

THE

SUMMER 2021



BULLETIN

MAGAZINE OF THE SOCIETY OF ST. VINCENT DE PAUL




**VIRTUAL
AREA
GATHERINGS**

2020/2021
A ROLLERCOASTER
YEAR FOR VINCENTS

**CUTTING BACK
AND FALLING**

THE VOICE OF SOCIAL JUSTICE IN IRELAND

A landscape photograph showing a grassy field in the foreground, a line of bare trees in the middle ground, and a bright sun shining through the trees, creating a lens flare effect. The sky is clear and blue. In the background, there are rolling hills or mountains. The overall mood is bright and hopeful.

*“Hope is being able
to see that there is
light despite all of
the darkness.”*

- Desmond Tutu



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

THE IRISH SVP OZANAM BULLETIN

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RELEVANT ARTICLES ARE
WELCOME. SEND TO THE EDITOR.



It is hard to believe that the last edition of the SVP Bulletin magazine was Spring 2020, and it was also the first time we ever just produced an online-only version. In that edition, we highlighted the fantastic support we had received for our 2019 Annual Appeal. It seems like such a very long time ago now, and so much has happened since.

The Society had its first-ever "Urgent Appeal", and the response and support we received was truly amazing. SVP was selected as the chosen charity for the final episode of *The Late Late Show* for the season during this appeal. That night many of us held our breathe in amazement as we saw donations flood in. The volume was so huge our website crashed, but only for a few minutes! So we can say it was a stressful yet awe-inspiring night, where the public donated over €1 million to the organisation. This, I believe, is a true testament to how the people of Ireland view SVP.

So much transpired during those months. We had to change how we usually operated our core Home Visitation work and assist people due to the restrictions. Many of our volunteers had to take a step back and look after themselves or their loved ones. We had a new National President take up the torch, Rose McGowan, and we are sure this was hugely challenging for her as she started her new role.

Our members, volunteers and staff adapted to a new way of operating and working, stepping up where they could. "Virtual Area gatherings" became a new thing and one which seems to have become a great success, allowing our members to reach out and connect with each other and continue our SVP work during these challenging times. On occasions, it brought moments of laughter as we continually heard the saying "You're on mute"!

I can vouch for the tremendous work I witnessed among all my colleagues, going above and beyond what was asked of them.

As we started to come out of lockdown, we wanted to recognise our members, volunteers and staff's challenges and highlight the resilience and hope we heard from around the country, so a "Beyond Covid" video was created to capture just a flavour of those stories.

Our Vincent's Shops went through a period of closing and opening as we jumped from one restriction level to another; like some game of hopscotch, never quite knowing what the future would hold. This was no game, however, and it not only took a financial toll on the organisation but an emotional one for all our volunteers and staff. But retail did not let that keep them down. You will read how they adapted and pivoted and their plans for the future.

Church Door collections stopped in most places, and we offered Conferences the opportunity to create their own fundraising pages on the SVP website, which were a huge success. We will be recommending these again this year, and we have outlined the steps involved for this coming Annual Appeal in the magazine.

You will read all about the challenges our Young SVP program faced and how all these young people, with the support and guidance of our Youth Development team, adapted and stepped up to the mark.

I am hoping from reading this edition; you will see just how truly inspiring and resilient SVP is because of the amazing people/family in it. There were definitely a series of new words that were added to our vocabulary such as 'cocooning', 'social distancing', 'self-isolation', 'stay home, stay safe' that I hope we might be able to leave in the past, like a story we will tell our great-grandchildren in years to come.

Linda O'Connell



A YEAR OF CRISIS BUT WE MUST LOOK TO THE FUTURE

When I took up my new role as the national president, I never thought that my vision, plans, and hopes for the organisation during my term would be so quickly side-lined. The pandemic had other plans for me and the Society and the world in general. The past sixteen months have been a time that I know for sure most of us wish to forget.

The litany of difficulties kept growing as 2020 went on. Apart from the deaths and illness from the virus, there was a huge lack of contact with loved ones for long periods, with many people feeling lonely and isolated, thousands more unemployed, the closure of hundreds of family businesses, families struggling with home schooling and more people struggling to pay bills.

As an organisation, the SVP was not immune to the effects and restrictions introduced due to the pandemic. When Covid-19 hit the country, the safety of our members and the people we visit had to be our priority. Consequently, we followed Government guidelines and suspended home visitations throughout the country and arranged support in other ways.

As a result, help was provided through telephone and online contact with food, vouchers or other needs delivered by post or dropped off by those volunteers who were in a position to do so.

You can imagine this was a major decision as home visitations is the core element of the Society's work.

Quality visitation is paramount – the key objective of the Society is to be out there among people, not just with material help, but with friendship, respect, love and admiration. Our visits – listening – sharing – supporting (financially and with advice) are the priceless Vincentian gifts we offer on our visitation.

Also, as a result of Covid-19, our finances have been stretched. The enforced closure of our 234 Vincent's shops for several months and the cessation of church gate collections created great difficulty for the Society.

One positive of the past year and a half has been the sense of community that has been shown time and time again, organisations coming together, isolated people and older neighbours being supported by their neighbours. We heard numerous stories of such generosity, and I am sure those of you who watched our "Beyond Covid" video would have witnessed the amazing work that our volunteers and staff around

the country continued to do during extremely difficult and emotional times.

We are now moving towards the light, and I hope that such generosity of spirit may long continue. It is vital within the Society that we look after each other as well as those we support. It is essential that we are aware of each other's needs as we work for the common good.

Last December, I wrote to all our members, volunteers and staff to thank you on behalf of myself and the National Management Council for what you have done for the Society during 2020 under very difficult circumstances.

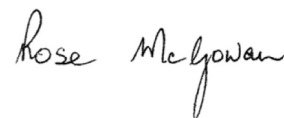
I also said at the time that members and volunteers who took a step back to ensure the health and safety of themselves and those they would have been supporting directly are to be commended for taking what was a brave decision. Those sentiments are still alive with me and deserve repeating.

If you are reading this as a member who took that step back last year to care for a loved one, we hope to see you resume an active role in the Society in the coming months as we move towards and return to a more stable situation.

While the loss of visitation opportunities left a significant gap in the quality of the service we could provide, we look forward to the time we can resume safely.

The roll-out of vaccinations is speeding up as I write and with it brings renewed hope that what we consider normal living returns and we can as SVP members, volunteers and staff resume with renewed vigour and commitment to supporting those who need our help.

For myself, the time has come for me to renew my plans, hopes and vision for the organisation. So in the very near future, I look forward to visiting in person, each region and meeting members, volunteers and staff and view the wonderful projects we have around the country.



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



Homelessness and Policy Matters

By Marcella Staken
SVP Social Justice Research and Policy
Officer

How many people are currently homeless in Ireland?

