

THE

AUTUMN 2018



BULLETIN

MAGAZINE OF THE SOCIETY OF ST. VINCENT DE PAUL

SVP ANNUAL APPEAL

You could save someone from a life of poverty

STORIES OF STRUGGLE

It was supposed to be a 'Housing Budget'

What Happened?

THE VOICE OF SOCIAL JUSTICE IN IRELAND



*“There are no strangers here;
Only friends you haven’t yet met”*

- William Butler Yeats



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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Contents

4	KIERAN STAFFORD REFLECTION
5	VOLUNTEER STORY
6	LACK OF INVESTMENT IN EDUCATION BUDGET 2019
8	WORDPOWER
9	SVP YOUNG
15	POVERTY PATH
16	RETAIL HEALTH & SAFETY
20	STORIES OF STRUGGLE
22	SVP INTERNATIONAL
24	NEW SVP HOUSING SCHEME
26	IT WAS SUPPOSED TO BE A 'HOUSING BUDGET'?
28	A HAND OF HOPE FOR A FAMILY IN HOMELESSNESS
32	WHERE IS THE LONG-TERM VISION FOR ONE-PARENT FAMILIES?
34	TWINNING
36	NATIONAL COUNCIL MEETING
38	FINANCES 2017
42	THE SVP GDPR JOURNEY
44	ANTRIM GAA TO COLLECT SHOEBOXES IN SUPPORT OF SVP
46	NATIONWIDE
50	IN TRIBUTE

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ADVERTISING RATES ON
REQUEST TO THE EDITOR

RELEVANT ARTICLES ARE
WELCOME. SEND TO THE EDITOR.

In 1847, the Choctaw Nation heard about the Irish Famine, and the story had such an impact that their community collected \$170 to send to the Irish victims, a sum equivalent to approximately €4,000 today. This was sent to Ireland where it was used for food, fuel and blankets for the victims. The story of the Irish famine resonated with the Choctaws as they had undergone their own hardship 16 years earlier when they were forced to move west of the Mississippi by the government of Andrew Jackson in a journey that became known as the 'Trail of Tears'.

"We helped the Irish because that's who we are and what we are," explains tribal council speaker, *"we remembered the sorrow to befall our people, and we felt the same for the people in Ireland. \$170 might not seem like much, we were poor, yet each of us eagerly gave to help our brothers and sisters."* A monument of gratitude to the Choctaw Nation was erected in Middleton, Co Cork. The sculpture takes the form of an empty bowl cupped by feathers, a poignant embodiment of the Choctaw Nation embracing a starving people.

What this story illustrates is the compassion and care that "strangers" can have for one another. As volunteers and

donors to the Society, there is immense compassion and drive to ease the suffering of people who they do not know personally. Likewise, for those we assist, they allow 'strangers' into their homes where they share their deepest sufferings. This relationship in many cases changes over time and those 'strangers' become friends sharing a bond of understanding and kindness.

The Society in Ireland was established in 1844 a year before the Famine. It has witnessed a civil war, a war of independence, two World Wars and several economic recessions and up to present day our volunteers continue to help people who they do not always know but for the greater good want to bring about change. Similarly, SVP relies heavily on the generosity of the public to support those most vulnerable. This money is donated through the kindness of people who want to help people they have never met before but can empathise with their struggles.

But SVP doesn't just operate on the island of Ireland; it is an international organisation present in almost 150 countries reaching out to over 30 million people. All of this work is only possible through the selfless dedication of our volunteers and the kindness of donors.

In this edition you will read examples of the constant activism SVP carries out by petitioning the government to implement positive policy changes for those we assist; the recent "Stories of Struggle" and "Paving a pathway out of poverty" Social Justice campaigns, which highlighted the many challenges, people struggle face. You will learn how 800,000 active members and over one million volunteers work throughout the world to help people in need; meet the eight SVP Youth Development officers and the work they do in colleges and schools; the recent opening of a new SVP housing scheme in Dublin, and many more stories on the work and activities of SVP.

Finishing with the words from a letter of gratitude to the Choctaw Nation *"I fondly reflect that the friendship between the Choctaw and the Irish continues to blossom. Few, if any connections have lasted so long, and certainly none have known as much mutual respect, compassion and laughter as that enjoyed by Ireland and the Choctaw"*.

Linda O'Connell



www.facebook.com/SVPireland



www.twitter.com/SVP_Ireland

The latest homeless figures continue to make for depressing reading as we move into another Christmas period.



Many will have heard the recent heart-rending interview on RTÉ's Morning Ireland with the bright young girl who was in fear of failing her Leaving Cert because she finds it impossible to study in the hotel room that she shares with her young brother, sister and mother. Her pleas for a home moved many who listened to the interview, was referred to in Dáil Éireann and even prompted a government Minister to admit that the State has failed her. But months later, she still exists in that room with her family. In fact, they are living in a hotel room for two years now and have only gone up one place on the housing list. Her pleas have gone unanswered.

We live in an era when so many famous people are referred to as heroes and legends, but the mother of that girl will never be referred to in those terms. I believe she should be; I think that anyone who can keep their kids safe and well while living in the hell of a hotel room is a hero. I have seen so many mothers shed bitter tears because they blame themselves for not being able to provide their kids with a home. They should not feel ashamed. It is others that should. Government policy is failing families and children who are homeless.

Never has the public been more aware of the homeless crisis. Many have taken part in rallies and demonstrations, and the media constantly remind us of the human stories behind the scandalous figures. But despite all this, the situation continues to get worse. For the thousands on housing lists and in emergency accommodation, there is no end in sight.

The most recent homeless figures show that 3,829 children are living in emergency homeless accommodation. Are they to blame for the shocking situation they find themselves in? Of course not, and I don't think there is anyone who does not believe every child should have a safe and secure home.

Imagine what it must feel like as a parent to witness the distress of your child because you are homeless.

Some parents have even had to make the heart-breaking decision to separate their families, sending children to stay with friends and extended family members to temporarily try to avoid the stress and hardship of living in hotels and B&Bs. It's hard to believe that some parents have to make that choice in Ireland today.

This Christmas we have put children at the heart of our Annual Appeal because we know that they are the most vulnerable and should not suffer because society has got things so wrong. Many will work hard to make this Christmas special for the thousands of children living in poverty throughout Ireland, and many will succeed. But for those without a home, it's likely to be only a short break from the harsh reality of their life.

They can only hope that someday they will have a place to call home. Surely that's not too much to ask?

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kieran Stafford'.

Kieran Stafford
National President



Volunteer Stories: John

For John, volunteering with SVP runs in the family. As a young student, he followed in his father's footsteps and joined a local Conference. Now he is on the frontline of the homeless crisis, using your donations to help families in poor accommodation.

How did you get involved with the Society?

My father has been a volunteer for most of 40 years. It was something that was always in the house growing up, always a blue collection box at the end of the stairs or something. I decided to join in my early twenties, 14 years ago now. I got involved with a Conference in Cork city centre and I'm still here!

What help does your Conference provide?

We're slightly different to most Conferences because we're right in the heart of the city. We visit a lot of people living in small or poor quality flats and emergency homeless accommodation. We meet a lot of people in short-term crisis. They may also be dealing with mental health problems, addiction or loneliness. We provide them with basics like food vouchers or fuel to keep warm. Often we use these vouchers as a means to get in the door and befriend them. Then we help address their root problems and link them in with other agencies.

How has the homeless crisis affected your work?

We used to help mostly single people, but now we are seeing more and more families in these same conditions. There is one family, for example, I've been visiting since last year. The mother and her four children have been in the same hotel room for over a year. She has three children attending school every day. The fourth one has a serious disability and needs full-time care.

"You can imagine the struggle of three kids doing homework in one hotel room in that situation, and trying to feed them all without proper cooking facilities."

Thanks to the generosity of donors, we have a food bank here in Cork now. They make specific hampers for people living in hotel rooms. They include expensive hygiene products like nappies. Or food you can cook if all you have is a kettle or a toaster. The team in the food bank try to customise each hamper for the specific needs of a family. When we visit, we always see such relief on the face of a mother. Not just the food, but having someone to talk to, someone to fight her corner. Life cramped up in a hotel room with all your children is stressful.

Because of donors, we're there to help.



Lack of Investment and Ambition Characterises Education Budget 2019

Marcella Stakem
Social Policy Development Officer

Educational disadvantage is one of the negative hallmarks of the Irish education system. Accessing a quality education can break the cycle of poverty, but if children don't have the materials they need, such as fit for purpose buildings, school books and school uniforms, it is difficult for them to have a positive experience of school and expectation to achieve in life. The Education Budget for 2019 saw an increase by €674 million to €10.8 billion in 2019. This is an impressive figure and the continued increase in the education budgets for the past few years is to be welcomed. However, this additional funding will not address in any meaningful way the issues faced by low income families while attending school or trying to access third level education.

Budget 2019 provides a 5% increase in school capitation, the first in a decade, equivalent to €8,50 per student at primary level. In our Pre-Budget Submission, *Paving a Way out of Poverty*, SVP asked the Department of Education to carry out an assessment of the adequacy of the capitation rates to schools. This is an important task to conduct so that we know the levels of funding required to run our schools, now and in the future. SVP received 6,000 calls for back to school help in August 2018. This clearly highlights the crisis we have in our education system with regard to underfunding. Schools will continue to be heavily reliant on 'voluntary' contributions and fundraising to pay for basics such as heat, light and maintenance. There are other costs to families associated with schooling, such as school clothing, books, equipment, exam fees, stationary and school transport.

In July 2018 SVP carried out a school costs survey among Conferences. The findings highlight that school books and school uniforms are the two items SVP receive most requests for with the average spend of €100-€150 paid out by Conferences to families. This does give us some indication of the burden of school costs on families, bearing in mind these are only two items from a long list of requirements to participate in school. SVP acknowledges and welcomes the increase in the Back to School Clothing and Footwear Allowance, however, we will continue to strongly advocate that the Department of Education and Skills must tackle the underinvestment in the education system.

In the absence of a properly funded school book rental scheme in many schools, each year parents spend on average between €75 and €125 per child on books for primary school children

and between €250 and €350 for secondary school children. In some cases, the costs can be substantially higher with some parents reporting that they must pay as much as €600 for secondary school books. There was no provision for additional funding to the school book rental scheme in Budget 2019. This is a huge disappointment to the families SVP support. It is estimated that it would cost approximately €40 million per year to have an entirely free school books scheme in both primary and secondary school, which SVP believe is achievable and would provide enormous benefits for pupils and parents.

The following are some of the examples SVP highlighted at the Joint Oireachtas Committee on Education and Skills in August 2018, which demonstrates the financial burden and stress families are enduring because of chronic underinvestment in our schools:

'One Parent family, four children, on social welfare. Child Starting 1st year. I-pad €700 and registration fee €250. 'Voluntary' fees for two other children at €180 each. Books primary school €70. There is also the cost of uniforms and shoes'. (SVP Member)

Low income families are going to moneylenders to fund school trips rather than tell their child they can't afford to pay. (SVP Member).

The extra funding given towards higher education, approximately €57 million is wholly inadequate given the record numbers of students attending third level. A further €60 million a year from 2020 to 2024 was also announced which will come from the National Training Fund. However, this will be of no use for the families wishing to access part-time education and continue with their caring responsibilities or employment. Also, it will do nothing to address the substantial costs involved to attend third level education which are a barrier for many.

Budget 2019 failed to provide meaningful, transformative change for the education system. SVP will continue to advocate that a properly funded education system is what is needed as a basis for this to happen. It would also ensure Ireland can finally make the term 'educational disadvantage' redundant when we discuss the Irish education system.

Introducing WordPower

"I do believe something very magical can happen when you read a good book"- J.K Rowling

Do you remember the first book you loved? At SVP we know how important education is and that every child is full of potential. The East Region (Dublin, Kildare, Wicklow) are delighted to introduce the SVP WordPower scheme. Through WordPower brand new children's books will be distributed through Home Visitations to encourage children in the families we visit to begin enjoying books early with all the benefits that they bring.

A study from the Australian National University and the University of Nevada has found that:

- Having more books at home when growing up, even if you don't necessarily read more, improves educational outcomes.
- The positive impact was greatest for those with higher levels of disadvantage, meaning lower income families could narrow the education gap by exposing their children to more books in the house.

Similarly, a 2013 study in the UK found that reading for pleasure had a more significant impact on progress in vocabulary, spelling and maths than having a parent with a degree.

