

THE

SUMMER 2023



# BULLETIN

MAGAZINE OF THE SOCIETY OF ST. VINCENT DE PAUL

**YOUNG SVP**  
YOUTH DAYS

**NATIONAL RETAIL**  
CONFERENCE 2023

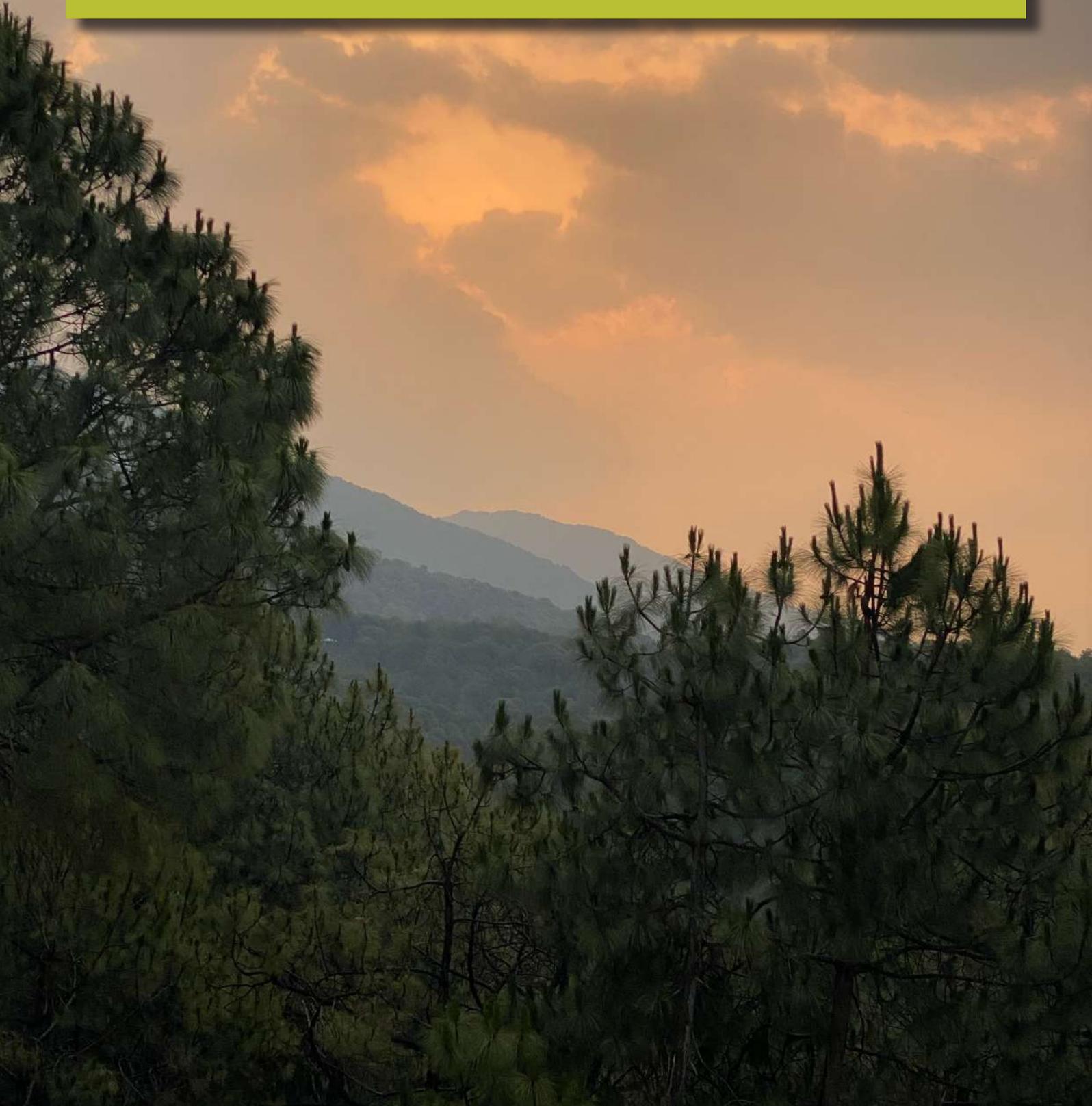
**FOUR PILLARS**  
TO BREAK THE CYCLE OF POVERTY  
IN BUDGET 2024

**NATIONAL CHILDREN &  
FAMILY SERVICES**  
WHAT WE DO

The Voice of Social Justice in Ireland

*"Bringing people together is what I call 'ubuntu,' which means 'I am because we are.' Far too often people think of themselves as just individuals, separated from one another, whereas you are connected and what you do affects the whole world. When you do well, it spreads out; it is for the whole of humanity."*

Desmond Tutu





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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*the human face to every aspect of life, as to be human is to recognise humanity in others".*

Bishop Tutu said, "I can only be fully me when you are fully you; we two are connected. I can't be rich if you are poor, I can't be free if you are enslaved". Does the word Umbutu not represent or embody SVP's mission statement; why we chose to serve those who need our help?

You only have to turn on the news or listen to the radio to witness an ever-growing movement of resentment, hatred and fear towards those who would compete for our resources, towards people who are refugees, many fleeing wars, hunger, torture and suffering. In mediaeval Europe, pilgrims travelled to far-off countries on journeys of spiritual enrichment and, traditionally, were warmly greeted on their way by locals and monastic communities and were given food and refuge (similar to Umbutu). The spiritual exercise of the modern traveller is the more existential one of keeping body and soul together, yet we seem to be on the verge of forgetting the hospitality imperatives of our Benedictine predecessors.

Within this edition, you will read about SVP's special annual pilgrimage to the Knock Shrine in September to celebrate the 190 years of the Society's founding, our 190 years of helping. Also, how our Galway-based resource centre, Croí na Gaillimhe, recently created videos to assist asylum seekers and refugees apply for International Protection in Ireland. As usual, the magazine covers the vast array of work that the Society does at a local and national level from prison visitations, to daycare centres, to the work we do to highlight social justice at the governmental level as well as within the Young SVP programme.

I hope this edition gives us all room for reflection on how we live Umbutu, or whatever word sits most comfortably for you.

*Linda O'Connell*

As I sat to write this editorial, I didn't know exactly what to type. With fingers poised over my keyboard, I could hear in the background the news on TV that a BBC presenter had died. George Alagiah was a migrant from Sri Lanka who experienced racism throughout his life. He married a British woman and worked most of his adult life in Africa, highlighting the horrendous suffering people endured because of war, famine and racism.

As a colleague spoke of their friendship, I heard him use a word I had heard before; a word I was familiar with, had read about, and had personally written about in the past: Umbutu – a word born from an African concept of collective existence. While there is no direct English translation for Umbutu, "it encompasses a suite of ideas and deeds that form a social and humanistic ethical code. Umbutu represents the core values of kindness, humanity, compassion, life, reconciliation, freedom, and the bonding with others. It is about listening and recognising our entanglement with others. It is not only a moral theory concerned with fostering humanistic attitudes but also one that embodies values, morals, and justice. It brings

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Saint Vincent de Paul Ireland



# Supporting education and making visitation our focus

By Rose McGowan  
SVP National President

As you read this, we will be heading into Back-to-School time. And with it comes another year of financial pressure on parents.

This pressure was highlighted in our survey of Voluntary Contributions launched at the end of May, which found that 87% of parents said they had to cut back or delay spending to pay the voluntary contribution charge.

Many parents who participated in the research spoke about the stress caused by requests for contributions, the need to cut back on essential spending, going into debt and feeling ashamed for struggling to meet the costs for their children. This mirrors what we see when working with families seeking our help yearly.

This year we have seen positive policy changes and investments that will make a real difference in children's and young people's lives. The provision of free schoolbooks at the primary level and the extension of hot school meals are very welcomed and are issues we have campaigned on for many years.

Based on research and the extensive experience of you, our members, we have made a number of recommendations directly to the Minister and officials in the Department of Education.

In the meantime, we must be prepared to provide adequate support to families who are currently seeking our help in meeting their back-to-school costs.

While supporting families with primary and secondary school costs is vital, we also provide, as you know, another level of support through our 3rd level Education and Training Bursary grants for students and adults returning to education. The Bursary grants support students of all ages who may financially struggle to access or stay in third-level education and training programmes.

We recognise the importance of further education and appreciate that, for many people, accessibility and affordability are real barriers to obtaining third-level education and training. There are many examples from around the country which demonstrate the benefit and success of the SVP Bursary.

On top of education costs at every level, we must now prepare for the increase in calls concerning Winter fuel and energy costs and, of course, Christmas.

## The power of visitation

We constantly emphasise that 'need' is our only criteria for offering help, and the only way to truly understand the need is to sit with those who seek our help. It has been the kernel of our work since our foundation. Recent consultations with members, volunteers, and staff as part of our planning strategy for the coming years have placed visitation as our number one priority.

It is what we are known for among the public who sustain our work through their donations. Blessed Frederick Ozanam was speaking about his time in the 19th century when he said, "Knowledge of the poor and needy is not gained by pouring over books or in discussions with politicians, but by visiting the slums where they live, sitting by the bedside of the dying, feeling the cold they feel and learning from their lips the causes of their woes".

Today we may not have slums and have the temptation to use the internet, email, telephone, or post to contact those seeking our help, but his exhortation and the principle behind it still holds true.

An example of the importance of getting to know the background of those struggling can be found in the review of a book called "Poor" later in this Bulletin.

Finally, I wish to thank all the members who supported me in my re-election as National President for another two years. Being elected to the role three years ago was a privilege. I hope I have fulfilled the trust placed in me then and will continue to work diligently for the Society until 2025.

Rose McGowan



## What do you think of Christ?

By Paschal Scallon CM  
SVP Spiritual Advisor

For a significant part of my ministry as a priest, I lived in Belfast. Need I say, Belfast is different? It has a feel that we don't get in Galway or Cork, for obvious reasons perhaps. Both are a long way from Lagside. But, even in Dublin, the most cosmopolitan city in Ireland, there is little trace of Belfast.

There is a frankness about Belfast and its people, a directness that can be very refreshing but which is also bracing.

When you're not used to the candour, the directness of speech, it is easy to be put off but it can also be very funny.

Blunt, direct expression is found even in, and perhaps especially in religious language. I remember being taken aback the first time I saw the very challenging question from St Matthew's gospel on an advertising hoarding, 'What think ye of Christ?' (Mt 22:42).

Written in that way, straight out of the King James Version of the Bible, first published in 1611 and as fresh for some people today as it ever was, I was mesmerised. I was amused but I was also thrilled. There it was, it seemed to me, and it has ever since, the fundamental question: who is he indeed?

For anyone, at all, attempting to navigate the sweeping currents moving through the culture in which we live today, especially in the West, the question is insistent and galling. It simply will not allow us the vanilla response that Jesus was a sort of early day Mahatma Gandhi. For all his merit, Gandhi does not compare. There is more in the life and legacy of Jesus Christ than we feel we can handle very often.

And that is why the question is galling, because we know we can't undo the impact the question has once it gets past our senses and begins to work on our imaginations and in ourselves spiritually.

For members of the Society of St Vincent De Paul who come to the work of the Society for the highest and most generous of reasons: to see as best we can in the Society that our neighbours have what they need to live with dignity and freedom from the worst of poverty, the question what think we of Christ is with us all the time because Frederic Ozanam puts it there.

Our work is inseparably wrapped in the sacrifice of Christ for the sake of the abandoned wherever and whenever he found them and wherever and whenever they come to us.

Christ goes to the ends of human experience not simply out of compassion or fellow feeling, though that's true, he does, but because he sees and recognises in the person who needs help the image of his Father.

We serve, all the years we spend in the Society, because we see in each person who comes to us someone who has eternal value. Only Christ insists on that and only in Christ can we see it.

So, what think you of Christ?

Paschal Scallon CM  
SVP Spiritual Advisor

# New SSVP President General Juan Manuel Buergo



On June 13, during the General Assembly of the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul held in Rome (Italy), brother Juan Manuel Buergo Gómez from Spain was elected the 17th President General International for a six-year term (2023/2029).

Juan Manuel Buergo obtained a majority in the first round of voting and replaces Brazilian brother Renato Lima de Oliveira, the 16th President General, who completes his term of office in September.

Juan Manuel is married and has two children. He lives in Madrid and is retired. He has a diploma in Economics and Business Administration (Universidad Complutense de Madrid) and a Master's Degree in Construction Management (Escuela Técnica Superior de Arquitectura de la Universidad Politécnica de Madrid).

He joined the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul in 1992. He has been, ever since, a member of the San Isidro Conference. Conference members carry out home visits and provide support to other conferences with fewer resources (human and economic) in the Madrid region. This conference is very active and even operates a food and clothing warehouse.