This is a significant and challenging question because the answer is unknown. Currently, we only know the number of people 'counted' as homeless by the Department of Housing. This means that many of the people SVP work with who are experiencing housing distress are not classed as homeless by our current Government. As a result, it means there are limited supports for them to access to improve their living situations.

A report commissioned by the European Commission has criticised Ireland's homelessness policy. The European Social Policy Network found that there are 'serious gaps' in the definition and documentation of homelessness in Ireland, as monthly releases of data do not cover rough sleeping, hidden homelessness, those in long-term supported accommodation or families in domestic violence refuges.

The 'official' count of 8,060 people experiencing homelessness in March 2021 does not include over 20,000 individuals and families on the social housing list doubling up with friends or family, often known as the 'Hidden Homeless' or the 3,052 women and children in domestic violence refuges but have nowhere to go or the 1000 individuals who have been granted refugee status but cannot find accommodation and so remain in Direct Provision.

A report commissioned by the European Commission has criticised Ireland's homelessness policy. The European Social Policy Network found that there are 'serious gaps' in the definition and documentation of homelessness in Ireland.

Understanding and knowing the extent of people experiencing housing insecurity matters to SVP because without this information, homelessness cannot be prevented. Most people who enter into homeless accommodation do so from a situation of inadequate and or insecure housing. Initiatives to tackle housing need and to minimise the number of people living in these circumstances are crucial to preventing people having to enter emergency homeless accommodation in the first place.

Most European member states use the ETHOS Light Classification of homelessness which has six operational categories: people living rough, people in emergency accommodation, homeless accommodation, those in non-conventional dwellings, people living in institutions, and those living with family and friends due to a lack of housing. Essentially, what ETHOS does is put homelessness into a bigger picture.

ETHOS provides detail about the different categories of homelessness and also includes various categories of people potentially at risk of homelessness. Of the six categories used by other member states, Ireland only calculates its homelessness figures based on two categories, those in emergency accommodation and homeless accommodation such as hostels.

By gathering data under each of the categories listed, through examining existing administrative data from various Government Departments and undertaking research, it is possible to generate a more complete understanding of both the current situation in relation to housing need and homelessness. When we have this information, we can then implement policies, legislation and increase investment in social

and affordable housing at the scale required to prevent homelessness occurring.

Homelessness and Housing are intrinsically linked. The Social Housing Needs Assessment shows that there were 68,693 households on the waiting list for social housing in 2019. A CSO Analysis of the Housing Assistance Payment (HAP) Scheme indicates that some 57,630 households in need of social housing were accommodated in the private rented sector by the end of 2019.

An SVP and Threshold research report in 2019 showed that HAP is an important short-term support in allowing people access to living accommodation, however, it is not suitable in the long term due to issues arising from affordability and security of tenure in the private rented sector. These are all factors that can lead to homelessness and with ever increasing numbers needing to access HAP to find accommodation it is concerning.

HAP is an important short-term support in allowing people access to living accommodation, however, it is not suitable in the long term due to issues arising from affordability and security of tenure in the private rented sector.

Homelessness has a devastating effect on those that it touches and makes achieving one's potential a difficult obstacle to overcome. We need to do much more to prevent it occurring in the first place.





Society of St. Vincent de Paul

Beyond Covid



Our sincere thanks to all those who took part and shared their experiences with us for use in this video.



Beyond Covid

Stories of resilience, hope and inspiration

In April 2021, as we looked forward to the easing of Covid-related restrictions, the SVP Member Support team wanted to formally acknowledge the significant challenges the last year presented to our members, volunteers and staff; to highlight their resilience and adaptability; and inspire hope for our shared future working to assist those who need our help.

The resulting "SVP Beyond Covid" video pays respect to the loss of life, livelihood and inter-personal connections within and beyond SVP and recognises the huge amount of work SVP Members, volunteers and staff undertook in the last year.

Member stories, shared experiences

Each member, volunteer and staff have their own stories from the past year how Covid has affected their work, service and personal lives. To create an honest, big-view picture of how the past year affected our community and services it was important to hear these experiences first-hand and to collate a variety of unique perspectives.

SVP is an organisation with wide ranging and diverse support services. During this time where so many of us experienced isolation in one form or another, it was important to connect these separate and unique stories as part of our shared and collective experience of the last year as a Society.

WATCH THE BEYOND COVID
VIDEO IN FULL, VISIT:

www.youtube.com/watch?v=Fp7FlvcWFYY

Our sincere thanks to all those who took part and shared their experiences with us for use in this video:

- **Paddy Carroll:** Member, Manager OFC Nenagh
- **Georgina Fox:** Ozanam House, Bundoran, Donegal
- **Margaret Lagara:** Volunteer, Croí na Gaillimhe Resource Centre, Galway
- **Brendan McKernan:** Member, Area President Armagh and Craigavon, North Region
- **Ceolan McMullin:** Young SVP, UCD
- **Madeleine Mellet:** SVP Social Justice Committee
- **Aideen Moran:** Team Leader, Ozanam House, Men's Hostel, South East Region
- **Kevin Mulligan:** Member, Former Area President North East and Midlands
- **Loretta Needham:** Manager, Croí na Gaillimhe
- **Maeve O'Gorman:** MSO Mid West Region

We hope this short video captures the resilience and determination of all our members, volunteers and staff who work tirelessly on behalf of the Society.

When circulating the video SVP Ireland National President, Rose McGowan said,

"While the past year has been difficult, I believe there is now an opportunity for us as Vincentians to renew our service to those in need as we have done over the last 177 years."

Our hope is that the "SVP Beyond Covid" video will reaffirm the commitment of the 'SVP family' to work together in the coming years to help people in need and give us a sense of hope for the future.

Over 800 members from 35 areas have attended Zoom Area Gatherings since January 2021, adding to the near 700 members from September-December 2020. For some of those members

“What a fantastic evening and you all did a great job making us all comfortable with zoom. I think we can now zoom as a conference considering a lot of our gang were there tonight crying out for human interaction.”



The conversations on Zoom Area Gatherings are great gas! SVP members who haven't seen one another in so long are delighted to have the opportunity. The opportunity to reconnect, to feel part of the Vincentian family, the opportunity to affirm what they are doing, the opportunity to hear how SVP is operating and how people in need can be assisted despite ongoing restrictions.

“I mean where in the country are you!!!!” “Oh!:

“I'm in the bedroom!”

“And where in the world are you Michael?”

“Sorry about the cat, she won't get off my lap!”

“Can you turn your video on John?”

“You're on mute Mary!”

Knowing the right question to ask also formed a big part of the discussions and information on assessment of need. Without

However, when the large session re-emerged and participants were asked had they any questions there was often deafening silence, until the group was asked “would you like to know when we can meet again?” Then the ice was truly broken!