Chapter One

In October 2017 Michael Boyle (Area President West Tallaght) put in place an initiative 'Books for Babies'. SVP members in West Tallaght began bringing books to families they were visiting with young children, with a view to supporting them to be 'school ready'.

"Reading books together can develop language skills, boost a young child's confidence and help them to feel more relaxed. Shared reading can encourage children to draw and write, and studies have shown that the greater the child's experience of books and language are, the greater their chance of reading fluency and a range of vocabulary. Reading together can be an important bonding experience for parent and child". DLR Libraries

Chapter Two

In August 2018 the East Region Board decided to extend this scheme across the Region. The name changed to "WordPower" as books would now be available for ages 0-13.

WordPower launched at the August East Region Council meeting. SVP members play an essential role in identifying families who would like to take part, distributing the book packs and empowering families, by providing encouragement to parents and creating opportunities for children to begin enjoying reading early.

When a request is received from a Conference, packs of books suitable for the children they are visiting are then put together and sent to a Vincent's shop to be collected by the Conference, who can then distribute the books during their home visits. Each book pack contains four children's books, a colouring book, crayons and a teddy. Conferences can request books once every month.

The response so far has been extremely positive. During the first two months of WordPower books have been distributed to over 400 children across more than 30 participating Conferences in the Region.

"Thank you so much for the wonderful bag of books for our families, I gave mine out tonight to 3 families, well such delight on the boys and girl, who adore books and got straight into looking into the bag, you can be assured they will be passed to the other children in the family."- Yvonne McGivern, SVP member

The Next Chapter

We hope to continue to expand WordPower by promoting the scheme to more Conferences in the East Region. We are also currently seeking corporate sponsorship to ensure the sustainability of WordPower so that we can continue to support children to begin reading and enjoying books.

If you would like to find out more about WordPower, we would be delighted to hear from you. Please email wordpower.east@svp.ie or phone (01)8198430.





Young SVP at College Level

by *Siofra Dempsey*
College Support Officer

The academic year 2017/18 was an exciting year for Young SVP nationwide. The Young SVP programme continued to grow reaching more young people than ever before.

Our team continues to grow too, and this year the College Support Officer role was made permanent, a position I am delighted to fill. As College Support Officer, I work with each college Conference nationwide.



There are Young SVP college Conferences in many of the third-level institutes nationwide including: Trinity College Dublin (TCD), University College Dublin (UCD), Dublin Institute of Technology (DIT), Dublin City University (DCU), Maynooth University (MU), University College Cork (UCC), Institute of Technology Tralee (ITT), Cork College of Commerce, Mary Immaculate College in both Limerick and Thurles, National University of Ireland Galway (NUIG), and Sligo Institute of Technology.

College Conferences are structured similarly to other SVP Conferences, and indeed other college societies.

The Conference is led by the committee. Many Conferences have Activity Leaders for their different activities, activity coordinators, fundraising coordinators, and other roles as they need them. The committees meet regularly regarding core items and organise additional meetings for the wider member base so everyone can come together and participate.



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The 2017/18 year started out with the usual momentum of the academic year, with each Conference signing up new members, all of whom go through application and training process, while also getting their activities off the ground. Given that each Conference chooses activities and projects they each have their own unique perspectives and programme of events.

Many colleges run befriending activities, such as UCC's ongoing activities with the Cope Foundation, Trinity's work with Friends of the Elderly and NUIG's events with Ability West.

Befriending is one of the most popular and rewarding Young SVP activities, as it gives volunteers and the people they help a chance to meet and get to know each other and creates links between community members.

Education activities are also popular – many colleges run homework clubs, drama and art clubs. The Conference at TCD expand their clubs into the annual Panto, a huge event held every year where SVP volunteers and the young people put on a pantomime. This year the Panto was Pirates of the Caribbean, it was loads of fun for everyone involved.

This year we saw an increase in the social justice work being done by college volunteers. UCD and Trinity have dedicated social justice clubs, where students meet to discuss social justice issues such as the homeless crisis, inequality, racism, poverty, the refugee crisis and other relevant topics. Many Conferences

involve this kind of research and discussion within their activities. It is important to put these discussions into action, as they learn about social justice issues. Young SVP volunteers put that knowledge into action by running campaigns and effective activities.

Almost all College Conference also run fundraisers through the year; the money they raise supports their own activities and other SVP projects. The biggest of these is Jailbreak; an annual event organised by three Trinity societies – SVP, DU Amnesty, and the Cumann Gaelach. Students from third-level all around Ireland can enter the race, fundraising before and during the race.

The premise of the race is to get to the mystery 'Location X' within 36-hours and without using any of your own money. This year's location was the city of Pula in Croatia. UCC were Jailbreak 2018 winners, with a group of four teams combining efforts to win together:

Over the past six years, Jailbreak has raised €225,000 for SVP and Amnesty. Jailbreak 2018 raised a record-breaking €59,000, with the money raised being split evenly between the two charities.

Young SVP at College Level



Photo: L-R
John Warren
Neil Lacey
Clare Gilmore
Clare Mander
Ivana Kolic
Siofra Dempsey
Debbie O'Halloran
Sylvia Doherty
Helen Ralph
BeccaGallagher

Debbie O'Halloran; South East (covering Waterford, Wexford, Carlow, Laois & Kilkenny)

I have been involved with SVP, in a number of different capacities, since my school days where I was a member of St Coleman's Youth Conference in Carrick-on-Suir. I've been in the YDO role since the very beginning of the pilot in 2013 and have had the pleasure of seeing the Young SVP Programme grow from an 'idea' into a very credible programme and resource over the last 5 years. With the help and support of members and staff both regionally and nationally, the Young SVP Programme in the south east is a huge success and is continuing to grow each year. I am as excited to see what the year ahead will bring as much as I was in my very first year. Let's see what 2018/2019 will bring.

John Warren; South West (Cork & Kerry)

Based in Cork City I deliver the Young SVP Programme to schools, Colleges and Youth Groups across Cork and Kerry. Although I am new to the role I have been a volunteer member with the Society for 14 years and have also worked in the youth and community sector for the last 6 years. I strongly believe that a young person's development and interaction around social justice is vital for our communities. It is a wonderful thing to help someone else, but to try and understand their situation makes it so much more fruitful.

Helen Ralph; West (Mayo & Roscommon)

Helen is our YDO who normally covers Mayo and Roscommon. She's currently on maternity leave & we hope to have her back with us before the end of 2018. Helen has been part of the team since early 2017 and has made great progress since then. She left a Youth Ministry coordinator position in Knock to join us & we are delighted she did. She brings great energy and enthusiasm to everything she does, while also always keeping a level head! While she is away she has left her schools in the very capable hands of Sylvia!



Neil Lacey; North East & Midlands (Louth, Meath, Westmeath, Longford, Cavan & Monaghan)

I am excited to have taken up the role and very much looking forward to working on the SVP Development Programme. I came to SVP with a number of years youth work, disability and social enterprise experience. Over the past few months with SVP I have been blown away by the support of members that I have met, I must also give a special mention to my colleagues in the regional and national offices and my Area and Regional president for their continued encouragement and support.

Ivana Kolic; Mid-West (Limerick, Clare, Tipperary & Offaly)

I was delighted when the YDO job in SVP came up, it sounded like a great way of getting back to working with students and schools, as I have worked as a psychologist and guidance counsellor previously. When I first arrived, I learned that there has been plenty of great work done with young people in the Region over the years, it was my job to put that all together and invite others to join us! As our founder, Blessed Frederic Ozanam said "No work is great if it's not organised.". I found myself building on existing relationships between SVP members and local schools, as well as establishing new connections and building our community from there. What I find worked best for us so far was having students involved over a few years, volunteering isn't just a one-off, it's more of a way of living, and this way students can also learn from their experience, build on their previous knowledge, and share with new members joining for the first time.

Sylvia Doherty; West (covering Galway, and Mayo and Roscommon)

I recently joined the Young SVP team, having worked in secondary schools for over 5 years, I believe that education may be the ticket that allows people to surpass the cycle of poverty. I'd the pleasure of attending the most recent Youth Day in the west where Young SVP members gathered to exhibit their projects and advocate on behalf of others on issues that they felt passionately about. It was notable that we can learn a lot from each other! I enjoy listening to young people's opinions on social and policy issues relating to poverty/income distribution; healthcare; inequality; social justice; education; well-being; public services; human rights, etc. It's inspiring to be around those working to help improve the quality of life for others.





Northern Region (Antrim, Armagh, Down, Tyrone, Fermanagh & Derry)

Clare Gilmore recently moved on from her role here and we are currently recruiting to find a new YDO for the Region, so watch this space. In the meantime please feel free to contact Becca@svp.ie with any queries relating to the programme in the North.

Helen Ralph; West (Mayo & Roscommon)

Helen is our YDO who normally covers Mayo and Roscommon. She's currently on maternity leave & we hope to have her back with us before the end of 2018. Helen has been part of the team since early 2017 and has made great progress since then. She left a Youth Ministry coordinator position in Knock to join us & we are delighted she did. She brings great energy and enthusiasm to everything she does, while also always keeping a level head! While she is away she has left her schools in the very capable hands of Sylvia!

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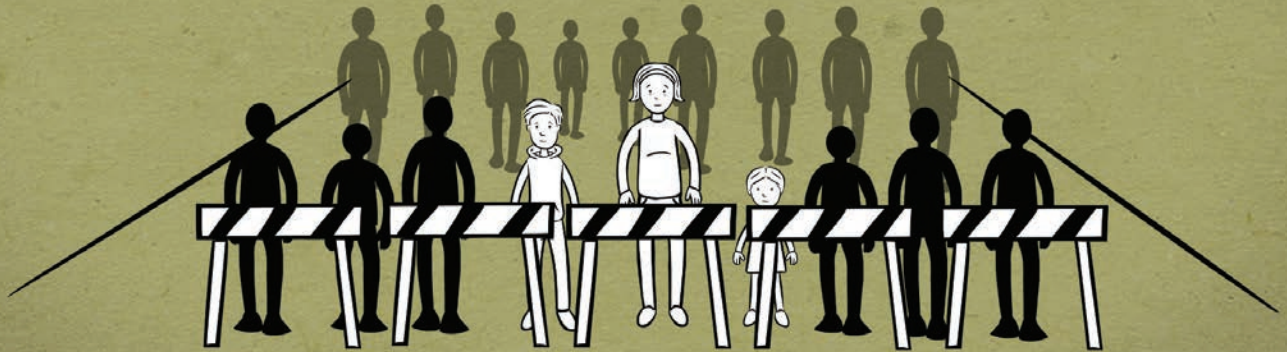
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The Poverty Path Campaign: Building better understandings of poverty and support for action

Tricia Keilthy
Social Policy Development Officer



Every week SVP members see first hand the daily struggle for people living in poverty. They see how poverty is an exhausting and endless struggle to make ends meet. They meet families under significant stress and strain as they often have to choose between whether to pay the rent, the electricity bill, or food. They know people have the daily worry about whether the car will break down or someone will get sick, and are wondering which necessity will have to be sacrificed to pay for an unexpected bill. Yet now, with austerity no longer in the media headlines, many members of the general public don't realise that hundreds and thousands of people are faced with this struggle every day.

Working for social justice is not only about bringing the experiences of the people SVP assist to those in Government and advocating of their behalf for better supports and services, is it also about creating better understandings of poverty among the public and building support for action. Unfortunately, attempts to work towards change can be undermined by unhelpful media narratives, stereotypes and misunderstandings about what it is really like to live in poverty in Ireland in 2018.

With the aim of shining a light on the real experience of people living on very low incomes, we decided to work with an animator to see if we could bring to life the daily struggles of people living in poverty. The aim was to inform, challenge stereotypes and build public support for change.

The result was a four minute video which showed that despite people's best efforts, it is impossible to make their income stretch to meet their families basic needs. Using data from the Vincentian Partnership's Budget Standards Research, we followed a one parent family with two children as they tried to meet their housing, utility, transport, education and food costs. The animation illustrated the various roadblocks families come up against as they try to improve their situation.

The video concluded with the ways the Government can help pave a pathway out of poverty such as improving pay and conditions, providing adequate income support, investing public services such as housing, childcare, transport and education. We then asked members of the public to support our call for budgetary decisions that are equitable, fair and just, protect the vulnerable, address structural inequalities and promote the well-being of this and future generations.

To date, across all our social media platforms, over 20,000 people viewed the video. We are hopeful that some took away a better understanding of what it is like to survive on a low income. And when the next general election comes around, they will ask each candidate that comes to their door, will your party prioritise the fight against poverty so that no one is left behind?

