms in March revealed there were more people sleeping rough than had been previously thought as many people unknown to services came in from the dangerous cold to emergency beds. And often when we first think of homelessness, it is the image of a person sleeping on the streets that comes to our mind. But actually, most of those that are homeless are coming from the private rented sector.

SVP's members are regularly visiting individuals and families who are experiencing the challenge of homelessness, rising rents, an insecure rental situation, and are putting up with poor quality housing. The homeless statistics are shocking and are at a record high. Latest figures from the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government show that almost 10,000 people are now homeless, with 1 in 3 of these being children. Homelessness has particular effects on children. SVP members visiting families in emergency accommodation see first-hand the impacts - toddlers who have developmental delays because they don't have room to crawl or learn to walk or play; children who turn up to school so tired that they can't concentrate because they have to share a room with older siblings and parents and teenagers who are embarrassed and ashamed about their circumstances and have become withdrawn and isolated from their friends.

It can be easy to think the problem is just too big and difficult and begin to wonder if solutions can be found. But they can – and they must!

SVP is supporting families facing housing and homelessness issues in a number of ways. A key response to the homelessness crisis is to ensure people can stay in their homes and not become homeless in the first place. Often the families our members visit can feel isolated and alone. Our members come alongside these families, listen to their situation and try to advise and direct the family to the best available services and help, in an effort to protect their home.

Our members also visit families in hotels and B&Bs, and more recently in 'family hubs' that the Government has established as a type of temporary accommodation, but which have extra facilities and supports. The needs families face in emergency accommodation can be very practical, such as help with food or clothes, or education costs and SVP provides this direct assistance.

Working for social justice is one of three key pillars of SVP's mission and a central part of what the Social Justice team do, is to raise the real-life experiences that our members come across through submissions to Government Departments or in meetings with Ministers or their advisors and political parties. Our members stories help raise awareness of the scale and impact of homelessness, and highlight the individuals and families behind the statistics. Through this, we seek to bring about the necessary policy change and ensure the scale and pace of implementation of initiatives.



SVP at the Housing & Homelessness March April 2018





# Spotlight on Social Justice

SVP believes that the homeless figures should act as a rallying call for urgent action. On the 7th April, SVP adding its voice and joined almost 10,000 other concerned and interested stakeholders at a march organised by the National Homeless and Housing Coalition. It aimed to raise awareness and demand action to end the housing and homelessness crisis.

A number of short term and longer-term solutions to the crisis exist, it's a matter of having the political will and sense of urgency to make them happen. A core response to this crisis is to provide much greater protection to keep people in their homes, providing much greater security for tenants and expand rent certainty measures. It is reasonable for landlords in the private rented sector to seek to make a profit from their investment. However, SVP believes that what is required by tenants is also reasonable – affordable housing that is secure and in good quality. We also need the Government to quickly publish its strategy for dealing with vacant properties.

Ultimately however, to sustainably address the housing crisis, the Government must prioritise the building of more social and affordable homes and stop the continued overreliance on the private sector to meet social housing need.

SVPs primary concern remains around security, affordability and access to housing across all housing situations for low income and middle-income households. As the Government seeks to implement a number of initiatives and actions, it is clear a greater sense of urgency, ambition and vision is required. An all-inclusive approach is needed to ensure a sustainable and fair solution to the housing crisis. Improved connections across Government departments and between local authorities and national level are also needed, in order to drive a national approach.



## What role can Young SVP play in working for social justice?

“Thinking about and doing” social justice requires patience, knowledge, persistence, and conviction – all characteristics that Young SVP members possess. In particular, you can play an important role speaking out on issues that affect your generation such as youth homelessness, child poverty, education costs, inadequate mental health services and inaccessible third level education. By researching and understanding an issue, planning a campaign with your peers and making your voices heard, there are no limits to what you can achieve.

**Contact your Youth Development Officer for support and advice on planning a social justice campaign.**





# What being part of young SVP means to me

Students in schools & groups in the East Region were asked to tell us 'What being part of Young SVP means to me'. This is what they had to say:

## Reflection

I have worked with and developed relationships with students in my year that I would not have been close with before

Young SVP to me means understanding the environment around me and feeling the urge to contribute

Young SVP to me means understanding the problems in our world. Throughout SVP this year I learned how to listen in meetings and contribute my ideas. I learned how to organise and help out my classmates.

I learned lots and grew as a person after being part of this brilliant experience

I really love the feeling of knowing that you are helping others and making a difference

Young SVP means broadening my knowledge on social issues and uniting to take action

Being part of our Conference has assisted me in finding myself and creating a passion within me

Young SVP gave me an opportunity to put my values into practice

Young SVP means Carrying on the work and inspiring vision of Frederic Ozanam

I learned so many new skills and I am so much more confident talking in public now

I have loved every minute!

This experience was something that I will never forget



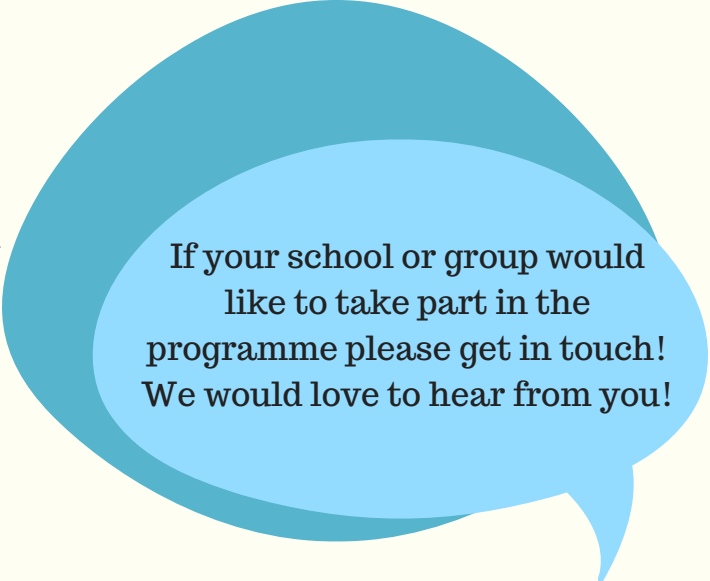


If your school or group is taking part in the Young SVP programme please contact us for information on how to register!


Thank you to the schools and centres who have registered with the Young SVP programme in the East Region this year.

If you would like to register your group please contact Clare at [claremander.east@svp.ie](mailto:claremander.east@svp.ie)

- Ballinteer Community School
- Belvedere College
- Bremore Educate Together Secondary School
- Catholic University School
- Coláiste Mhuire, Cabra
- Coláiste Iosagain
- Dominican College Sion Hill
- Donabate Community College
- Gonzaga College SJ
- Holy Child Killiney
- Loreto College Foxrock
- Loreto High School Beaufort
- Mount Anville Secondary School
- Pobalscoil Neasain
- Presentation Community College, Terenure
- Priory Youthreach
- Rosmini Community School
- St Aidan's CBS
- St Joseph of Cluny SS
- St Mary's College, Arklow
- St Mary's Holy Faith Glasnevin



If your school or group would like to take part in the programme please get in touch! We would love to hear from you!



SVP wants to support, acknowledge and record all the great work that young people are doing with or for SVP. We also want to ensure that all young volunteers are provided with the best possible opportunities to develop within their own experiences. In order to support as to do this please complete our registration form and keep in regular contact with the Youth Development Team.



A big thank you to everyone who has contributed to this publication. If you would like an article included in the next newsletter, please send in descriptions of your projects & activities and photos (with parent/guardian consent).

If you would like more information, resources or to take part in the programme please contact:

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