“It's great to be able to connect with Zoom group meetings good, I think we are all more or less coping the same way.”



The Gatherings usually begin with break out rooms where members can introduce themselves in smaller group which was a lot less daunting.

That opportunity to talk however, can be preceded by a sense of foreboding. There is nothing quite like looking at a screen of faces and getting both the courage and the timing right to make your point.

“It was very informative. The opportunity to talk to and with others was very useful.”



getting online and staying online was a new experience, but what was great was to experience was their level of participation and interaction, as well as their patience when things went wrong!



Virtual Area Gatherings for SVP Members
“Interaction we were crying out for”

By Brendan Hennessy
SVP National Membership Support Team

being able to look someone in the eye it is very hard for SVP members to get to the heart of the matter; likewise without being able to use body language it was difficult to show your concern and care. Therefore, it was important to consider in advance what might be going on for this person at the end of the phone line. What should I be looking out for; or what prompts might I use?



“It is necessary we familiarise ourselves with the tools to undertake worthwhile assessment of requests and the State supports available”.

The desire to assist shone throughout the Gatherings, and members shared their experience and practical wisdom when it came to discussions on posting vouchers, referring to other services, contacting schools about the provision of laptops. All the practical things that an SVP Conference must consider. This is the very spirit of the Gatherings, a coming together to share experience, insight and a shared ethos.

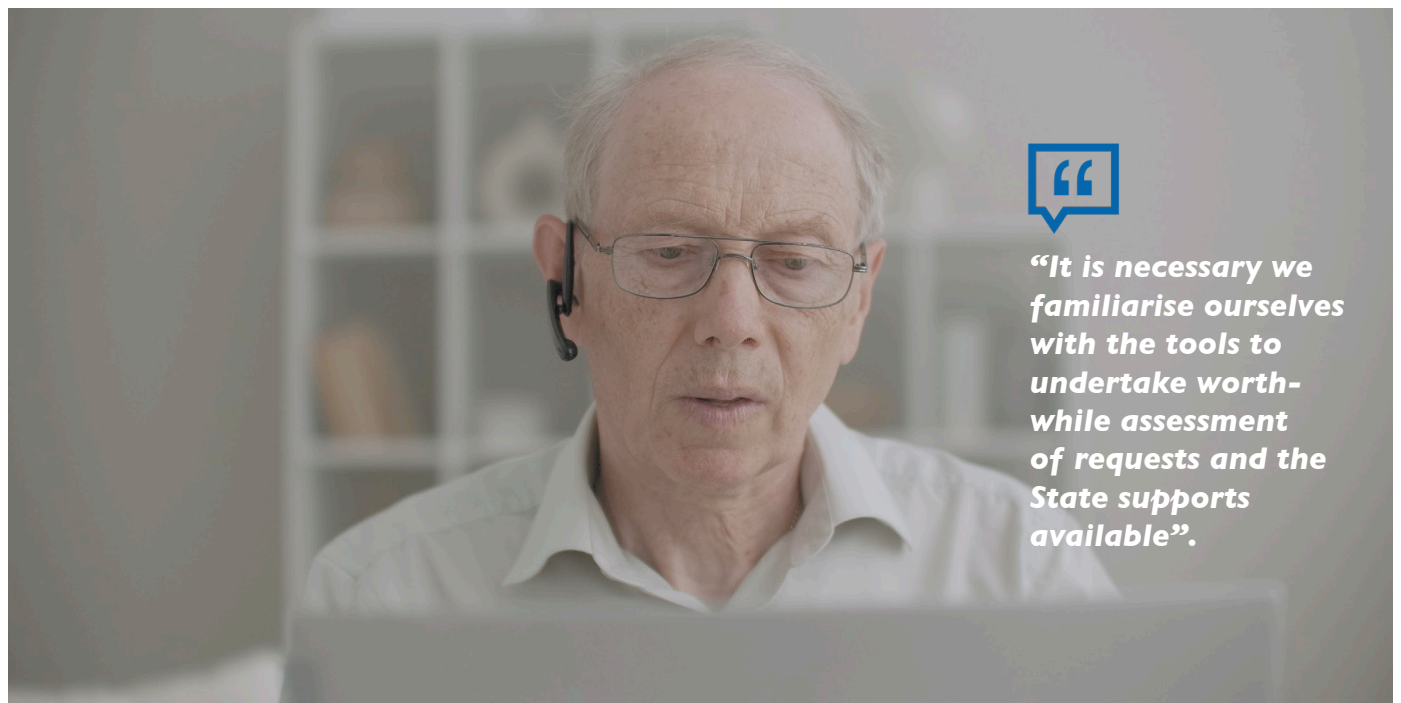


“This is very useful especially for our members, because there was positive training included rather than a lecture about dos and don’ts. If we had more of these it would encourage the members to attend and not to be afraid to ask questions about how better to serve the Society”

We all hope to meet again in person soon, but by adopting technology and adapting ourselves to its use many members, Conferences and Areas not only have continued to make a difference in the lives of the people SVP assists, but have broken down the Covid barriers to the interaction they were crying out for.



“It is necessary we familiarise ourselves with the tools to undertake worthwhile assessment of requests and the State supports available”.



Cutting back and falling behind





In March this year, SVP published new research which showed a significant proportion of Irish society are facing a multitude of financial pressures due to the pandemic. This includes loss of income, increased household expenditure on basics, erosion of savings to meet ordinary living expenses, falling behind on bills and being forced to cut back on essentials like food, heating and electricity.

Data from a representative sample of 1026 adults that was collected by RED C polling company showed that 43% of the population reported experiencing at least one form of financial strain due to the Covid-19 pandemic with:

- 24% cutting back on food, heating or electricity due to cost.
- 22% using savings to meet ordinary living expenses.
- 14% falling behind on bills such as rent, mortgages, utilities or other regular payments.
- 7% going into debt (personal loan, credit cards) to meet ordinary living expenses.

It finds that those who are experiencing the most adverse financial impacts are many of the groups that were vulnerable to poverty prior to the pandemic including low-income families with children, lone parents, renters, and people with disabilities. Covid-19 has added huge additional pressures to these groups as they navigated the practicalities of self-isolation and increased food and energy bills from being home.

For example, the research showed that over a third of one parent families had to cut back on heating or had fallen behind on bills, and 25% had cut back on food due to cost. Increased expenditure on basics is hitting low-income families with children harder as they coped with the additional financial pressures associated with school closures. For people unable to work due to illness or disability, 42% reported going without heating due to cost due to Covid-19, compared to 18% of people at work.

The data also shows warning signs of financial distress among tenants, with almost one-in-ten renters reporting that they have fallen behind on their rent and a quarter stating they were in arrears on other regular payments. It is SVP's view that the current protections for tenants with Covid-19 related rent arrears are too narrowly defined, difficult to access and can be particularly challenging for vulnerable tenants to navigate.