You can watch the video by visiting this website: <https://www.svp.ie/povertypath>.





VINCENT'S

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



HEALTH AND SAFETY AT WORK



“Health and safety is an integral part of the management of day to day activities in Vincent’s and is the responsibility of everyone. There is a legal obligation on all parties to meet their duty of care. SVP has written a Health and Safety Policy Statement for Retail (issued 01/18)”

The Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005 establishes a “Duty of Care” on all persons connected with our services. This applies equally to employees and volunteers who are required to take reasonable care to ensure their own safety and that of others who may be affected by their acts or omissions.

The Directors of any undertaking or similar officers of the corporate body will be held personally liable if they are found to have contributed to an offence by authorising breaches of health and safety law, by neglect or by connivance.

Our Legal Responsibilities - Republic of Ireland

In the Republic of Ireland, the Health and Safety Authority, www.hsa.ie is the statutory authority responsible for the promotion, monitoring and enforcement of health and safety in the workplace. Inspectors have the power to issue:

- An Improvement Notice (improvement required with a defined period)
- A Prohibition Notice (a serious risk has been identified)
- A Prosecution notice which can result in fines - District Court up to €3,000 fine and /or 6 months in prison and the Circuit Court up to €3 million fine and /or 2 years imprisonment.

Please consult the Health & Safety Authority website for help and advice – www.hsa.ie

Key Legislation (ROI) includes:

- The Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005
- The Safety, Health and Welfare at Work (General Application Regulations 2007)
- The Fire Services Act 1981 & 2003
- Building Control Act & Regulations 2007-2013
- Corporate Manslaughter & Grossly Negligent Management Causing Death Bills (Published in 2016)

Our Legal Responsibilities – Northern Ireland

In Northern Ireland, the Health and Safety Executive, the HSE, www.hseni.gov.uk is the statutory authority responsible for the promotion, monitoring and enforcement of health and safety in the workplace. Inspectors have the powers to issue:

- Advice (either verbal or in writing)
- Issue a 'Notice of Contravention' (NOC)
- Issue an Improvement Notice
- Issue a Prohibition Notice
- Prosecute a person or company.

The HSE NI website is: www.hseni.gov.uk

Some key legislation (NI) includes:

- Health and Safety at Work Act 1974
- Fire and Rescue Services Order Act 2006
- Corporate Manslaughter and Homicide Act 2007
- Fire Safety Regulations 2010



HAZARDS AT WORK

“A hazard is anything that has the potential to cause harm to you or others”

Some Definitions

- An accident is defined as an unplanned event resulting in personal injury or property damage.
- An incident is defined as a “near miss” where the potential for serious consequences exist.
- A hazard is anything with the potential to cause harm. There are generally six categories of hazards:
 - Physical - slip or trip hazard
 - Environmental - sewage discharge
 - Ergonomic - manual handling
 - Psychological - stress
 - Chemical - cleaning products
 - Biological - biological agent exposure - blood
- A control measure is a precaution to control the hazard.
- A risk is the likelihood that someone will be harmed and how serious that harm might be based on likelihood and severity.
- A risk assessment is a careful examination of what could cause harm to a person or operations so that preventative measures can be taken. It is a legal requirement to carry out Risk Assessments.

How to Complete a Risk Assessment:

See sample risk assessment form

1. Identify the hazard (e.g. surface water)
2. Classify the hazard (e.g. physical)
3. Identify the risk group (e.g. customers)
4. Identify the probability of an accident (e.g. 5 - a slip is certain to occur)
5. Identify the severity of such an accident (e.g. 4 - serious injury)
6. Determine the risk score (e.g. probability of 5 x severity of 4) = 20
7. Introduce control measures (e.g. Remove the surface water, place warning signs until the floor is dry)
8. Repeat the risk assessment in anticipation of a lower risk & score

When investigating an accident, don't forget to identify:

- The root cause (e.g. surface water that has leaked from the sink)
- Any contributory factors (e.g. poor lighting)
- Corrective Action and steps to prevent re-occurrence (e.g. fix the leak, the lighting and increase inspections).

Every Vincent's Charity Shop & OFC must have:

- A safety statement.
- A Fire Safety Management Plan including a Fire Cert, a Fire Assembly Point, a Fire Register Manual and service records for Fire extinguishers, Emergency Lighting and Fire doors.
- A First Aid kit - compliant with First Aid Regulations
- Written Risk Assessments in their Safety Statement
- Access to Accident / incident report forms
- A schedule of work in each location. See below:

	TEAM BRIEF	RETAIL CHECKLIST	RISK ASSESSMENT	FIRE ALARMS & EMERGENCY LIGHTING	FIRE DRILLS	FIRE EXTINGUISHERS	FIRE RESISTANT DOORS	REVIEW OF SAFETY STATEMENT
Daily	Yes							
Weekly		Yes						
Monthly			Yes or as required					
3 monthly				Yes – service				
6 Monthly					Yes			
Annually						Yes – service	Check every 5 years	Yes or as required



RETAIL SHOPS RISK ASSESSMENT FORM

Location:			Assessment Date:		Assessor (s):					
Address:										
Work Area / Task Activity:			Review Date:							
No.	HAZARD IDENTIFIED Detail the Hazard(s) Identified	HAZARD CLASSIFICATION Pick from the Drop Down List	RISK GROUP Insert the Persons at Risk	PROBABILITY FACTORS (1) The factors considered indicate the probability of an incident occurring	SEVERITY OF INCIDENT FACTORS (2) The factors considered indicate the possible loss that can be sustained	RISK SCORE Determined by Multiplying (1) x (2)	RISK BAND Risk Score determines the Risk Band	RESIDUAL RISK/CONTROL MEASURES REQUIRED Insert current Control Measures to reduce the Risk Score		
	Example: Slips/Trips/Fire.	Physical	Staff	5 = Certain to occur	5 = Fatality or major incident/ Closure of Operations		0-4: Very Low Risk = Acceptable Level of Risk			
		Environmental	Customers	4 = Very Likely to occur	4 = Serious Injury / Long Term Illness / Operational Delays		5-9 : Low Risk = Additional Monitoring of the Risk Required			
		Ergonomic	Visitors	3 = Possible chance	3 = Lost Time Accident (>3 days or more) or Hospitalisation		10-14 : Medium Risk = Further Action and Control Measures are required			
		Psychosocial	Others	2 = Unlikely to occur	2 = Minor Injury (first aid treatment - inhouse)		15-19: High Risk = Prohibition of activity/event required			
		Biological	All Parties	1 = Extremely Unlikely to occur	1 = Minimal Loss to Person/Operations		20-25 : Unacceptable Risk = Prohibition of activity/event required			
		Chemical								
No.	HAZARD IDENTIFIED	HAZARD CLASS	RISK GROUP	RISK ASSESSMENT		RISK SCORE	RISK BAND	CONTROL MEASURES REQUIRED Insert current Control Measures in place to reduce the Risk Score	Residual Risk Score	Risk Band
				Probability	Severity					
1						0	Very Low Risk		0	Very Low Risk
2						0	Very Low Risk		0	Very Low Risk
3						0	Very Low Risk		0	Very Low Risk
4						0	Very Low Risk		0	Very Low Risk
5						0	Very Low Risk		0	Very Low Risk
6						0	Very Low Risk		0	Very Low Risk
7						0	Very Low Risk		0	Very Low Risk
8						0	Very Low Risk		0	Very Low Risk
9						0	Very Low Risk		0	Very Low Risk
10						0	Very Low Risk		0	Very Low Risk

MANUAL HANDLING

The 8 Principles of Lifting



1. Assess the risk (*Task, Individual, Load and Environment – TILE*)
2. Broad stable base
3. Bend the knees
4. Back straight
5. Firm palmer grip
6. Arms in line with trunk
7. Weight close to the centre of gravity
8. Point feet in the direction of movement

HOW TO USE A FIRE EXTINGUISHER

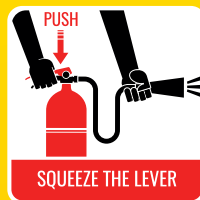
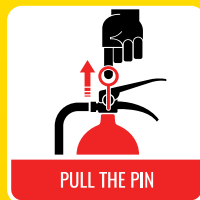
Remember the phrase

PASS

PULL

AIM

SQUEEZE SWEEP



HOW TO USE A FIRE BLANKET

Fire Blankets are suitable for burning clothing and small burning liquid fires



- **Pull tapes down until blanket is released.** Open blanket fully ensuring it protects your hands.
- **For a liquid/substance fire.** Turn off power supply immediately. Place blanket gently over flames to seal the fire from the air.
- **For a person in flames.** Wrap the blanket around them, to seal the fire from the air but avoiding the nose and mouth. Immediately seek medical assistance.

Not to be used on live electrical equipment especially where high voltage is involved.

ARE YOU USING THE RIGHT FIRE EXTINGUISHER?

TYPE	Class A	Class B	Class C	Class D	Electrical	Class F	Comments
	Combustible materials (e.g. paper & wood)	Flammable liquids (e.g. paint & petrol)	Flammable gases (e.g. butane & methane)	Flammable metals (e.g. lithium & potassium)	Electrical equipment (e.g. computers & generators)	Deep fat fryers (e.g. chip pans)	
WATER	○	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	Do not use on liquid or electric
FOAM	○	○	✗	✗	✗	✗	Not suited to domestic use
DRY POWDER	○	○	○	○	○	✗	Can be used safely up to 1000 volts
CO ₂	✗	○	✗	✗	○	✗	Safe on both high and low voltage
WET CHEMICAL	○	✗	✗	✗	✗	○	Use on extremely high temperatures

EXPERIENCES OF LIVING BELOW THE
MINIMUM ESSENTIAL STANDARD OF LIVING

STORIES OF STRUGGLE

A VPSJ RESEARCH REPORT, COMMISSIONED
BY THE SOCIETY OF ST. VINCENT DE PAUL



Society of St Vincent de Paul



MINIMUM
ESSENTIAL
BUDGET
STANDARDS
RESEARCH CENTRE

Minister Doherty launches new research on experiences of living below the Minimum Essential Standard of Living in SVP House

Caroline Fahey
Head of Social Justice



Called *Stories of Struggle*, this new research shines a light on what it is like for families whose income is not enough to afford a minimum essential standard of living (MESL). The research was commissioned by the Society of St Vincent de Paul and carried out by the Vincentian Partnership for Social Justice.

30 families with children took part in the research, and outlined their experiences of having an income that is too low to afford a Minimum Essential Standard of Living - a standard of living that meets all of their physical, psychological and social needs. The families who took part in the research faced a shortfall in their income of up to 39% below what they needed each week and were unable to afford all of the goods and services necessary for their household. Significantly, the vast majority (23) of the families who took part in the research were in this situation for more than six years. Most families interviewed could point to specific events that lowered total family income such as the death of an immediate family member, being 'let-go' from a job or having hours reduced, rent increases, a car accident, the birth of a child with special needs, a family separation or a parent's illness.

The impact of living on an inadequate income is multi-dimensional, making it difficult at times to understand the comprehensive nature of ongoing disadvantage and the physical, psychological and social toll on the lives of children and adults. This research highlights the consequences of living with an inadequate income, the cumulative impact on family well-being, and the risk to children's development and quality of life when there is an ongoing shortfall in all areas of household expenditure.

The research challenges myths that people who are struggling to make ends meet have poor budgeting skills and make poor choices. Instead the report clearly shows that families with an inadequate income work very hard to make ends meet and use a myriad of coping strategies to help manage the shortfall in

income. Dealing with income inadequacy requires discipline, resilience and sacrifice. But living on an inadequate income is very stressful and emotionally draining, and the longer it goes on, the more difficult it is for families to see a way out.

In order to cope with the sometimes overwhelming task of trying to make ends meet when there is simply not enough income in a household, parents make sacrifices and neglect their own needs in order to protect their children from the effects of inadequate income. Parents also struggle with the stress and strain of constantly juggling bills, worrying about big expenses and not having the money for sufficient healthy food, school trips, children's activities or birthday celebrations.