Juan Manuel has a lot of experience and a very complete Vincentian curriculum. He is the current National President of Spain, with a mandate ending in 2025. He exercised previously the functions of treasurer (1994/1998) and vice-president (2013/2016) at the Council. He is also coordinator of the Vincentian Family in Spain. He has served in various capacities within the Council General, including "Coordinator Zone 3 - Europe I, and 3rd Assistant General Vice-president, responsible for the areas of solidarity, special projects, governance, communication and strategic affairs.

*"If elected President General, I will act as a servant leader. I will faithfully promote the unity of our Society with a team dedicated to the spiritual growth of our members and loyalty to the Rule,"* stressed our fellow member. The proposals that Juan Manuel Buergo presented during the electoral process, with some ideas and projects for the future, are available on the website of the Council General International ([www.ssvpglobal.org](http://www.ssvpglobal.org)), as well as the images of the election day.

Among the strategic priorities planned by the new president are the spiritual strengthening project called "Growing Together in Faith," expanding the work of the "Historical Research Commission" (on the seven founders), the creation of a digital Vincentian library, the institution of the "International Vincentian Day" (with cultural and musical events), the promotion of youth within the Society and the creation of an international team to raise funds for those most in need.

It should also be noted that the new president intends to promote an environment in which prayer, action and self-giving out of love are inseparable from the formation and the functioning of the conferences. "We need to foster the second network of charity, which is charity among the members of the SSVP, based on fraternal friendship that promotes the healthy growth of conferences. The first network is between us and the assisted," he said.

The entire SSVP and the Vincentian Family pray that the mandate of brother Juan Manuel Buergo will be full of good works in favor of the poor, the Vincentian members and the national councils that are part of the International Confederation of the SSVP.

His inauguration will take place on September 9, at 10 a.m. (Paris time), in the Chapel of St. Vincent de Paul, with live broadcast on Ozanam TV (Facebook and YouTube).

# YOUTH DAYS



## Mid-West Youth Day

In the Mid-West Region, the Youth Day was held on Tuesday the 16th of May in the Radisson Blu Hotel in Limerick. There were over 200 students attending from across the counties of Limerick, Clare, Tipperary, and Offaly.

Many schools also engaged in other community-based projects through kindness campaign activities, well-being activities, visits to local nursing homes and much more. Both their school and local communities benefited from their involvement in the Young SVP Programme. The display boards created by schools were outstanding and reflected the phenomenal, good work they carried out to help others in need. It was a fun day out for all involved and the students were treated to a range of engaging activities including a table quiz, activity hunt, table discussions and much more. It was also a day of learning and raising awareness about SVP and the great work carried out by the charity.

The National President of SVP Rose McGowan from Dublin began the days' proceedings with a lovely opening speech to welcome the students. Throughout the day the students discovered more about the charity and the services provided by SVP from very informative speeches from the Regional Retail Manager Suzanne McNamara and Drop In Centre Manager Eimear Purcell. Suzanne highlighted the great bargains that can be grabbed at your local Vincent's Shops and how SVP promotes sustainable fashion. Eimear spoke earnestly about the struggles people who are homeless are facing on a daily basis and how the Drop In Centre in Limerick city can help those who need assistance through the provision of food and clothing. Many schools provided entertainment on the day by performing musical pieces on stage. Nicola O' Keeffe and Ella Guinane from Coláiste na Trócaire, Rathkeale treated the crowd to a wonderful rendition of the Adele Song 'Remedy'. Fantastic Irish Dancing and music was performed by the very

talented Caoimhe Franey and Doireann O' Callaghan from Salesian College Pallaskenry. Vicki Lee and Jessica Heffernan from Coláiste Iosaef Kilmallock sang a beautiful version of 'The travellin' Soldier' on stage. Lastly a group of students from Scoil Mhuire agus Ide entertained the crowd with an engaging traditional Irish Music piece. The wonderful talents of all these students were clear to see and everyone enjoyed all the fantastic performances. Students also contributed to panel discussions on stage where they outlined and explained the projects, they were involved in throughout the year. This gave other schools and students the opportunity to gain fresh ideas that they could use when planning other fundraising, education, awareness, and befriending projects next year. The Regional President Teresa Ryan delivered a heart-warming closing speech at the end of the day thanking the schools for their commitment and dedication to the Young SVP Programme and for successfully raising much needed funds for the charity.

Students, teachers, SVP members, volunteers, and staff all really enjoyed the day and are already looking forward to the next Youth Day Event in 2024. Please contact [Clodagh.Lenihan@svp.ie](mailto:Clodagh.Lenihan@svp.ie) if you would like any further information about the Young SVP Programme.



### *In attendance*

- Scoil Mhuire agus Ide, NewCastle West, Co. Limerick
- CBS Ennistymon, Co. Clare
- Salesian College, Pallaskenry, Co. Limerick
- St. Caimin's Community School, Shannon, Co. Clare
- Gaelcholáiste an Chláir & Ennis Community School, Ennis, Co. Clare
- Coláiste na Trocaire, Rathkeale, Co. Limerick
- CBS High School, Clonmel, Co. Tipperary
- St. Joseph's Secondary School, Spanish Point, Co. Clare
- Scoil Iosaef, Kilmallock, Co. Limerick
- Loreto Secondary School, Clonmel, Co. Tipperary
- St. Mary's School, Edenderry, Co. Offaly
- St. Brendan's Community School, Birr, Co. Offaly
- Thomand College, Limerick City
- St. Flannan's College, Ennis, Co. Clare

## South East Youth Day

On Tuesday 25th April 2023 in the recently renamed academic setting of SETU Arena, Waterford, the Southeast kicked off yet another hugely successful Youth Day.

With schools representing all five counties Carlow, Kilkenny, Laois, Waterford, and Wexford in the region upwards of 300 students shared ideas and experiences of their Young SVP journey. The event was as a celebration of the hard work and dedication of the Young SVP conferences that took part in the programme.

Over 300 hundred students were in the SETU Arena, and the atmosphere was incredible as a positive energy was bursting through the doors and students were beaming with pride. There was music, face painting, singing, and dancing - and that was before the stage presentations even began! Students were curious about projects done by other schools and the exhibition gave them the chance to set up their stand and chat to students from across the Southeast before delivering their stage presentations about their SVP journey.

Southeast regional president Annette Beckett spoke about the important role young people had to play in their communities. Describing the Young SVP year Debbie Donohue wrapped up the

day by saying “I think it’s [about] empathy. It’s to get you (the students) to think about other people and to get them to think about if they have the opportunity to make a difference, they should. And you do. You have all done that which is amazing. You should be so proud of your work and your achievements”.

### *In attendance*

- De la Salle, Waterford
- St Pauls CC, Waterford
- Presentation SS Waterford
- Mercy SS Waterford
- St Angela’s SS Waterford
- St Declan’s CC, Co Waterford
- OLOL, New Ross, Wexford
- St Mary’s SS, New Ross
- Presentation SS, Wexford
- Colaiste on Atha, Wexford
- Meanscoil Gharman, Enniscorthy
- Bunclody VEC
- Presentation College Carlow
- St Leo’s Carlow

## South West Youth Day

Following an enforced absence of three years the Society of St Vincent de Paul (SVP) Southwest Region held their youth day 2023 for Transition Year students from Cork and Kerry.

Up to 34 schools across both Cork and Kerry came together to celebrate the social justice projects that they have carried out throughout the year under the SVP Youth for Justice programme.

Some of the projects submitted helped to raise awareness of issues pertaining to disadvantage, inequality, support for senior citizens, and the establishment of St Vincent de Paul youth conferences in their schools.

SVP South-West regional president Paddy O’Flynn praised the students for their commitment in helping other people in their community.

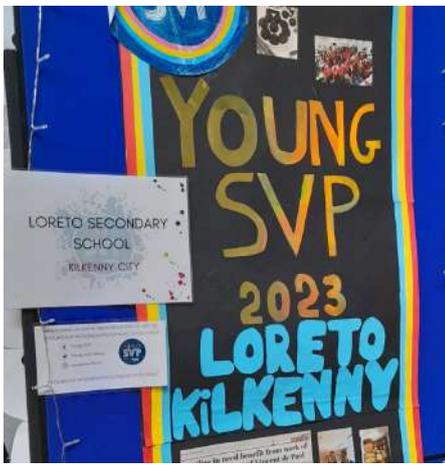
The SVP regional president concluded his speech with advice for the TY students. “We live in a challenging world but one where you have many opportunities. Giving up is far too easy. It’s often said that when the going gets tough, the tough get going.

“Do you respond to your challenges or let them overcome you and become stuck in self-doubt? You already have the strength and tools to overcome any challenge you may face,” he added.

SVP national president, Rose McGowan then addressed the students from the secondary schools in Cork and Kerry. She praised the students for their work and wished them well in their future careers and lives.

She outlined the many benefits that are provided to families and communities by St Vincent de Paul.





## North East & Midlands Youth Day

On the 3rd of May the Northeast & Midlands had its Youth Day in the Ardboyne Hotel Navan. Schools taken part in its Young SVP programme this year from across the region represented all counties Cavan, Longford, Louth, Meath, and Westmeath.

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 was great to see the range of projects that students showcased on the day. 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.

Over 200 students came to the Youth Day with the support of their schools and teachers and on the day all the students were asked to get out of their comfort zone and mix with likeminded students from other schools. This encouraged the great sharing of ideas and opinions and allowing the students to get to know each other better.

"I'm thrilled to say that our Regional Youth Day was an amazing show case of the work the schools, students and teachers had



done for SVP. The projects were of a very high standard highlighting the ways they could help in their community". Clodagh Naughton said, and she added "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!"

Larry Butler praised the students on their commitments and concluded by saying "the future of the Society is in safe hands".

### *In attendance*

- Scoil Mhuire agus Ide, NewCastle West, Co. Limerick
- CBS Ennistymon, Co. Clare
- Salesian College, Pallaskerry, Co. Limerick
- St. Caimin's Community School, Shannon, Co. Clare
- Gaelcholáiste an Chláir & Ennis Community School, Ennis, Co. Clare
- Coláiste na Trocaire, Rathkeale, Co. Limerick
- CBS High School, Clonmel, Co. Tipperary
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- Loreto Secondary School, Clonmel, Co. Tipperary
- St. Mary's School, Edenderry, Co. Offaly
- St. Brendan's Community School, Birr, Co. Offaly
- Thomand College, Limerick City
- St. Flannan's College, Ennis, Co. Clare

# A summer trip to create future leaders



Students from across the West Region (Galway, Mayo & Roscommon) took part in the first ever Young SVP Summer Trip. Students who were taking part in the Young SVP programme in the West had the opportunity to apply to come on the summer trip to Achill. 26 students were chosen from a list of applicants, and they attended the three-day trip on the 22nd of June.

The idea behind the trip was to help students develop a deeper understanding of Vincentian values and the work of the SVP and to equip young people with the knowledge and skills to lead future young people in the Young SVP Programme.

Helen Ralph the Youth Development Officer for the Society of St. Vincent de Paul in the West Region delivers the YSPV programme in schools across Mayo, Galway, and Roscommon. The programme is typically run with Transition Year students and gives students a chance to get involved in the work of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul. 'The Young SVP Programme aims to teach young people about the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul, its ideas and how the SVP works towards social justice. The Young SVP programme plays a very significant role within the society. It gives students the opportunity to get involved in positive social justice action within their local community' explains Ms Ralph. 'The thinking behind the trip was if young people continue to have good and positive experiences of SVP as a charity, they will naturally want to continue its good work and remain involved with the charity for years to come'.

The trip itself was three days of workshops, outdoor activities, reflections and getting to meet other like minded young people.

The 26 students travelled to Achill and spent the three days in Achill Outdoor Adventure Centre. Over the three days, students took part in leadership workshops, worked in teams at outdoor activities like canoeing and paddle boarding, explored the importance of community and SVPs role within their communities and students also met with members of the local SVP conference in Achill.

The students who took part in the trip described the event as 'brilliant' 'enjoyable' and 'a chance to do something different'.

Eve, a transition year student from the Presentation College in Athenry described what she had learned on the trip 'While on the summer trip, I learned what it takes to be a good leader. I also learned a lot about all the different projects in schools across Connacht, and why those students participated in the Young SVP programme. As well as that, I made new friends on the trip while we were doing activities such as workshops, surfing, and canoeing, which showed me the importance of teamwork.'

When asked if the students would recommend the trip to others Yvonne from St. Raphael's College in Loughrea responded 'Yes 100%, I think it's a very good bonding experience and fun. You learn so many new things and help your community in so many ways'. Students will return to their school, and it is hoped that they will help future Young SVP groups within their schools.