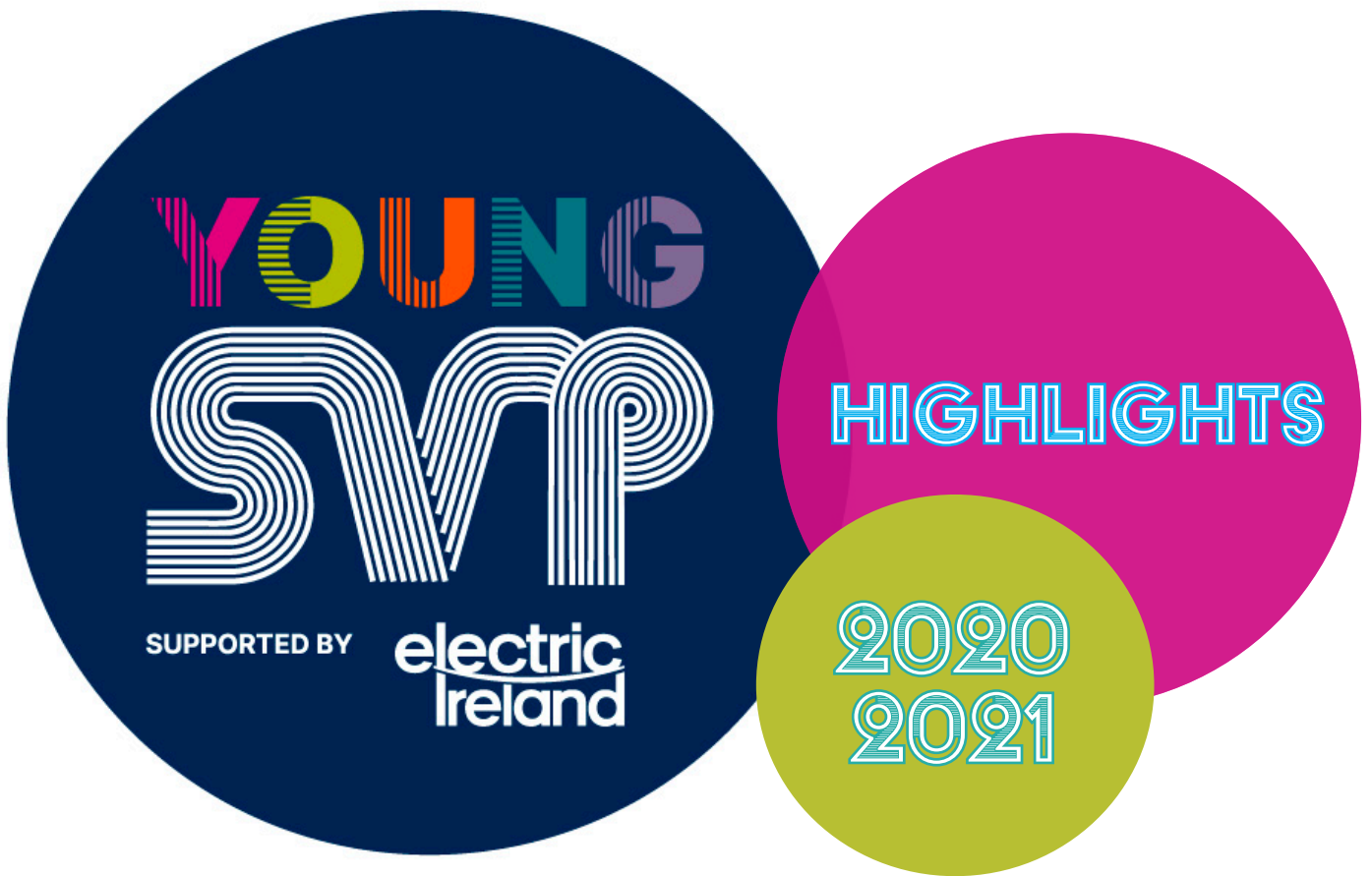
By Tricia Keilthy
Head of Social Justice and Policy

The research shows that the financial impact of the pandemic is not felt evenly across the population. Of those who were finding it difficult to manage financially prior to the pandemic, 85% reported experiencing some form of financial strain due to Covid-19, compared to 21% of those who stated they were living comfortably prior to the pandemic. This group were also more likely to report a drop in income (51% compared to 25% of those living comfortably prior to the pandemic). Furthermore, of those who were finding it quite difficult or very difficult to manage prior to Covid-19, 49% were spending more on essentials compared to 35% of those who were living comfortably.

These findings point to a divergence in experience during lockdown, with those most vulnerable to financial strain and poverty feeling the brunt of the negative economic consequence of the pandemic.

While the Government policy response has mitigated significant income losses through the pandemic unemployment payment and wage subsidy schemes, this data shows that additional interventions for those most at risk of financial distress are needed to ensure the public health crisis is not followed by a deeper debt, homelessness and poverty crisis.

The pandemic has heightened and exposed long-term issues for people living on low incomes and in financial precarity. We now have an opportunity to build back better. We must bolster the financial resilience of households in Ireland by investing in our safety net and our social infrastructure.



The 2020 / 2021 Year in Young SVP — some highlights!

By Becca Gallagher
National Coordinator Young SVP

In what was a difficult and unusual year for everyone, many would argue that for school and college students it was even more so. Students have missed out on so many of their usual opportunities, experiences, activities and events. I think it is fair to say that they will be one of the groups most affected by our lockdowns and may not ever get the chance again to experience the things they missed out on.

However, young people are more resilient and creative than we often give them credit for and I

have to say this year in Young SVP has highlighted that no end.

Over the next couple of pages you will see some of the amazing things those taking part in the Young SVP programme have achieved this year in very awkward and annoying circumstances, not even a pandemic can stop these guys. Congratulations to all the young people, teachers and groups who all rose to unbelievable challenges and persevered regardless (all guided gently throughout by our very own SVP Youth Development Team).



SCHOOLS PROGRAMME 2020/21*

*from Sept 2020 - May 2021 only



147 SCHOOLS



194 GROUPS



653 WORKSHOPS DELIVERED



254 'CHAMPIONS' REGISTERED



4850 PARTICIPANTS



YD TEAM @ 64%

Champions programme

This year we launched our pilot Young SVP Champions Programme offering a new and exciting opportunity for young people to engage in the Young SVP programme independently of their school or group setting.

Young SVP Champions allows students with a particular interest in learning more / those who do not have the opportunity to participate through school to take part in an online version of the Young SVP Programme.

Registered Champions have the opportunity to engage in online workshops, exploring topics and issues relevant to the work of SVP. They are asked to participate in Challenges that encourage social action, and to come together to meet other participants in a monthly 'Connects' meeting.