Not being able to plan for the longer term needs of the family, putting off expenses such as car or home maintenance, the guilt of letting children down, the impact on children's education and the stress and strain of seldom, if ever, having a break are among the consequences faced by families with an inadequate income. One of the interesting findings from the research was that the level of household income is only one of the factors explaining the extent to which a family is struggling to make ends meet, with some families on similar incomes having very different experiences. This reflects the experience of SVP members on the ground who see the different circumstances of the families they are visiting. The analysis of the interviews for this research indicated that households tended to fall into three groups, those who cannot make ends meet, those who struggle to make ends meet and those who can just about make ends meet but with difficulty. Having debt and arrears, facing extra costs due to illness or disability and living on a low income for a long period of time added to the difficulties of some families in making ends meet. On the other hand, having savings, access to good public transport and employment opportunities, and strong supports from families, friends and schools helped some families with low incomes to make ends meet, albeit with difficulty. However, even where families were able to make ends meet with difficulty, the ongoing shortfall in their weekly income and the fact that they are constantly cutting back on essential items will, over time, erode their savings, their health and well-being and their resilience if their situation does not improve.

Families identified the supports they need to improve their circumstances. Increased Government investment in housing, childcare, education, health and transport is needed so that families are supported to find a way out of poverty and income inadequacy. Social welfare rates and the National Minimum Wage also need to be benchmarked against the cost of a Minimum Essential Standard of Living in recognition of the real costs being faced by families. The full report can be read at www.svp.ie/storiesofstruggle

A LOOK AT THE SVP WORLDWIDE

*Liam Fitzpatrick
Former Treasurer General*



Very often we tend to look at our organisation solely in an Irish context.

Taking a broader view, SVP, Ireland is a component of an International charity which was commenced in Paris in 1833 by a group of University students, led by Frederic Ozanam, who was only 20 years old at that time. The Society, generally referred to internationally as SSVP, quickly spread from Paris to other parts of France and then to other countries, reaching Ireland in 1844.

The Society's main purpose from the outset was the sanctification of its members by personal service to the poor and was placed under the patronage of St. Vincent de Paul, a French Catholic Priest & social reformer (1581-1660) who devoted himself to serving the poor.

SSVP is part of the Vincentian Family, which consists of a number of charitable organisations with similar mission and values. In Ireland these include the Congregation of the Missions (Vincentians), De Paul (who support people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness), Daughters of Charity, AIC (formerly known as Ladies of Charity) and Vincentian Marian Youth.

Worldwide, the SSVP has some 800,000 active members and over one million volunteers. It has a presence in almost 150 countries and is estimated to reach out to 30 million people. In keeping with its maxim that "*no work of charity is foreign to the Society*", its activities are extremely widespread in nature and are carried out in widely different circumstances, through person-to-person contact.

The international headquarters of the Society are located in Paris and, while each country conducts its affairs independently, an International Rule governs the manner in which this may be done.

The overall governing body of the SSVP is the Council General International (CGI), which is, in effect, a Board comprised of a President General, Vice-President(s), Secretary General, Treasurer General and about 10 members from the affiliated countries.

Most of these members also carry additional responsibilities – e.g. Training, Twinning, Communications, Development of SSVP, Overview of CGI finances, Spirituality of SSVP, Youth, etc.

Overview and development of the SSVP worldwide is effected through a structure of Territories, so that every country has a communications channel to CGI. In all, the CGI has around 70 volunteers working on its behalf in this field.

In addition, there are different Committees attached to CGI covering such fields as Training, Twinning (whereby Conferences in better-off countries help out Conferences in poor countries financially & with assistance towards development & training), IFAC (monitoring the finances of CGI), CIAD (providing financial

assistance towards vital projects in very poor countries, financial help following natural disasters etc.), and communications.

Membership of the CGI Board and of the various Sub Committees and representative positions are filled on a voluntary basis for a period of 6 years to coincide with life of each CGI Board.

Financing of CGI is achieved almost entirely by contributions from the better-off member countries. In effect, this means that about 20 countries provide the funding which amounts to about €1.1m p.a. at present. CGI outlay consists of the overheads of the Paris office (5 staff who support the Society worldwide) and the cost of international structure (including meetings of the CGI Board and sub-committees and the members who undertake specific roles for the CGI throughout the world).

Ireland features prominently in the worldwide Society. We have had representatives on CGI Boards over the years and have had two Irish International Vice-Presidents – Gerry Martin and Brian O'Reilly. An SVP Dublin member, Larry Tuomey, is the current Treasurer General and Rose McGowan of Dublin is a member of CIAD.

Ireland is a very generous and much appreciated contributor to CGI and to its various appeals for disaster relief. Could and should we do more than we do at present for the International Society? In my opinion, the answer to both questions is a definite "YES". There is very significant scope for more Conference involvement and financial assistance, particularly in the areas of twinning, training and aid towards recovery from natural disasters.

If the will to help is there, a way will be found. So, please think about it.

For more information on SVP International visit <https://www.ssvpglobal.org/en>

Société de Saint-Vincent-de-Paul
Conseil General International



New phase of SVP Housing Scheme

officially opened by Minister Eoghan Murphy

Phase 2 of the Society of St Vincent De Paul (SVP) St Benedict's Housing Scheme at Estuary Road, Malahide, County Dublin was officially opened on Friday 19 October by Eoghan Murphy TD, Minister for Housing, Planning & Local Government.

St Benedict's Phase 2 scheme provides an additional eight x 1 bed units of accommodation for the elderly to the Society's existing scheme of 37 units. The scheme was funded by Fingal County Council and the Department of Housing, Planning & Local Government through the Capital Assistance Scheme. The scheme was delivered by the commitment and dedication of the local volunteers of Saint Vincent de Paul St Benedict's Conference. The units have been delivered to a very high standard completed on time and within budget.

Phase 2 was designed by architect Jerry Hannigan and constructed by Demac construction.

The first phase of St Benedict's was completed in 2009 designed by Paul Keogh architects and comprises 37 units of hous-

ing (31 (1 bed) and 6 (2 bed) units and community facility. The plot of land on Estuary Road on which St Benedict's was built was gifted by Josephine Denning. She willed that the land be used for housing older people.

Scheme Management

The scheme has been delivered and is managed and maintained through a volunteer led approach supported by on-site Housing Manager. The commitment and dedication of the volunteer St Vincent De Paul board (Conference) is key to the ongoing successful management of both the housing and tenants and is very much the added value element to the housing delivery. The vision, dedication and work of the local volunteers has realised the delivery of accommodation that can sustain older people and people with disabilities to live in their community independently.

The volunteer led approach has translated into ensuring an effective design solution in the delivery of the scheme and also





ensures the ongoing highest standards in the management and maintenance/upkeep of the scheme.

The support provided to tenants through the on-site Housing Manager is vital to ensuring the continuation of tenants independent living – for some tenants without such support they would not be in a position to sustain their tenancies and would be in nursing home care.

The Housing Manager provides day to day support to tenants, advocating on behalf of vulnerable tenants, communicating with other professionals/external agencies on their behalf regarding facilities, services/entitlements (e.g. local authority, community health service, etc.)

In addition to supporting the Conference in terms of overall scheme management and maintenance the Manager promotes community development /tenant participation in communal activities , organising social activities within the scheme (coffee mornings, book clubs, gardening, fitness classes) creating a sense of community, nurturing individual tenant wellbeing.

Design - Contemporary vernacular aesthetic

The single storey design allows for a wide spectrum of users in line with universal design and life cycle adaptability. Open space is overlooked by housing fronts ensuring passive surveillance at all times. Houses are laid out with orientation to maximise sunlight to open space and to allow daylight penetration. Courtyard design lends itself to community interaction , ethos is to encourage friendship and neighbourly relationships through public realm.

The Community Facility built in parallel with the housing units (funded through National Lottery Communal facilities grant in addition to St Vincent De Paul funding contribution)- is an integral part of the scheme and offers tenants a valuable social outlet for social, educational and leisure activities.

Nationally SVP provide 875 housing units which accommodate 961 people.

It was supposed to be a 'Housing Budget',

What Happened?

*Marcella Stakem
Social Policy Development Officer*



After months and unfortunately years of homeless figures rising, countless Dáil debates, the harrowing stories of families living in unsuitable accommodation, protests culminating in the 'Raise the Roof Rally' on October 3rd and the realisation that Ireland has almost 4,000 of its young citizens with no home, expectations were high for Budget 2019. Yet, as SVP absorbed the figures and attended the Prime-Time Budget special for analysis, it soon became clear that little was going to change. The much hoped for housing budget failed to materialise. It was and is a deep disappointment, particularly for SVP members supporting families and individuals in homeless accommodation.

The number of people in emergency accommodation has more than doubled in three years, from around 4,350 in May 2015 to 9,698 in September 2018. Officially, homelessness is at its highest ever level. The waiting lists for social housing are also at record levels. How can this be the case? It is clearly evident that the housing policies pursued have failed to ensure adequate, affordable and secure housing for all people living in Ireland. This has resulted in successive budgets failing to address the housing crisis, Budget 2019 was no different. Poor policy makes for poor budget choices. Everyone working within the housing and homeless crisis accepts that Rebuilding Ireland, the Government's Action Plan for Housing and Homelessness is not working and needs to be urgently reviewed. Unfortunately, the Department of Housing do not hold the same views. The families who are experiencing the crisis, many of whom SVP members support are the victims.

In addition to these official figures, there are many people who are without a home but are not registered as such. These include individuals and families who are 'doubling up' with family members or friends, and those who are 'couch surfing'. There are many experiencing deep distress, as a result of mortgage arrears or are living in poor, cramped accommodation or indeed thousands of individuals and families paying unsustainable amounts of their income just to keep a roof over their heads. They are also those who have left their homes because of domestic violence and are now 'trapped' in institutional living because they have simply nowhere to go. Furthermore, the official figures on homelessness do not include individuals and families who have been granted refugee status but cannot find

accommodation and so remain in Direct Provision. These are our 'Hidden Homeless'.

Reviewing the housing budget, almost €2.4 billion was allocated to housing in 2019. Over half of this will be allocated to social housing to deliver 10,000 new social homes. However, only about half of these will actually be new-builds. The other half will come from leasing and acquisitions. This is a concern because it will reduce the supply of private housing for families that don't qualify for social housing, pushing rents and house prices even higher.

By allocating an additional €121 million for the Housing Assistance Payment (HAP), the Department has yet again put too much emphasis on the private sector to remedy a social issue. Budget 2019 allocated €30 million to homeless services and an additional €60 million was allocated to increase the provision of emergency accommodation and 'family hubs'. The Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission expressed concern that family hubs could normalise family homelessness causing families to be institutionalised. 'Family Hubs' are not homes and housing policy must redirect its focus away from temporary solutions to long term sustainable accommodation.

SVP Social Justice call for a radically different approach to housing policy in Ireland, one which is based on recognising housing as a fundamental human right. Housing is recognised as a fundamental human right in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) and in the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR). In addition, the realisation of the right to housing is deeply intertwined with and a necessary condition for the realisation of other human rights, such as the right to life itself, the right to health, to education, to respect for family life, to privacy, to freedom from discrimination, and to participation in democratic processes.

SVP continue to advocate and highlight that the housing crisis and the resulting pain and suffering of thousands of Irish citizens can only be alleviated by a change in policy, which prioritises the building of social homes. Until then, no amount of budget announcements will bring an end to the housing crisis.



A Hand of Hope for a Family in Homelessness

Teresa is a fighter: Every day she keeps fighting for her children's future. Fighting against the odds of homelessness. But with support for the public, she won't be fighting alone.

"If you've ever found yourself unemployed and having to sign on," Teresa begins, "you feel like 'God, this is my lowest point'. Let me tell you, you haven't seen anything until you have to sit in an area with twenty other people and present yourself as homeless. There's all walks of life there. But you wouldn't believe how many young single parents there were. And families with one child, three children, even five!"

Teresa's life wasn't much different to yours or mine. She had moved from Dublin to a modest house in the west of the country to raise her three children. Being a stay-at-home, single mother and providing for them was tough, but they got by. They were happy. Then a series of events pushed them to the edge – and over it.

"My mother used to say 'Things come in threes,'" Teresa explains. "Well breakdowns come in threes as well I can tell you. First the car broke down, then the heating, and finally the immersion. I had three children in school; I couldn't go without heat, water or a car. So all of a sudden, I was trying to find the money for all of these repairs."

Before she knew it, Teresa was in crisis and fighting to keep the very roof over their heads. Their mortgage wasn't big but as soon as she started missing some payments, the banks were quickly in touch.

"It was a year-long fight with the mortgage providers. They're constantly calling, constantly ringing. And all I could say was 'It's just not there, the money's just not there'."

To try improve their situation, Teresa went back to college to do a secretarial course. She hoped to get a part-time job and prove she could bring their debt down.

It wasn't enough. It was too late. They came for the house. *"We went to court and that was a real eye-opener," Teresa continues with a sigh. "I was in arrears, but it was a drop in the ocean compared to what some people owed. But they had some hope on the horizon, I didn't."*

Her daughter was sitting the Junior Cert at the time so Teresa fought for a stay on the order to leave. It was granted. Then they were to be out by that August.