***"Some say of our young people they are the future, but I believe they are more they are the now".***

***Rose McGowan, SVP National President***



Society of St. Vincent de Paul

## KNOCK PILGRIMAGE

**SATURDAY SEPTEMBER 9TH**

*"I would like to embrace the whole world  
in a network of love"*  
~ Blessed Frederic Ozanam

## Vincentian Family Pilgrimage to Ireland's International Eucharistic and Marian Shrine Knock, Co. Mayo

**Saturday 9th September 2023**

***"Do not be afraid of new beginnings – be creative – be inventive"***  
(Blessed Frederic Ozanam)

This year is a very special year for all Vincentians as we celebrate the 190th anniversary of the foundation of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul and the 210th anniversary of the birth of Blessed Frederic Ozanam.

To celebrate and give thanks we will be joined by the wider Vincentian Family in Knock – Daughters of Charity – Vincent Fathers – International Association of Charity – Association of the Miraculous Medal – Holy Faith Sisters, Vincentian Lay Missionaries, De Paul Ireland, Vincentian Marian Youth.

***'From a tiny seed a mighty oak has grown'***

We are also privileged to have the wonderful choir from St. Muredach's Cathedral, Ballina. This choir is well known for its sustained excellence of liturgical music.



## Information videos for international protection applicants in Ireland

by Loretta Needham,  
Manager of Croí na Gaillimhe



Croí na Gaillimhe launched the first information videos for International Protection Applicants in Ireland. The two information videos cover two key areas of the application process – making an application and attending the main interview. They are available in four languages: Arabic, English, Georgian and Somali.

The background to Croí na Gaillimhe's work in this area for many years, we have been offering one-to-one information and support to people in the asylum process, mostly focusing on helping people to prepare for their main interview.

We've always been struck by how little information people have or what to expect as they move through the process. It's not that information isn't available, it is, but it's mostly in written format, quiet complex, spans a whole range of topics, and up to recently it wasn't well publicised. We always felt that people would benefit by a short overview at each of the main stages

in the process so about a year ago we started doing a series of workshops in different languages on "Preparing for the Interview".

The advantage of offering workshops is the number of people that you can provide information to at one time. This is where the idea of providing information by video seemed a natural progression - being able to reach way more people anywhere in the country was a no brainer.

The advantage of using the video format is the accessibility of it. It's available on your phone, presented by someone from your own country and you can look at it at your own pace, pause it, rewind it, screen shot etc. It doesn't require any literacy skills, its available on YOUTUBE, and very importantly you can select what is relevant to you at any time. We applied to the Department of Integration for a grant to subsidise this work.

The motivation behind our work was that we knew from meeting IPA applicants that the application and interview stages were the most stressful and anxious times for people, so it made sense to focus on these two topics.

### **Video 1 - Main Interview Applying for international protection in Ireland**

The first video focuses on what to expect on the day you make an application for asylum. People are often extremely vulnerable and exhausted when they arrive and very few have any idea what to expect. They've come from countries where the state authorities did not protect them and often persecuted them so walking into a government department in Mount Street in Dublin is extremely daunting. The first video focuses on what happens on the first day someone goes to the IPO office asking for asylum. The video starts by explaining how the asylum process works and gives a step-by-step explanation of everything that will happen and who they will meet as they make their application. See video for details.

**Please share the QR code and video link to people who need it.**

<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?app=desktop&list=PLL3id-e-0PF9x-lotdnKKekeVGvjUBhcIs>

### **Video 2 - Application Process Preparing for and attending the main interview with the International Protection Office**

Video 2 focuses on what to expect from their solicitor, what they can do to prepare for the main interview and what to expect at the main interview. Its undoubtedly the most important part of the process as it determines which if any status an applicant will be granted.

The videos have subtitles and direct people to further information material. There are QR codes which bring people to the detailed IPO booklet which the Department of Justice has translated into 20 languages.

The videos are available on the SVP YouTube playlist, and very importantly the Department of Justice is making them available on the day that people apply for protection in Mount Street. We have asked that they will be circulated through the network of accommodation centres. We are also part of a network of support services who will also make them available to their clients.

This will never replace the legal advice people get but it is there to stand along side it as an option for people who need us to make things easier for them at a time when life is unimaginable difficult.



Denis Maher, President of St James Conference, Janet Kehelly, Consultant on project, Loretta Needham, Manager of Croi na Gaillimhe, Niall Mulligan, SVP National Secretary, Maureen Mitchell, Regional President, Thady Kavanagh, Video Producer and Karen Timothy, West Regional Manager.



by Dermot McGilloway  
National Retail and Development Manager

The National Retail Conference recently took place in Bailey Allen Hall in NUI Galway. Over 150 staff and volunteers from retail operations across Ireland attended the one-day event which included:

- Opening address by SVP National President, Rose McGowan
- Keynote address from Dan Ryan – Retailer/ Start Up Investor / Mentor
- Sector Update from Julia Edwards – Charity Retail Association
- Sustainability update from Dermot McGilloway & Mary Butterly
- Our 'Meet the Volunteers' session.
- Supplier Exhibition & workshops
- Retail Awards
- Fashion Show & shop to showcase Vincents labels & Upcycled collections.

MC for the day was National Retail Co-ordinator, Mary Butterly.

### Conference Theme

Our theme for Conference this year was Sustainability. The Fashion industry is now one of the biggest polluters on the planet, generating more CO2 than the aviation and maritime industry combined. Nearly 100 billion garments are made annually, increasingly from synthetic non-biodegradable materials, and 92 million tonnes will end up in landfill each year. These synthetic materials are mostly plastic-based polyester, polyamide and acrylic and are now polluting our waterways and indeed our food chain. During this manufacturing process, greenhouse gases like nitrous oxide are released into the atmosphere. Nitrous oxide (N2O) is a type of greenhouse gas that is 300 times more potent than carbon dioxide (Overview of Greenhouse Gases | US EPA). Our planet cannot cope with the current fashion industry linear model of take, make, and throw away.

In addition to the impact on our environment, over 40 million people are working in garment factories globally, for as little as \$3 per day, and are being subjected to unacceptable and dangerous working conditions, all in pursuit of bigger profits for the clothing industry. As the largest charity retailer in Ireland, we need to take a stand on this!

At Vincent's, we support the circular economy and are committed to using our national network of shops and Order Fulfilment Centres to promote the reuse of as many garments as possible for as long as we can. We are also committed to working with approved export and recycling partners who are as committed to the circular economy as we are. Conference gave us a great opportunity to discuss and consider some of the challenges and opportunities of processing donated textiles.

### 'Meet the Volunteers' Session

One of the highlights of the day was our long established 'Meet the Volunteer' session. Delegates were treated to a highly motivating session as shop volunteers from across Ireland shared their experiences and how volunteering for Vincents had enriched their lives in one way or another.

#### Our excellent speakers this year were:

- Carman Stimeriu Mullingar, Co Westmeath
- Sean Scott Dunne, Gorey, Wexford
- Sinead Tracey, Carrick-On-Shannon, Leitrim
- Catherine Nyhan, Carrigtwohill, Cork
- Marian Fitzgerald, Westpark, Galway
- Mkyhailo Poirkov, Kenmare, Kerry





## Retail Awards

Each year at Conference, we take the opportunity to recognise some outstanding work undertaken by our staff and volunteers across the retail network. Whilst we are immensely proud of our collective achievements in 2022 and thank everyone involved for their considerable efforts, the following won special awards on the day:

### Vincent's Volunteer of the Year

- Susan Leng – Lurgan – North Region
- Caitriona Matthews – Dundalk Bridal – NE & Midlands
- Sarah Brady – Ballyshannon – North West
- Ann Mooney – Georges Street, Dublin – East
- Marion Glynn – Westside – West
- Breda Murphy – Macroom – South West
- Pat Begley – Limerick Furniture – Mid West

### National Team of the Year Awards

- Gorey - South East
- Clara – Mid West
- Cork OFC – South West
- Newcastle – North
- Carrickmacross - NE & Midlands
- Letterkenny Station Road – North West
- Claremorris OFC – West
- Terenure – East

### Highest % Growth in Sales

- Dungarvan – South East
- Tullamore 2 – Mid West
- Carrigaline – South West
- Magherafelt - North
- Monaghan – NE & Midlands
- Donegal Town – North West
- Merchants Rd - West
- Meath Street – East

### Exceptional Effort Award

- Railway Square – South East
- Moyross - Mid West
- Cobh - South West
- Mill St, Newry - North
- Cavan – NE & Midlands
- Bundoran – North West
- Castlebar - West
- Rush – East Region



In addition to these awards, a posthumous award was given to the team in Tramore in recognition of the exceptional work of shop volunteer Margaret Whittle, who sadly passed away one month before the event in Galway. According to her colleagues, Margaret was such an important part of SVP Tramore. *“She always brought a sense of calm and genuine passion when volunteering and was respected by everyone involved in the shop”*. Margaret will be sorely missed by staff and customers alike in Tramore. May she rest in peace.

**I want again to thank the volunteers who spoke with such conviction at Conference, but we are deeply indebted to all our volunteers across all shops and OFCs. We simply could not function without you.**

# Supplier Exhibitions & Workshops

Delegates were also able to browse the exhibitor stands of many key suppliers who also contributed to the cost of hosting the event on the day. Special thanks to Alltex Recyclers who were our headline sponsor.



We would like to thank our Sponsor, Alltex Recyclers for making this event possible

Please visit our exhibitors and don't forget to complete your exhibitor passport



## Sustainability Fashion Show

Another event highlight was the Sustainability Fashion Show which showcased the affordable style on offer in Vincent's shops across Ireland. Our MC for the evening was Mr Peter Johnson, who guided us effortlessly through an action-packed programme including a celebration of our Value, Style, Designer, Vintage and Retro collections as well as upcycled collections from several shops.

Delegates were also treated to a beautiful performance by the young ballet dancers from the Antoinette Casserly school of dance. Students from NUI Galway worked closely with staff from Vincent's in Merchants Road to curate and model our various collections which were promptly snapped up at our Sustainability shop directly after the event.

I would like to thank Regional Managers Caroline McGrath, Anne Crossan, Paula Taggart and Peter Johnson and Merchants Road Manager, Dee McFadden for the phenomenal work that they put into the Fashion Show and thank the whole team, but especially Lydia O'Connor and Mary Buttery for their customary hard work, good humour, and creativity. I would also like to thank our fashion show models including our mystery model, Mr Vincent O'Kane. It takes great people to create great events and Galway 2023 was a fitting celebration of SVP retail operations across Ireland.



### Diary Date for 2024

If you couldn't join us in Galway, keep Friday 7th June 2024 free as Conference will be heading Southwest and to the beautiful campus of UCC in Cork. More details to follow...

**VINCENT'S**  
SUPPORTING THE WORK OF SVP THE SOCIETY OF ST. VINCENT DE PAUL

**SVP**

**HUMAN COST OF FAST FASHION**

- 175 million child labourers working in sweatshops
- Wages under \$3 per day
- Excessive Working hours
- Unsafe working conditions
- Exposure to harmful substances

**ENVIRONMENTAL COST OF FAST FASHION**

- 3,500 chemicals used in textile production
- 750 are hazardous to human health
- 1.2 billion tonnes of greenhouse gases produced annually
- 215 billion litres of water are used each year
- 82 million tonnes of textiles end up in landfill each year

**BENEFITS OF REUSE**

- Reusing a garment uses 0.01% of the water required to make a new garment and 34% less of CO2
- The environmental impact of reusing textiles is 70 times lower, even when accounting for global exports for reuse including transport emissions. (TRA)

**FAST FASHION DO NOT ENTER**

**REDUCE REUSE RECYCLE**

**WE ARE WORRIED ABOUT THE HARMFUL EFFECTS OF FAST FASHION!**

**Surplus donations sold to reputable exporter/recycler**

**Surplus clothing sent to SVP OFC**

**Sorted & sold in local shop**

**Donations to Vincents**

**Sold and reused**

**Second sort and sent out to different shops**

**Clothing graded (up to 200 categories)**

**83% resold abroad**

**3% converted to RDF (reuse derived fuel)**

**14% recycled for other purposes**

**Vincent's Ireland reuses 14,000 tonnes of textiles per year, keeping them out of landfill**

**THANK YOU FOR SUPPORTING OUR ONGOING EFFORTS TO "REDUCE, REUSE AND RECYCLE"**

## Post consumer textiles

### A changing landscape

Vincent's is Ireland's largest charity retailer and receives an estimated 14,000 tonnes of donated textiles annually through our shops and Order Fulfilment Centres (OFCs). OFCs were introduced to allow SVP to take another look at unsold / returned stock from our shops with a view to sending saleable items out to other shops in the area. This "Double filter" system enables SVP to keep clothing in circulation for much longer and is good for the environment whilst providing our shops with more low-cost quality clothing. The fashion industry is now recognised as a major contributor to the production of greenhouse gases and global warming and agencies from the UN right down to local authorities are calling for the consumer to buy less new clothes and for pre-loved clothing to be kept in circulation for longer.