This year we had over 200 students signing up for the pilot and we intend to launch it as a full and comprehensive programme in September 2021.



College activities

College conferences are generally engaged in a wide variety of activities over the academic year, including running youth clubs, after school clubs, street outreach, hospice and hostel visitation, and on-campus events. This year has been difficult for them as they are all attending college remotely and very few of those activities shifted into online spaces. The college conferences have needed much more support than usual in organising online events, maintaining member engagement, and in their leadership and teamwork. Daire, our College Support Officer, worked closely with each group to set up online activities with other college societies, with local youth groups and schools. With the varying levels of restrictions, it has been possible at times to run in-person activities, which groups like UCD have been able to take advantage of due to having a concentration of members living close to each other.

Social Justice programme – a significant aspect of Daire's work revolves around delivering the social justice programme. The programme includes workshops on topics including poverty, power and injustice, sustainability and energy poverty, social justice and social action. This year they have facilitated workshops with UCD, DCU, Maynooth University, TUD, UCC and NUIG. TCD run their own social justice events, which have also been supported. The workshops are a space in which the students can explore their interests and develop campaigns and activity ideas.



Electric Ireland support and our new logo!

Electric Ireland have been generously sponsoring the Young SVP programme since 2013 and we were delighted when they announced at the start of this academic year that this support would be continuing until at least 2023, their support has been fantastic and this year not only did they provide us with the financial support we have also been working together on other ways they can support the programme and the young people taking part.

As part of this they went about designing a new logo for us which we started using this year, but intent to launch properly in September 2021.

We also look forward to working on more collaborations and projects with them in the coming months and years.

A Sample of our Young SVP Projects

Clothes Drive – April / May 2021

As school buildings reopened and welcomed students in April we asked our groups if they would run clothes drives to support their local Vincent's Shops – and the response was, as always, incredible. We had schools from 7 different regions taking part and between them collecting €1000's worth of donations. Massive thanks to all who took part – photos are only a small sample of all that was collected!



Gonzaga College, Dublin



Scoil Mhuire Carrick on Suir Co Tipperary



Presentation College, Carlow

***to arrange a collection date please contact us by email - youth@svp.ie**



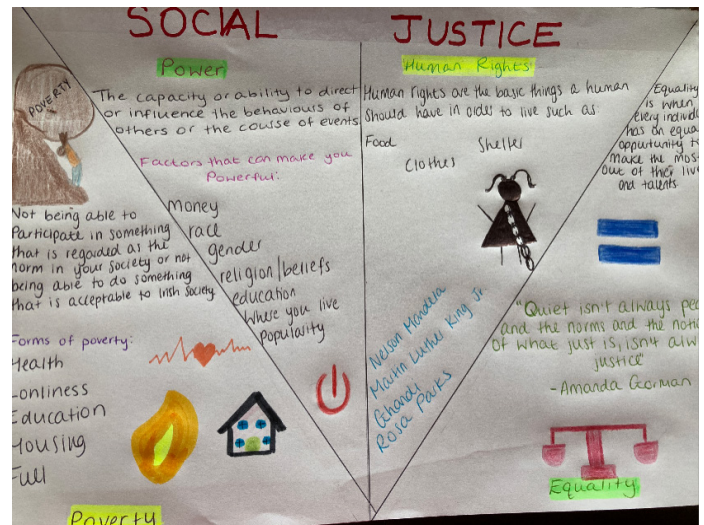
**** please note we can only collect in certain areas so PLEASE contact us before you start planning your event to ensure we can collect from you!**



Create to Celebrate

'Create to Celebrate' piece completed at the end of the workshop series delivered by Helen in the West.

Here you can see one Gortnor Abbey student's reflection and learning highlighted in a simple yet comprehensive diagram.



A student's view

Our Year in Loreto's Young SVP

by Rachel Holohan



We became involved with the Young Saint Vincent de Paul at the start of our time in transition year. For our first Young St. Vincent de Paul event of the year, we decided to host a befriending event for all of the new first year students in the school. This event encouraged new friendships and bonding, and was a pleasant way to start off our Young St. Vincent de Paul journey.

For our next project we focused on the annual Christmas hamper appeal. Each year group brought in different food items and our team hand packed the donation boxes. After everything was carefully packed, we donated the hampers to St. Canice's SVP shop in Kilkenny. Overall this event was a huge success as it provided a festive lift to ourselves and the wider school community.

During these challenging times of covid, the Young SVP encouraged our fellow students to wear face masks to keep our school community safe. YSVP member, Maeghann O'Mahony designed and created hundreds of beautiful handmade face masks, which were a big hit with students. These masks were sold in the school and all of the proceeds were donated to St. Canice's SVP conference.

Overall, everyone of Loreto Kilkenny's Young SVP members really enjoyed their experience with the Young SVP, especially organising events and fundraisers throughout the year. We were all thankful to have the opportunity to give back to our school and local community during this challenging year.

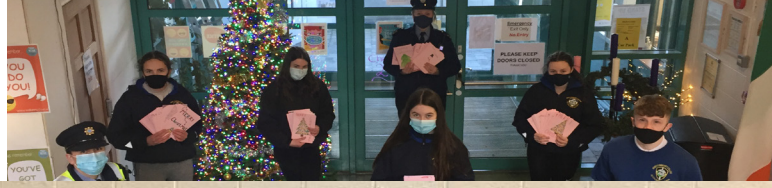
Our plans over the summer...reaching out and building links;

Over the summer months the Young SVP team are on a mission to link in with as many local Conferences, Area Councils, Area gatherings and Regional Councils as possible. We want to explore ways to link the work of our Young SVP groups (in schools, colleges and other youth settings) to the work of local Conferences and members in a more comprehensive way.

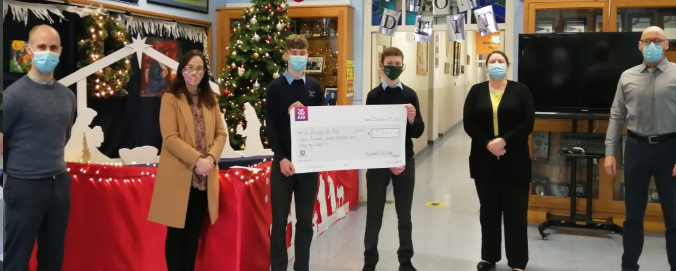
- Are there projects in your areas that our young people could support?
- Are there areas of need that could be addressed by local students?
- Can you support the work that our Young people are engaging in?

We would love to talk to you about mutually beneficial projects / activities that our groups could potentially engage in with you, in order to highlight further the work of SVP in local communities and also offering developmental opportunities for our programme participants!

Please email us youth@svp.ie / contact our National Youth Development Coordinator, Becca Gallagher, for more info!