With nowhere else to turn, she found herself in that Dublin City Council office, presenting as homeless. "All I was given was a list of numbers to call and find my own place to stay. No guarantees. No warm words of reassurance."

Ever-determined, Teresa took that list and started ringing hotels, hostels, anything. All day, every day. She had three children studying in school, and whatever about herself, she would never give up on them.

Finally this one day, she had rang nearly fifty hotels and was close to giving up. Then she got the answer she so desperately needed. They had a spare room and they would take her. It was only small, with two beds and a pull-out couch. It was out by the airport so she would need to keep the car running. But it would do.

This is where you stepped in and finally came to the aid of an exhausted mother.

You see, volunteers here at SVP have been helping homeless families stuck in hotels for a number of years. They use your donations to provide food, clothes or vouchers to do something with the kids. Anything to help with the stress of living in such terribly unsuitable accommodation.

"St. Vincent de Paul have been such a help to my family," Teresa told us. "If all they did was be a voice at the end of the phone, that would have been enough. Somebody to listen to you. To make you feel human again and respected."

"But they did more than that. They stepped in and helped my eldest daughter with her expenses starting college. That gave me just that little bit of breathing space, so I can cover everything else for now."

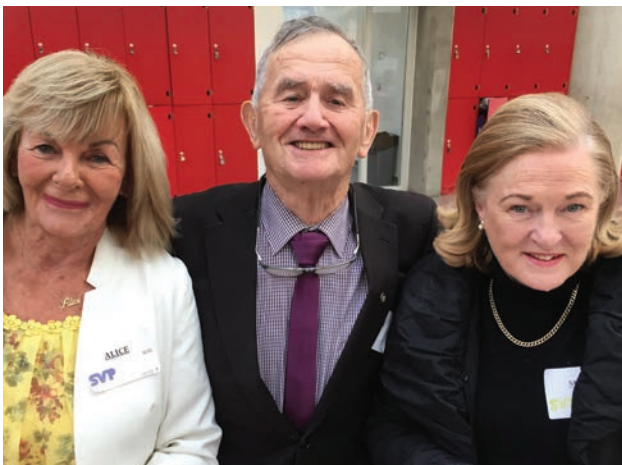
"I've lost what I had," Teresa continues. "There's no way I'll ever get that back again. Now all I want is somewhere decent to raise my kids. Sometimes it all feels so hopeless. But thanks to SVP, and the good people who donate to them, it gives me the strength to keep going. To never give up."



**Save someone from
a life of poverty.**



SVP Midwest Holds its Annual Members Gathering



The Midwest Regional Members Gathering took place at Glenstal Abbey on Saturday October 27th last. The purpose of the day was to afford the Members from across Tipperary, Offaly, Clare and Limerick City and County the opportunity to meet, get to know each other and to share their experiences of visitation. The Gathering commenced with a very appropriate opening reflection by Br. Padraig McIntyre, from the Benedictine Community in Glenstal who spoke about the importance of being awake and fully present in the moment, so as not to miss the gifts that life is presenting to us at any given time.

The day was planned with the object of highlighting to Members what they already know and anticipating that they would take one or two additional learnings away with them to enhance practice at Conference level. John Lupton, the Regional President, spoke about the recently launched initiative SVP Reaching Out and affirmed the Region's priorities in relation to achieving quality visitation as being recruitment, Member development, the establishment of Outreach Conferences and adequate assessment of need.

Work has commenced on piloting an Outreach Conference for the Limerick City Area, the purpose of which will be to support the Conferences in the Area, with visitation to the Direct Provision Centre, Traveller families living on Halting Sites, and those living in emergency accommodation. It is hoped that each of the nine Areas in the Midwest will have an Outreach Conference in due course. Key to ensuring the ethos of our work is having an adequate Membership to meet the needs in any community. This is fundamental to ensuring that Members have the time to offer the support and friendship during visitation that is core to our ethos.

Brendan Hennessy, Acting National Member Support Manager, outlined the findings of research carried out with those living on social protection payments or minimum wage from the Stories of Struggle Report recently launched. The Gathering included breakout sessions where Members in smaller groupings were introduced to the Minimum Income Standard Calculator as a tool to assist with assessment of needs. Members had the opportunity to consider case studies and various scenarios and to put forward various approaches to dealing with requests for assistance. Members Sheila O'Meara, Niamh McDonnell and Cathal Oakes assisted with the facilitation and feedback from these sessions. Following feedback and sharing from the breakout sessions, some time was spent on appropriate minute recording in the context of GDPR and on the Guidance Notes as a resource with the assistance of Members – Con Ryan, St. Bernadette's Conference, Upperchurch and John Byrne, St. Benedict Labre Conference, Limerick City. The National President Kieran Stafford addressed the Gathering and spoke about the upcoming Annual Appeal and the importance and positive impact of the work of Members at Christmas and throughout the year. The Gathering drew to a close with an Open Forum moderated by Pat Carroll, Regional Vice President. This was followed by Mass in the Monastery Church. Further work is planned at Area Gatherings throughout the Region to affirm and promote SVP Reaching Out and the Midwest Regional priorities in this context.

Where is the long-term vision for one parent families?

Tricia Keilthy
Social Policy Development Officer

"I work nights and my parents mind my children while I'm working, they spend the night at their grandparents. Then I sleep while they're at school, but I get little sleep, especially at the weekends and school holidays." Lone Parent - Stories of Struggle

Just after the budget, yet another report was published by the Economic and Social Research Institute (ESRI) which showed that lone parents lost proportionally more income than other groups during the austerity period. Furthermore, while other households' situation was improving during the recovery period, lone parents continued to see a fall in their disposable income due to the cuts and changes to the One Parent Family Payment. This wasn't a surprising finding. In fact, it is the fourth report published within the past 12 months which has demonstrated that one parent families suffered most under the austerity measures and are benefiting least from the recovery. Speak with any SVP member and they would come to the same conclusion. The Minister for Employment Affairs and Social Protection made it clear in advance of the budget that lone parents and children living in poverty were her main priority. So did budget 2019 reflect this commitment?

There were some welcome measures. Firstly, there were incremental improvements in supports that will help lone parents take up and increase their working hours. Additionally, the increase in social welfare, the full restoration of the Christmas

bonus, improvements in the Back to School Allowance and the new higher rate of payment for children over 12 will help reduce the poverty risk among one parent families and their children.

However, lone parents working part-time will still see a reduction in their income when their child reaches the age of 7, as they are no longer eligible for the One Parent Family Payment and in-work income supports. There are also still going to be a number of issues when their child reaches the age of 14. Parents' caring obligations effectively become invisible to the system as they are now just viewed as "jobseekers". Extending the cut off until their child reaches the age of 18, would mean they would be able to work full-time or part-time, depending on their caring responsibilities, and they could access better in-work income supports.

It remains to be seen whether these two issues related to the age of the youngest child will be addressed as the Minister "seeks to unwind the cuts". But even if these changes are reversed in future Budgets, there are still significant challenges in the areas of housing, education, childcare and child maintenance. Take housing. Lone parents have been most affected by the housing and homeless crisis as approximately 60 per cent of homeless families are headed by one parent. Yet, Budget 2019 will do little to address this as 70 per cent of social housing





need will be met through the private rented sector next year. This means many lone parents will continue to pay unsustainable top-ups on their rent, have no security of tenure and continue to live with the constant fear of becoming homeless.

The welcome increases in childcare subsidies announced by the Minister for Children on budget day will no doubt benefit lone parents. But there are questions of capacity within the sector with many families struggling to find a subsidised childcare place, as most childminders aren't covered under the scheme. We know that improving access to education has numerous benefits for parents and their children, and making SUSI available to those studying part-time would have really made a difference to those balancing caring and work responsibilities. However, the Minister for Education failed to see this as a priority.

The Minister for Justice also has a role to play, as SVP views a properly functioning child maintenance system as an important part of the response to child poverty. Currently, in Ireland, child maintenance must be sought by the resident parent through the family law courts. The experience can be costly, daunting and overwhelming, placing an excessive burden on lone parents. In other countries there are statutory child maintenance services which have much better outcomes for families.

If the Government are committed to lifting one parent families and their children out of poverty, every Minister must enter budget negotiations with tackling poverty as a priority, not just the Minister for Employment Affairs and Social Protection. Unless that happens, the best efforts of one Department are likely to be blunted.



There are *no borders* when *SVP* help is requested.

NO BORDERS

to *SVP* help



SVP Twinning programme

Twinning is a direct link between Councils and Conferences in different countries. Through Twinning Vincentians share resources, experiences and mutual friendship.

These links reflect the reality that there are no borders to poverty and injustice.



HEAVY RAINS IN NORTHERN GHANA

Once again I am writing to inform and to keep you abreast with events back home here in Northern Ghana. Shortly before I returned from my trip to your country, I was told of heavy rains and the collapse of buildings especially the bud buildings. Upon arrival and for two weeks now we have had rain every day. I cannot remember the last time in the history of Northern Ghana we ever had this kind of rain. We live between two extremes of prolonged drought and heavy rains in some years. I remember it was 6th of October of 2017 we had the last rain and not until 20th of June 2018 that we had the first rain, specifically in Navrongo the rains started in the last week of June this year.

Anyway, I was home on the 23rd of August to experience the harm caused by the continuous rains. Most of the crops are submerged in the water, which means that the crops will rot translating into the failure of a good harvest. This is more serious along the riverbanks where many people have their farms. Yesterday I got a call that the house I built for Akitera and her children, Margaret, Asana and Sakina fifteen years ago had collapsed.

Many of the roads are cut off by the heavy rains, and I can't use my car to visit the people again and anytime I risk I get stuck in the mud. For now, the only means to get to the people is by a motorbike but unfortunately since I returned my motor has broken down beyond repairs because the problem is from the engine. I am in the process of raising money to buy a stronger motorbike, which will be more economical for my use because fuel prices have gone so high and as long as I am not carrying food to the poor I can be comfortable on the motorbike. Because of the flood, many people are flocking to the mission house for food assistance, but this time we don't have much food in the market, so I am currently buying food at a higher price to support them. As at December last year a bag of corn was ghc 100.00, but now I am buying a bag of corn at ghc 150.00 to meet the urgent needs of the poor.

I am happy so grateful to all our Vincentian Brothers and sisters in Ireland for the support they have given and have been offering to help meet the needs of the poor. You are saving many lives and we are so thankful of the support we receive through the Twinning Programme.

God richly bless you.

Fr. Paul Kapochina



National Council 2018

Brendan Hennessy
National Member Support Development Officer

The National Council meeting provides a great opportunity to hear how other Areas work. It is very important that feedback on the day is distributed to the areas, so that local Conferences can hear what this national council is all about.

In mid-September the National Council of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul met in Mount St. Anne's Retreat and Conference Centre in Killenard, Co. Laois. The National Council is the representative body of the Society, and is made up of our National President, the Presidents of Regional and Area Councils and other members nominated by the National President. The theme for this year's National Council was 'SVP Reaching Out – Seek and find those who are forgotten'. Here are the highlights along with some of the feedback received.

"Kept me engaged for the whole day – am now 'raring to go' back to area and conference."

The key ingredients for SVP to assist people are our ethos, our volunteers and our financial resources from both the public and the State. The early sessions of the day were therefore dedicated to reflecting on the nature of SVP assistance and the difference it can make, informing the National Council of the strides SVP is making to streamline our recruitment and training processes for potential volunteers and concluding with an update on the nature of our financial resources.

"Very useful to have workshops region based. Should ensure more action at regional level."

'Behind every good workshop is a strong cup of coffee' it may be said, but our coffee and tea break also gave us the opportunity to catch up with old friends, share ideas and reflect on

the mornings session. Soon after, regional workshop groups discussed the themes of responding to need, member/volunteer supports, recruitment and member development, training & leadership. Volunteer facilitators helped the different regional workshop groups' focus on achievable goals for the near future, which were then fed back by each of the 8 Regional Presidents at a plenary session. From this National Council Regional Councils will now prepare their own 'Reaching Out' plans with a focus on action and achievement.

New Initiatives

Following the workshop feedback National President, Kieran Stafford, outlined some new initiatives that SVP will undertake in the coming months. These include a National Reaching Out Steering Group to maintain the momentum of the workshops and future regional discussions. Kieran announced a National Education Committee, which will assist and advise on the development of education bursaries and a National Rural Committee to provide support to Conferences dealing with social isolation in hard to reach communities.

