

THE



SPRING 2023

BULLETIN

MAGAZINE OF THE SOCIETY OF ST. VINCENT DE PAUL

**WARM, SAFE,
CONNECTED?**
ENERGY REPORT LAUNCH

**SOCIAL
HOUSING**
ENERGY UPGRADES
WEST REGION

**WORKING
TOWARDS**
THE FAST DEMISE
OF FAST FASHION

YOUNG SVP
MEET THE TEAM



The Voice of Social Justice in Ireland



**“To serve is beautiful, but only if it is done with joy
and a whole heart and a free mind.”**

Pearl S. Buck



This magazine is named in honour of the principal founder of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul, Frederic Ozanam

THE IRISH SVP OZANAM BULLETIN

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RELEVANT ARTICLES
ARE WELCOME.
PLEASE EMAIL TO THE
EDITOR.

It's been some time since our last Bulletin and, in that intervening period, I attended a couple of our Regional Members' Days in different parts of the country. The eagerness I witnessed to return to what we do best, 'visit people in their homes', was palpable. We are all a bit weary of the dreaded word 'Covid', for sure. It impacted so many people in many different ways and stole something from so many of us. Still, I also feel there is an emotional and physical desire to return to our everyday lives without fear, cautiousness or worry. So to see so many members attend these days filled me with pride and a sense of purpose. You can easily get sucked in that dark place of never seeing the light at the end of the tunnel.

We speak a lot about how the Society is there to support people in need and highlight the issues which cause a lot of their struggles to the government via our social justice team. Which is what we do but, while attending one of the members' days, another aspect of SVP struck me. An older volunteer approached me at the end of the day and asked me if I had been the person taking photos all day and if I would be willing to take her photo. Of course, I was only too delighted to do this for her but, as we spoke, I noticed she seemed a bit emotional and upset. She told me she was going to the hospital the following week for major surgery and wanted this photo prior to this happening. I sensed she was really worried about the outcome.

She told me that her doctor had encouraged her to attend the members' day so she could be with friends and, I suppose in a roundabout way, it was an attempt to distract her from what lay ahead. She was so happy she had come and spoke fondly of the other volunteers she had worked with for over 30 years and the support they had given her since her diagnosis. I felt quite moved and fully present to her fear and worry. I realised then that the Society doesn't just help people in need. It helps our SVP members and volunteers by being friends, a family, and an amazing support network whenever needed. Like other outwardly focused organisations, SVP forms a community of its members within the community it serves.

It is essential that we keep sight of that unique aspect of what we do also. We don't just offer friendship and support to people in need: we also look out for our Conference members and volunteers. I am sure the other regions who will be running their members' days will see this for themselves. When you see a member you haven't seen in a long time, undoubtedly you will feel the joy, greet them with a smile and want to hear all about how they are doing; I really hope you will experience the pride that I did when in the presence of our fellow Vincentians.

In 2022, SVP received over 200k calls for help, the highest total to date. We have seen a huge increase in the number of people struggling with their energy bills and in those trying to cope with the impact of the increased cost of living in general. Rising consumer prices and increasing interest rates are expected to persist into 2023, which is likely to further reduce disposable incomes. But as an organisation, we continue to support those struggling when and wherever we can.

In this edition, you will see how our social justice team continues to highlight the plight of those we assist. It also contains many wonderful stories from our volunteers and services, such as the Croí na Gaillimhe Older People's Programme, articles from around the country, our various activities like our Vincent's shops, social housing units, our Young SVP programme, fundraising, and so much more.

I hope you enjoy the read.

Linda O'Connell



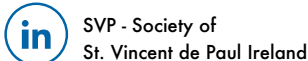
SVPireland



SVP_Ireland



svp_ireland



SVP - Society of
St. Vincent de Paul Ireland



Saint Vincent de Paul Ireland



Preparing for the future

By Rose McGowan
SVP National President

From time to time every organisation has to take a serious look at what it is doing, how it is performing and where it is going into the future.

This Society of Saint Vincent de Paul (SVP) has gone through many changes over the years since it was founded in Ireland 179 years ago. The first Conference came together in a house in Charles Street West in the Parish of St Michan's in Dublin on Monday, 16 December 1844.

Through that time it has been a bedrock of support for hundreds of thousands of Irish people.

It is hard to believe but that support has been sustained through the Famine in the 19th century, two World Wars, a War of Independence, a Civil War, cycles of economic austerity and a pandemic.

Now it is a cost-of-living and housing crisis that challenges us and you are at the heart of that challenge.

But we live and work in a very different era and now what we do needs to be carried out within a structure. This is needed anyway but we now operate within a new set of regulations since the establishment of the Charities Regulator.

Everyone will remember the scandals in the charity sector over 10 years ago and since then the environment in which we operate has changed dramatically.

The Charity Regulator now has a governance code for charities that sets down a number of requirements for all charities. One of those requirements is to have a strategic plan.

As the largest voluntary charity in Ireland we are in the headlights when it comes to regulations and governance so we must show leadership for the sector.

We are all proud to be associated with our Society which has had an excellent reputation throughout its history. And we must

keep that reputation. It is essential that we are seen to manage the Society in a proper way and continue to work for the benefit of those in need who seek our help. That requires us to manage our finances in a transparent manner and to treat everyone, people we visit, our staff and each other with care, dignity, support and respect.

Having a strategy that allows us to be clear about how we operate is now essential.

What do we mean by a strategy?

Strategy is about shaping the future. It is preparing a general plan to achieve one or more long-term or overall goals. It is determining actions to achieve these goals and mobilizing resources to execute the actions. This is important because the resources available to achieve goals are usually limited.

The first phase of developing our new strategy has begun with a survey gathering information and insights into our existing structure, activities and operations to better understand both the opportunities and challenges we have as an organisation.

On 25 March members of our National Councils heard about the findings of this survey and in the coming weeks and months these findings will be discussed at Regional, Area and Conference levels.

At all times as our new strategy is being developed we must keep in mind that the key focus of everything we do has to be those in need who seek our help. Our history and the exhortation of our founders, especially Blessed Frederick Ozanam all have that as the cornerstone of our existence.

That will be the driving force in our discussions today around developing this new strategy.

Rose McGowan,
National President, Society of St. Vincent de Paul



The Word was made Flesh

By Paschal Scallon CM
SVP Spiritual Advisor

Henry Ossawa Tanner was an African-American artist who was almost a contemporary of W. B. Yeats, living in the second half of the 19th century and the first half of the 20th century. He died in 1937.

In one of his most famous paintings, Tanner depicts the scene of the Annunciation, the moment Mary learns she is to become the mother of Jesus. Tanner painted the scene in 1898 after a visit to Egypt during which he seems to have been especially struck by the interiors of houses and the use of textiles.

This is a striking depiction of the occasion we remember and celebrate as the moment Jesus is conceived, the moment the utter other, transcendent Word of God becomes flesh. It is the moment when the perfection of humanity, embodied in Jesus Christ, takes on the frailty of being human and all the potential and risk that entails.

Tanner's Annunciation owes something to his Methodist background, perhaps, because he depicts the event in a very ordinary setting. In the Catholic tradition we are more used to medieval images that show Mary dressed as a European princess with nothing more pressing on her time than her prayers. But, frankly, in this painting Mary looks anxious.

At a meeting of the NCC on 25 March those members of the Society who were present reflected on the practicalities of being members of the Society of St Vincent De Paul and the ways in which the Society might be more effective in its work for the greater good of people around the country who experience need or poverty. In tandem with this, though, it was also useful, even necessary, particularly if we are people of faith, to reflect theologically on what we propose and offer to

our sisters and brothers who contact us. March 25 is the feast of the Annunciation in Christian tradition. It is the occasion on which we may imagine more intensely than usual that our faith has foundation, that it has substance.

The Annunciation makes it real, as it were, and that reality places the human condition at the centre of our attention. If we believe it is God who has done this, there is no looking away from our brothers and sisters in whatever circumstances we meet them.

In viewing this painting, one of the first things that catches the attention of any member of the Society must be the thought, "how many times have any of us walked in on a scene like this when visiting someone's home in response to a call for help"? Mary looks anxious. Theologically, she represents the hope (or despair) of the people of Israel who wait for the Messiah but who have become afraid that the Messiah is not coming.

More prosaically, for ourselves, Mary speaks to us of the hope in the hearts of people that seeks to overcome the despair of being marginalised and impeded by circumstances, people who want to live with dignity and who want their children to live with the potential a sense of dignity gives a person.

Let's not hide our light under a tub. In accepting the challenge membership of the SVP confers on us, we participate in the life and work of the one we call Saviour. We are part of the Body of Christ and we go to the cross so that others don't have to, which is to say, we give our time and our energy, and often more, to ensure people can eat or go to school or simply live with a sense of grace.



The Annunciation
1898 Henry Ossawa Tanner
(American (active France), 1859–1937)
Philadelphia Museum of Art



Annual Circular Letter of President General 2023

It's a long tradition started by the first President General, Emmanuel Bailey, in 1841 for the President General to write each year to the members of the Society worldwide presenting ideas and proposing reflections.

The current President General, Renato Lima de Oliveira has maintained that tradition and his 2023 Circular Letter was published on 31 January 2023.

For the full text please see:

<https://www.ssvpglobal.org/a-circular-letter-full-of-emotion-in-a-farewell-tone-2/>

This is Renato's last Circular Letter (he finishes his term on 9 September 2023). The letter has a farewell tone as well as sharing accountability for his seven years in office.

Among the topics the President General covers are:

- the highlights of his seven year term
- the role of Vincentian youth
- progress of the canonisation of Bl. Frederic Ozanam
- process for the election of the 17th President General
- qualities of a Vincentian leader and importance of succession.
- meaning of spirituality and poverty
- the challenges of the post- pandemic period.
- profile of Jules Gossin (one of our founders)
- final reflections and farewell.

Space does not permit publishing the full Circular Letter here but it may be of interest to comment on one section likely to be of particular interest to members - the challenges for us of the post pandemic world. The President General identifies five challenges:

1. REVITALISE OUR CONFERENCES AND MODERNISE OUR PRACTICES

The pandemic revealed that some Conferences are “frozen in time and space”, their work focussed solely on material good ignoring other forms of poverty, including spiritual and moral. We should train our brothers and sisters to specialise in particular forms of need; dividing the Conference internally into working groups, focussing on the various forms of poverty.

2. ENCOURAGE MEMBERS AND UPDATE VINCENTIAN TRAINING

The pandemic showed how useful online training was; it helped to keep members mobilised and involved. It is vital to update training not only to help deepen Vincentian spirituality, the charism uniting us and the values distinguishing us from other social organisations but also new topics reflecting the current environment in which we operate.

3. IMPROVE OUR PROCEDURES AND REDUCE BUREAUCRACY

The pandemic has shown that the administration of our Society needs to be improved and updated not only in Conferences but in Special Works and Councils also but we are slow to accept change. The excessive number of Rules also freezes us, preventing us acting as quickly as we should in response to need. One suggestion is to have hybrid Conference meetings (in person and on line) throughout the month as need arises. It is a shame to admit it but we have lost many opportunities to be more proactive toward the most vulnerable people. We must acknowledge that other social NGOs are more flexible and less bureaucratic than us and resolve to change.

4. EXPAND OUR CHARITABLE WORK

We should review if we are meeting contemporary needs in our locality. For example the pandemic showed that mental illness is more prevalent than thought. Are our Conferences prepared to interact with those who are suffering in silence? Do we know how to listen? Are we properly prepared or just content to deliver bags of basic products or have friendly chats?

5. COLLABORATION WITH OTHER ORGANISATIONS

The pandemic showed that we cannot tackle the causes of poverty alone. On our own, we risk dealing only with the superficial aspects of its effects, perpetuating the unhappy situation. We need to be open to collaboration with other social organisations without of course abandoning our own values.

A FINAL WORD FROM PRESIDENT GENERAL

In order to bury once and for all, the pandemic and the hypocrisy which accompanied it, we must take off our masks and return to normality. We are not afraid, because God will never abandon his people.

Dear Vincentians, let us move forward, without fear, trusting in Divine Providence and seeking creative and innovative solutions to renew and strengthen our Conferences to better serve the poor.

Farewell

In farewell, Renato acknowledges that it has been a huge honour and a great responsibility to have held the position of President General, the first Brazilian to do so. Renato thanks the Lord for the grace to have been able to fulfil his mandate and notes that the motto he chose in taking office was a great strength for him.