YOUNG SVP PROJECTS 2020/2021





SVP Bundoran

Home away from home



Bundoran is a small idyllic seaside town in south Donegal. The Society of St Vincent de Paul has three Conferences in Bundoran:

- Visitation - Star of the Sea Conference
- SVP Vincent's Thrift Shop
- Special Works Conference of Ozanam House oversees the running of Bundoran Holiday Centre and SVP Ozanam House Residential Unit

Unfortunately, Bundoran Holiday Centre could not open for the summer seasons of 2020 and 2021. Ozanam House Residential Unit has been in operation since the 1960's. It is our residents "Home away from Home".

Ozanam House is Assisted Living for older people who want to keep their independence yet be supported in a safe and secure environment. Our aim is to assist our residents to stay healthy, active and independent for longer. We provide a warm, supportive and homely environment for our residents to enjoy their retirement with good friends and company.

We have 15 Private Ensuite Bedrooms. Our sitting and dining room have breathtaking views of Bundoran's Beach and provide

Full Board Accommodation to all residents. Caring and professional support staff are available through the day and night, prioritising our resident's independence yet there to assist if required.

The last year was an incredibly difficult year for everyone. The family of Ozanam House: our residents, their families and friends along with our team of staff worked together to keep everyone well. Everyone went above and beyond and gave it 100%. Thankfully, everyone here in Ozanam House continues to remain well.

The support and kindness we also received from our community was and continues to be tremendous.

To each and every one of you, I would like to sincerely thank you for your support and good wishes. Whether it was a donation, a card or a telephone call, it showed that you were thinking of us and is very much appreciated.

Should you have any questions or would like more information on Ozanam House, Bundoran please contact Georgina Fox, Manager 087 2434528.

SVP International 'Ozanam Network' Digital Magazine

The Issue nº 01/2021 of 'Ozanam Network' digital magazine, translated and edited by Council General International's Communications Department, is now available.

One of the highlighted sections is the Vincentian Charity in Times of Crisis. This issue is also packed with other news and relevant information, including:

- 2021 Themed year of Jules Devaux
- SSVp took part in a panel discussion on homelessness at the United Nations
- Syria. Winning the War with Faith
- Kenya. Street families
- Fasting: Council General Launches Campaign for Canonisation of Bl. Frédéric Ozanam
- Consensus Decision by Superior Councils on Adjourning the General Assembly to 2023
- Various articles on formation and spirituality

On page 46 of this issue there is a feature on SVP Ireland's Vincent's Charity Shops highlighting need for these shops to be classified as an essential service during the Covid-19 pandemic.

To read the latest issue (01/2021) of 'Ozanam Network' visit:
<https://www.ssvpglobal.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/ozanam-network-2021-01-en.pdf>



Ireland Charity shops, an essential service

SVP Shops are the driving force supporting local Conferences and social projects of the SSVp Ireland.

The SSVp Ireland has 234 charity shops across the country which, due to the lockdown, have been virtually closed since Christmas. This has led to a fall in the SSVp's income of over 16 million euros.

The SSVp has requested the government to regard charity shops as an essential service, since they provide major assistance to the people most in need in their country. Moreover, opening up, it is believed, would reduce traffic movement, since the majority of their customer base is in



2021 Themed year of Jules Devaux	SSVP took part in a panel discussion on homelessness at the United Nations	Syria. Winning the War with Faith	Kenya. Street families
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SVP Trustees

The National Management Council (NMC) is the directive, co-ordinating and management body of the Society in Ireland and sets the policy of the Society, consistent with the Mission and Values Statement. It is also responsible for the overall direction, control and management of the activities of the Society at national, regional, area and local level and in respect of the Society's special works, implementing its policy consistent with the Mission and Values Statement.

The membership of the NMC, consists of the National President, the 8 Regional Presidents, 2 appointees of the National President and the Spiritual Advisor. The National Management Council members are also the Trustees of the Society. The NMC normally meets once a month.

National President: Rose McGowan - appointed September 2020

Rose has been a member of the Society since her early school days, visiting the North inner city in Dublin where she continues to carry out her visitation today with her Conference. She has held a number of roles in the Society over the years from Conference President, Area President and was Regional President for the Dublin Region from 2005.

Rose was appointed National Twinning Coordinator in 2006 and became a member of the Commission for International Aid and Development in Paris having been appointed by the previous President General, a position she has been reappointed to by the current President General.



National Vice President: John Lupton - appointed October 2020

John Lupton is Regional President of the Mid West Region (i.e. Clare, Limerick, Offaly and Tipperary). Born (August 14th 1952) in Roscrea and a member of the town's St. Cronan's Conference since March 1983. Having been involved in various community empowerment initiatives over the years, he sees his role, as a Vincentian, as facilitating those isolated and marginalised, through need, back to their rightful place in their community of belonging.

A past pupil of Roscrea CBS and graduate of UCD, he is founding principal of the Accountancy firm, Lupton & Associates, and a Trust & Estate and Personal Insolvency Practitioner.

National Treasurer: Peter Fitzpatrick - appointed July 2017

Peter is a native of Belfast, where he lived until he graduated from Queen's University. He qualified as a Chartered Accountant in England before moving to Dublin in 1980, where he has lived since then.

He is now retired and was previously a Partner in Coopers & Lybrand, Chartered Accountants (now part of Price Waterhouse Coopers) before embarking on a career in Financial Services. In the past, he has acted as a non-executive director for a number of companies and served with Associations in a voluntary capacity. Peter's previous involvement with the Society was in the role of Independent Examiner for a number of years.





Regional President South West: Paddy O'Flynn - appointed February 2020

Paddy O' Flynn is a native of West Cork and has been a volunteer with the Society since 2006. He is married to Ann and they have four children and eight grandchildren. Ann is a Conference President and their daughter Mairead is a volunteer with the Society in Cork. Paddy has been a Conference President, Area President and most recently a Vice President of the South West Region.

Following graduation from UCC, Paddy spent his working life managing operations for multinational companies in the UK and Ireland in the food and drink industry. Paddy is particularly interested in all matters relating to social justice and is passionate about the role of education in the Society's work.

Regional President West: Maureen Mitchell - appointed Nov. 2020

Maureen originally from Dublin was first introduced to the Vincent De Paul in the early 1970's when she volunteered as a Youth Leader in a club for teenage children on the northside of the city. When Maureen married in 1979 she moved out of the area, and was busy working and raising two children but always wanted to return to volunteering. In 2002 she moved back to Dunmore in Galway where her husband was born and in 2006 she joined St. Nicholas Conference. In 2009 she was appointed Treasurer and was re-elected in 2018 and still holds that post. In 2016 Maureen was elected as Area President in the Tuam Area. She was nominated by her Conference for Regional President in 2020 and took up the position on the 2nd November 2020.