"The keynote speaker was excellent and if we followed his spirit we can make a difference."

The keynote speaker was Brian Cody, Kilkenny hurling manager since 1998. Brian imbued the room with his sense of team spirit and the importance of playing to your strengths and recognising the strengths of others. He gave examples and insights into how the great must always aim to achieve better and yet that defeat, while hard, should be the ultimate challenge to complacency. Was their room in Brian's team for personalities and personal challenges? An emphatic yes, but when decisions have to be made, they must be made, by the leader.

"A sense of belonging needs to be nurtured as evolution continues."

It was left then to Rose McGowan, National Vice-President, to reflect on the highlights of the day, be that Reaching Out or new committees; recruitment & training, financial clarity or simply questions & answers. Brian Cody, she reiterated, reinforced the role of leadership and the National Council is the leadership of SVP. As the Society's leaders, she said, it is us who have the important role of supporting volunteer members reaching out to those who are forgotten in the spirit of St. Vincent de Paul.





Financial Report

	Year 2017			Year 2016		
	Income €'000	Expended €'000	Net €'000	Income €'000	Expended €'000	Net €'000
Visitation	39,304	28,371	10,933	37,098	30,142	6,956
<i>Twining</i>	-	408	-408	-	514	-514
<i>Fundraising</i>	-	846	-846	-	744	-744
SUBTOTAL	39,304	29,625	9,679	37,098	31,400	5,698
Services						
<i>Hostels</i>	6,022	7,114	-1,092	6,220	6,746	-526
<i>Social Housing</i>	2,778	3,464	-686	2,630	5,288	-2,658
<i>Holiday Homes, Resource Centres, etc.</i>	5,183	7,776	-2,593	5,099	8,690	-3,591
SUBTOTAL	13,983	18,354	-4,371	13,949	20,724	-6,775
<i>Charity Shops</i>	28,876	20,137	8,739	28,262	19,403	8,859
<i>Governance, Management, Support & Admin</i>	-	8,362	-8,362	-	8,302	-8,302
TOTAL	82,163	76,478	5,685	79,309	79,829	-520

Our Financial Statements for the Society are available at www.svp.ie/finance

Balance Sheet 2017

The Society's Reserves were €162.1 million at December 2017.

This is made up of:

Restricted & Designated Reserves €21.1 million

Property Valuation Reserves €84.9 million

General Reserves €56.1 million

The cash balance is the aggregate of all Conferences, Areas, Regions and National.

The cash balance is held across the Conferences and Councils of the Society (No. 1,200+). The months of November and

December are key months for the Society's fundraising.

Cash balance are related to restricted and designated funds, funds held for sinking funds requirements, funds to meet obligations under SLAs (Service Level Agreements) and Conference purposes.

The Society provides a wide range of services for vulnerable people through its property. The properties include social housing, hostels, resources centres, charity shops, day-care centres and holiday homes.

Financial Position	Year 2017 €'000	Year 2016 €'000	Movement €'000
Property, Tangible Assets	116,318	121,097	-4,779
<i>Investment and Other</i>	140	136	4
SUBTOTAL	116,458	121,233	-4775

Current Assets

<i>Stock</i>	37	43	-6
<i>Debtors</i>	3,527	2,678	849
<i>Cash at Bank and in Hand</i>			
- <i>Restricted/Designated</i>	21,097	7,066	14,031
- <i>General</i>	60,390	66,526	-6,136
TOTAL ASSETS	201,509	197,546	3,963

Liabilities

<i>Creditors falling due within 1 Year</i>	6,424	5,825	599
<i>Creditors and Deeds of Mortgages</i>	32,995	33,101	-146
NET ASSETS	162,130	158,620	3,510

Funds of the Society

<i>Restricted</i>	5,789	6,107	-318
<i>Property Valuations</i>	84,902	87,058	2,156
<i>Designated Funds</i>	15,308	959	14,349
<i>General Funds</i>	56,131	64,496	-8,365
TOTAL FUNDS	162,130	158,620	3,510

Society Highlights 2017

What we do

In 2017, SVP received circa 140,000 requests for help. In response to these, we provide practical support to people in need through a wide range of services.

Visitation

Home Visitation is the core activity of the Society in which the majority of our 11,000 members partake. Our volunteers spend time talking with those who request our help to ensure we fully understand the issues they are facing which enables us to provide the best support possible. Our support can be either non-financial or financial in order to alleviate the impact of poverty and social exclusion. In 2017, we provided €28.4 million to individuals and families. (2016: €30.1 million).

Service Provision

In addition to our Visitation work, we provide a wide range of services, some government funded for vulnerable people. Such services include 7 resource centres, 10 emergency homeless services (300 beds in hostels), social housing (c. 857 Units), 5 holiday homes, prison visitor centres, children / young adult services and day-care centres. In 2017 we expended €18.4 million on such services accounting for 24% of the Society's total expenditure.

Community Charity Shops

The Society has 220+ community charity shops. Our Vincent's shops are a very important aspect of service provided by SVP. Not only do they provide people with new and lightly worn items at affordable prices, they also provide an income source for the Society, which is reinvested directly back into the community.

Members



11,000 +

Requests for Help



circa 140,000

Social Housing & Hostel Units



1,157

Shop Locations



220 +

Income 2017 Value € '000

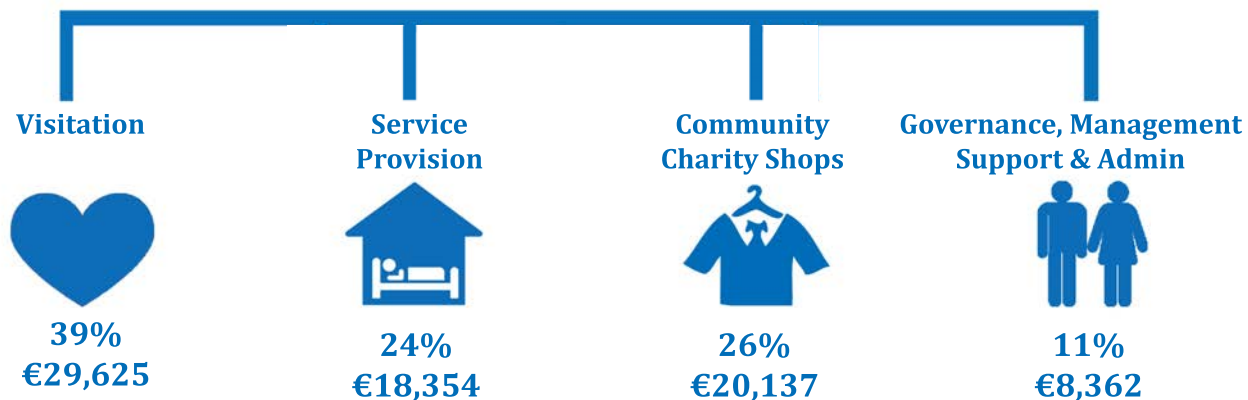


In 2017, Total Income for the Society was €82.2 million (2016: €79.3 million). We couldn't carry out our vital work without the generosity of our many donors.

SVP is committed to complying with the standards outlined in the Guidelines for Charitable Organisations on Fundraising from the Public and formally adopted the statement in 2013.

Our Financial Statements for the Society are available at <http://www.svp.ie/finance>

Expenditure 2017 Value € '000



In 2017, Total Expenditure was €76.5 million (2016: €79.8 million). Visitation work includes non-financial support, advisory assistance, befriending and supporting access to social services. In addition assistance to individuals can be direct financial support, foods, fuel and support with utility bills.

Our Services including social housing, homeless services, resource centres, holiday homes etc., accounting for 24% of the Society's total expenditure.

Charity shops account for 26% of the Society's total expenditure with management, support, governance and administration representing 11% of the Society's total expenditure in 2017.

The SVP GDPR Compliance Journey

What is GDPR?

The General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) is a new regulation in EU law on data protection and privacy for all individuals within the European Union, which came into law on the 25th May 2018. The GDPR aims to give more control to individuals over their personal data and to simplify and clarify the rules for organisations who collect and store any personal data.

This new legislation is something of a 'game changer' for everyone as it is prompting us all to review how we approach processing any personal data. Much of what we are being asked to reflect on is to put ourselves in the shoes of the data subject (people we assist) and ask if we are conducting our business appropriately in terms of Data Privacy and Data Protection for that individual.

So, what is the Society doing to become compliant with the GDPR?

The work started early in 2018 with a risk assessment of how the Society manages any personal data. As the Society manages significant amounts of personal information with many Members involved it was no surprise that there were a large number of risks identified. From the list of risks an implementation plan to support all areas around the Society to work towards compliance and reduce the risks began.

There are 4 major initiatives now in place to support Members and employees:

1. Set of GDPR Policies

In order to support everyone to understand what is required to be compliant the following policies have been approved and will become effective from January 1st 2019.

1 Overall Data Protection Policy for the Society	Reviewed/updated
2 Data retention and destruction Policy	New
3 Data Breach Policy	New
4 Email acceptable usage Policy	Reviewed/updated
5 Subject Access Rights Policy	New
6 Right to be forgotten Policy	New
7 (IT System) Access Control and Password Policy	New
8 IT Acceptable usage Policy – last updated Aug 2015	Review/update

The policies are all available to be viewed/downloaded on the CRM Knowledge Base for Members as well as on the HR SharePoint site for employees. Copies are available on request from your Regional Office.

2. Conference Booklet

A GDPR booklet has been developed to support Members to understand how to be compliant with GDPR when handling any personal data and carrying out the work of the conference. The Booklet can be used as a reference and will answer many of the questions that have been raised on how to ensure the Conference work is compliant with GDPR.

3. Roll out of official emails for Area Presidents and Conferences

One of the highest risks that was identified was not having SVP emails for the key official roles within the Society who could be communicating sensitive or personal information as part of the role.

For this reason official SVP emails are being rolled out to each Area President and Conference. Every Area President and Conference will be encouraged to use the official email for any SVP correspondence which will significantly reduce the risk of a data breach as well as increase compliance.

If any Area President or Conference President would like to find out about how to get an email then please contact your Regional Office.

4. Online training via the Privacy Engine System

GDPR can be very daunting and we have engaged a specialist company to assist with providing a central system, which has the most up to date training on all aspects of Data Protection. There are modules, which each Member can complete, online. Some regions have begun sending out invites to Members to complete the training so please take the time to log in and watch the videos if you are sent an invite. If you would like to be set up on the online training system please contact your Regional Office.

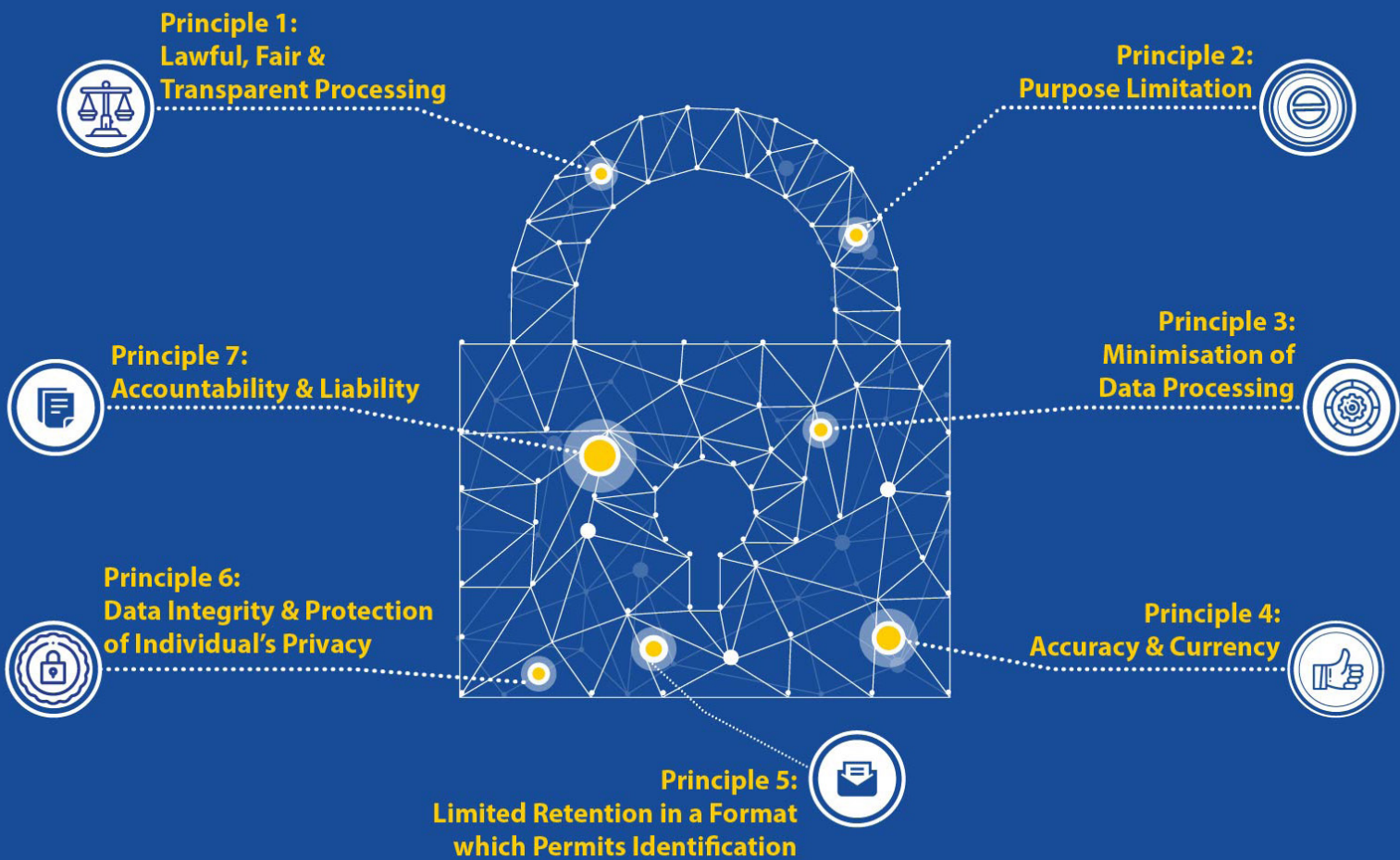
The journey to compliance with GDPR will take time for the Society. The willingness of Members and employees to engage and adapt has meant that the Society is making great strides to reduce the risks of being found in breach of the new laws significantly.