“Anyone who wants to be first must be the last of all and servant of all.” (Mark 9.35).

He expresses his gratitude to all who have worked with him at all levels in the Society and to all Councils, Conferences and members who have warmly welcomed him in the 50 countries he visited.

The above is a brief synopsis of the 2023 Circular Letter. Members will find many more challenges and reflections in the full letter which merits reading by all of those in need who seek our help. That requires us to manage our finances in a transparent manner and to treat everyone, people we visit, our staff and each other with care, dignity, support and respect.



New SVP National Secretary

*Niall Mulligan
SVP National Secretary*

It's rare for me to be asked to write a short piece about myself. It doesn't sit or flow easily! What would anyone really want to know, and what is it I am willing to say?

I can tell you I'm from Dundalk, a town I love and which I will always consider to be my home. I have many friends and family still living there and visit them as regularly as I can.

Dundalk gave me my first job working with people. I was a youth worker for one year back in 1986 as part of a Fás Scheme (not dissimilar to Community Employment) and loved it. It was a way of working where I realised, I could make a difference in the lives of some people. Could help in small ways that may ultimately lead to bigger changes.

For the last 30 plus years I have continued to work with people from all walks of life. People who have often been impacted by addiction, homelessness, mental health difficulties, HIV, suicidal thoughts, and the desperation that can come with poverty.

Often these people have experienced trauma in their lives and have been denied their basic human rights – health, education, employment, a safe place to live.

The resilience they show, sometimes in the face

of huge adversity is incredible and they always have my respect and gratitude for they also give much back to me and others.

My parents chose Dundalk to raise our family. We all consider ourselves very lucky that they made that decision! They also raised us to believe in certain ways of living our lives.

I can sum these up as follows:

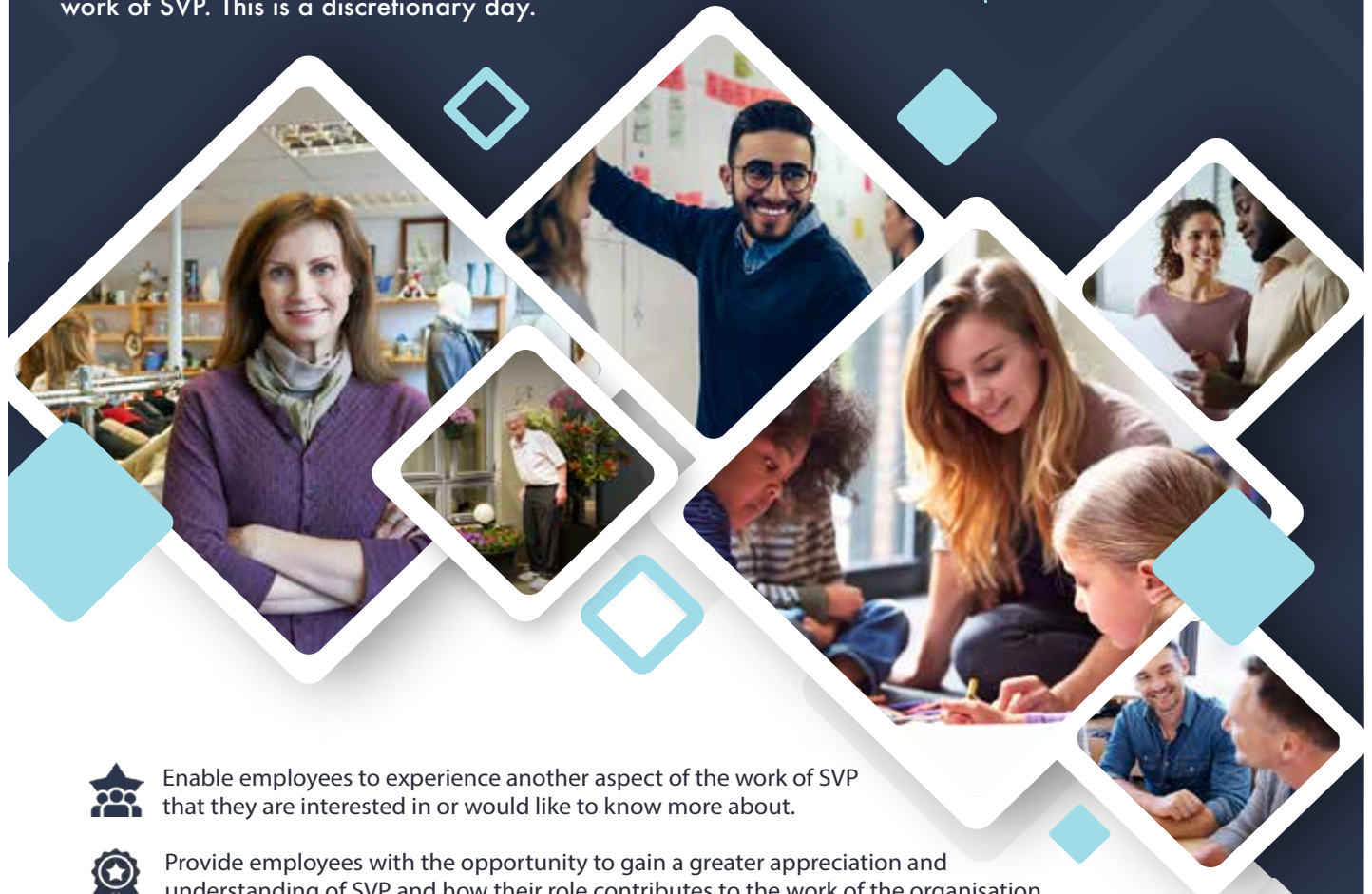
- Don't compromise on your principles.
- Never allow anyone to bully you or put you down.
- Always treat everyone you meet with respect.

I bring these with me to my work in SVP Ireland, an organisation I have the highest regard for. I look forward to working with members, volunteers, staff, partners, and above all the people we are here to support when they need us.

Thank you

SVP Experience Day

All SVP (ROI & NI) contracted employees on permanent and fixed term contracts (of 6 months or more duration) are eligible and encouraged to spend one day per calendar year experiencing a different aspect of the work of SVP. This is a discretionary day.



Enable employees to experience another aspect of the work of SVP that they are interested in or would like to know more about.



Provide employees with the opportunity to gain a greater appreciation and understanding of SVP and how their role contributes to the work of the organisation.



Build a stronger relationship between our services and the wider SVP.



Identify the sharing of best practice.

Employees may decide what aspect of SVP work they wish to experience in Ireland be it in Social Housing, Child and Family Services, Resource Centres, Retail, Administrative /Support function etc.

Given the confidential nature of visitation and Conference work, plus the training required, employees will not be able to engage in visitation or attend Conference meetings.

Any employee who wishes to avail of the SVP Experience Day should speak to their manager, the manager will then agree an appropriate date and liaise with the respective area of work. Given the potential impact on cover, this day will need to be planned well in advance and is subject to management approval. Employees are under no obligation to report back on their experience but are encouraged to share any appropriate observations/ideas with their manager and team. It is also an opportunity to share best practice or opportunities for improvements observed during this day.

A department may also avail of the SVP Experience Day as a team event or a small number of team members subject to the approval of their manager.

SVP EXPERIENCE DAY GUIDELINES



Aim

The purpose is to gain a better understanding of another function or service operated by SVP or simply experience a different aspect of SVP's work.

In addition, it is an opportunity to look at other roles in other services that an employee may be interested in knowing more about for future development/career progression.

We hope that the experience will lead to greater engagement, reinforce the reasons why employees chose to work for SVP and understanding of how we all contribute to the SVP mission. Whilst it is an opportunity to gain experience and learn more about other services/roles it also provides all with a chance to learn how other services operate and share best practice or new ways of doing things.

Team event

A team may elect to visit another service as a team or to visit a service to assist in some way or get involved in a project eg on previous occasions a team has visited a service to assist with decorating etc.

The process for arranging such an event is similar to when an individual employee visits but will require additional planning and coordination in terms of the number of people, travel coordination, impact on service delivery etc.

How does it work?

An employee should identify the service they are interested in learning more about. This may also be a service that engages in similar work but in a different location or a larger service.

To be eligible an employee must have satisfactorily completed their probation period.

The employee should speak with their manager to discuss when they would like to do their SVP Experience Day (it does not have to be a full day), where and what they would like to do or learn.

The manager will then contact the relevant service and agree a mutually appropriate date, time and who the contact will be.

The hosting service will then map out an itinerary for the day, or half day etc. It is expected that the hosting service will allocate a colleague that the employee can 'shadow,' and show around the service.

On return from the SVP Experience Day, the employee may want to share with their manager and/or team their experience (this is encouraged however a formal report etc is not required).

Additional Considerations

- ◆ The SVP Experience Day is quite informal
- ◆ It needs to be planned to be at a time that suits all parties
- ◆ One day per calendar year (but can be less than a day)
- ◆ We encourage sharing of best practice etc
- ◆ The service must be with SVP on the Island of Ireland...no international experience days permitted! :)
- ◆ If the service being experienced involves contact with Children and/or vulnerable adults & the employee is not vetted then they will need to be with another vetted employee for the duration of their day.
- ◆ It is envisaged that staff based in ROI will do their experience day in ROI and NI staff will do their day in NI but where it is a service unique to the region, subject to management approval, this may be accommodated. **N.B This initiative is not expected to incur additional costs for SVP. Any additional expenses incurred will need to be approved in advance and should be in line with the relevant SVP policy.**



MEMBER Stories

Homelessness and the threat of homelessness

by Labhras Loughran

When I joined the Society about 20 years ago, one of the things I could not get over was how poor people who were struggling with rent, and consequently under the threat of eviction, were able to cope so well. I knew I would struggle severely with the threat of eviction, but they seemed to manage.

So I thought that the poor had built up some kind of protective shell that shielded them from this pressure. Stress was simply part and parcel of the hurly burly of being poor. They were used to it.

Boy, was I wrong.

Take John. His wife died about 10 years ago. Together they had a basement flat and they managed ok. But on his own John couldn't pay the rent for a two-person flat. So, he got in touch with us and we helped him with food and electricity as we do for many of our clients.

Mark is a man who lost it all. First he lost his partner when he died in a road accident. Then he lost his health. With his health gone, Mark struggled at work and in the end he lost his job. As a result of all this

Mark was very depressed. Suicidal in fact. As part of his depression, he could not manage his money. He ran up huge debts. But he spent far, far too much and fell behind with his rent and was under constant threat of eviction.

We supported Mark both financially and emotionally. Financially in the usual way with food vouchers. For emotional support, we would meet him regularly for a chat. But we knew that Mark needed some security, particularly with regard to accommodation. So two of my colleagues in the V D P, helped Mark to apply for secure accommodation in various facilities around the city.

Eventually their efforts paid off, and Mark moved into a complex run by the V D P. And that has been transformative for him. I met him one day in Ranelagh about a year ago. He was a different man. No longer that anxious look on his face as he shuffled along, shoulders hunched, but a bright contented look in his eye as he walked purposefully down the street.

That was a wonderful sight to behold.

How a little help can make a difference

by *Marian Quinlan*

Approximately three years ago our Social Welfare Officer (who attended our SVP centre weekly) alerted us to a situation in our locality and asked if we could visit a young separated mother with three very young children.

Two of us from the Conference called to the lady. It was indeed a very difficult situation. She had three little boys who had Autism under the age of two (including twins). Her husband and father of the boys was unable to cope with the situation and went back to live with his parents up the county. He himself had mental health problems was drinking a lot and was verbally abusive. This undermined her confidence and it was a relief when he left.

If it wasn't for the social welfare officer contacting us this lady would not have benefited from the help and support we were able to give her. Her immediate need was to get a triple buggy so that she could bring her boys out of the tiny cramped house which she was renting. She also had huge refuse bills owing to the amount of nappies required.

We sourced a triple buggy and had it shipped in from Belgium for which SVP covered the cost. We also paid her refuse bill and gave her food vouchers along with food. We kept in regular contact with her.

All of the above lifted a huge weight from her shoulders and it was so rewarding to see her smile knowing that we were there to support her in her very difficult circumstances.

She always sent text messages expressing her deep gratitude for everything.

She has succeeded in getting her three children assessed through the HSE. She moved into much more suitable accommodation and is coping very well assured that SVP are always there for her.

We feel families like this might not approach us for help so it is important to advertise we are here to help where we can.