The following all promote the topic of greater circularity in the textile industry:

- UN Sustainable Development goals – Supported by the OECD
- National Circular Economy Strategy – Department of the Environment, Climate & Communication
- Waste Action Plan for a circular economy – DECC
- National Circular Economy Program – EPA
- National Waste Management Plan for the circular economy – Local Government

At an international level, SVP is an associate member of UNESCO and a special adviser to the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). It is also part of the Global Catholic Climate Movement and is aligned with the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) proposed by the United Nations in its Agenda 2030. It is therefore totally appropriate that SVP Retail in Ireland would take a leading role in promoting the reuse of textiles for longer.

As Ireland, led by the EU, prepares for the separate collection of textiles from 2025 and the introduction of Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) and digital product passports for clothing manufacturers, this is an opportune time to ask all shops and OFCs to check and recheck donated textiles to ensure that as few as possible end up being unnecessarily recycled. Watch out for the introduction of clearance sales this autumn across the retail network as we endeavour to keep more "VALUE" label textiles in circulation for longer.



# National Children and Family Services

Our National Children and Family services department was established within the national framework of SVP in 2020. Since then, the department has been working with and supporting 35 conferences who provide a variety of children, family and adult support services in local communities across the country.



## Responding to needs

These wonderful services have been established by members in response to an identified need in their communities to provide supports to children, families, adults and older people in many different ways. Many of the supports provided in our services equip people with the necessary skills and competencies to empower them in their own lives as well as improving their quality of life and independence.

Some of the services have been in existence since as early as the 1930's and they have been a huge part of local communities ever since. Multiple generations of children and families have now availed of these services over the years, knowing that they can always find a person who is ready to listen, to help, to guide, to teach, to mentor and to care for their wellbeing. Our Vincentian ethos is central to all interactions and programmes we provide.

## Doing it right

One of the main objectives of the department is to provide the services with support and guidance around the growing needs of good governance and compliance with our legal, regulatory and constitutional obligations as service providers working closely with HSE, Tusla and other government bodies, as well as within our own SVP policy framework. In the past couple of years, the department has supported services to enhance our safeguarding

measures further in all aspects of the work we do, to protect all of our clients and provide them with the best quality service possible. These measures also help to protect our volunteers and our staff whose important work is at the heart of our success in all of our children and family services.

## Sharing our wisdom with each other

We have now established good networks, communication forums and information sharing platforms for conference presidents from similar types of services. Our members come together through regional child and family service committees and share their experiences, their wisdom and knowledge while also supporting each other in their services strategic development.

We have also created similar groups for service management staff, who now meet three times a year to share good practice, ideas, initiatives and general information to support each other in their daily work.

These new committees are also a great opportunity to share details and information on new policies and procedures, initiatives, or developments within SVP be it local, regional or national and to help to make them relevant to the everyday work each service does. Not only do these groups and networks help us share information and good practice, but they also give a voice to the services conferences, an opportunity to highlight the amazing work that they do with us all.

## What we do

### • Childrens services

These services include a variety of services working with children including childcare centres, with pre-school and after school classes, youth clubs, homework clubs and holiday camps.

Working with hundreds of children every year, they each have a rich history of support, learning and development, compassion and care and the encouragement they provide for children each day.

*“I love my club, it’s like my other home. I can’t wait to come every week. I feel so happy when I get to meet my friends and have fun doing so much stuff that I love and I love our leaders, they are great, they look after us and are so friendly.”*

**Mathew – Youth Club member**

Parents of children in Direct Provision Hostels receiving supports in Childrens services:

*“I feel good and proud that he can do something outside of the hostel. He wants to go again and wear his rugby gear”.*

**Nwabisa’s son went to Rugbytots**

### • Community Centres

Our many Community and Resource Centres provide a range of programmes for families and adults alike, including a variety of classes for personal development, education and learning, family support, financial planning, supporting families and adults living in direct provision, helping those suffering homelessness and much more. Always looking at the needs of the local community.

*“I think it’s a really positive environment for both service users and volunteers and has a family type atmosphere were you feel valued and as a volunteer you feel your input is acknowledged. The sense of community also makes you feel apart of something very special.”* **Joan – Volunteer**

## People at the heart of it all

In all, SVP operates 12 different types of services across the island of Ireland. Every week, though these services we engage 4,800 people, 1,500 of those children. All of this is achieved through the incredible work, commitment, compassion, and dedication of 180 conference members, 400 service volunteers and our 170 staff who work in our services across the country. A BIG family having a BIG impact on so many people’s lives in such a special way.

*“There should be a place like this in every town and community. I think it’s great that there are activities for everyone from children to retired people. It is such an inspirational place - always so positive and makes every volunteer feel important.”* **Michael – Volunteer**

**Tony Rock** – National Children and Family Services Manager  
**Nino Tadiashvili** – National Children and Family Services Support Coordinator



### • Older People Centres

Our Day Care Centre’s and a Residential unit for the elderly, provide a warm welcoming atmosphere with dedicated teams of volunteers and staff who care for their health both physical and emotional as well as their general wellbeing. These centres promote independent living. They also promote positive mental health through activities and social interaction, eliminating the impacts of possible loneliness and isolation. They enhance physical health through daily exercise, games and a healthy home cooked meal and they support general wellbeing through the many fun programmes on offer each day, whether it is much loved bingo, speakeasy sessions, music, arts and crafts or day trips out.

*“I live alone now and it can be lonely a lot of the time. But I have my friends here in the day centre and they are like a family to me now. We chat and play cards or bingo or do exercises, which is important for me at my age, and we have dinner together. We are looked after so well by everyone. It gives me so much joy in my day to come here”* **Breda – Day Care Centre member**

Our Meals of Wheels services deliver hot nutritious meals to older members of the community in their homes. Our dedicated volunteers and staff deliver over 1,500 meals a week throughout the country. Having this service helps many elderly people to continue to live at home in the communities they know and love and takes a lot of worry away from their family members, knowing that there will be kind and caring volunteers bringing them nutritious meals every day.



# St Mary's Youth Club, Ballyfermot

St Mary's Youth Club was founded in 1956. It was established by the late Bob Cashman and Ronnie O Toole who were members of a visitation conference in the South Inner City. Bob and Ronnie had seen the need for a youth club in the newly built corporation housing estate which lacked facilities for young people.



## Claddagh Green

They obtained a premises from Dublin Corporation located on Claddagh Green which had been used by the builders as a depot during the construction of the estate. In the early years the club had a wonderful parents committee who over many years organised many fundraising events to ensure that the club could buy equipment when needed and carry out repairs and improvements as required.

In the early years the club catered only for boys up until the late 1960's, when one of our most dedicated leaders Michael Nolan who sadly passed away earlier this year took the decision to change the outdated rule and allow girls join the club. Today the club caters for boys and girls aged between 9 and 20 years of age. Activities include table tennis, pool, arts and crafts, computers and various board games. We have also facilitated weekend trips to Alton Towers, Carne Centre Wexford and Mornington Holiday Centre. As part of our club programme we arrange trips to Panto, Go Quest, Jumpzone, bowling to name a few.

## Annual Club Holiday

The highlight of the club year is our Annual club holiday which had Lorna Murphy House in Sallin's as its first venue. We then had many fantastic years in Kerdiffstown House until its closure. After the loss of Kerdiffstown we used Coolure House in Castlepollard, Shielbaggan in Wexford, and our current venue The Cavan Centre, Ballyjamesduff for the last 15 years which promotes outdoor activities.

We also have a wonderful drama section which began almost 30 years ago. Over the years the Drama Section has been very successful in Mini Tops drama competition winning it twice and receiving Adjudicators awards on many occasions. In addition to Mini Tops (formerly John Player Tops) the group has participated in the All Ireland Variety Competition. The group has children and young adults aged between 5 and 20 years taking to the stage every year performing in various venues including the Rupert Guinness Hall, The Helix, The Olympia Theatre, Civic Theatre Tallaght, The O Reilly Theatre and the Mill Theatre, Dundrum.

This year our drama group performed two shows at the Mill Theatre, Dundrum on Sunday 9th July. Our drama group gives children and young people the opportunity to take to the stage and perform in front of family and friends and is a most wonderful activity to encourage children and young people to express themselves through singing, dancing, and acting.

Our group has over many years been invited to perform for the local community at the annual Remembrance Mass for the Ballyfermot Star project. We are already preparing for next year's show and are currently looking forward to this year's club holiday in The Cavan Centre.

In 2007 as part of area regeneration programme we secured a new purpose built premises which is leased to the Society.

Since 1956 the conference has on behalf of the SVP provided a much needed social service to the Ballyfermot community. This would not have been possible had it not been for the great dedication of many volunteers over many years who have given so much of themselves to serve the community. As an integral part of the community since 1956 the conference has received great support from the community itself, parents, ex club members who fondly reminisce about the great times in the youth club, the conference has through its tireless work firmly established that the Societies work is recognised and greatly valued.





# St Joseph's, Childcare, Waterford

St Joseph's Childcare Centre was established in 1996 in Waterford city, providing affordable and good quality services to children in the local area. The premises was run as St Joseph's Boys Club (those of us of a certain age will remember the youth discos that took place in the 1970's) and later, in 1997 as a homework club. It was handed over to the current committee by St Joseph's Boys Club in 2003. Since then, the volunteer led conference secured funding from the Equal Opportunities Childcare Programme, and it was converted to a full-day childcare facility. The volunteer conference has overseen the growth of the centre over the years starting with 4 children and a sand pit in 1996 to our centre of excellence in childcare today.

In 2020 the centre was renamed to The Yellow Brick Road as it straddles the historic areas of Lower Yellow Road and Ballybricken.

## Our ethos

Yellow Brick Road aims to provide a high-quality service that promotes children's individual growth and holistic development. The Centre caters for 130 children from diverse nationalities, aged between 5 months to 12 years. The capacity in the centre in any one day is 80-85 children.

This diversity introduces a unique cultural aspect embraced by all at the childcare centre, you can see this in our "National Culture Days". Giving children an opportunity to share aspects of other cultures and promotes cultural understanding and harmony.

It is our aim to work with professionals to enable us to meet the needs of the children in our care on a holistic, emotional, social, physical and intellectual level. Children are seen as individuals and are presented with opportunities through play to facilitate reaching their full potential and through this to become active learners in a nurturing environment that is inclusive through choice, positive self-esteem, and confidence.

## Range of services and facilities

The childcare operates 51 weeks a year and we offer NCS and ECCE scheme. The centre is designed specifically to meet the developing needs of each child using our service. In our bright spacious rooms children are guided through a range of education and play activities at their own pace.

Our incredible staff create a positive and secure environment where children feel confident in exploring their surroundings. Developing their self esteem and confidence through play and support from our team.

Childcare centre promotes healthy eating and wellbeing with children throughout the day, providing fresh and nutritious meals cooked daily in the centre. Which includes breakfast, healthy snacks and a full lunch. Children grow and develop fast, and eating the right variety of foods can help children grow, learn and play well.

The centre participates with AIM support and Better Start services. AIM programme meets the needs of children through personalised and practical supports within the ECCE setting that does not require formal diagnosis of disability. Better Start is a national framework to develop and enhance inclusive high quality Early Learning and Care for children from birth to six years of age. This initiative delivers coordinated continuing professional development opportunities to make sure all staff are continuously upskilling and working with best approach possible.

## Current project: Sensory room

At the moment we are developing a Sensory Room in our Childcare Centre. A sensory room is a specially designed space to develop children's senses, it creates a safe space for children to relax and encourage the development of many skills. They are a calm environment and can be used for variety of therapeutic needs.

We are looking forward to completing this project as it will be of great benefit for children, promoting their cognitive development, improving interactions and social skills, improving motor development and boosting emotional wellbeing, improve their hand eye coordination and their concentration and focus.

## Classes in focus

Overall we provide, the following classes in our centre.

- **Baby Room: 5 months – 1 year**
- **Toddler Room: 1 year – 2 years**
- **Senior Toddler 2 years – 3 years**
- **ECCE Preschool Room: 3 – 4 years**
- **ECCE Preschool Room: 4 – 5 years**
- **Junior After-School 4 – 6 years**
- **Senior After-School 6 – 12 years**
- **Junior Summer Camp 4 – 6 years**
- **Senior Summer Camp 6 – 12 years**

Rachel English – Manager  
Geraldine Croke – Assistant Manager





# North Region Members Day

More than 120 members from across the North Region joined to celebrate Volunteers' Week and learn of the inspirational work being undertaken by SVP across Northern Ireland, at the North Region's annual Members' Day.

The occasion marked significant membership milestones for 12 members, who were presented with special commemorative certificates and medals. Between them they have devoted over 150 years of selfless service to SVP in their local community.