If there is any questions contact email: svp.gdpr@svp.ie

GDPR

What does GDPR mean to the work I do for SVP?

The 7 Principles of Data Protection Legislation





Pictured at the launch of #SaffronAid3 and the announcement that Antrim GAA clubs, including St Enda's GAC in Glengormley, are to collect shoeboxes in support of SVP are (l-r) James McAuley of St Enda's GAC, Collie Donnelly, Chairman of Antrim County Board, Archie Kinney, Regional Vice President of SVP and Conor McCann of Creggan GAC in Randalstown.

ANTRIM GAA TO COLLECT SHOEBOXES IN SUPPORT OF SVP

Supporters encouraged to 'hot-foot' it to local GAA Club with shoeboxes for charity

Antrim Gaels have been set an unusual festive target for Christmas 2018. They have been challenged to beat their own record of providing more than 1,000 shoeboxes filled with thoughtful gifts for those in need in their local community.

The challenge was set at the launch of #SaffronAid3, an initiative started by Antrim GAA PRO, Sean Kelly in 2016, which encourages GAA fans across County Antrim to fill shoeboxes with useful items for vulnerable families and individuals, which will then be distributed by St Vincent de Paul in Northern Ireland (SVP) in the run up to Christmas.

For some families in Northern Ireland, the fast-approaching festive season is something to dread rather than celebrate, with

many households having to forego presents as they choose between buying food or providing heat. In 2017, generous Antrim Gaels and their friends and families donated more than 1000 shoeboxes through the #SaffronAid2 charity initiative and it is hoped that even more can be collected and distributed this year, helping to make sure that as many families as possible wake up to something special to open on 25 December.

Antrim GAA PRO, Sean Kelly, commented: "GAA clubs and supporters are wonderfully generous and we are delighted to do what we can to help those less fortunate than ourselves. This is our third year of running this very special appeal and we were overwhelmed by the generosity of Co Antrim Gaels in previous years, especially last year when 30 clubs gathered more than 1,000 shoeboxes.

We're also delighted to announce that Sainsburys Supermarket at the Kennedy Centre has very kindly agreed to let us loose in their aisles again with a sponsored trolley dash which will take place on 6 November.

"We're so pleased to be working with SVP once again and we hope that there is even more support this year as each shoebox or gift that is donated makes such a huge difference to those in need within our own communities.

"Clubs across the county will be getting involved by encouraging their members to donate a shoebox containing a few items for families in need or alternatively, they can donate a gift for a child. We also hope many Clubs will make their premises available as collection points for SVP."

Sinead Steele, #SaffronAid coordinator, explains: "It's very simple to make a shoebox donation. The next time you're out shopping, pick up a few extra little items, place them in a shoebox, wrap the box and mark on it whether it is suitable for a man or woman. Suitable items for the shoebox could be things such as shower gel, toothbrushes, toothpaste, lip balm, gloves, hats, small towels, chocolate, hand cream, to name just a few. Or you can provide a new, unwrapped gift for child up to 16 years old – we are also keen to take more gifts for teenage boys this year. SVP will then collect all donations from your local GAA club."

Michael Sands, North Belfast Area Vice President for SVP, added: *"I would like to thank the GAA for running #SaffronAid3 again this year and bringing it to the attention of their players and supporters – it's a wonderful initiative. We know it is a busy and expensive time of year but picking up just one extra toy or a few small, inexpensive items for this appeal could bring a smile to someone who might otherwise wake up with nothing on Christmas morning.*

"Each year thousands of families approach SVP for support at Christmas time, so this campaign really will make a huge difference to so many people in our communities and with your help, Christmas may become a little bit brighter for some families."

Iain Semple, Manager of Sainsburys Supermarket at the Kennedy Centre, said: *"As a local business, we're always glad to be able to give something back to our local community. Christmas can be a stressful time of year for those who are already struggling and we hope that our continued support for #SaffronAid3 will go someway towards helping those in need this year."*

The closing date for receipt of donations to all clubs is 28 November 2018. For further information on Antrim GAA's campaign, please visit www.antrim.gaa.ie.

To learn more about SVP and their work in every village, town and city across Northern Ireland, visit www.svp-ni.co.uk.

John Rogers Appointed Manager of Vincent's Shop in Dairy Farm Centre



North Belfast man, John Rogers, who has a wealth of experience in the community sector, has just taken up the position of Manager at the Vincent's shop in the Dairy Farm Centre. Vincent's is the retail arm of charity, St Vincent de Paul (SVP), which works to support those in need within villages, towns and cities right across Northern Ireland.

After 20 years of working closely with charities, John, who has also worked in industry, understands the important role Vincent's plays in Dunmurry and the surrounding areas. He explains: "Our store is a community hub where people can come for a friendly ear, a smile to brighten their day or information on where to seek advice and guidance if they are in need of support. In addition to that we have so many rails full of pre-loved garments, some of which are still with original tags and lots of bric-a-brac. Our store really is jam-packed with bargains galore!"

"I am thoroughly enjoying working with the team of four volunteers and we really appreciate the support from everyone who visits our store. We are also very grateful for the donations of wonderful items that we receive from the generous public. All the money we raise in the shop goes towards helping SVP members to run the vital support services that we offer across the region.

"I can see a lot of opportunities for our Dairy Farm store to integrate even further into the local community by extending what we have on offer. One area, which I am keen to develop for the shop, is antiques and collectibles. We already receive some fabulous pieces from benefactors, which are resold but I would love to build our store as a destination for not only shoppers but also for eagle-eyed collectors and dealers, who are seeking unique pieces. I think this would really give our store a wider appeal and increase our turnover and revenue, which ultimately benefits the local community through the provision of assistance to those in need."

SVP is a volunteer-led organisation and teams work tirelessly, 365 days a year, to provide assistance to all sections of the community across Northern Ireland.

Through Conferences (groups), SVP works with those in need, irrespective of creed, ethnic or social backgrounds, health, gender or political opinions, in local areas. Around 1,850 SVP volunteers carry out activities for the charity, including paying weekly visits to around 2,500 people and run creches, breakfast clubs and the network of 33 Vincent's shops across the province.

John adds: "We couldn't do what we do in the Society or in Vincent's shops without our volunteers; they really are vital to our success. Here at Dairy Farm, we would love to extend our store's opening hours to help maximise income for the charity so if there is anyone considering volunteering, I would encourage you to consider doing so in Vincent's. If you are interested, please drop in to the store and let me know, we'd love to hear from you!"

Vincent's in the Dairy Farm Centre is situated at the rear of the centre at W3 and is open from Monday to Saturday from 10am to 5pm.



Farewell to Br Eamon

Br Eamon McLaughlin is a member of the Christian Brothers and has spent many years working in Ireland and abroad and has been living for the last 5 years in our Community in Carrick-on-Suir County Tipperary.

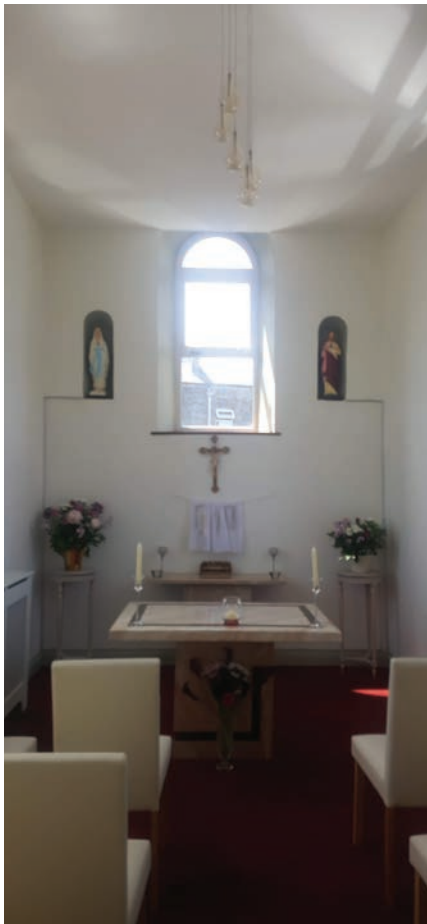
Br Eamon a native of Dublin joined our Conference of St Nicholas having been involved in Dublin Conferences over the years while working there.

The Christian Brothers in Carrick-on-Suir was the second school and house to be opened in Ireland by Blessed Edmund Rice way back in 1820 and the house 'Bru Na Cruinne' was a very historic building in the town. The house was recently sold for private use and the 3 remaining brothers living there went to various houses around the country.

Br Eamon was a very active member of our Conference and very much involved with the Aldi food run every week building up a great rapport with the many people who depended on this service. 'Bru na Cruinne was our base for the Christmas Hamper Appeal and Eamon stored and packed the many hampers that were delivered to those in our area.

Br Eamon was also involved as Chairman of the local Active Retirement group in the town and also Bridgewater House for refugees and will be sadly missed by all who knew him.

The Conference at Br Eamon's last meeting made a small presentation with two prints of local landmarks and Conference President Michael Lonergan thanked him for all his work and contribution to the Conference for the past 5 years. We wish him good health and happiness in the future and know that 'Carrick's loss will be Wexford's gain'.



Restoration of Ozanam House Chapel, Limerick

The administrative centre for the Midwest Region is located in Ozanam House, Hartstonge Street, Limerick, a building owned by the Society since 1919. Originally known as Hartstonge House, the house was completed in the early 1840s and was owned by the Barrington Family, a long established family of the ascendancy, well known in Limerick. It was leased for a period and came into the possession of the wealthy Harris Family in the 1870s. The Harris's had a bakery on Henry Street, Limerick and the actor Richard Harris is a descendent of this family. The house was purchased by Stephen O'Mara in the 1880's. The O'Mara's were well known around Limerick for their business interests in O'Mara Meats, political involvement with Parnell's Irish Parliamentary Party, and a famous tenor, Joseph O'Mara described at the time as the Irish Caruso. Soon after moving into Hartstonge House the O'Mara Family built a private chapel in a return room off the second floor landing. Our understanding is that the Chapel functioned as such until 1909 when the O'Mara family left Hartstonge House. The original contents of the Chapel were donated to the Jesuits in Limerick City in 1920 following the transfer of the House to the Society of St.Vincent de Paul.

Earlier this year in anticipation of the 100 year anniversary of the Society's ownership of Ozanam House and the impending visit to the Midwest Region by the International President General, remodelling works were carried out on the chapel, restoring it once again as a sacred space, albeit, without the presence of the Blessed Sacrament. It was blessed and inaugurated during the visit of our International President General in June and it is anticipated that Members and Staff alike will view this space as a tangible expression of our Christian ethos and the spiritual foundation that underpins the work that we do and that it will be used as a meditative space, a place apart.