Community Engagement Mentors

by Sarah Hogan

My name is Sarah Hogan and I'm the manager of Vincent's Moyross Limerick. Unfortunately, during the pandemic I found myself unemployed for the first time since being a teenager and I got an opportunity to return to education at the age of 27. I started in the University of Limerick in September 2020 undertaking a level 7 Diploma in CWELL (Community Wellness, Empowerment, Leadership and Life skills). (<https://www.ul.ie/engage/CWELL>)

After my first month at University, I saw a position advertised online for a community store manager with SVP in the Moyross area. I'm originally from Moyross which led to a lot of my course work being focused on this area. I thought all my dreams had come true and this job position was made for me. I have 11 years retail experience but my goal for after university was to work within the community so it was bringing both my past and future work experience together. I didn't hear anything more about the position until July 2021 when I had my first year complete.

I completed CWELL throughout 2021 and 2022 while working full time at Vincent's. During this time, I completed my final year project with an organisation known as Moyross Youth Academy (MYA). My project in a brief description was:

"To identify, analyse and encourage aspiration levels among the youth of Moyross. To identify local role models to broaden the 'rippling effect' while focusing on sustaining and motivating the younger people in Moyross' aspirations and providing inspiration from within the community".

As part of the project, we carried out research among two youth groups and had a local role model intervention. Our research showed that youths can develop and achieve their aspirations with the support of one person whether that be a parent, family member, sports coach, teacher etc.

I finished University in May 2022 with a 1st Class honors diploma.

A couple of months later I was invited back to Moyross Youth Academy as they had gotten 30K funding to develop the MYA Peer mentorship programme. This programme supports young adults, by making them aware of the facilities in the community and inviting them to take part on their own terms e.g., local gym classes, cooking and woodwork classes, wellbeing and

mindfulness workshops, nature walks and hiking groups etc. The goal is to build a rapport with these young people and be a positive mentor and support them with whatever they need to integrate into wider society whether that be everyday tasks, education, employment etc. There are six local people including myself from the Moyross community who are now community engagement mentors.

I have made great links in the community that have supported my shop and I have also gained a CE participant and a volunteer through these links. It is very important to me that I can support local people through SVP but also on a wider scale.

So far, the programme has been successful. I feel that working within a community, I can have a deeper connection with my staff, customers and donors. It is nothing like any other retail position I have worked in before and I am so grateful to be a positive mentor in both my roles.



Sarah Hogan



New Head of Fundraising

Elizabeth Smyth
SVP Head of Fundraising



I am delighted to introduce myself to you all as Head of Fundraising with SVP Ireland.

Prior to this role I worked as the Head of the National Fundraising Initiatives with Focus Ireland for 7 years, Community & Corporate Fundraiser for LauraLynn Children's Hospice and as General Manager of the Christina Noble Children's Foundation.

I started my career into the charity sector through a CSR programme with Vodafone, called 'World of Difference'. This was an opportunity to apply to make a 'World of Difference' in a charity of your choice for 1 year and Vodafone would pay your salary. I saw this has a great chance to give back to a charity that I was close to while not costing them anything. Out of the many applications I was one of three chosen. I then began working for Spinal Injuries Ireland which at the time was based on the grounds of National Rehabilitation Hospital.

Over the last 12 years I have built strong relationships, not only in the teams of which I am a part but also with key stakeholders and supporters of the organisations I have worked for.

I have worked as both a Community & Corporate Fundraising Manager in the previous charities. I have spent a large part of my time researching, encouraging, and managing donors ensuring they have a rewarding and enjoyable journey of fundraising for the charity, in the hope that they continue to support the charity.

I am from Blackrock in Dublin, where I still live. I am the seventh child of nine, and always considered one of the babies of the house.

I hold a BA in Business (Hons), Diploma in Employment Law, Diploma in Digital Marketing and Certificate in Community Fundraising.

I truly loved my time in Focus Ireland and saw first-hand the challenges people faced on a day to day basis living without a place to call home and all the difficulties that go with that. I always said I would never leave unless either an equally good or even better charity came along...so here I am!

When I think of SVP, this quote by Margaret Mead always comes to mind;

"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has."

I am looking forward to meeting you all in the future and working closely to help ensure the future of SVP.

Kindest regards,
Elizabeth Smyth



CHY Forms

Since January 2013, Irish charities have been able to claim back significant tax relief on donations under the Revenue Commissioners' Charitable Donations Scheme. Once donors have given a minimum of €250 to the charity in a single calendar year, the refund goes to the charity and is made at 45%. During the month of March we have sent over 6,000 forms to our supporters.

This was a very big undertaking by the fundraising team and we would really appreciate you encouraging and reminding supporters and members to fill out & return to us in the envelope provided.

Who qualifies under this scheme?

Anyone who has donated €250 or more in one calendar year to SVP, and who pays income tax through PAYE or self-assessment.

If you have any questions about the tax back scheme, please contact fundraising@svp.ie or call 01 8848200. We'll be happy to hear from you.

Your Privacy

This form requires your PPS number in order to be valid but we will only use it for tax reclaim purposes and will keep it safe and promise never pass it to a third party.

Education Appeal

The Society recognises the importance of further education. However, for many people accessibility and affordability are real barriers to obtaining a third level education and training. The SVP Education and Training Bursary Fund has been established to support students of all ages who may financially struggle to access or stay in third level education and training programmes.

The Bursary Programme will consider all recognised third level education and training programmes for funding. However, postgraduate studies (Master or PhD) or private colleges are not eligible. Get in touch with your regional office to find out more about your regional bursary fund and how students can apply.

Kelsey May was a past recipient of an SVP bursary and during the Annual Appeal 2022 she spoke on Ryan Tubridy's radio show about the profound and lasting impact that made on her life. She volunteered



her story again for an education appeal launched this spring by the Fundraising Team and below you can read in her own words what the support of SVP meant to her

YOUR €60

Could help **feed a young person for a week**, making sure they have the brain fuel to thrive at school.

YOUR €144

Could pay for a **student travel pass for a whole month**, so a young person can reach their classes.

YOUR €250

could help with **a year's worth of textbooks**, so a young person has all the knowledge to thrive at college.

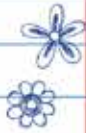
St Vincent de Paul has been in my life as far back as I can remember...

It would be the evening and our SVP volunteer, Noel, would come knocking.

Sometimes he'd have food vouchers for my mam. Sometimes he'd just come to check in. I feel like those chats were often more important than the vouchers.

Because when I was a kid, our family suffered a tragedy.

My baby brother died of cot death. I was only a child myself. And a few years later, my baby sister was born with a severe disability. I remember she was the size of my dad's hand. My parents were told she wouldn't survive.



Thank God she did survive. She has cerebral palsy and chronic lung disease. But she's here and she's happy.

But with my Mam as her full time carer, and my sister in and out of hospital, you can imagine how tight family finances were.

Through it all, SVP was there.

Noel came once a week, twice sometimes. That level of attention, that level of friendship that he gave to my mam... I'll never forget that.

It does hit a nerve speaking about these things, because I struggled a lot with the idea of — 'oh, we're poor'. There would be times where we'd be eating cereal with water, or toast for dinner.

I never thought I'd go to college.

But I was always good with words. I started writing songs and poems when I was 8. For me, poetry was a release — getting all your emotions out.

My guidance counsellor said I should apply to study English literature in



college. I just said —

'I'm not going to get to go to university.
That's just not an option for me with the money.'

I thought I'd leave school and get a minimum wage job, that was the option for people like me. But my Ma called Noel one day and asked, on the off chance, is there anything you can do for Kelsey to help her with college?

Noel said YES...

That AVP has a bursary fund for students who can't afford third level education. He said that I could apply and that he'd help me...

He did. Every step of the way. And I got it!

Mam was thrilled. She never had an education. If you've lived around poverty your whole life, it's a gift to see your child on the path out of it.

Today, I've got a 1st class honours degree in English and creative writing, and I'm a published poet.

Without AVP's grant, without the kindness of people like you, I could never have gone to college. We just didn't have the money for it.

The grant paid for my books, my laptop, transport to get me there and back. All the extras you don't really think about if you have money.

I want to say **THANK YOU** for everything you did for me, and for the faith you put in me. I'll never forget it for as long as I live.

With my love and lasting gratitude,
Kelsey May xoxo

I got to speak to Ryan Tubridy about how kindness like yours changed my life!

You can hear it at:
sup.ie/educationappeal





Issy Petrie, SVP Social Policy Officer; Nessan Vaughan Vice Chair of the SVP Social Justice Committee, Amie Lajoie of Money Advice and Budgeting Services (MABs), Nat O'Connor of Age Action, Karen Trant of the Commission for the Regulation of Utilities, and Dara Lynott, CEO of the Electricity Association of Ireland



In **Warm, Safe, Connected?** SVP sets out our priorities to support people in energy poverty. For too many households that SVP assists, the end of winter won't bring the end of the pressure caused by the rising cost of living.

Whilst we will all be pleased to leave the worst of the cold weather behind, the reality is that people need energy throughout the year, and people in energy poverty will still be struggling with costs.

National data shows that in 2022 the number of people who could not afford to keep their home warm enough more than doubled to 377,000 people.

At SVP, the number of people requesting assistance with energy costs increased by 40% last year.

Those figures reflect just how many people are finding



Warm, Safe, Connected?

Energy Report Launch

By Issy Petrie
SVP Social Justice Policy Officer

their energy costs a huge strain at the moment, and that is why the Society continue to call for the measures needed to protect households in energy poverty.

New report

On the 1st March 2023, the Social Justice team of SVP held an event to launch our priorities for action to support households in energy poverty.

'Warm, Safe, Connected? Priorities to protect households in energy poverty' details the challenges people are facing throughout the cost of living crisis, as well as the key next steps that will provide targeted help to people while prices remain high.

The report set out 6 areas of priority action for the government, and 6 areas of priority action for the energy Regulator and energy suppliers.

Our priorities include:

- Improving protections for prepay customers, making sure can keep their meters topped up and have sources of support when they are struggling.
- Support for people receiving bills they cannot pay – we know many people are shocked at the bills they are receiving, and it is essential they are supported to find a solution that works for them.
- Fundamentally, we also need to make sure people have an adequate income to meet their essential needs. This includes making sure social welfare rates reflect the cost of living, according to Minimum Essential Standard of Living research, and that supports such as the Fuel Allowance reach all who need it.



After a difficult winter, we need to see continued action to make sure households facing high costs and big bills receive all the support they need.

The Social Justice team will continue to advocate for progress in these areas. For full details of our recommendations please see the report on the SVP website: www.svp.ie/energypovertryreport2023.

Launch Event

The event to launch the report was kindly chaired by Nessian Vaughan, Vice-Chair of SVP's Social Justice Committee. We were delighted that there were many SVP members in attendance at the event who took the opportunity during the Questions and Answers to share their experiences of supporting people in energy poverty.

Members spoke about the impossible choices for families who simply don't have enough income each week to cover their most basic costs, the particular challenges some prepay customers are dealing with keeping meters topped up, and the enormous pressure people are feeling from the rising cost of living.

This really brought home to everyone in the room the reality facing people at the moment.



An Taoiseach visits SVP House

On the 6th of April, we were delighted to welcome An Taoiseach Leo Varadkar to SVP House.

The visit was an opportunity for the Taoiseach to hear directly from Members supporting children and families in poverty across the country.

Tackling child poverty is a key objective of the Taoiseach and at the meeting he listened to our concerns and solutions. We hope this positive engagement can be built upon so that the next budget includes key measures to help break the cycle of poverty.



Teresa Ryan, Niall Mulligan, Ben Doyle, Leo Varadkar, Ann Fitzgerald, Noel Boyce, Nessian Vaughan, Tricia Keilthy

Education and the role of Voluntary Contributions

By Niamh Dalziel
SVP Social Justice Policy Officer



Investing in education enables every child and young person can reach their full potential. However, we know from our work in communities that education funding falls short of what is required to promote participation of all children and reduce costs to families.

We understand that voluntary contributions charged from school put further pressure on parents and families at a time when they are trying to ensure they can provide everything that is needed for the child to attend school.

We want all children and young people to have positive experiences in school, knowing that education is a crucial in breaking the cycle of poverty and provides people and their future families

with a better quality of life. We want that generation to be this generation, with change we know they can be.

Last August SVP took on average 300 calls per day from families worried about back-to-school costs, this is a 10% rise on the previous year. This rise demonstrates the growing demand the cost of living is having on families. We want free education to mean free education.