Mary Waide, Regional President for the North Region, said:

*"As SVP Regional President it was a great privilege to welcome everyone to Members' Day and to celebrate our volunteers during Volunteers' Week. Our volunteers' compassion and commitment is incredible as they play an invaluable role in the Society and are the very fabric of the Vincentian family. We are extremely proud of our volunteers and I know that so many of those who attended Members' Day left feeling inspired for the future and the contribution they have made and will continue to make through SVP in the heart of their own community. The atmosphere in the room was brimming with positivity and it was testament to the enduring spirit of kindness that lies at the heart of SVP in the North Region."*

The celebratory atmosphere was filled with countless heartfelt stories, shared memories, and expressions of gratitude. Attendees were deeply moved by the genuine connections and lifelong bonds that have been forged through their shared commitment to service. The event provided a platform for volunteers to reflect on their incredible journey and inspire others to embark on their own path of volunteering.



SVP's Rose McGowan, Mary Waide and Niall Mulligan

# “Poor”: A must read for anyone who supports those who are disadvantaged

by Jim Walsh

Any SVP member who attended the 2019 Conference in the Convention Centre in Dublin to celebrate the 175th anniversary of the Society in Ireland will remember Katriona O’Sullivan.

Her telling of her story from growing up in a dysfunctional household, becoming homeless, and pregnant at 15 and turning her life around to gain a PhD in Psychology in Trinity College, drew a standing ovation from the audience.

She called her talk “Stuck in the Mud” and explained that we all get stuck in the mud at sometime in our lives. But if we have a strong support system we can get out of the mud quickly. The fewer supports we have the deeper we sink and the more difficult it is to drag ourselves out.

She has now turned her life story into a bestselling book called “Poor”.

During her talk back in 2019 she spoke about the two members from SVP who helped her at the time she was struggling as a single parent to deal with her entry into the Trinity Access programme and at the same time look after her young son.

She described the SVP members as polite and non-judgemental. It was a question of ‘what do you need?’. They didn’t judge, just listened. “There was no questions like can you prove income or disadvantage” She said that the ¾ years of help from SVP helped transform her life.

‘Poor’ is not an easy book to read. Her treatment by many people, teachers, social workers, health workers and others who should have more empathy is difficult to read. That said she also gives credit to other teachers who saw the potential in her and went out of their way to help and support her.

She writes about a Mrs Arkinson and Miss Hall from her first year. “At the time I was wetting the bed every single night and then going to school without washing or changing my pants. I didn’t know how to wash. There were no towels in our bathroom, barely any toilet paper. Never any soap. None of use owned a toothbrush. Those two teachers became aware of the conditions in her home and every morning provided her with a white fresh towel, white flannel and clean underwear. She would come into school very early, collect them from Miss Hall’s desk and then go to the bathroom wash and put on the clean pants before school started.”

Another teacher a Mr Pickering was also instrumental in encouraging her to enhance her English skills.

In contrast she describes a Mrs Smyth, who she said made her life hell in later school years. “She picked on me. She asked me the same questions again and again. Her attitude trickled down and my classmates treated me just the same.”

When she was at her worst, during her teenage years it is easy to imagine many of those who tried to offer help giving up. But those who delved a little deeper saw the truly horrific circumstances in which she lived.

Her mother and father were both alcoholics and drug addicts and for the most part their house was a haven for other addicts. Her ‘uncles’ were always around and one ‘Uncle Bob’ raped her when she was just seven.

When she told her mother she says, “My mother strung out and worn down, stared straight ahead. ‘Yeah... well he raped me too.’”

One of the most poignant moments in the book is when later in life Katriona asked her mother, “Did you ever love me?” Her mother’s response was “Oh God I loved you with all my heart. I just found it really hard to show it.” But then added “I suppose I loved drugs more.”

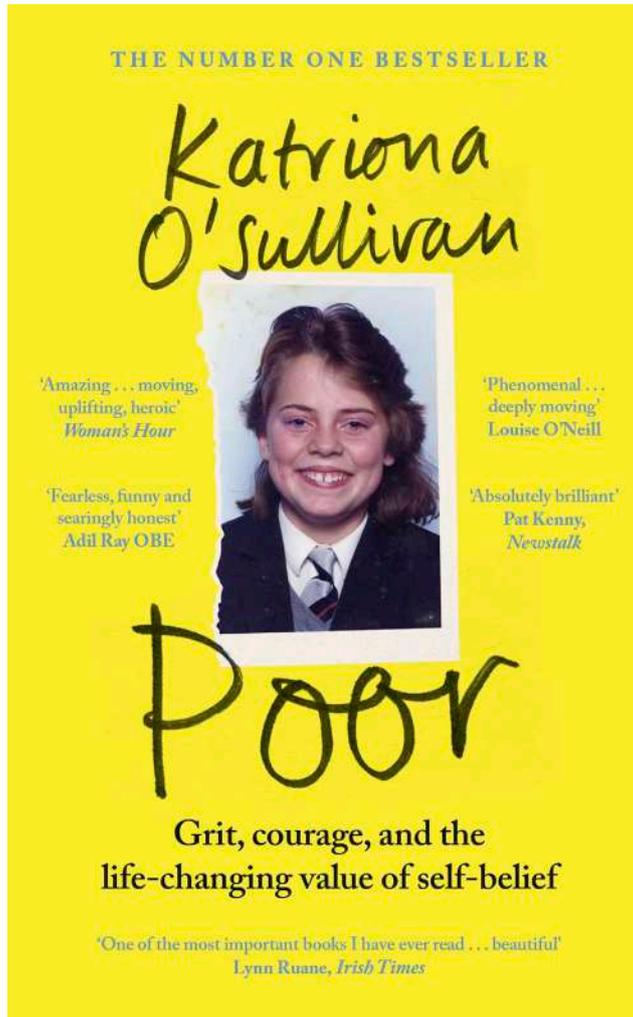
Despite the harrowing descriptions of her early life this is an exceptional

read and a must for anyone who has to deal with those who are disadvantaged.

In her talk back in 2019 she said, “Those who are seen as disadvantage or come from poor backgrounds are not poor in terms of skills, They are not poor in terms of capabilities. They are just poor in terms of opportunities.”

As the cover of ‘Poor’ says this book is a stirring argument for the importance of looking out for our kids, of giving them hope, practical support and meaningful opportunities.

“Poor by Katriona O’Sullivan is published in paperback by Penguin Books



# Estimating the MESL costs for families in Direct Provision



Annual  
 Update  
 2023

The Vincentian MESL Research Centre at SVP recently published a report called “Estimating the MESL costs for families in Direct provision.” Our report is the first stage of a project looking at the Minimum Essential Standard of Living (MESL) for families with children in the Irish Direct Provision system.

The MESL research works with members of the public to figure out how much individuals and households in Ireland require to meet their needs at a minimum socially acceptable level. By calculating the weekly cost of all the goods and services required for an acceptable standard of living, the research provides a benchmark of what is needed for a life with dignity.

Direct Provision is Ireland’s system of providing accommodation, food, utilities, healthcare and income support to individuals and families who are waiting for a decision on their asylum application. The system is managed by the International Protection Accommodation Service (IPAS), which is part of the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration, and Youth.

To estimate the MESL costs for families in Direct Provision, we reviewed documentation on the Direct Provision system and consulted with an Expert Group made up of organisations that work directly with people in Direct Provision.

During this review and consultation, we found that the standard and type of service provided to people in Direct Provision accommodation varied significantly across the country. This made it challenging to estimate MESL costs because the goods and services needed could differ based on the level of service provided. To overcome this challenge, we focused on a specific scenario for the families being considered in the research. The report focuses on one and two parent families with two children, one of primary school age and the other of secondary school age. These families are assumed to have been living in Direct Provision for less than six months and depend solely on state-provided income. They live in an IPAS Accommodation Centre with access to shared self-catering facilities and use the transport service provided by their accommodation centre, along with some use of public transport.

We adjusted the existing MESL baskets for the general population to account for items that are not relevant and additional or different items needed when living in Direct Provision. For example, we removed the cost of healthcare services and prescription charges from the MESL Health basket, because families in Direct Provision receive a medical card and do not have to pay for prescriptions. Additionally, we added extra weekly public transport

trips to the MESL Transport basket for children in Direct Provision, to support their participation in afterschool activities and social inclusion.

Based on these adjustments, we estimated the MESL costs for these families living in Direct Provision, and examined whether the current income supports provided by the State are adequate to meet their MESL needs.

Weekly estimated MESL need, and average weekly income:		
	One Parent, Two Child	Two Parent, Two Child
<b>MESL need</b>	€228.30	€289.98
<b>Income</b>	€110.80	€149.60
<b>Shortfall</b>	€117.50	€140.37

We found that for each individual family member living in Direct Provision accommodation, the income supports provided are inadequate to meet their estimated MESL need, and that this inadequacy is made worse at Household level.

Based on the findings, it is clear that families living in Direct Provision are going without the goods and services needed to live and participate in Irish society, at a standard of living that no one should be expected to live.

Our research also explored the potential impact of introducing a payment similar to Child Benefit for families in Direct Provision. We found that while its introduction would increase household income, it would not be enough to meet their estimated MESL needs. Read our full report here: <https://www.budgeting.ie/publications/estimating-the-mesl-costs-for-families-in-direct-p/>

# Four pillars to break the cycle of poverty in Budget 2024

An important date in the social justice calendar every year is the launch of the Society's pre-budget submission. Bringing the experience of members on the ground, we aim to influence the budget process so that the choices made by Government bring about positive change for the people we assist. This includes things like ending voluntary contributions in schools, making sure child with additional needs can access assessments, or building more social and affordable homes on the scale that is needed.

This year Members and staff from across the country came to Buswells hotel across the road from Dáil Eireann on the 12th of July. Over the course of the morning we spoke to almost 30 TDs and Senators about SVP priorities for budget 2024. Our main message on the day was that Government must protect more people from experiencing poverty and exclusion as the cost of living continues to rise. At the same time, we need to see progress on the structural issues like income inadequacy, low pay and underfunded public services that are trapping people in the cycle of poverty.

**Our recommendations are focused on 4 key pillars:**

## 1. Protect people's incomes and guarantee the essentials

While one-off measures help, the failure to increase social welfare payments in line with inflation in Budget 2023 put many people at risk of being pulled further into the kind of grinding daily hardship that is very difficult to escape. We know that steps can be taken by Government in Budget 2024 to prevent and intervene where needed, to change the tide for people living in Ireland on low incomes.

At a minimum we need to ensure that the basic rate of social protection is never so low that people are unable to afford essentials such as food, utility bills, housing, transport, basic household goods and having the means to participate in our community.

## 2. Prioritise children in poverty

As a society we understand that all children should have a fulfilling childhood and be given what they need in life to reach their potential. The new Child Poverty and Well-Being Unit in the Department of An Taoiseach presents the opportunity for a coordinated and cross-departmental approach to end child poverty. Children and their families must be front and centre in Budget 2024. This must be the first step in a wider strategy to support families and break the cycle of disadvantage for children.

## 3. Promote access to good quality jobs

Work is not always a route out of poverty and that's why we need employment opportunities which support people to have long term and sustainable employment. This requires a recognition that access to employment relies on the strength of services such as childcare, public transport and in work income supports, as well as decent wages and conditions.

For many trapped in the cycle of poverty, having the option to gain access to education and training opportunities is the first step on the road to a good job and financial stability.

## 4. Prevent poverty through affordable & accessible services

A strong social protection net must go hand in hand with an investment in quality public services. Ireland is a rich country, and we must use the revenue available to build a country that lifts people out of poverty and supports the well-being of everyone in society. Windfall gains in taxes must be invested in vital infrastructure and services especially housing, energy efficiency measures, public transport, and childcare.

We know our Government are capable of reverse the rising tide of poverty and providing supports where they are needed. The design of our current system of supports is the result of a set of decisions that were made about our society's priorities and resources. As the experience during the pandemic shows, we can redesign it to work for everyone.

The social justice team will continue to push our recommendations with policy makers right up to the October budget. We are hopeful that it will bring the positive change to set us on the right road to ending poverty in Ireland.

by Tricia Keilthy  
Head of Social Justice and Policy

# Summary of recommendations



## In this Budget, we are calling on Government to:

1.

**Protect people's incomes and guarantee the essentials**

- Prevent poverty with a minimum €27.50 adjustment in welfare rates.
- Introduce a cost of disability payment starting with a €40 payment.
- Increase the daily living allowance for asylum seekers.
- Fund Community Welfare Services effectively.
- Increase the Fuel Allowance by €680.48 to restore its purchasing power.
- Extend the Fuel Allowance to recipients of WFP\*.
- Use windfall taxes to fund a new social energy tariff for low income households.
- Provide funding of €5 million to address rent arrears for HAP\* tenants.
- Increase HAP\* and Rent Supplement rates by 40%.
- Provide a dedicated homeless prevention budget.