New MSO for the South East



Sinead Melaniff has joined the South East regional office as new member support officer. Sinead previously worked with Macra as training and development officer and is looking forward to settling in to the role. Sinead is currently working with the regional training team and is embarking on coordinating new members training and refresher training in the coming months.

Sinead is also planning a new members recruitment campaign for the New Year and is hopeful in joining up new members. Ben Doyle South East Regional President has stated *"We are delighted to welcome Sinead on board and we look forward to working with Sinead over the coming years."*

Long serving members



Janet Irwin, sister Mary T Delap, Mary Frewen, 25 years - Ciaran Ryan 40 years, were presented with certificates and medals at the home of John Hickey another long standing member on Thursday 13th September.

A huge congratulations and thanks to Kitty Hynes, long serving member

The Wexford Area Council hosted a special mass on the 29th September 2018 and made a presentation to Kitty Hynes Long serving member who reached 50 years service. Kitty joined the Society in 1968 with St Marys conference. Over the years Kitty took the lead in setting up Vincent's, formerly Fred's Fashions, establishing Ozanam House Homeless service for men and St Francis refuge for women. Kitty was also involved in many SVP activities throughout her 50 years service that are too many to mention.



Kitty also spearheaded the Community Employment project funded by DEASP formally FAS in the mid 1990's and is now 25 years old. The Carne Holiday centre under Kitty's area presidency was revitalised and is now operating 52 weeks of the year. The Wexford Area Council President Annette Becket presented Kitty with a 50 year medal and certificate acknowledging her selfless volunteering and paid tribute to Kitty's husband Tony, and daughters Lorraine, Suzanne & Sinead. Kieran Stafford National President attended the presentation and paid tribute to Kitty and her family wonderful years of delivering services to people in need.

Columba Faulkner World Meeting of Families



Columba Faulkner former National Secretary of the Society of St.Vincent de Paul, with visitors on the Vincentian Stand, R.D.S. Ballsbridge, World Meeting of Families in August 2018.

Father Ray on song for SVP in Navan

Bill Lawlor, Navan SVP



HALLELUJAH – Singing priest Father Ray Kelly (second from left) helps cut the ribbon for the opening of another Navan SVP shop. From left are: Sandra Brady, shop manager; Father Kelly; Dermot McGilloway, SVP National Retail Development Manager; Stephen Flattery, Navan SVP Area President, and Peter Johnson, SVP North-East and Midlands Regional Manager.

PICTURE: SEAMUS FARRELLY

Nobody really cared about the weather, but the warm sunny intervals of early Autumn lent a balmy air to the occasion of the official opening of the new Vincent's shop at Blackcastle Shopping Centre in Navan on August 22nd.

And there was a particularly warm welcome for singing priest Father Ray Kelly of TV fame who, with Navan Area President Stephen Flattery, cut the ribbon to launch the new enterprise.

The large attendance gathered inside and outside the premises were thoroughly entertained and fully appreciative as the recent Irish contender in the Britain's Got Talent show performed his best known numbers, including "Everybody Hurts" to prolonged applause.

At the outset, local curate Father Kevin Heery blessed the shop and complimented the charity on its work in support of the needy.

Stephen Flattery pointed out that the SVP shops provided a vital income stream for the organisation, as well as giving it visibility, which was of paramount importance.

It was a very special day for everyone in the Navan St.Vincent de Paul Society, who were extremely pleased with the efforts of hard working shop manager Sandra Brady who, with her able staff, organised children's face painting, a free raffle and refreshments, as well as ensuring that lots of new stock was available to view.

Like all Vincent's outlets, the latest Navan one has a wide range of clothing, bric-a-brac, books and DVDs. The attendance also included SVP North East and Midlands Regional Manager Peter Johnson who, with local SVP members, was delighted to see Navan's fourth Vincent's shop up and running so successfully. He was accompanied by Dermot McGilloway, SVP National Retail Development Manager.

Bag Pack SVP Mullingar

Sincere thanks to Dunnes Stores Mullingar for allowing the society of St Vincent De Paul Mullingar conduct a bag pack as we head into Christmas.

Thanks also to Loreto School, Westmeath Volunteer Org and to all who volunteered to help us help our community.

And last but by no means least, many thanks to our community in Mullingar & the surrounding areas who as usual support Mullingar Society of Saint Vincent De Paul on an ongoing basis, and have done for decades now.

Thank you for your support, empathy and understanding - you are very kind.

If you are interested in becoming a volunteer with SVP Mullingar why not ring our recruitment number - 089 226 8269



In Tribute

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

Aiden Power **St. Fiacc's Conference,** **Graigucullen Carlow**

The death of Brother Aidan in March of this year was received with great sadness by the members of St. Fiacc's Conference Graigucullen.

Aidan joined the Society in 1991, but prior to this was always available to help with the monthly church gate collections whenever asked. He was known as "The Postman" due to his former occupation. The knowledge he amassed from this, was invaluable to the Conference when it received requests for a visit in the rural parts of the area which it covered. Aidan's knowledge about families in these areas could and did cover up to three or four generations. This was of enormous help to the visitation members when they made their visit.

He always viewed the Society as a Family and to this end he recruited both his daughter and daughter in law as members of the conference where they are both very active members. He will be fondly remembered by the Conference and greatly missed.

We extend our deepest sympathy to his family.

May he rest in Peace. Ar dheis De go raibh a anam Dilis

Dominic Ryan **St. Michael's Conference,** **Rathdrum, Co. Wicklow**

The members of St. Michael's Conference Rathdrum were saddened by the passing of Dominic Ryan recently.

Dominic spent 50 years in the Conference and was one of the longest serving members. He was President for a term and also acted as Assistant Treasurer.

Dominic was a native of Toomevara, Co. Tipperary and was a proud hurling supporter of his county and often at Conference meetings there were long discussions and debates about the great games. Dominic graced the hurling fields of Wicklow, playing with local Club Avondale.

As a young man, Dom was responsible for the re-birth of Rathdrum Youth Club. He travelled with the local teenagers all over Leinster, making sure they entered in all competitions and fun activities. He helped organise the First Parnell Games in Rathdrum and was involved thereafter with the Community Games.

Dominic was a kind and caring man and his commitment to the poor and the needy was legendary.

Sympathy is extended to his wife Joan, son John, daughters Sinead and Susanna and his grandchildren.

May he rest in Peace.

Don Mahony **Former SVP National President**

The Society of St Vincent de Paul was deeply saddened to hear of the unexpected passing of former National President Don Mahony this week. Don was an active member of the Society since his school days and served as National President from 1981 to 1987.

Throughout the years Don held many posts within the Society such as President of the old Central Council of Dublin from 1978 to 1981 and later Conference President of St Francis Conference, Priorswood, and Area President of North East Area, Dublin and Secretary of the Dublin Central Council.

During his National Presidency, Don launched a major Society document entitled "Towards a National Social Policy".

He remained an active member of his local Conference right to the end.

May he Rest In Peace.

Joe Barron **President of Holy Cross Visitation Conference** **Dunfanaghy, Co. Donegal**

The death occurred on the 10th October 2018 of Joe Barron, President of Holy Cross Visitation Conference Dunfanaghy, Co. Donegal, and past treasurer and member of Holy Cross Special Works.

He was an example of Vincentian ethos, kind, caring, compassionate and always there to help in any way.

We extend our deepest condolences to his wife and family and the greater Vincentian community.

May he rest in peace.



Jacqui O Sullivan
St Michans, Halston Street,
Dublin

The Conference of St Michans, Halston Street were very saddened by the loss of a dear colleague and friend Jacqui O Sullivan who died on July 18th, 2018. She was a devoted member of our Conference for over thirty years performing her role as the secretary with total efficiency and dedication.

Jacqui was a caring and sympathetic member who had a wonderful outlook in dealing with people we help. She had great empathy and compassion for those in need. It was through her vibrant enthusiasm for life and wonderful sense of humour that she enhanced the lives of those around her.

She will be fondly remembered by everyone whose lives she touched. We will sadly miss such a lovely person who brightened up our world.

We wish to express our heartfelt sympathy to her husband Mark, mother Brigid, brother Lawrence and all her relatives and friends.

May her gentle soul rest in peace.

Margaret O'Neill
St. Brigid's Conference,
Kilcock, Co. Kildare

St. Brigid's Conference Kilcock, Co. Kildare was saddened by the death of one of its founder members, Margaret O'Neill who died on the 8th August 2018.

Margaret was a great Vincentian and held the position as shop manager for years. She first set up shop in a room attached to St. Cocas, Parish Church. She collected clothing, took it home, washed and ironed it and displayed it on a Saturday morning. The clothes were given out free of charge to those in need. The Conference subsequently found a premise to rent in The Square, Kilcock and 'Fred's Fashions' was founded. Margaret ran this shop six days a week raising money for the Conference. The shop went from strength to strength due to her drive, passion and commitment. As the shop flourished, the Conference bought a larger premise in Church St. when Margaret stood down as Manager but continued her commitment in the shop for some time.

It was a great privilege to have served in the same Conference as Margaret for over 20 years. She was an inspiration to us all. During her time in the Conference she was readily available to anyone in need day or night and was always there for the sick and lonely spending many hours visiting the local nursing home.

Margaret died aged 94 having been lovingly cared for in her final illness by the devoted family. Her funeral was one of the largest seen in Kilcock and Fr. George – who knew her so well – thanked her touchingly for her wonderful work and commitment to the community. Mass was celebrated by a number of priests including Fr. McVerry.

She is survived by her four daughters, and one son, a number of grandchildren and great grand children who will miss "Nanny" dearly.

Ar dheis Dé go raibh a hanam dílis.

Marian Deegan
Mary Immaculate Conference

It was with great sadness that the Conference of Mary Immaculate, Shannon heard of the death of Marian Deegan.

Marian was a very active member of our Conference and despite her illness was always cheerful and self-giving. She was an inspiration to all with whom she associated both members and the people we serve. Marian enjoyed nature and especially the sunshine and cliff walks in her beloved Kilkee. It was fitting that at the time of her funeral we were basking in the sun.

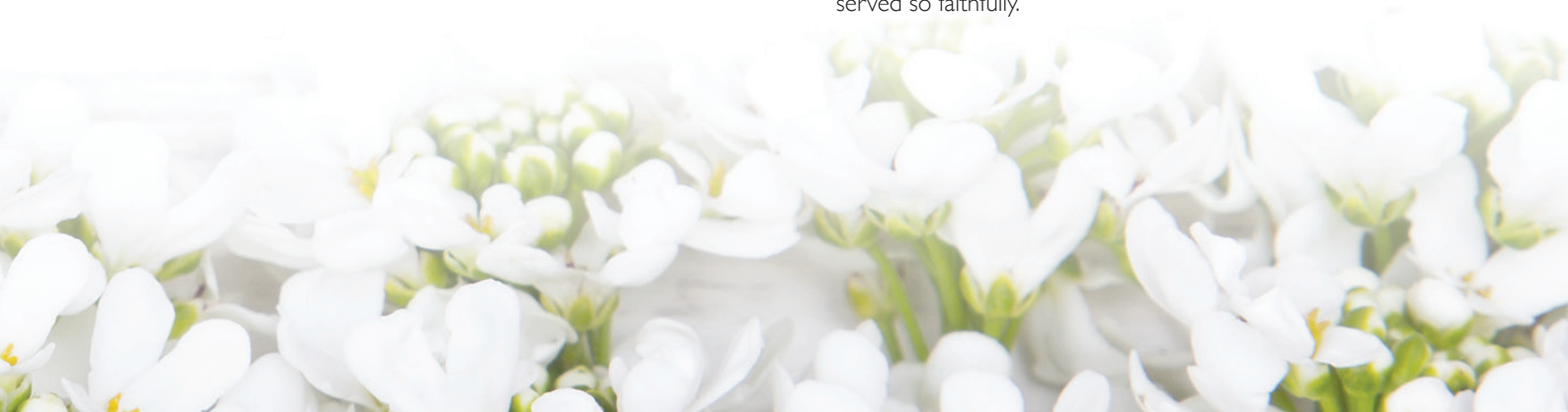
While we miss Marian as a friend and a member of our Conference we take consolation from the reflection read at her funeral liturgy.

Her diminished size is in me - not in her.

And, just at the moment when someone says,
"There, she is gone,"
there are other eyes watching her coming,
and other voices
ready to take up the glad shout,
"Here she comes!"

We offer our sincere sympathy to her sister Doreen and family.

May Marian's gentle soul rest in the peace of the God that she served so faithfully.



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