Schools are run by those who are called to educate and improve the lives of children and young people, society would be a different place without them. But they are having to do this with demanding budgets, schools have had their payments per child (capitation rates) reduced. For many years now SVP has been campaigning for an education system which is sufficiently funded and for an increase in the capitation rates to 2010 levels, so that schools will no longer have to fundraise or request voluntary contributions in order meet their financial costs.

The Social Justice Team is working alongside Grant Thornton to conduct an online survey aimed at parents and interviews with school principals to develop a report which will identify where the current gaps in funding are for all categories of secondary schools in Ireland.

We engaged with schools to understand the role voluntary contributions play in their budgeting and meeting their financial demands for the school year and we have asked parents about the impact paying voluntary contributions has on their families finances. The information we gathered will be a catalyst for further crucial conversations about how voluntary contributions should not exist in a free education system and school capitation rates should return to 2010 levels, leading to the end of voluntary contributions. Schools should be financially supported to deliver truly free education and parents should no longer financially called upon to pay any voluntarily contributions or any further charges for their child's education.

The report and SVPs response will be published early summer, with the aim of facilitating further discussions of the impact of voluntary contribution charges in an education system which is financially reliant on parents and families.

Free schoolbooks for all primary school pupils



Information for parents/guardians

From September 2023, schoolbooks, workbooks and copybooks for children in recognised primary schools, including special schools, will be provided to every child free by their school. There is no charge to parents/guardians for this, as schools receive funding from Government to cover these costs.

Schoolbooks, workbooks and copybooks will be provided on loan by the school.

There is no need for parents to buy or read these.

There will be no fee for parents for this.

Schools receive funding to buy these items. Schools must prioritise the use of the funding to cover all costs of textbooks, workbooks and copybooks.

There may be a requirement for parents to buy some additional items for children to use at school. The schools must make this clear to parents.

All children in the class will have access to the schoolbooks, workbooks and copybooks that they need.

The schoolbooks and workbooks will be on loan to the children.

They must be returned at the end of the school year, or if the child leaves the school.

It is important that books are kept in good condition so they can be re-used. Please help make sure your child/children keep the school books safe and takes care of them, so they can be used again by another child.

In Budget 2023, the Government provided over €30 million to eliminate the cost of schoolbooks for children attending primary schools and special schools.



An Roinn Óideacháin
Department of Education



DID YOU KNOW THE SOCIETY UPDATED ITS RISK POLICY? IT CAN BE FOUND ON THE KNOWLEDGE BASE OF THE SVP CONFERENCE PORTAL.

What does that mean for the work I do in a conference?

In the Society our strength is our membership. Our conferences are at the heart of the Society and deliver support and friendship to the people in our communities day in, day out. In performing this work you manage risk daily. In the Risk Management Policy Guidance we have some simple tools to help conference members manage risk in the work that they do.

What simple tools would we use?

At intervals during the year, at conference meetings you could look at the examples below and consider how well your conference manages them. Consider if there changes you want to make to how you operate so as to keep members and service users safe and protect the Society.

COMMON RISKS IN VISITATION CONFERENCES

TYPE	DESCRIPTION	Risk Level High Medium Low	Has the Risk Increased Decreased Stayed the Same?	What steps are we following to manage this risk?	What additional steps might we take?
Safety	The risk that Members or service users are harmed while undertaking activities due to poor planning or unsafe practices.				
Safeguarding	The risk that failure to follow Society safeguarding guidelines, create opportunities to abuse children or vulnerable adults.				
Data	The risk that we have a data breach that results in the accidental or unlawful destruction, loss, alteration or unauthorised disclosure or access to personal data resulting in loss of trust and/or fines.				
Finance	The risk that failure to follow finance process guidelines causes financial loss to the Society.				
Succession	The risk that the conference may not continue due to lack of membership and/or willing committee board.				
Communication	The risk that the Society break Charities Act Legislation or Governance Code or other legislation due to lack of awareness.				
Skills	The risk that activities are undertaken without appropriate expertise in the membership which lead to loss of reputation, harm to service users and/or harm to Members/Volunteers				
Fundraising	The risk that the Conference has insufficient funds raised or fundraising planned to deliver for their community.				
Training	The risk that Conference members undertake activities without the appropriate training needed resulting in poor services for our users, noncompliance with internal procedures and/or regulation, financial penalties and damage to the reputation of the Society,				
Governance	The risk that failure to follow term guidelines set out in the rule result in noncompliance to The Rule.				
Other					



WHERE CAN I FIND OUT MORE?

You can visit the Knowledge Base of the SVP Conference Portal, talk to your Member Support Officer or contact the Head of Risk Management at National Office.

Croí na Gaillimhe

Older People's Programmes 2020-2023

by Loyola King, Activities Coordinator
and Loretta Needham CNG Manager



All the days we enjoyed over the years and all the days we still hoped to enjoy seemed a little unreachable in those early Covid days of 2020. However, we were resilient and committed to staying connected and this we did through phone contact, email, 'What's App' and other means with our participants, volunteers and fellow community groups.

CNG were the first community group in Galway to re-open post the 2021 lockdown. Starting small, socially distant, and compliant with all Covid regulations and protocols we resumed our lunch and social club first our participants were happy to be back and reconnecting with their fellow lunchtime friends. Lockdown stories were shared, thankfully Covid had not impacted too much on our participants, volunteers, or their families but our thoughts and prayers were with those who had suffered loss and prolonged damage because of this devastating disease.

While we are all learning to live alongside Covid thankfully life goes on and we resumed all our activities stronger than ever! We offer classes in art, digital skills, sewing, upcycling, crafting and chair yoga which are eagerly and quickly filled. When possible musical afternoons with live music. We are delighted that people are renewing interest in the different areas of upskilling or rekindling and honing an existing skill. One new addition to our activities is a scrabble club which meets weekly and attracts enthusiasts from across the city to meet up and challenge each-others wit and skills while still having time for coffee and a chat.



CNG ran a very successful "Young Hearts Intergenerational" Programme in collaboration with the University of Galway and transition years from a local secondary school which was funded by the Royal Astronomical Society. We looked at the universe, stars, planets through lectures and explored these concepts through the mediums of art, mosaic, quilting, drama, music, and storytelling.

CNG worked with staff in Ozanam House Dublin and the active retirement group to organise a trip to the West to meet CNG group in 2022. A great day was had by all. Relationships were built and stories shared. There was a great desire for more trips. CNG are planning to travel to Dublin on the 23rd March to see the EPIC sites that the capital has to offer.

CNG have invited the Ozanam House Active Retirement Group to a joint workshop on Music and Storytelling with CNG participants to reflect on their Covid experience in April. We hope to produce a song at this workshop based on the stories facilitated by the "Whileaways" (a Galway Band). Watch this space!

CNG got recognition for its work from the HSE who have brought the older people services in under Section 39 Grants.

The target demographic for our older people's services are those aged 55 upwards, who are looking to establish new and healthy routines whether its reconnecting with a lunchtime community of friends, or as mentioned getting passionate about a new skill and generally learning to use their time wisely while enjoying themselves. Looking to the future we will continue to offer all the above and respond to changing or new interests in as far as we can.

The staff of CNG are happy that we stayed together and stayed strong despite the challenges of the last number of years, good teamwork has ensured that the older people in Galway will always find a welcome and loads of socially engaging things to do at 1 Mill Street.

Newbridge Day Care Centre



Newbridge Day Care Centre is located in the heart of Newbridge town on Station Road. The centre opened its doors on the 6th May 1991 and has been providing a range of day care and community services since then.

Back in the 90s the centre provided a place for the older person to come and spend time with friends, chat and participate in various activities such as card games, bingo, and crafting. Alongside this emerged the 'meals on wheels' venture which started as a core group of volunteers cooking wholesome foods at home and delivering it to a variety of older people in a variety of situations. For example for the older person recovering from illness at home, the person unable to shop or cook due to deteriorating health or the person who just couldn't afford to put food on the table. This type of service was very much in line with the core values of St. Vincent De Paul.

The service continued to grow and the dedicated day care building developed in line with this growth. A catering kitchen is now at the heart of the service which provides up to 950 meals per month. Up to 20 service users attend the centre daily at present and this is expanding weekly in line with the HSE guidance and our service level agreement.

I became manager of the centre in mid-December 2022. The centre was emerging from the pandemic, various lock downs and stages of reopening. I have worked since 1997

in the nursing, care and support of the older person and persons with dementia in a variety of healthcare settings. I was struck by how the centre offers a warm welcoming environment to all service users. However, I also became aware very quickly how the COVID19 pandemic had affected the service users. They were nervous of their health status; they were slower in participating in activities of daily living and expressed significant anxiety regarding any future disruption that may affect the service.

Questions like, 'will you close again if the cases of COVID rise?' Comments like, 'I'm finding it a lot harder to concentrate', 'I feel like I've really slowed down, my walking isn't what it used to be!' 'I've missed everyone so much.' 'I never got outside the door until the centre re-opened'. 'I never want to be alone like that again.'

The staff understood that it was essential that we create the preferred and familiar routines of the service users to give them a sense of stability familiarity and safety. Activities vary and are chosen by service users, these include:

- Crafting,
- Art,
- Planting/potting/light gardening
- Gentle exercise and movement programmes
- Bingo (still the most popular activity in the centre!
- Live music 2 afternoons per week by our fantastic volunteer musicians.

We introduced a 'speak up group' which facilitates the discussion of chosen topics in a relaxed and social manner. For example: Health promotion discussions on the vaccination programmes, the importance of sleep, medication management and what to do in various types of emergency situations.

We also have a 'weekly news review' group where we discuss the local and national news headlines, this can get fiery but we normally survive everyone's opinion!

These very simple ideas have provided a safe and social space for service users to share experiences, listen to advise and limit anxiety. The main aim of the centre now is to offer service users the opportunity to cultivate connections with people, a pivotal pillar of good mental health and wellbeing.

The centre also provides a 'Meals on Wheels Service' to the Newbridge community Monday to Friday. The catering team led by our chef provides nutritious main course meals and desserts to individuals daily in conjunction with our amazing volunteer drivers. During the pandemic this service increased its capacity from 25 meals a day to 50-60 meals per day. Service users who attend the day service also receive their dinner in the centre.

Two other aspects of the service really stand out for me as a new manager with St. Vincent De Paul:

- The importance of the community in supporting and knowing about the service.
- The value of volunteers.

In January a local business man Eric Mc Donnell and the local councillor Peggy O' Dwyer approached me to let me know that they were interested in putting together a fundraiser for the centre due to the positive impact of the meals on wheels service for the community. Together we worked to facilitate a coffee morning for the centre in Mc' Don-



nell's bar. Prizes were donated from local businesses for a raffle often with additional donations to the fund, musicians played free of charge on the day and there was a huge turnout on the 28th of February and over €8000 was raised. The sense of community spirit and generosity towards the service users of the centre and for St. Vincent De Paul was something that was very apparent and something I will nurture in my role.

The service has a group of core staff who work in the meals on wheels service or the day care service, they are an amazing team. However, the culture of volunteerism has really surprised me. Firstly, the number of volunteers who attend the centre each week to deliver activities with the service users. Each week I have watched our volunteer musicians for example come every Wednesday and Thursday to provide live music for the service users. We have 4 other volunteers who support the service for up to 28 hours each week. This facilitates the team to have smaller group activities, more 1:1 activity and a real focus on meaningful interactions and experiences. We also have sixteen volunteer drivers who share most of the food deliveries each and every day. As the centre manager I am so grateful for their time energy and enthusiasm.

Considering the immense impact of COVID19 and now its aftermath the service users of Newbridge day care in conjunction with the staff team and volunteers have revised its mission statement to remind us each and every day what is important to us. Our new mission statement reads as follows:

Newbridge Day Care Centre aims to provide a safe, welcoming, inclusive and person-centred service to the people of Newbridge and its surrounds. We endeavour to promote the abilities, preferences, pastimes and passions of service users thus promoting independence, fulfilment, fun and fellowship.

The centre has adapted to a changing service landscape for the elderly since the 1990s and will continue to do so with this vibrant and resilient group of service users.