2.

**Prioritise children in poverty**

- Raise the QCI\* by €10 for children under 12 and by €15 for children over 12.
- Provide €5 million for the implementation of the Equal Participation Model.
- Deliver free school books at second level, starting with a pilot in 2024.
- End voluntary contributions by increasing the capitation grant.
- Expand child benefit to students experiencing disadvantage over the age of 18.
- Pay a child benefit type payment to children living in direct provision.
- Retain the €100 increase in the BSCFA\*.
- Provide a fund for in-school activities for pupils experiencing disadvantage.
- Invest to end long waiting times for psychological assessments for children.
- Ensure children in homeless accommodation has a family support worker.
- Expand mental health and wellbeing supports to secondary students.

3.

**Promote access to good quality jobs**

- Provide free access to childcare for families with a medical card.
- Increase the grant and income thresholds for SUSI by 15%.
- Expand eligibility for the SUSI grant to part-time students.
- Make the SUSI grant payable to those in receipt of the BETA\*.
- Extend JST\* to one parent families in work, training or education.
- Smooth the thresholds to the BSCFA\* to promote parental participation in work.
- Introduce a refundable tax credit to low income workers.
- Move to a Living Wage and link increases to thresholds for secondary supports.

4.

**Prevent poverty through affordable and accessible services**

- Build 20,000 social homes and refurbish Local Authority vacant housing.
- Pilot a Housing First Model for families with complex needs.
- Fund a pilot project of supported housing for youth.
- Provide funding to support refugees with residency status into housing.
- Pilot a programme of Community Energy Advisors.
- Retain public transport reduction.
- Increase funding for the Rural Public Transport Scheme.



# Budget 2024

## Opportunity to address housing insecurity for low-income households

by Marcella Stakem  
Research and Policy Officer

The housing and homeless crisis has deteriorated further in the past year and is a real concern for SVP members. Without a home it is extremely difficult to participate fully in society and reach one's potential. Homelessness is at record levels. Figures from April 2023, show that 12,259 people including 3,594 children are currently experiencing homelessness. That is an increase of 28% since March 2022. The impact of the ending of the no fault evictions in March 2023 has had further negative consequences on people renting in the private rented sector and the numbers becoming homeless. Approximately, 14,000 Notices to Quit were issued in the last 12 months to tenants living in the private rented sector.

Funding in successive budgets has been provided to reacting to homelessness rather than having it evenly distributed between homeless prevention, tenancy sustainment, and necessary funding for homeless services such as hostels. We now need a dedicated homeless prevention budget, amounting to 20% of all homeless expenditure. Recent budgets have also failed to effectively provide interventions for children and parents living in emergency accommodation to alleviate some of the trauma of homelessness. This is despite the fact that the homeless crisis has been an issue for many years now. Child support workers should be available to any family who needs it while living in emergency accommodation.

The maximum monthly rent limits payable for a household under the Housing Assistance Payment (HAP) have remained largely unchanged since 2016. In March 2023 there were no properties available within the standard HAP rate limits. Within the discretionary limits there were just 21 properties available for families with children. For those families and individuals that do secure private rented accommodation, paying a top-up to their landlord on top of the differential rent payment to secure and maintain the

accommodation has become the norm for the households SVP assist. This exposes them to an even greater risk of poverty and in some instances an accumulation of rent arrears. We have recommended that HAP and Rent Supplement limits be increased by 40% in Budget 2024.

In Amsterdam 42% of total housing stock is social housing, in Vienna 50%, Copenhagen 28%, in Ireland, just 10% of our total housing stock is social housing. Increasing Approved Housing Bodies and Local Authorities ownership of total housing stock to 20% through direct build and targeting vacancy will greatly increase access to secure and affordable housing, and is the most appropriate response to addressing the housing and homeless crisis. We recommend that an additional €500 million from wind-fall revenues be used to deliver 20,000 social and affordable cost rental homes and to address local authority vacant housing.

The Housing First model should be extended on a pilot basis to accommodate families currently experiencing homelessness and have complex needs at an estimated cost of €5 million. Young people experiencing disadvantage continue to be negatively impacted by the housing and homeless crisis; dedicated funding must be assigned in this budget to address their housing needs. We need to also urgently address the long term accommodation needs of people who have refugee status and cannot move out of direct provision because of no affordable accommodation available. We recommend €250 million be used in this budget to increase the provision of secure homes for refugees affected. This is an extremely uncertain and challenging time for many in our society who continue to be negatively affected by housing insecurity. However, Budget 2024 can address those concerns by adequately resourcing our housing system so that all low-income and vulnerable households can access secure and affordable accommodation.



# Third level education

## Their success will be our success

by Niamh Dalziel  
Research and Policy Officer

### Education is more than just a qualification

Making connections with peers, joining clubs and societies and team sports are key aspects of college/university life, alongside achieving a higher education qualification. Creating those connections through a support network of people helps students to get the most out of student life, stay the course and achieve their qualification. Which is what we all want to see for each student who has the drive and vision to want to go to third level education. But once they get there, how easy is it to create that community? Especially if they're sitting on a train or bus commuting for hours each day.

The key factor in commuting or living away from home for students is often down to funding their accommodation, and it would seem, for those living at home while they save on not paying private rent, though are probably more likely to have higher transport costs and they miss out on those key experiences. Accommodation remains a high priority and concern for current and future higher education students. With a recent survey from University of Limerick Student Life (Union) showing out of 1,233 students just over half of the respondents having secure accommodation, while one third were still seeking accommodation and the remaining commuting. While another survey tells us that students need an extra €14,000 a year to cover the costs of living away from home.

### Financial barriers

That's where SVP come in, facilitating as best we can, by removing the financial burden and barriers to higher education students who want to create a better life through education, empower themselves and show others behind them that they can do it too. Making college/university more possible is what we do, each year. And with our members action on the ground, higher education support continues for those on low incomes because they and society will benefit greatly from their success.

Alongside that ongoing support from members and the more that the social justice team can do to change policy and create a higher education system that's a more viable option for those on low income, giving them the opportunity to a good quality and successful student life which is only right.

Their success will be our success. Which is why we have the following asks in Budget 2024 to widen participation in higher education by removing the imposing financial barriers:

- Increase the grant rates and income thresholds for SUSI by 15%.
- Expand eligibility for the SUSI grant to part-time students.
- Make the SUSI grant payable to those in receipt of the Back to Education Allowance.

# Budget 2024

## Government must address the impact of energy prices & provide targeted support to people in energy poverty

by Issy Petrie  
Research and Policy Officer

For Budget 2024, the government must address the impact of energy prices and provide targeted support to people in energy poverty.

SVP members are currently seeing the hardship caused by the cost of energy, with people reaching out for assistance who just cannot keep up with bills coming in, or keep prepay meters topped up to keep their power on. People are forced to make inhumane sacrifices of either food or energy through the week. No one should be faced with that dilemma.

Last year SVP saw a 40% increase in requests for assistance related to energy, and in the first quarter of this year we have seen energy requests increase by a further 50%.

With national statistics also showing energy deprivation rising steeply, we need Budget 2024 to provide a comprehensive package that tackles this crisis.

Energy poverty is understood to be caused by three interlinked factors: a household's income, the cost of the energy they need, and the energy efficiency of their home.

This article will highlight one of our recommendations to tackle each of these factors – but there is further detail and additional recommendations in our full pre-budget submission 'Breaking the Cycle: Proposals to End Poverty in Ireland'.

### 1. Increase and expand the Fuel Allowance to restore people's incomes.

It is essential that in Budget 2024 the government makes sure households at risk of poverty have the income they need to afford the essentials. This means restoring the value of the Fuel Allowance (FA) by increasing it by €680.40 per year. As the core rate of the FA wasn't increased in the last Budget (with a once-off payment given instead), we enter this year with an FA rate that has significantly dropped in value.

For a one parent family with two children, in 2020 the FA payment would have helped cover 45% of their expected energy bills – this year, FA will cover just 27%. (As calculated by MESL analysis.)

We also need to see the Fuel Allowance extended to on the Working Family Payment who also need the safety net of this support. This would bring extra help to an additional 100,000 children who live in these families and would be an important move to address children living in energy poverty.



### 2. Ensure energy is always affordable to people in poverty through a social energy tariff.

Energy is an essential service for our health, our wellbeing, and our ability to navigate daily life. In recognition of this, over the last year Government has stepped in to pay for universal electricity credits to every household.

Looking forward, we need to make sure we have mechanisms in place to offer targeted support that makes the best use of government money – reaching those in need, and able to offer the right level of help at the right time. We are recommending the government, using windfall tax revenues, funds a social tariff that provides reduced cost energy to households in energy poverty.

### 3. Introduce Community Energy Advisors to help people escape energy poverty for good.

We are calling for a local energy advice service to be piloted that helps people manage their energy needs, whether that is a very large bill, navigating tariffs and deals, or deciding what energy efficiency measures might work at home, starting with quick-win measures that are easy to install immediately.

This is an essential service to bridge the gap between supporting households with immediate energy needs and enabling them to access longer term solutions such as retro-fitting grants to reduce their energy needs in the future.

In a changing energy market it is also a key part of a just energy transition, helping everyone to manage with the best possible advice, and be able to hear about and access opportunities that are there for support.

Acting on these key asks is essential to address energy poverty in Budget 2024.

# 'You will know them by their fruits' (Mt 7:16)

by Sr Anne Neylon



**Saint Vincent de Paul (1581-1660)**



**Saint Louise de Marillac (1591-1660)**

Visitors who call to our community house, on seeing two portraits in the hallway ask, 'Who are these people?' They are Saint Vincent de Paul (1581-1660) and Saint Louise de Marillac (1591-1660), co-founders of the Company of the Daughters of Charity (1633). Endowed with the Vincentian charism, they are the *raison d'être* for the sisters' vocation, 'given to God, in community, to serve those who live in poverty.'

I often wonder how to introduce Saint Vincent de Paul to an enquirer. His collaborative life is rich in word and deed. His familiar name resounds internationally in the Vincentian Family, including the Society of St Vincent de Paul and the ecclesial movements. Jesus' words describe the saint's life – 'You will know them by their fruits' (Mt 7:16). Saint Vincent de Paul loved God wholeheartedly, by dedicating his life to serving persons who were poor.

'Who is Saint Vincent de Paul? Who do I say he is? How does his name live on through time? What energised him?' Such questions prompt reflection on Jesus' conversation with his disciples when he asked them, 'Who do people say that I am?' and turning to Peter, Jesus said, 'But you, who do you say I am?' (Mt 16:13-20).

Fr. Richard Mc Cullen C.M. said that 'it is a person's letters that will often give the deepest insight into the workings

of the mind and heart.' He said this was 'eminently true of Saint Louise de Marillac.' It is also true of Saint Vincent de Paul. From Saint Vincent's writings, we discover that, 'there is only one driving force: the person of Jesus Christ. He told the members of the Congregation of the Mission, "Jesus Christ is the Rule of the Mission", the centre of their life and activity.'

The more God's people come to read and know Sacred Scripture where Jesus Christ is revealed, the more, they will deepen their encounter with Him. The saints who were friends of God revealed His love through their lives of holiness. They loved God and actively loved their neighbour. Their correspondence brings their gifts to light, thus guiding God's people to follow Jesus in their journey to God.

Fr. Robert Maloney C.M. offers readers 'distinctive characteristics' to understand the Christ of Saint Vincent de Paul. These characteristics emanate from Vincent's rootedness in Christ, which enabled him to live the maxim of the Gospel 'whatsoever you do to the least of my people, you do unto me.' (Mt 25:40). The challenge for Vincentian Family members today is to serve Jesus tenderly in persons who are poor as Saint Vincent, Saint Louise, Blessed Frederic Ozanam (1813-53) and Blessed Rosalie Rendu (1786-1856) served Him in former times.

# SVP Prison Visitation Gathering 17th June 2023

On 17th June 2023, 26 members from 4 conferences (Hydebank, Belfast; Dublin Guild; Maghaberry, Lisburn; Midlands, Portlaoise) attended a Prison Visitation Gathering in SVP House, Sean Mc Dermott St., Dublin.

Conference Presidents had several zoom meetings over the previous 9 months and the Gathering was the result with the meticulous planning and organising of these meetings.

The last Gathering prior to June 17th was in 2014 so members were extremely happy to eventually meet and chat. The commitment to prison visitation and the conviction that it's a core work of SVP was very evident. However, there's a general feeling that this work is undervalued and mostly overlooked by SVP.



The meeting was chaired by Catherine Coleman (Midlands), Opening Prayer by Fr. John O'Sullivan (Chaplain Arbour Hill) and Opening Reflection by Siobhan Keogh (Midlands). We were also pleased to welcome SVP Vice-President, John Lupton.