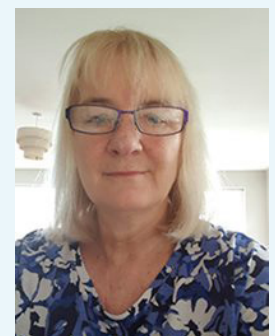


Regional President Northern Ireland: Mary Waide - appointed July 2020

Mary joined St Vincent de Paul 15 years ago and has vast experience in working with a range of Conferences and communities from village to town and rural. She is currently a member of her Parish Pastoral Council. Mary is a Member of the Society's National Safeguarding Committee and is Safeguarding Lead for the Northern Region. She is committed to ensuring that Safeguarding is highlighted in all areas of SVP's work. When she joined the Society, Mary experienced the warmth of the spirit of the Vincentian Family and as Regional President, Mary has a clear focus on the priorities around education, membership support, SVP shops, governance, quality visitation and social justice. She believes spirituality must be at the heart of meetings, visitations and the decisions made by SVP.

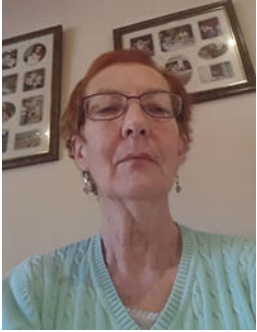
Regional President Mid West: Teresa Ryan - appointed April 2020

Teresa is one of the founder members of St. Ailbes SVP Conference where she was elected president. Teresa took on the role of the first Area President when the East Limerick Area Conference was established. She believes that the responses of the St. Vincent De Paul Society must continue to be nuanced in line with the ever-changing needs of the less well off in our communities. Self-help, personal training and education may well become an ever-increasing focus of our organization, as vital ways of breaking the ever-widening circles of deprivation and poverty.



Regional President NorthEast & Midlands: Larry Butler - appointed 2018

Retired Customs Officer, married with a grown-up family, Larry has been involved with various organisations since first joining Clones Civil Defence Casualty Service in 1981. In 1997 he joined Chernobyl Children International and served as a Group Leader, organising host families taking children to Ireland for rest and recuperation and as a humanitarian aid co-ordinator, organising and participating in convoys of aid to Belarus and Western Russia. He is a member of the St. Joseph Young Priests Society. He joined the Sacred Heart Conference of Saint Vincent de Paul in Clones around 2002 as a volunteer, and served as Conference President before being appointed Area President for Monaghan Area Council in 2010.



Regional President NorthWest: Rosa Glacken - appointed January 2018

Rosa is a retired teacher and married with five sons. She joined the Society in 1996 in Ashbourne Co. Meath. Having later moved to Letterkenny Rosa joined St. Eunans Conference.

She served as Letterkenny Area President and took an active role in the region.

She is passionate about education accessibility and the plight of those in rural deprived areas.

Regional President South East: Ben Doyle - appointed April 2017

Ben has been a member of SVP since 2010 beginning her volunteer role with the Visitation Conference in Barnstown. She is also a member of the Hospital Visitation in Wexford and served as Wexford Area President for two and a half years.

Ben is also a member of the regional training team in the South East. Ben is married for 35 years and has two children, Paul and Deirdre and three grandchildren. Her motto in life is *"Live life to the max"*.



Regional President East: Marie Cronin - appointed July 2020

Marie joined SVP in the late 80s. She is the founding member of a number of Conferences in Dublin. Marie served as Area President in Dublin West County Area for two five-year terms and for another five year term as Area President in Ballyfermot/Clondalkin Area. She set up three SVP clothing shops in the Region and recently Marie has been involved in setting up foodbanks funded by the Dublin City Council.

Her passion in life is to encourage the families SVP visits to remain in education by mentoring and expanding tuition assistance at second level so that third level education is open to everyone. *"Education is the best way out of poverty"* says Marie.

National Secretary: Andy Heffernan - appointed in July 2014

Andy Heffernan has been National Secretary for the Society for almost 7 years having been appointed in 2014.

Andy had a long career in the Defence Forces and held numerous roles in Disability and Mental Health services.



Online Conference Fundraisers

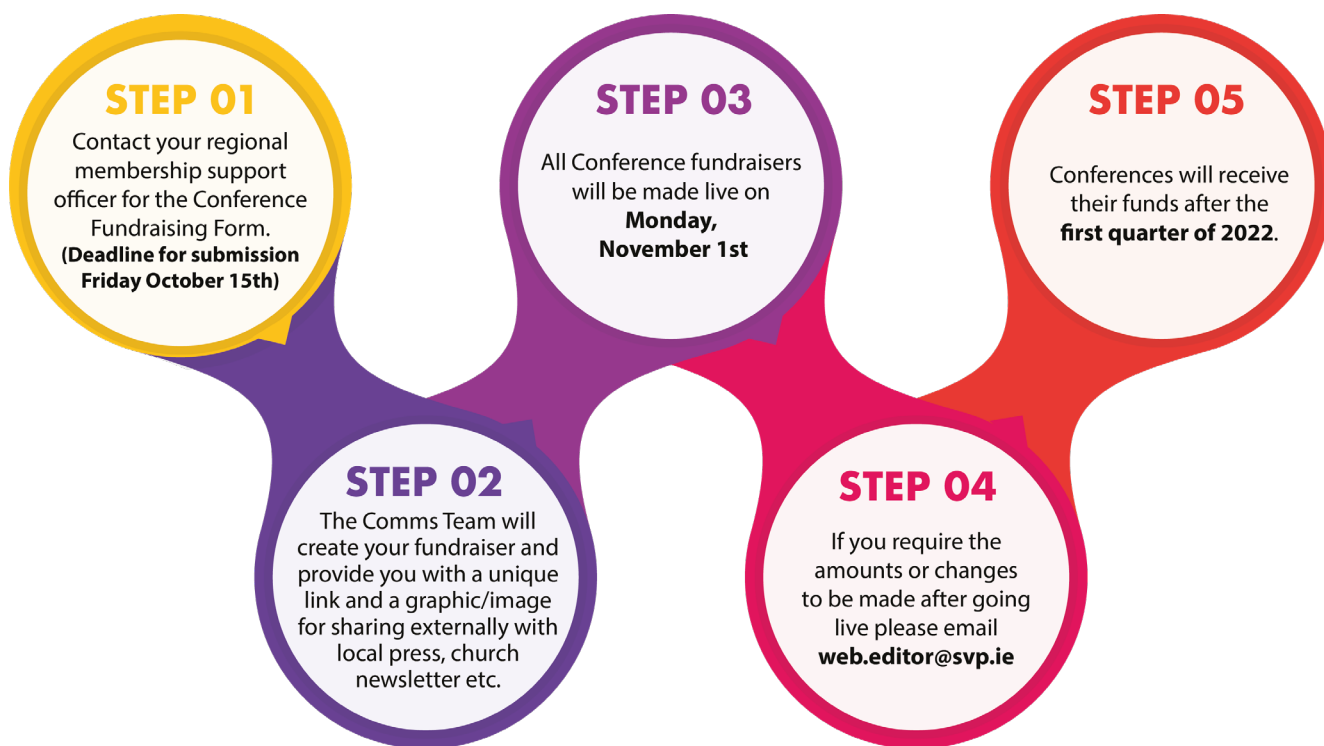
Last Christmas we supported numerous Conferences in setting up their own online fundraiser on the SVP website where 100% of all monies raised go to your Conference. This was a huge success and we have had a lot of interest since.