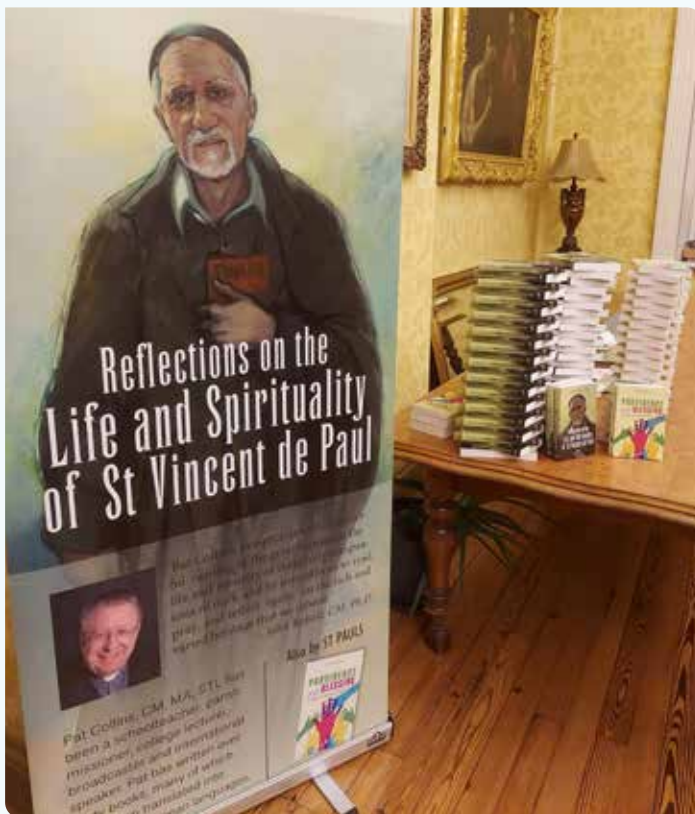


Reflections on the Life and Spirituality of St Vincent de Paul

Fr. Paschal Scallon CM
SVP Spiritual Advisor

Frederic Ozanam gathered a few friends around him in 1833. Together they committed themselves to assist the poor of their day. Influenced by the advice of Bl. Rosalie Rendu, a Daughter of Charity, whose work for the poor they very much admired, they decided to adopt as their name, The Society of St Vincent de Paul. They did this because they were inspired by the life and teaching of the patron of charitable works in the Catholic Church.

There are many excellent biographies of St Vincent, notably the three volume publications of Bishop Louis Abelly in the 17th century, and of Pierre, Coste, CM. in the 20th. More recently, Irish Vincentian, Fr Pat Collins has written a book entitled, Reflections on the Life and Spirituality of St Vincent de Paul (Maynooth: St Paul's Publications, 2022).



As its title suggests, rather than being a biography, it contains a number of chapters which reflect on Vincent's formative years together with such topics as, Vincentian spirituality, evangelisation, compassion, guidance in prayer, divine providence, and the role of the SVP society. The book seeks to relate these topics to the circumstances of everyday life in the 21st century.

Writing in the preface, well known Vincentian scholar, John Rybolt CM, PhD, says, Fr Pat:

“presents us with a masterful reading of the great sources of the life and ministry of these holy companions of ours, and he provokes us to read, pray, and reflect again, not on something totally new, but on the rich and varied heritage that we inherit as their descendants in mission.”

We should be grateful, too, that Fr. Collins has opened up this treasury of the spiritual life, a much-discussed topic in our time. His experiences in reading, studying, and communicating his insights will certainly inspire us, his readers, to new commitments to our own ministry.”

Thankyou

SVP would like to thank the businesses that joined the **SVP Heart of Community** family to help those silently struggling in communities across Ireland.



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Sturdy products Ltd | The Drogheda Property Shop Ltd | Walls Construction | WebSummit |
WinWin/Digibreaks Ltd | Zurich Insurance Plc

Our Heart of Community campaign has been growing from strength to strength each year. Recently thanks to our friends in the Irish Independent newspaper had a full-page advert, thanking all the Companies who donated to us.

We would also like to take this opportunity to thank you, the Members for all your work, continuously promoting SVP, which helps makes our work in fundraising easier.



1 – 9 Ozanam Place, Swinford

Social Housing in Focus

Social Housing Energy Upgrades West Region

*By Paula Kenny
National Manager for Social Housing*

The West region recently saw a number of housing energy upgrade projects undertaken by St Patricks Conference in Westport (4 units) and by Mary Help of Christians in Swinford (9 units).

The upgrade works included: The upgrade works across the 13 units saw the removal of oil-fired central heating systems, outdated electric storage heaters and open fires/stoves, replaced with Air Source Heat Pumps (ASHP) better known as Air to Water Heating Systems. Further upgrade works included replacement of windows and doors with high efficiency double glazing and high quality composite front and rear doors, attic insu-

lation in addition to the pumping of the wall cavities with eco bead thermally efficient insulation.

The installation of new low energy LED lighting throughout the 13 units helped to further improve the carbon footprint of these homes. The projects also included general refurbishment works including internal and external painting, new floor covering and bathroom fit outs.

The upgrade works on both schemes improved the BER rating to a B2. (A BER certificate rates a home's energy performance on a scale between A and G. A-rated homes are the most energy efficient while G-rated are the least energy efficient).

The significant improvement in BER rating to B2 standard makes the homes more thermally efficient and air tight, resulting in increased comfort levels and improved air quality for the tenants. Instances



1 – 4 Ozanam Place, Westport

of mould growth have been eliminated as a continually warm environment removes humidity from the air which is the primary cause of such growth.

The heating systems installed, run entirely on electricity and are considered environmentally friendly, as there are no emissions resulting in zero co2 release into the atmosphere.

The insulation provision across the properties combined with the heat pump technology translates to the retention of more heat, and a constant temperature throughout the home of around 21oC is achieved 24 hours a day.



Members Pat O'Toole and Marie Ruanne of the St Patrick's Conference Westport pictured beside a newly installed heat pump.

The heat pump is designed to run at low temperatures and to be left operating at all times with the tenant only needing to adjust the thermostats by two or three degrees to retain comfortable indoor warmth at all times.



Cost Effective

Despite the sharp rise in electricity prices, the heat pumps are proving economical to run for the tenants, evidenced through recent performance assessment on the thirteen units. Through the analysis of data taken from the electricity used over the first quarter of 2023 compared to a similar period in 2022 the cost of heating the thirteen one bedroom properties came in at an average cost of €18.72 a week, running 24 hours.

In analysing costs across fuel (home heating oil, coal & briquettes purchased during a typical winter period) overall costs have reduced by approximately 60%.

Tenant Satisfaction

Overall tenants have expressed high satisfaction with the upgrade works as per recent tenant survey conducted. In addition to the cost savings there is no more need to have solid fuel delivered and stored and there is a convenience associated with having no more open fires or stoves to look after. The ease of use, being able to control the new heating system has also been highlighted. Homes are warmer for tenants which brings an enhanced level of comfort which is important in the provision of housing for older people.

Our deep retrofits in their entirety, across Westport and Swinford to homes of very similar size, averaged out at a cost of €11,250 per unit which included 50% grant funding received through Government grant assistance from Sustainable Energy Authority Ireland (SEAI).

Both projects were managed by Clár ICH, a Claremorris based SEAI registered 'One Stop Shop' service provider.



1 – 9 Ozanam Place, Swinford



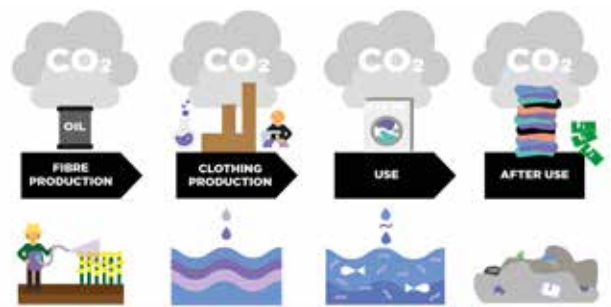
Pictured at The Donate Don't Waste Charleville launch at the Charleville Park Hotel were Dermot McGilloway, National Retail Manager SVP, Sarah O'Connor, Clean Technology Centre and Mary Fleming, CRNI. Photo: Alan Place

Working Towards the Fast Demise of Fast Fashion

By Dermot McGilloway
National Retail Development Manager

The Clothing industry employs over three hundred million people globally and is worth \$ 1.3 trillion. However, the sector also relies mostly on non-renewable resources – 98m tonnes in total per year – including oil to produce synthetic fibres, fertilisers to grow cotton, and chemicals to produce, dye, and finish fibres and textiles. (Ellen MacArthur Foundation)

At Vincent’s Charity shops, we are deeply committed to the circular retailing model of Reduce – Reuse – Recycle and to an energy efficient, low carbon, textile collection and processing service. In a world that produces 1.6 times more waste than it can re-absorb, the old fashion industry linear model of “Take – Make – Throw away” must end in favour of more environmentally friendly practices. With this in mind, we have developed a national network of Order Fulfilment Centres, and are using Epos technology to extract the maximum value from every single donation. We are also working closely with our Recycling partners to ensure that as many unsold garments as possible are reused or recycled, but are we doing enough? If you want to find out ...read on!



A New Textiles Economy: Redesigning Fashion Report

Urgent need for Climate Change

The latest UN climate change report, from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, has been described by UN Chief Antonio Guterres as a “Survival guide for humanity” At the heart of the survival plan, is that global temperatures must be reduced by 1.5 degrees Celsius through the rapid reduction in the use of fossil fuels, which would in turn cut greenhouse gas emissions that are warming the planet’s atmo-

sphere. By 2035, the developed world must be using carbon free electricity. As one of the biggest polluters on the planet, the Fashion industry needs to change!

The world is now at its hottest in 125,000 years and temperatures are set to climb further in the next decade unless urgent action is taken. The diagram below shows the percentage of species exposed to potentially dangerous temperature conditions. (Source BBC)

Amongst other consequences of not meeting these targets is the likelihood that extreme coastal flooding will now occur annually instead on once every hundred years.

The Contribution of Consumerism in this imperfect "Perfect storm"

As we grapple with unprecedented global warming, we are also consuming the resources of the planet at unprecedented and unsustainable levels. This is at the heart of the problem and has its origins in the rise of consumerism.

An early proponent of consumerism, advertising pioneer Ernest Elmo Calkins, spoke of "Consumer engineering", stating that effective advertising and design work could help create an artificial demand for any product.

Calkins took the view that consumer demand for any product would increase if the consumer could be convinced that the product they had once used had now been used up. A combination of marketing and consumerism could be used by manufacturers to boost sales by the "planned obsolescence" of perfectly reusable products. Calkins wrote "To make people buy more goods, it is necessary to displace what they already have, still useful, but outdated, old-fashioned, obsolete".

To meet the ever-changing needs and wants of those wishing to consume fashion, it is estimated that the rapacious fashion industry is now producing 160 billion garments annually and, in doing so, has become one of the biggest polluters on the planet. We buy on average 60% more clothes than we used to and wear them for half the time we used to. The textile value chain emits over 3.3 billion metric tons of greenhouse gases annually, (Quantis, 2018), more than all international flights and maritime ship-

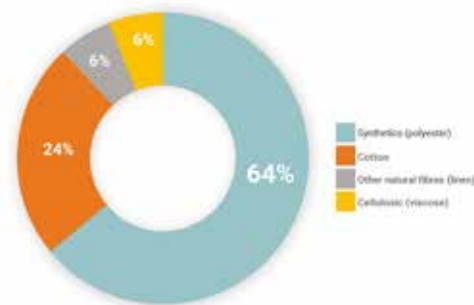
ping combined. It is also estimated that a truckload of abandoned textiles is being dumped or incinerated every second of every day (Ellen MacArthur Foundation, 2017). This cannot continue and we need to be part of the solution.

Our appetite for Faster Fashion

High street brands, fashion designers, image makers and the media are all feeding into our obsession for quicker access to more disposable fashion, aided by shorter supply chains and lower costs. The fashion sector now operating one of the most aggressive marketing programmes around. The Fashion business model is increasingly based on higher turnover, higher volumes and cheaper prices with the term "Fast Fashion" used to describe cheaper, low-quality clothing, that we are consuming in unprecedented quantities and at unprecedented speeds, in our hunt for the latest trends. The consumer is now treated to 52 seasons a year by many of our favourite High Street or online clothing retailers.