Proceedings started at 11 o'clock although many members had arrived by 9.30am to set up a display of art/craft items gifted by prisoners to members over the years, and to enjoy tea/scones/chat before business began.

The 4 Conference Presidents and 1 Visitor Centre Manager introduced themselves and their members to the meeting. The Presidents had already written a resume of their Conference origins and activities which were printed into a booklet to give to each member to take home. Each members also received a copy of Sr. Imelda's book 'Unheard Voices' in each folder.

*"So glad to meet other members and hear their experiences, which were different to mine. I feel more connected to my volunteering experience by being here today. I am energised."*

Sr. Imelda was our first speaker to address the group. She is a well-known author, former prison chaplain and prisoner advocate. Sr. Imelda gave a wonderful insight into the feelings experienced by prisoners in many situations. We truly have to listen to get any understanding of how they feel.

Our second speaker, Miriam Healy, prison chaplain at Wheatfield prison, gave a very interesting talk on the role of the visitor in the prisoner's life. Again, listening was a key function and she felt that the prison staff, including chaplains, had a lot to learn in this regard. Training new prison officers often involves changing their in-built attitude to prisoners before they begin their careers. Both speakers answered questions and a lively discussion followed. A lovely hot lunch was served which was much appreciated, along with more time to chat.

An hour was spent participating in workshops after lunch. Topics included Needs of Prisoners, Long-term Prisoners, Female Prisoners, New Prisoners, Being an effective Visitor, How can SVP support Prison Visitation and Recruitment, Breaking the Cycle/ Education of Prisoners, Stories of Success. Members were divided up from their Conferences so everyone could bring back the learnings to their next Conference meeting.

There was excellent participation, engagement and feedback. John Lupton concluded the meeting with encouraging words from GK Chesterton:

*To love means loving the unlovable  
To forgive means pardoning the unpardonable  
Faith means believing the unbelievable  
Hope means hoping when everything seems hopeless.*

John suggested that Prison Visitation might become part of Member Support committee. Our gathering concluded at 3.30pm and Evaluation showed a satisfaction rate of 94%.

Conferences are very grateful to Brendan Hennessy for the trojan work he did to make the day a great success and to MSO, Anna Kelly, who made videos on the day and took many photos.

*"These Conferences are excellent and help us reflect on the jobs we do. Helps us to learn and encourage each other. Helps to renew our beliefs in what we do. Giving us an idea on how to be the best we can be. There should be a Conference at least every two years."*

# Giving made easy

We are delighted to introduce the CollecTin More, our new fundraising tool, designed to revolutionise the way we collect cashless donations.

## How does it work?

The interface offers donors up to six pre-set donation options or the freedom to choose a custom amount.

The donor then taps their card or smartphone wallet on the card reader which sits on top of the device, or they can insert their card for a Chip + Pin transaction. The CollecTin More is the upgraded version of the CollecTin which works similarly.

The original CollecTin are still available which requires the use of a phone or tablet nearby, installing the SumUp app, on which you enter the donation amount when someone is ready to give.

We have already started to roll out these newer “tap to donate” devices for church collections and various fundraising events and the response so far have been overwhelmingly positive as donors today are less likely to carry cash and are seeking more contactless means to support charity initiatives.

Email: [Fundraising@svp.ie](mailto:Fundraising@svp.ie) for further details or Call: 01 884 8217.



## Leave a Gift

Plant a Seed by Including a Gift in your Will for SVP



**September is Legacy Month ~ Leave a lasting gift**

If, like so many of you, SVP holds a special place in your heart, please consider making a gift in your Will, so your kindness can live on even after you're gone.

For more information, contact Elizabeth at [elizabeth.smyth@svp.ie](mailto:elizabeth.smyth@svp.ie) or call 01 884 8226. Thank you



# EY volunteers make a lasting difference

Recently, SVP Ireland welcomed 10 staff members from Ernst and Young who generously gave up their day to give their time and volunteer in our warehouse and Vincent’s shop on Sean McDermott Street.

Their day involved organising stock and assisting customers

with a “lunch and learn” in between where they got to find out more about the empowering work of SVP.

These corporate volunteering initiatives are important because they enable businesses to make a tangible and positive impact on the communities they serve.

# Fundraising supporter recognition

## Huge Congratulations and well done to Philip Howard

Starting on July 10th, Philip ran 5 marathons in 5 days in aid of SVP. The challenge started in Bundoran on Monday 10th of July, and ended in Sandymount, Dublin on Friday 14th July.

The total distance is approximately 228km or approximately 45 km a day.

As a home school liaison teacher working in two primary schools in inner city Dublin, Philip regularly works with families who are struggling to pay the bills, put food on the table and give their children the opportunities many of us take for granted.

Poverty is a very real existence for families in every corner of Ireland.



## 5 Marathons in 5 Days

Philip said: “St Vincent De Paul support families by providing financial and personal support on a range of issues. Hopefully I can raise a few euros to support their cause.”

Thanks to Philip and all who supported him, we really appreciate all your efforts.

To support Philip’s fundraising efforts, please visit:

<https://gofund.me/d73e448f>

Email: [Fundraising@svp.ie](mailto:Fundraising@svp.ie) for further details or Call: 01 884 8217.

### 1 Email



A bulk attack usually in the form of spam. Not customised for the victim. Generic and opportunistic.

### 2 Spear Phishing



Tailored content designed to trick the victim into believing it is legitimate. Usually sees personal information to increase believability. Often focused on executives and senior managers.

### 3 Whaling



Fraudulent content, in the form of email sent to executives or senior managers purporting to be from the CEO. Often uses content that relates to legal cases, customer complaints etc.

### 4 Clone Phishing



A copy of a legitimate email, which contains fraudulent content. Often requires the victims email account to be already compromised. often used for payment fraud, where a legitimate invoice from a supplier has been modified to with bank account details of the attacker.

### 5 Voice Phishing



Automated phone calls, usually with synthesized speech. These are becoming increasingly common.

### 6 SMS Phishing



Fraudulent SMS messages purporting to be from a legitimate company. Be aware of any and all links.

### 7 Page Hijacking



Fake web pages, designed to look like a legitimate one. Always pay attention to the URL of these pages.

### 8 Calendar Phishing



Fake calendar invitations with phishing links. Not as common as other methods but important to beware.



# NORTH REGION

## Mary Waide Re-elected

Mary Waide has been re-elected to serve the North Region. Her re-election comes with unanimous support, as she ran unopposed. A respected member of the community, Mary will lead the North Region for another two years, following her first term of three years.

## Area Presidents Gathering

Mary Waide, Regional President for the North Region, addressed an Area Presidents gathering in her home town of Dungannon. The event provided an opportunity to reflect on the work of the Society and discuss future aims and objectives.



## Newry Mourne and Down Chairs Ball



Rosemary Cunningham, Area President, is pictured with Cllr Michael Savage at the Chairperson's Ball. SVP was one of four charities chosen to be supported by Newry, Mourne and Down District Council Chairperson during his year in office and received a donation of £5,500 from the event.

## North Down and Ards Gathering

North Down & Ards Area held a gathering at Cladeboye Golf Club. Representatives of Ards and North Down Community Advice and members of Ards & North Down Women's Aid attended to provide an overview of the services offered locally.





## Social Justice Group Meets Naomi Long

North Region Social Justice Group is meeting with elected representatives across the Region and recently a delegation met with Naomi Long MLA, Leader of the Alliance Party, and Connie Egan MLA, at Parliament Buildings Stormont.

## Spinathon for SVP

Members of All Saints GAC recently took part in a spinathon in Ballymena with all proceeds raised on the day donated to SVP.



## Charity Retail Awards Magherafelt

Congratulations to Vincent's Magherafelt on being awarded Highly Commended Shop Team of the Year at the Charity Retail Ireland Awards!

## SVP Retail Awards – Lurgan and Newcastle

Susan Long from Vincent's Lurgan won Volunteer of the Year in the SVP North Region. She is pictured here (centre) with Dermot McGilloway, National Retail Development Manager and Ann Crossan, North Region Retail Manager.



Vincent's charity shop in Newcastle has won the Team of the Year in the SVP North region. Pictured is Tom Mulholland, Manager (centre) receiving the award from, Dermot McGilloway, SVP National Retail Development Manager and Ann Crossan, SVP North Region Retail Manager.



## Conference treasurer receives honorary doctorate

Mary McCloskey, treasurer of St Canice Conference, Limavady receiving an Honorary Doctor from Hillary Rodham Clinton, Vice Chancellor, Queen's University Belfast. Mary was one of eight principals who received honorary doctorates as part of the 25 years celebration of the Good Friday Agreement. The doctorates were awarded for the work of the schools in Shared Education.. A shared campus in Limavady is the first of its kind in Northern Ireland.



Mary McCloskey, treasurer of St Canice Conference, Limavady receiving an Honorary Doctor from Hillary Rodham Clinton, Vice Chancellor, Queen's University Belfast. Mary was one of eight principals who received honorary doctorates as part of the 25 years celebration of the Good Friday Agreement. The doctorates were awarded for the work of the schools in Shared Education.. A shared campus in Limavady is the first of its kind in Northern Ireland.

## Happy Birthday Ian Falls

This is our Ian! It was his 80th birthday on the 21/6/23 and some of the members from St Patrick's and Comber Conference went to surprise him with a cake and gift. Ian has been a member of Saint Vincent de Paul since he was a boy of 14! We are honoured and extremely privileged that is part of our team. His wisdom, knowledge and commitment to our clients inspires us and keeps us all focused.



## King Charles III compliments the work of SVP Enniskillen

King Charles and Queen Camilla visited Enniskillen on their recent trip to N Ireland. The focus of the visit in Enniskillen was Volunteering, Community and Heritage. Two members of the Blessed Virgin Conference, Martha Smyth (President) and Nuala Cassidy (Treasurer) were invited to meet with King Charles at Enniskillen Castle.

King Charles spoke with both members and complimented them on the work of St Vincent de Paul Society. He was very well informed of the work carried out by the organisation throughout Ireland and internationally.

King Charles asked about the number of volunteers in the Enniskillen Conference and if people could access support all day, every day. The conference members talked about the helpline and King Charles then asked what were the main items people were requesting. Conference members responded saying that food vouchers, fuel, white goods and beds were the most requested items in their area but other help was also given.

King Charles thanked Martha and Nuala for their good work and complimented the organisation on their good work which he claimed is very necessary in the present cost of living crisis. King Charles final words to the volunteers were, "Keep up the good work."



## Twinbrook Conference Belfast

Hi my name is Rosie Mc Loughlin. I have been a member of SVP for over 40 years. I started off in St Anne's Conference and although we had lots of members then and little work, I have been seconded to help out in other conferences four or five times in West Belfast where the demands have been substantial. I was asked over 30 years ago to help out for a while in Twinbrook and ended up there for six years. I then helped out in St Paul's Conference went back to my conference in st Anne's.

A few years ago I was asked again to go back and help the very active conference in Twinbrook. Particularly since Covid the calls for help have been plentiful. The rise in electricity and gas not to mention the large expense of appliances has increased significantly. During school holidays food prices and children at home has been a challenge not to mention school uniform prices.

We have been very lucky to work hand in hand with the local food bank and they will supply food and another one "pre loved" school uniforms to help us with that expense.

We also have used the expertise of a wellbeing organisation we can encourage our addicts or people with mental health problems to call into.

This group will offer expert counselling and follow up not to mention a listening ear and cuppa.

All of the above "partners" free up some of our money for vouchers and if needed appliances. It has always been a privilege to be a member of this great organisation and answer Gods call to "feed the hungry give drink to the thirsty give clothes to the naked shelter the homeless.



## UTV Life visit to Vincent's Springfield Road

Dermot McGilloway, National Retail Development Manager, was interviewed for a UTV Life feature on sustainable shopping at Vincent's on Springfield Road.



## WEST REGION

### Sacred Heart Conference Castlebar Reunion

Members past and present came together for a reunion in June of this year at the Museum of Country Life, Castlebar.

The conference has a long tradition going back over the last 55 years of visiting residents of the Sacred Heart Hospital in Castlebar.

The reunion celebrated this achievement and awarded certificates of recognition and appreciation to members who have retired. These retired members gave generous and dedicated service and held various roles within the Conference from President, Vice President, Treasurer and Secretary. Collectively they had over 100 years membership. They have left a rich legacy, received many warm tributes and were wished health and happiness in the years ahead.

The reunion was tinged with sadness with the passing a week earlier of Dr Aodan Bourke, an active member of the conference for 55 years.