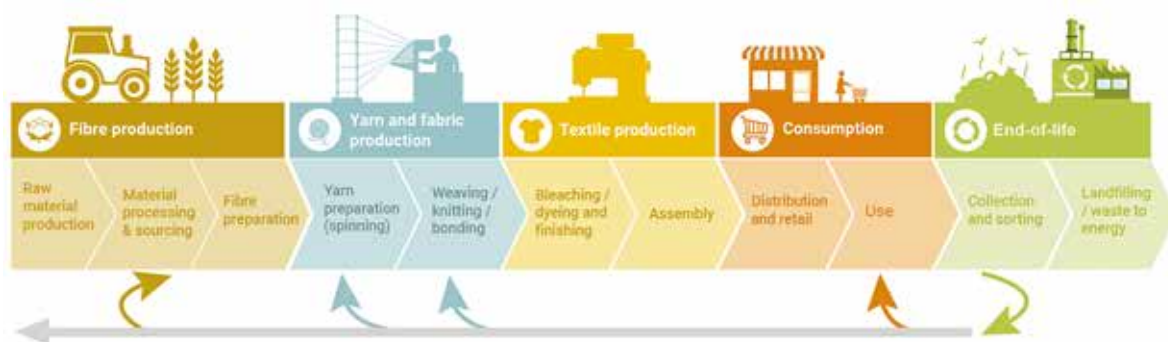
Clothing / apparel now accounts for around 60% of the global demand for fibres, with the share of household and industrial textiles roughly equal (accounting for around 20% each of global demand for fibre) (PCI Wood Mackenzie, 2016).

Share of fibres in global apparel in 2016



Source: Quantis (Quantis, 2018)

These garments are generally a blend of natural agricultural materials, cotton, and synthetic fibres like polyester, that are made from crude oil. Most garments produced today, over 64%, are made of synthetic, oil-based materials like Polyester. 24% are made from cotton. Both natural and synthetic garments draw heavily on the diminishing resources of our planet, but each in different ways.








Source: Sustainability and Circularity in the Textile Value Chain Report: UN Environment Programme 2020

The True Cost of Fashion

The Fashion Industry currently operates a linear model of “Take, Make & Dispose” with 5 clear stages in the life cycle of a garment.

- **Fibre Production** covers the extraction and processing of fibres.
- **Yarn Production** covers the spinning of yarn from both filament and staple fibres. (wet spinning and cotton spinning). Fabric Production covers knitting and weaving yarn into fabric.
- **Textile Production** includes dyeing and finishing which covers the bleaching and dyeing of the fabric as well as fabric finishing. Assembly covers the cutting and sewing of fabric into apparel products.
- **Consumption Distribution** covers the transportation of apparel products from their assembly location to retail stores.
- **End of Life Disposal** covers the collection and management of apparel products at the end of their use full life (incineration and landfilling).

Having studied the textile value chain, the UN Environment Programme has identified several hotspot areas at each stage of textile production. **See table below.**

The textile value chain and its hotspots	
 Fibre Production	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High use of fossil fuels to produce synthetic fibres (which involves climate, human health and ecosystem quality impacts) • High use of agrichemicals, land and water to produce natural fibres, especially cotton (leading to biodiversity and ecosystem quality impacts) • Unsafe working conditions and fragility of the legal system (leading to human health impacts and social risks)
 Yarn and Fabric Production	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No hotspots identified (although there are climate, human health and ecosystem quality impacts, along with social risks, the available life cycle data shows yarn and fabric production is not among the top contributors to impacts when the whole value chain is considered)
 Textile Production	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High use of fossil fuels for heat and electricity generation in energy-intensive textile processes (which involves climate, human health and ecosystem quality impacts) • Use of hazardous chemicals (leading to high human health and ecosystem quality impacts, particularly via water pollution) • Release of microfibres (leading to ecosystem quality impacts and potential human health impacts) • Unsafe working conditions and fragility of the legal system (leading to human health impacts and social risks)*
 Use Phase	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High use of electricity in the care of textiles over their lifetime (fossil fuels used for energy production, leading to climate, human health and ecosystem quality impacts) • High use of water and releases of microfibres in washing textiles over their lifetime (leading respectively to water scarcity, ecosystem quality and potential human health impacts)
 End-of-Life	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low rates of recovery of textiles at end-of-life leading to high material value loss and non-renewable resource depletion

Source: Sustainability and Circularity in the Textile Value Chain Report: UN Environment Programme 2020

The wet processing stages of dyeing and finishing are especially energy intensive, as large volumes of water need to be heated. The greenhouse gases emitted from burning fossil fuels (particularly coal) to generate the heat and electricity required in these stages of textile production account for their high contribution to climate impact.



Additional concerns arise around an estimated 3,500 substances that have been identified as used in textile production (KEMI, 2014). Many of the chemicals used in textile production are hazardous and include toxic chemicals, such as alkylphenols and perfluorinated compounds (PFCs), flame retardants and many dyes containing carcinogenic heavy metals.

Asian countries, particularly China, India and Bangladesh, account for a high proportion of the various global textile manufacturing stages and all rely heavily on fossil fuels for energy generation.



Source: Sustainability and Circularity in the Textile Value Chain Report: UN Environment Programme 2020

Working conditions for people working in these early stages of production are also a major cause of concern, particularly due to the high numbers of women and rural migrants working for extremely low wages and in sub- standard working conditions.

The Fast Fashion business model requires extremely low wages to ensure lower prices once the finished garment reaches the clothes shops of Europe and North America. As long as we keep buying Fast Fashion, retailers will keep making it.

The Fast Demise of Fast Fashion

Whilst our consumption of garments may currently be described as Fast, the term Fast Fashion is a misnomer as the garments in question have gone through all of the usual stages listed above.

A €4 cotton T shirt will have used 2,700 litres of water, pesticides and insecticides, bleaches and dyes and will have polluted the land, our waterways, and the air in the process. The T shirt will also have passed through the hands of factory workers, working for low pay in unsafe working environments and been transported halfway across the world, to reach our high streets.

Once bought, worn and washed, the garment starts to shed microfibres, up to 1,800 with each machine wash. In truth, there is nothing cheap or fast about Fast Fashion as it is literally costing us the earth!



Vincent's as a leader in ethical & sustainable Retailing

By donating your pre-loved items to Vincent's or updating your wardrobe from our extensive & affordable range of classy garments, you are helping to slow down the harmful effects of Fast Fashion and keep garments in circulation for longer.

At Vincent's, we are committed to the following initiatives:

- Encouraging “Reduce, Reuse & Recycle” by offering an affordable, ethical, sustainable, and convenient alternative to Fast Fashion
- Operating a double filter system in our shops and OFC'S to extract every possible textile that can sold or redistributed through our Emergency Assistance or Conference Referral programme.
- Using Epos technology to track local demand and replenish that demand efficiently and effectively.
- Reducing unnecessary journeys and emissions from fuel consumption by managing our fleet through our OFCs to ensure route optimisation.
- Recycling surplus stock, cardboards & plastics in a growing number of sites
- Using recycled resources – labels & cotton donation bags
- Reducing energy consumption by introducing LED lighting in our shops
- Educating staff, volunteers, customers, and donors through instore activity
- Working with reputable Recycling companies to ensure that textiles unsold in Ireland are re-worn abroad (81%) or are recycled or re-manufactured (18%)
- Participating in “Donate Don't Waste” – Developing A Circular Economy for Ireland Pilot run by CRNI and funded by EPA.
- Using Sustainable suppliers including Recyclers and utility companies

MEET *The Team*



Around the Regions

West Region

I wanted to take this opportunity to tell you how the Young SVP programme in the West region is going. We are having another successful year with over 25 schools and 579 students taking part in the Young SVP programme I am privileged to have met with so many amazing students who are all planning to do amazing things. We are also delighted to welcome back our Befriending projects, where students can return to visits to nursing homes and meeting with older people outside of the school.

This has always been one of the most popular projects in our region. It means that the young people taking part in Young SVP can really get a sense of what SVP does and mirror the values of the Society in that person to person contact which our members are so good at doing.

Students this year are also extremely interested in the effect of poverty on people's day to day lives. Through the workshops they explore the impact that living below the poverty line has on families and individuals. The workshops evoke a sense of empathy and understanding on what this must be like and also is a catalyst for the students to get involved and use their power to effect change in these areas. There have been particular discussions around the cost of education and the strain this is putting on people.

I ask all of the students why they want to get involved in the Young SVP programme and I always get the same response 'to help others',

they do this through learning and educating themselves around the real issues happening in Ireland at the minute but also, they raise awareness around the work of the Society which results in inventive fundraisers which go to help the people in their area.

I am looking forward to the new year and all the inspiring work the students will continue to do.



North East & Midlands



I would like to begin by introducing myself My name is Clodagh Naughton, and I am the new YDO here in the North East & Midlands, covering Meath, Cavan, Monaghan, Westmeath, Longford and Louth. I started the role in September 2022, so I am still newish.

The programme encourages students to get involved in their local communities, improving the lives of others and gain a better understanding of SVP. I am currently working with 24 schools across the region. The schools have taken part in the Young SVP workshops which helps young people gain knowledge and understanding of poverty, social exclusions while also allowing students to work on social action projects.

Social action projects undertaken by some of the schools include fashion shows working with the local shops, the stay awake campaign and raising awareness of food poverty in young people. This will all be displayed at our youth day.

I am looking forward to my first Youth Day in Meath (3rd May 2023, Ardboyne Navan). Each group will get to show case there projects to other schools and hopefully some schools will do a performances for us on the day. Its a great way to see what other schools do in different areas.

South East Region

Hi! My name is Debbie Donohoe and I'm the Youth Development Officer in the South East Region (Waterford, Wexford, Carlow, Kilkenny & Laois). This is the 9th year that Young SVP has been active in the South East and each year it grows from strength to strength. I'm delighted to say that, after 2 uncertain and difficult years with Covid restrictions, the programme is back in full swing. We have 29 schools (so far!) engaging with Young SVP in the South East this year with 21 Youth Conferences and the other 8 schools taking part in our Young SVP module.

Students taking part in our workshops get the opportunity to learn about social justice issues that face SVP daily, in a fun, thought provoking way. The emphasis in these workshops is to promote social action and to empower young people to do their bit to help people in need. Our Youth Conferences have the opportunity to get involved in the 4 types of projects in Young SVP (Befriending, Education, Awareness, Direct Aid) and it's great to see the range of projects that students are already organising this year. It's important that young people see their ability to make change and make a difference, just like our founder Frederic Ozanam did as a young man.

I'm thrilled to say that our Regional Youth Day is back and will be taking place in the SETU Arena, Waterford on Tuesday 25th April 2023. There is an open invitation to all members to come and meet the students in your area and see the great work that's happening in our region.



As always, if there is anything that we can do to help your local conference, don't hesitate to reach out to us. It's so important to nourish connections between youth conferences and local conferences. I am also always available to come to Area/ Conference meetings to speak to members about Young SVP. Thank you all for your continued support!

Mid West Region



Hi, my name is Clodagh and I am the Youth Development Officer for the Mid-West Region. I am relatively new to the role of Youth Development Officer. I started in September 2021 and completed a very successful 6 months in the position before I went on Maternity leave. While I was on maternity leave the Youth Development Role lay in the very capable hands of Jorien Szkudlarski. Jorien brought a wonderful passion and energy to the job. All the schools she engaged with spoke very highly about how she delivered the Young SVP Programme so well. She inspired many schools to complete a variety of fundraisers for SVP. Since my return to the YDO role in January

I have been very busy delivering Social Justice Workshops to schools from the 4 counties of Limerick, Clare, Tipperary and Offaly. I have really enjoyed setting up new Young SVP School Conferences and meeting familiar faces from the very established and active school conferences I had previously engaged with. Schools in the Mid-West Region have been very busy this term organizing events, projects and fundraisers in aid of SVP. The Young SVP School Conferences are also really looking forward to the Mid-West Youth Day taking place on Tuesday the 16th of May in the Radisson Blu Hotel in Limerick.

The Youth Day will be an opportunity for schools to showcase all their great projects, hard work and efforts in helping others. It promises to be a fun day out for all!

A student from Schull, West Cork said the programme was "a breath of fresh air".

A teacher from Schull, West Cork Community School said "thank you for one of the best sessions ever with the TY's".

South West Region

I would like to begin by introducing myself and say a HUGE HELLO from Cork. My name is Alita Kelly, and I am the new YDO here in the South West Region (Cork and Kerry). I started the role in November, so I am quite the newbie... but really enjoying the change of environment and pace.

SVP have welcomed me with open arms, and I instantly felt like a part of the South West/Young SVP teams. I am happy to say that a lot of schools in both Cork and Kerry engaged with me quite quickly and have really welcomed both me and the programme into their schools. In such a short period of time I have had the opportunity to meet so many wonderful students, supportive teachers, and school chaplains.

As always, if there is anything that we can do to help your local conference, don't hesitate to reach out to us. It's so important to nourish connections between youth conferences and local conferences. I am also always available to come to Area/ Conference meetings to speak to members about Young SVP. Thank you all for your continued support!



Colleges

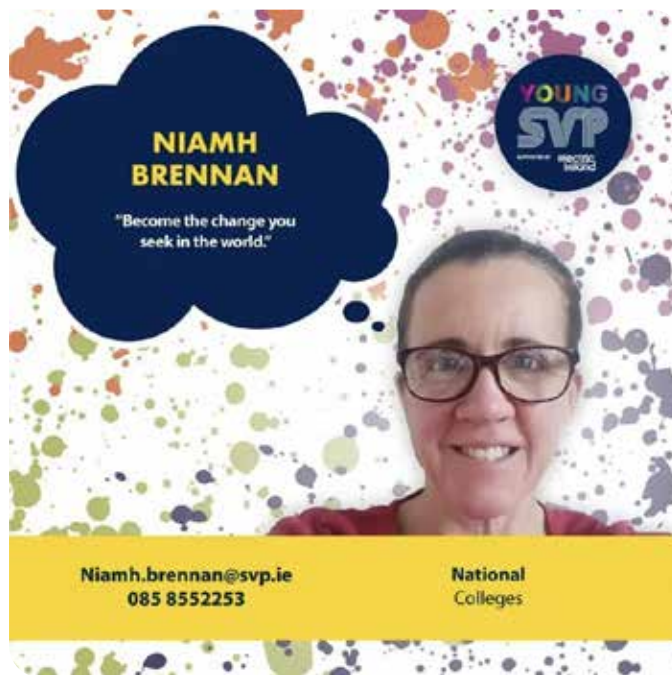
The year 2022/2023 has been a productive time for our college programme. It has also been an exciting time for me having taken up the role of College Support Officer working with colleges throughout the country! This academic year saw colleges returning to direct contact activities again post-Covid. Although students had kept the societies going with fundraisers and other non-contact events they were keen to get back to activities. Training in Street Outreach, Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults or Child Protection has begun in NUI, Galway and NUI, Maynooth who were generously assisted in their start-up by UCD and TCD. Street

Outreach involves walking a weekly route to engage with homeless people and providing small material assistance such as toothpaste, toothbrushes, feminine hygiene products and clothes, as well as having a chat and being a friendly presence and a listening ear.

Jailbreak also returned. Organised by 3 Trinity societies, SVP, DU Amnesty & Cumann Gaelach with funds raised shared between SVP and Amnesty. The event involves teams of two racing to a mysterious "Location X" (anywhere in Ireland) within 36 hours. Six teams participating this year. The TCD annual pantomime returned with 40 children from the Trinity VDP homework club, 20 adults from the T-club (a club for adults with intellectual disabilities) and over 100 Trinity VDP volunteers. They created the set and all the costumes – and spent hours practicing! This year's panto, Madagascar was performed to an audience of over 500 people each night. It was an absolute joy and received standing ovations both nights.

March saw the roll-out of our first college collaboration with a Chaplaincy department. We ran a workshop on 'Volunteering: a bridge to Well-being, Connection and Community' with a focus on volunteering with SVP. The first workshop was held in ATU, Galway and was a wonderful afternoon of discussion and awareness raising. The next will be held in UCC and MTU. We also teamed up with the Chaplaincy department and the Sustainable Energy & Environmental Society in MTU, Cork to run a workshop on sustainable fashion and its connection to the Vincent's Shops. In Cork College of Commerce, we held an awareness raising workshop on 'Poverty and the Cost of Living'. We also took our first trip to Queens University, Belfast where we held an information session for students on the work of SVP and ways to volunteer with us.

Meanwhile, Dundalk I.T held a very successful fundraiser for SVP with numerous fun-filled events such as 'beat the goalie' and 'be a saint for SVP'. Colaiste Stiofain Naofa held a soccer tournament fundraiser with the torrential downpour of rain doing nothing to dampen their spirits! All in all, an exciting and busy few months with lots more plans in the pipeline!



...testimonials

I have been a facilitator with our Young SVP in St. Caimin's Community school for 15 years. It has been a privilege to support enthusiastic and kind young people in their efforts to raise awareness about social justice issues and to support various people in our community.

I've had fun, laughter and seen fabulous friendships formed, many which have lasted long after students have left St. Caimin's.

Young people come alive when helping others, they have an innate goodness within them, which I've seen come alive through senior citizen coffee mornings, visits to our local nursing home, fundraising, food and toy appeals and much more. As a teacher and chaplain, it is great to relate to students out of the classroom and watch their leadership and characters flourish. Young SVP has been a life force within our school, all students are welcome to join the group, where kindness, acceptance, friendship and fun are central values at our weekly meetings.

Cora Guinnane (Chaplain, St. Caimin's Community School, Shannon, Co. Clare)

Upcoming Youth Days

West Region

30th March
McWilliam Park Hotel

South West Region

27th April
Silver Springs Cork Hotels

South East Region

25th April
WIT/SETU Waterford

Mid West Region

16th May
Radisson Blu Limerick Hotel & Spa

Northeast & Midlands Region

3rd May
Ardoyne Hotel

*A Chaplain from Milstreet
Co. Cork said
"the workshops are great,
they are engaging and
they gave the students a
lot of food for thought"*

*A teacher from Rathmore
Co. Kerry said
"I am so glad we have had the
opportunity to reengage with
Young SVP, the students
really enjoyed it and learned
a lot from it"*

THANK YOU

Thank You

From everyone here at the Young SVP team we would like to say a massive thank you to all the schools, colleges, teachers, students and members involved.

The enthusiasm and generosity this programme receives every year does not go unnoticed and we cannot wait to continue our efforts in 2023.

Any questions/queries
please
CONTACT US at
youth@svp.ie





Saint Vincent de Paul (1581-1660) – A Child’s Saint

by Sister Anne Neylon DC

A teacher introduced her religious education lesson on the Saints to Second Class/P4 from Grow in Love. She asked, ‘Did anyone ever hear the name, Saint Vincent de Paul?’ Immediately, Charlie answered, ‘Yea, he was in our house last night. He’s very kind and often helps us.’ Cherish the nugget! Charlie’s experience was key to teaching the lesson. The name Saint Vincent de Paul (SVDP) and the purpose of the regular visit was familiar to Charlie (from the SVP’s member’s witness). This engendered a positive, active context to the lesson. *Tosú maith leath na h-oibre.* The title ‘Saint’ expresses Vincent’s holiness.

Charlie’s response touched the core of the Vincentian charism which ‘refers to St Vincent de Paul’s and St Louise de Marillac’s way of understanding and expressing their experience of God’s presence and action in their lives.’ Sacred Scripture identifies their experience as, ‘Whenever you did this for one of the least of my brothers and sisters, you did it for me’ (Mt 25:40).

It is evident that Saint Vincent de Paul is one of the most revered and popular saints. God’s goodness continues to touch numerous lives in countless organisations of the Vincentian Family internationally, through Saint Vincent’s name and intercession. Even as early as 1645, Saint Vincent could hardly believe how his family had grown.

Pope Francis launched ‘For a Synodal Church’ in October 2021. He reflected on how the synodality of the Church is achieved through communion, participation, and mission, with the Holy Spirit as the protagonist. The Synodal Pathway relates to Saint Vincent’s experience of Jesus, whose spirituality

focused on an encounter with the poor Christ. The Holy Spirit also led Saint Vincent as a missionary disciple.

Educators strive to educate pupils in teaching religious education and witnessing to the Gospel, by living their faith. The children’s encounter with Jesus, will lead them into the world, where they will share the Good News amid suffering, hunger, violence, and poverty. The hope is to impel youth to share their talents, engaging in generous service and mission, especially to those most in need. Simultaneously, pupils are formed, by God’s grace as advocates, to build a just and caring society. Over time, through prayer and reflection, the Holy Spirit will guide the youth to answer similar questions that Saint Vincent answered, ‘Who is Jesus?’ and ‘How do I follow Jesus?’

Educators will introduce children at an age-appropriate level to concrete connections, associated with Saint Vincent in historical and current times, e.g., a visit to a SVDP Charity Shop, a visit to a SVP Conference in a post-primary school, research the work of the DePaul Ireland Homeless Charity or initiate a conversation with a local SVP Conference about the work of the SVP, Blessed Frédéric Ozanam and his fellow students. Saint Vincent de Paul’s life is attractive, energising and challenging. Vincent grew up in a family steeped in Christian values, which grounded him in faith. In prayer, he rooted himself in the person of Jesus Christ. The fruit of prayer enabled him to do God’s will collaboratively, to build the Kingdom of God in the context of the world in which he lived.

‘Give me a man of prayer and he will be ready for anything’ (Saint Vincent).



NORTH REGION



Annual Appeal

Mary Waide, SVP Regional President for the North Region, was joined by broadcaster Eamonn Holmes and Northern Ireland's queen of comedy, May McFettridge, to launch the North Region's Annual Appeal.

The Appeal attracted support from a wide range of businesses and schools across the Region.

Long Service Recognition

SVP members in Omagh received recognition of their long service with the Society. Mary Waide, Regional President for the North Region, presented Michael Donnelly, Fionnuala Farley and Phil McKenna with certificates celebrating their commitment to volunteering with SVP.



Fionnuala Farley with Mary Waide, Regional President for the North Region.



Michael Donnelly with Mary Waide, Regional President for the North Region.



Phil McKenna with Mary Waide, Regional President for the North Region.



Freedom of the City Belfast

The Freedom of Belfast was conferred on SVP during a special concert at Belfast’s Waterfront Hall. This event was attended by Pauline Brown, SVP Regional Manager, and Mary Waide, SVP Regional President for the North Region.

Lord Mayor of Belfast Cllr Tina Black invited SVP members from across Belfast to join her for afternoon tea at Belfast’s City Hall in celebration of this honour.

PSNI attend Mass at St Colman’s Church

Representatives of Banbridge PSNI Neighbourhood Team and the PSNI Catholic Police Guild were invited to St Colman’s church for Mass.

Those attending also celebrated the growing success of the ongoing referral scheme, a partnership between SVP and the PSNI in Armagh, Banbridge and Craigavon Policing District.



Vincent’s Opens on Belfast’s Springfield Road



Local man 101 year old Terry Sharpe was the guest of honour at the official opening of Vincent’s on Springfield Road.

Terry is pictured with SVP Regional Board member Anne Irwin, Mary Waide, SVP Regional President for the North Region, and Anne McLarnon, Chair of SVP Northern Regional Retail Committee.

Terry’s dad Albert rose to fame alongside Sean Connery when he played Darby O’Gill in the 1959 Disney movie ‘Darby O’Gill and the Little People’.

Immaculate Heart of Mary Conference, Christmas Dinner

Our Conference held a very successful Christmas dinner at the La Mon Hotel & Country Club for the senior citizens in our parish.

Peter Woods, one of our long serving members who helps in organising these events has retired. Peter joined our Conference on the 01/01/85 and retired 21/06/23. He also served as President on two separate terms as a member during this period.

We, the conference members, took the opportunity to show Peter our appreciation and presented him with a small gift and card, signed by members, wishing him a happy retirement at the annual dinner he so fondly helped with and attended.

Immaculate Heart of Mary Conference,
Drumbo and Carryduff, South and East Belfast Area



SOUTH WEST REGION



Eileen O'Sullivan pictured at the South West Regional Member's Day in the Killarney Heights Hotel.

Eileen O'Sullivan SVP Long-serving Member

Eileen has been a dedicated and much-loved Volunteer in the Listowel Vincent's Shop for over 25 years.

Eileen is known for her wonderfully warm personality, good humour, wit and kindness. Eileen is also a long serving and highly respected member of Our Lady of Lourdes Conference, Listowel, known affectionately as "our Eileen" by Members and Volunteers.

Doesn't she carry her 85 years well!

South West Regional Members Day 2023 Killarney Heights Hotel

“Back to Basics” was the theme of the day remembering the Core Work of SVP Home Visitation. The South West Region held their members day on the 19th of February 2023. 150 members travelled from all over the region to attend the day.