The Conference and residents of the Sacred Heart Hospital have suffered a great loss. He will be sadly missed. (See tribute to Aodan on last page)



Front Row left to right: Christine Podger, Anne Leonard, Gerry Millett, Bea O'Grady (retired), Kathleen Gallagher (retired)  
Back Row left to right: Pat Kenny, John Deacy, Mary Derrig (retired), Brian O'Reilly, Bernard Gallagher (retired), Renee Loughnane, Paddy Connor.

## MID WEST REGION



### SVP Portlaoise

St. Vincent de Paul Portlaoise would like to thank Catherine, Alison and Jimmy along with the management and staff of Laois Hire for their very generous donation to our Conference, we were delighted to receive the sum of €3000.

We have decided to allocate this donation toward our Bursary fund where we will be in a better position to assist families with the high cost of 3rd level courses and related expenses.

Front Row: Hannah Mulvihill, Mary Stack, Michael Dillane. Back Row: Kathleen Stack, Mary Sobieralski, Eileen O'Sullivan, Kay Landy.



# EAST REGION



## Members Day

East Region were delighted to welcome 175 members to our Members Day in the Convention Centre. Marie Cronin, East Regional President spoke about the great work going on in the Region and future plans. She thanked the members for their dedication, hard work and commitment to SVP.



Rose McGowan, National President attended the event and spoke to the members about the importance of being back together as a Society and the immeasurable value of meeting & engaging with clients, she expressed how this cannot be underestimated and is of vast importance to the heart of our work in society.

We had an inspirational speech from Mr John Lonergan, Former Governor of Mountjoy Prison which left us feeling encouraged and hopeful.



Mr Nesson Vaughan, Vice Chair National Social Justice and Policy Committee updated the members of all the vital work being done by the Social Justice team and how important it is.

Mr Bryan Murray attended with his partner Ms Una Crawford O'Brien, he spoke about how he joined the Society in his youth and how much it meant to him to support our organisation. Thanks to David McDonough our MC for the day, John Miley, Fr Jim Noonan, the organisation committee and all the members who attended and contributed to the event.

## Summer music at New Dolphin Park from Stomptown Brass

With 43 apartments, the attractively-designed new complex at Dolphin Park, Rialto, Dublin 8, for which Dublin City Council architect Stephen Lowe deserves great credit, houses a population of elderly residents who are just starting to emerge from their long social isolation during the Covid years. Some have health or mobility issues and rarely go out, others are still reluctant to stray far outside their apartments. That doesn't mean they can't enjoy a live music performance.

On 28 June the strains of the saxophone, trombone and other brass and the pulsating rhythm of the drum brought the normally quiet courtyard in Dolphin Park to life with a concert by Stomptown Brass, an up-and-coming band who are starting to make a name for themselves. Having enjoyed pre-concert refreshments, soon the residents were foot tapping, bopping, clapping and generally having a good time on a lovely summer's evening.

Stomptown Brass is not a brass band in the traditional sense. Their sound is original, rhythmic, infectious, their performers highly energetic. We were entertained for an hour and half by James O'Leary on tuba, Rob Grant, trumpet and vocals, Brendan Doherty on drums, Luke Byrne on saxophone, Liam Ryan on trumpet and Finnian Kelly on trombone.

St Rita's conference, Rialto, organised the concert in partnership with Fold Housing which runs the Dolphin Park apartments. The courtyard was a perfect venue for the concert, providing a safe, enclosed and easily-managed space with a great acoustic. Those who chose not to come outdoors were able to enjoy the music from their apartments and in fact the music could be heard all over Dolphin House.

We were very lucky through a conference connection to get Stomptown Brass to play in Dolphin Park. This highly-talented band has previously delighted audiences at festivals around the country including Electric Picnic, Longitude and Indipendence and will go on to play at Galway Arts Festival and other gigs. Reaction to the concert was universally positive. People loved the music and enjoyed the occasion. This was a first venture by our conference and we are very pleased with its success. We hope it will be the first of many.



*Stomptown Brass: from left James O'Leary, Rob Grant, Brendan Doherty, Luke Byrne, Liam Ryan and Finnian Kelly*

## SOUTH WEST REGION



### 65 years involvement in the Vincent de Paul

Michael was born in Tralee in 1933. While he grew up in Tralee, he did spend time with his relations in Sussa, Ballinskelligs and even attended school there briefly. His parents had a farm in the Kerries and he attended the Green Secondary School in Tralee. He played football for the Green. He was good at maths and went for the Met service got the exams and spent 12 weeks in Dublin doing intensive training around Glasnevin. We are told most of the training took place at the Tolka inn and a few more spots around the Northside. After training, Michael was posted to the Valentia Observatory in Caherciveen. There were up to 50 staff there at the time and they all got on very well.

He went to various social events organised through the workplace and the community. It was at one of these social events that Michael met his late wife Joan Mullins from Tralee who was visiting her Uncle Jim. They spent 52 wonderful years together until she passed away nearly five years ago. Joan still missed by all those who knew her. Over the years Michael has been involved in the social services delivering meals on wheels, the Legion of Mary and of course the Vincent De Paul.

These days Michael is busy looking after his garden, attending church services, visiting family and meeting up with friends. He makes weekly trips to Killarney/Tralee and to Dublin every few months and has recently returned from a pilgrimage to Fatima in Portugal. Even though he is a senior citizen himself, he continues to visit the sick and the elderly. He also plays a mean game of poker at the men's shed on a Thursday night and enjoys catching up with the neighbours.

Michael still enjoys being involved with the St. Vincent de Paul Society after all these years. During Covid, he went on Zoom to attend the meetings. He has made many friends over the years through SVP and especially enjoyed attending the area meetings in Killarney.

On 24th May this year, past and present members of the Cahersiveen conference, joined by his family, had a small get together to celebrate Michael's 65 years membership. A certificate and long service medal were presented to Michael by regional president Paddy O Flynn and a great evening reminiscing was had by all.



### Listowel SVP Conference Celebration Mary Stack



Front Row: Hannah Mulvihill, Mary Stack, Michael Dillane. Back Row: Kathleen Stack, Mary Sobieralski, Eileen O'Sullivan, Kay Landy.

Listowel's Our Lady of Lourdes Conference recently celebrated Mary's 90th birthday and her 59 years as an active member. Mary Stack was one of the founding members of the first women's Conference in Listowel, Co. Kerry in the 1960s. She was later instrumental in the amalgamation of the men's and women's conferences in the early 70s, becoming president of the new Our Lady of Lourdes Conference at the time.

She was joined on the night by present members and former members including Michael Dillane and Kathleen Stack. Michael was involved in the founding of the Day Centre/ Meals on Wheels project which still flourishes today in the town. Also present was Kay Landy who opened the St. Vincent de Paul shop in the town which, under her guidance, has gone from strength to strength. Eileen O'Sullivan, Hannah Mulvihill and Mary Sobieralski who worked with Kay in the shop over the years were delighted to join the festivities. Mass was celebrated by Canon Declan O'Connor and music was provided by John Kinsella who volunteers as a caller at the conference's weekly Bingo in the local Ozanam Centre. Flowers were presented to Mary by Marie Mulvihill and a cake by Helena Carmody, the present chair of the Listowel Conference. It was a wonderful opportunity for present and past members to meet and reminisce; celebrating Mary's birthday reminded us of our origins and achievements as a conference over the decades. This helps to strengthen our resolve to continue the great work in our town. Beir Bua!

# In Tribute

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

### Dr Aodan Bourke

*Castlebar*

Fifty-five years! That's how long the late Dr Aodan Bourke visited the residents of the Sacred Heart hospital as a member of the Society of St Vincent de Paul (SVP). On 14 June Aodan passed away peacefully.

As a valued and dedicated member of the SVP, each week Aodan would bring the newspapers and befriend the residents, making them feel valued, offering support and friendship. This is the mission of the SVP, a 200-year-old charity that recognises spiritual and material poverty. One person succinctly described Aodan's commitment to the residents as a member of the SVP with a comment on RIP.ie as follows: 'His weekly visits to the patients in the Sacred Heart Hospital for many years with the local weekly newspapers was a testament to his strong social conscience... & how the patients looked forward to his visits – with his gentle demeanour & quiet comforting words calling each by name as he & they became familiar with each other. God rest you Dr Aodan, you have surely gained a place at the Lord's right hand.' Another paid a similar tribute: 'Sincere condolences to Nuala and family on the sad loss of Aodan RIP his kindness and generosity in delivering weekly newspapers without fail to the residents of the SHHC was greatly appreciated by the resident's. He was a quiet kind unassuming gentleman who will be greatly missed his kindness to the residents will be always remembered.'

Delivering a newspaper may seem inconsequential, but it's how it is delivered and by whom that makes the difference. Such was Aodan's gentle, humble manner that a nurse, now long-retired, recalls having her appendix removed when she was just 11-years-old, and still fondly remembers Aodan being the anaesthetist who attended her. Many will have such fond memories of Aodan.

Aodan's fellow members of the SVP extend their condolences to his beloved wife Nuala, his sons Johnny, Billy, Mark and Aodan, and daughter Fionnuala.

### Mary Cunningham

*St. John the Baptist Conference, Kill*

The late Mary Cunningham of Kill Lodge Kill, was a beloved lady in the Kildare community.

For many years she and her sister Antoinette, rang the Five Lamps public house at South Main Street, Naas. She retired 15 years ago and she and her sister moved to Kill.

Mary was a dedicated and active member of several societies chief among them being the St. Vincent de Paul Society. She was president of St. John the Baptist Conference twice as well as being a member of St. Ita's Conference which looked after the SVP Housing in the town of Naas. To both conferences Mary gave her all. Her sympathetic nature, empathy and non judgmental attitude gave solace to many people in need.

The Country Markets was another society dear to her. Once again she found herself presiding over this society for a number of years. Mary was a fantastic gardener and needed no help with the hard work of digging and planting. She had a stall at the Country Market in Naas and would sell out all her well nurtured plants.

Mary's last years were blighted by ill health but she fought bravely on, ably assisted by her carer Frances Cole.

She will be sadly missed by all those who sought refuge from her over the years, but especially her colleagues in the St. Vincent de Paul Society and the Country Markets.

Ar Deis De go raibh a anam delis.



## Noel O' Dea

*St Columba's Conference Raphoe, Donegal*

It was Sunday 13th August 2006, after the 11 o'clock Mass in St Eunan's Church Raphoe, that I took courage and approached Noel, as he stood holding the box for St Vincent de Paul. I asked him how do I go about joining. Noel encouraged me to come to their meeting on the following Monday night. However it wasn't until October of that year that I eventually went to my first meeting. From that moment Noel and I became the very best of friends.

Noel taught me so much about the Society. He taught me far more by his good example and genuine love and respect for those in need.

Frederic Ozanam was asked "What is your church doing for the poor." This question sparked Frederic into forming the Society of St Vincent de Paul. Noel very much kept Frederic's response fresh, bringing fuel, food, comfort and encouragement to those in need.

Everyone Noel came into contact with was treated with the greatest of respect. Noel devoted himself to the work of the Society with love and kindness. He gave his time freely and used his talents wisely for the good of the Society. Noel was not content just with tiding someone over the poverty crisis but he tried to alleviate the source of the problem.

Noel joined St Columba's Conference Raphoe under the leadership of Seamus Mc Ginley who became his life long friend.

Noel was a member for more than 40 years and during his time with the Raphoe Conference. He was Area President and Regional President. Under his leadership The Conference rented a shop in Meetinghouse Street where we opened the first Vincentian shop in Raphoe. He will be sadly missed by everyone who knew him.

May Eternal Light Shine upon him and may his soul and all our deceased Vincentian members rest in peace.

## Bro. Lucian Pat Phelan

*St Fergal's Conference, Finglas, Dublin*

The members of St Fergals Conference, Finglas West were deeply saddened by the recent passing of their beloved ex Conference President, Bro. Lucian Pat Phelan.

He was born in 1938 and joined the Patrician Brothers and was conferred in 1955. He served in India, Kenya, Ghana and Australia and later returned to Ireland and worked in Galway and Newbridge. After some time he moved to Dublin where he was the principle in Patrician College, Finglas.

When Bro. Lucian retired he was heavily involved with SVP. He was a mentor to everyone and will really be missed by his friends, family and members. He was a True Vincentian.

## Paul Wills

*Conference of Our Lady of the Rosary, Harold's Cross, Dublin*

It is with sadness and thanksgiving that the Conference of Our Lady of the Rosary, Harold's Cross, Dublin, mourns the death of Paul Wills. Paul was a valued member of the Conference for many years and fulfilled roles of both President and Treasurer.

He was very dedicated truly incorporating the ethos of St. Vincent de Paul in both home visiting and formal roles. Paul established a Junior Conference as a school boy in the Christian Brothers' school in Synge Street and continued his membership of St. Vincent de Paul right to the end of his life.

We extend our sympathy to Patricia, his wife, his two daughters, Alison and Tara and their families and his brother, John and his family.

Ar dheis De go raibh se.



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