The day began with Mass concelebrated by Bishop Ray Browne and Retired Bishop Bill Murphy. Before Mass began there was a presentation of symbols about the work SVP does and the meaning each symbol was explained to the members by the Regional Vice President for Cork Julieann Ramsell Kelly. Bishop Browne’s sermon focused on the benefit of education and thanked the SVP on their continued support in this area. Members participated in every part of the Mass with Ministers of the Word, Prayers of the Faithful, Minister of the Eucharist and the Reflection all given by members.



Eileen O’Sullivan pictured at the South West Regional Member’s Day in the Killarney Heights Hotel.



When Mass was finished the members were addressed by the Regional President Paddy O’Flynn who thanked members for attending and especially their hard work in keeping everything going for the past 2.5 years during the pandemic. However, today was a day for focusing on back to visitation the core work of SVP and being back out and visible in the community. He also focused on the role SVP members plays on education and the support SVP gives to 3rd level as well as primary and secondary level where support in this area really does make a difference. Paddy then thanked our special guests for attending, Rose McGowan, National President, Norma Foley Minister for Education, John Lupton National Vice President and Billy Keane Writer and Novelist. Paddy then called on the National President Rose McGowan to address the members.

The National President then called on the Minister to address the members who spoke on the support SVP does around education and thanked the members for all their hard work. The members were pleased to hear it confirmed that from September school books will be free to all primary school students.

Our Regional Vice President Mary Frances Behan then introduced Billy Keane writer and novelist who addressed the members and left them laughing and light hearted with various stories and had of course to have a bit of banter about the Cork/Kerry relationship with the message “shop face” where the members then broke for lunch and a chat.



After lunch members attended a workshop using Assessment of Need led by Mary Frances Behan & Brendan Hennessy. This created much chat and discussion and when finished 2 members Richard Murphy St Brendan’s Conference Caherciveen & Sandra Brett St Patricks Cork City Centre gave a summary of both case studies. These were well received and gave the members food for thought.

The members were then addressed by the National Vice President John Lupton who give the closing reflection for the day. The day closed with the Regional President Paddy O’Flynn with the prayers for peace.





EAST REGION

Inner Wheel donates to SVP in Booterstown

The Inner Wheel is an international women's organisation. The Irish branch meets every month in Dun Laoghaire. A women's social group, its aims are to promote true friendship, to encourage the ideals of personal service and to foster international understanding. The members also raise funds for a variety of charitable causes, including LauraLynn, The Blackrock Hospice, The Heart Foundation (Stroke Research), Mary's Meals and the Red Cross Appeal for Ukraine.

In March the cause of their choice was the SVP conference of the Assumption in Booterstown. Their very generous donation of €2,250 will of course be put to very good use for our clients.



Long Service Recognition

Mass for Members 25 and 50 year recognition

East Region held a Mass for all members on 8th December, Clarendon Street Church which was very well attended by members and their family and friends. It was a great opportunity for members to come together again.

Marie Cronin Regional President, East Region presented some members with the 25 and 50 year recognition and thanked them for their commitment to those we serve. 50 years' service Mary Fitzmaurice, St Maelruan, 25 years' service, Alan Markey, St Peter, Phibsboro, Beatrice Flanagan, Nativity Beaumont, Catherine Garvan, Three Patrons Rathgar, Philip Duggan, St Marys Youth Club, Mary Foley, St Marys Youth Club, Pauline O'Neill, St Marys Youth Club.



Marie Cronin, Regional President, presenting Alan Markey, Area President North Central Area and Conference President his certificate



St Kevin's Conference Ballymore Eustace

Kay Kavanagh, is celebrating 40 years of volunteering with the SVP this year. She has served in various posts in our Conference throughout this time and today still plays an active roll in the work we do in the community. We made a small presentation to Kay at our last meeting to celebrate the occasion.

Conference Retirees St Fergal's Conference Finglas West, Dublin 11

St Fergal's Conference Finglas West would like to acknowledge two members: Our Treasurer John Dawson and our President Pat Phelan have retired from our Conference.

For many years they provided tremendous service to the Society of St Vincent de Paul and the people of Finglas West.

John had over 65 year's service and Pat has also contributed many years.

We thank them for their dedication and all their efforts over the years and wish them well in their retirement.



St Fergal's Conference Treasurer
John Dawson



St Fergal's Conference President
Pat Phelan

NORTH WEST REGION

St John's Conference Eighties Theme Night



A fabulous 80's themed Disco was held during October 2022 in Toff's/Lola's in aid of St John's Conference and Sligo Cancer Support Centre.

We are very thankful to the Committee who worked very hard to organise this, with owners: Kennedy Bros, organising a live band, DJ Seamie & others from the era.

A huge crowd attended there was even the traditional supper and slow sets. We are delighted to receive €8,771.50.

SOUTH EAST REGION

Waterford Lions Club raises €60,000 for local SVP

Waterford Lions Club in the run to Christmas 2022 raised a whopping €60,000 for the Christmas Hamper Appeal. Brian Jacob Waterford Lions president stated the Waterford Lions are over 40 years in supporting the Christmas Hamper appeal and are delighted to have raised much needed funds for many families in need in Waterford City.

Eugene Lanigan Waterford Area President of the Saint Vincent de Paul stated the SVP could not deliver services to families in need in the run up to Christmas without the dedicated support and commitment from the Waterford Lions club, Eugene paid tribute and thanks to the Waterford Lions for their continued support to the Waterford Society of Saint Vincent de Paul supporting families in need across Waterford city.



Patsy Sheridan PR Waterford Lions, Rebecca Smyth SVP, Eugene Lanigan SVP Area President, Brian Jacob Waterford Lions President, David O'Neill SVP and Aidan Barrett Waterford Lions at a recent presentation of €60,000 to the Saint Vincent de Paul Christmas Hamper Appeal.

St Joseph & Benildus Conference accepts donations from local Gaelschoil

Liam O Connor and Marta Flood members of St Joseph and Benildus Conference, Newtown, Waterford receiving the gifts from Gaelschoil, Ballygunner, Waterford.



MID WEST REGION



Pancake fundraiser for St Margaret's Cappawhite Annacarty & Donohill

Our local Primary school held a Pancake Breakfast morning and raised €1000.00 for our Conference, St Margarets Cappawhite Annacarty and Donohill Co.Tipperary for which we are very grateful.

Cappawhite National School, Co.Tipperary and its Principal Mrs Flynn organised a fundraiser for local St.Vincent de Paul on Shrove Tuesday presenting Breakfast and pancakes to the parents and pupils and proceeds to St. Margaret's Conference.

The 6th Class students did a lot of the work and were helped by teachers and parents.And the event was covered in the local newspaper.

The school also gives a generous donation of food at Christmas time along with two other schools in the Conference area and this is very much appreciated.

St Margaret's Conference is a rural Conference covering seven local parishes and we also cover an Outreach area that is not covered by any other Conference and this is an extremely busy area and is on the border of Limerick so it consists of a lot of travelling, and lots of complex cases.We are a conference of eight Members and we are kept busy.



Cappawhite National School, Co. Tipperary fundraiser for St Margaret's Conference featuring in the local newspaper.



John Barry complete with his marathon medal

Clonoulty Rossmore's Marathon Man

Our Conference, Clonoulty Rossmore St Vincent de Paul Conference, Tipperary was founded in 1982 by Fr Tim Kennedy PP comprising of four dedicated Members and that commitment, care and empathy for the needs of our parishioners continues over forty years later with our Conference.

We have always received tremendous support in our country parish. We can accomplish great things by kindness and John Barry an esteemed parishioner trained, ran and completed Dublin City Marathon on Sunday October 30th 2022 in aid of our Conference.

We printed sponsorship cards, put a notice of our appeal in the parish newsletter and thanks to John's vision and everyone's generosity we raised almost 3,000 euro which has made an incredible difference to families in need in our parish. Sometimes it takes only one great act of kindness and caring to change a person's life and John Barry made this possible.

St Marthas Conference, Newport, Co Tipperary Celebrating 30 years as a Conference



30 years ago, a small number of people came together in the Newport area with the collective mission to help individuals and families generously and quietly and they assisted hundreds in need. They've been commended for their commitment and selflessness in the cause which has been the symbol of their continuous work, and new volunteers have replaced the members who have gone to their eternal rest over the years, to continue the outstanding work done. They had a celebration and Thanksgiving Mass in Newport church, in which Saint Martha's conference of Saint Vincent de Paul has conferred with over the years.

Father Delaney recalled the history of Saint Vincent de Paul who chose to be poor and dedicated to helping families in need with the objective of helping in a non-judgmental way because nobody knows what is going on in someone's life, and the purpose of the SVP has been to aid families who are experiencing a difficult time in their lives

Among those who attended were Teresa Ryan Regional President, Ann Bourke Regional Coordinator, Dave Lawler President of Saint Martin's Conference, and the current members of the Conference. Dave Lawler said that it was time to thank all the members past and present for having given terrific service since 1992 and that without

the support of volunteers it would not have been possible. There is immense appreciation for Father Delaney who did great work for the community by starting it.

Teresa Ryan said she felt honoured to be among great people because of the service given both by the people who have retired from SVP and those who are currently in this society. Teresa warns that there's a lot of poverty out there and she asks people to be generous and not be saying that you must live within your budget, because there is no set budget dealing with people who are suffering. Don't be short of money if there isn't as much coming in because there is money in the Region which will be shared and if you need it ask for it and you will get it. As there will be a lot more people looking for it. Compared to what you were giving last year, you are talking about double the cost this year, don't be worried about it, you are helping people that need it. Do it generously, don't be upset if it's too much to be spent. You brought light to those who were hopeless and in darkness and that is so important. I am so conscious that you bring hope to those in need without counting the cost of what you do. I think that it's really about selflessness and giving to those in need.

(Nenagh Guardian, "Saint Vincent de Paul 30 years on" 22-10-2022)



Letter from a client

Taken from a letter received by the Annunciation Conference, in North Tipperary, more than 20 years ago.



Dear Members,

Please find a cheque, for the amount of \$300, as a contribution to the St. Vincent de Paul Society.

As [my wife] and I enjoy the warm Winter in our Summer home I cannot help but recall the Winter of 1946 when three orphans huddled together, back in Ireland, with no fire, just to keep warm.

That thought compels me to send a contribution – perhaps it can address some similar need over 56 years later.

The St. Vincent de Paul Society is a wonderful Society and I give them all the help I can no matter where I am. They give without taking away a person's dignity and keep their contributions known only to God and the organization – two great virtues. I find that wonderful.

Rest assured that you will be hearing from us from time to time.

May God bless your good works for God's beloved poor.

The sender of this letter, who wishes to remain anonymous, has continued to be a loyal benefactor to this conference. Although now an internationally successful businessman, the experience of poverty in his youth has given him an awareness and compassion for those in need.

May we, in the same spirit, respond to those who call on our support.

In Tribute

To Deceased Members of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul

Sean Gallagher and Rebecca McCabe

*St Mura's Conference,
(Fahan, Inch & Burt)*

It was with much sadness that St Mura's Conference (Fahan, Inch & Burt) heard of the death of another of its long serving members. In the early days of Covid 19 we lost Sean Gallagher, a stalwart member of our conference for over 30 years and now, Rebecca McCabe, another serving member for 20 plus years.

They are both a huge loss to our conference. They will be sorely missed by all for their kindness, compassion and above all friendship, advice and understanding to all they came in contact with.

Our sincere condolences to Bernadette and Sean, Benedict, Nigel, Dominic and Lorraine and to Rebecca's sons, Patrick, Damien and daughters Edel & Catherine.

Eternal rest grant onto them and let Perpetual light shine upon them.

May their gentle souls Rest in Peace Amen.

St Vincent De Paul, pray for them

Noel McGuire

*Our Lady of Mount Carmel Conference,
Firhouse, Co. Dublin*

It was with great sadness that members of the conference of Our Lady of Mount Carmel, Firhouse, heard of the death last November of Noel McGuire former member and President of the conference for many years.

Noel was a generous, caring and gentle man, and was fully involved in the life of the conference while also playing a caring role for his wife Joan, who suffered from very poor health. He was devoted to his daughter Joanne.

Noel had an amazing memory for detail, and remembered all those we visited, irrespective of how long it was since we had last seen them. He was always ready to drop anything to go to the assistance of a client in need, be it to board up a broken window or provide some other practical assistance. We were all enriched through knowing him.

Ar dheis Dé go raibh a hanam dílis.



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