We are planning to do the same this Christmas. To ensure everything is streamlined and organised we are asking any Conferences who would like to have their own online fundraiser to submit all their details **no later than Friday October 15th, 2021** and these will all be made live on November 1st 2021.

We have outlined the process below and what you will need to do:



1. Contact your regional membership support officer for the Conference Fundraising Form (Deadline for submission - Friday October 15th). We would ask you to please familiarise yourself with this document as this will ensure the money is transferred where it is intended for.
2. The Comms Team will create your fundraiser and provide you with a unique link and a graphic/image for sharing externally with local press, church newsletter etc.
3. All Conference fundraisers will be made live on Monday, November 1st
4. Please note Conferences will receive their funds after the first quarter of 2022.
5. If you require the amounts or any amendments after going live please email web.editor@svp.ie





SVP Communications Icons

Over the years, SVP has proudly contributed to making a difference in people's lives. This has been made possible by the hard work of all our volunteers and staff who work across the many different services/functions SVP offers to help the most vulnerable in society.

The work of SVP is varied and our internal and external audiences are large. At times, specific content and messaging will be relevant only to certain segments. While we try to reach a wide range of audiences through our external communications channels such as our website, intranet, social media and campaigns we have created eight unique icons representing the different SVP service areas so users can easily identify and segment content to offer a better experience.

These icons will distinguish SVP materials and guide our audiences to engage with the relevant topics that suit them most.

We hope SVP services/functions adopt and support the spread of this new campaign. We are asking you to identify and use the right SVP icon relating to newly developed content, documents, images or material before you share with your SVP teams and audience.

This will help us target different audiences with the right information that interests them most; and will empower them with the choice to filter content that is relevant to them.

If you have queries about these icons, and guidelines on how to use them please contact Bruno by email bruno.charneski@svp.ie ...we'll be happy to help.

New National Branding Guidelines

We recently produced a national branding guidelines. This branding guidelines booklet is designed to maintain a cohesive look for Society of St. Vincent de Paul and contains all approved items and elements necessary for brand use such as official colours, fonts, logos etc. By incorporating these brand guidelines, you can ensure the SVP identity stays the way it was intended, no matter what the context.

Anyone who requires any of the official logos for printing purposes or anything else you can contact us and we will provide you with the required formats at web.editor@svp.ie. There will be a limited number of printed copies available in due course from Regional Offices.

You can also view and download a copy by visiting: https://issuu.com/svp15/docs/visual_identity_guidelines_2021_-_v2





**WE ARE NOT CURRENTLY ACCEPTING
SHOP DONATIONS**



2020 – 2021

A Rollercoaster Year for Vincent's

by Dermot McGilloway
National Retail Development Manager

On March 16th, 2020, we took the precautionary step of closing our charity shops in response to the emerging situation with Covid-19. Who could have imagined that we would face three national lockdowns on March 27th, 21st October and again on 30th December; in addition to numerous lock restrictions in counties including Kildare, Laois, Offaly, and Donegal?

As we now know, the 3rd lockdown was to last nearly 20 weeks from December 30th until May 17th 2021 and eventually led to over 270 of our essential retail staff being placed on temporary layoff. This 3rd lockdown was reputedly the longest in the world and it certainly felt like it!

Whilst our primary concern was, and continues to be, the health and well-being of our family, friends, and wider community, it became clear that this pandemic and associated lockdown would have a devastating impact on our network of community shops and their fund-raising capabilities in addition to impacting on those who depend on our services.

2019 had seen retail generate income of over €31 million, 38% of total SVP income, whilst we had received an estimated 14,000 tonnes of donated textiles, collected from our shops, OFCs and clothing banks. In addition to financial losses likely in 2020/21, our shops temporarily lost many experienced shop volunteers who correctly followed Government advice to shield at home. Whilst this has kept our volunteers safe, it had a profound impact on our ability to operate our shops. It became very clear that our retailing model would need to undergo significant change if it were to withstand the initial impact and multiple aftershocks of this virus.

Thankfully, the creativity, resilience, resourcefulness and adaptability of the staff, volunteers, members, CE, and Tus involved with retail has put us back on the front foot.

Shopping in a Global Pandemic

The retail sector has been rocked to the core by Covid -19 but has focused on customer safety in the short term but also an increased emphasis on its digital capabilities and “green” credentials in the longer term to reassure and reengage with a more discerning and digitally enabled global consumer. The team at Vincent’s have responded to both that shorter- and longer-term need.

Our shops are now safer than ever before with a comprehensive list of social distancing measures in place which have provided the assurance that our customers, volunteers, staff, and donors require, although it must be said that retail had been identified as a very low risk environment anyway.

Building on that firm foundation, the Vincents team has written a comprehensive Return to Business protocol, Covid Risk assessment form and introduced a range of mitigation measures in the shops and OFCs including:

- Provision of Vincent’s Facemasks for all staff and volunteers
- Acrylic Protection guards (sneeze guards) at all tills and workstations
- Social distancing signage
- Hand sanitisers
- Zoned working areas.



- A 72-hour quarantine period for all donated textiles
- Debit / credit card readers for cashless transactions
- Different entry and exit points.
- Restricted use of changing rooms
- Rosters for cleaning and disinfecting surfaces
- Isolation rooms

Customer and team safety continues to be our very top priority.



Vincent's as an essential retailer

Many Vincent's customers depend on local and immediate access to our shops for essential and affordable clothing and household items whilst using our shops as a gateway to the ecosystem of social justice and sustainability that is SVP.

Regrettably, this was not considered when our shops were designated as "non-essential" during lockdown by virtue of the fact that we stock "non-essential" items including clothing and books as part of a much wider offering.

As we know, many in our society do not have the 'luxury of choice' when it comes to shopping but during lockdown, they were forced to choose between shopping online, visiting the shops that were open or going without.

Whilst we are fully supportive of all public health efforts to suppress the virus, it became difficult for many to understand why it was deemed safe and lawful to pick up a coffee or newspaper from the corner shop but not safe or lawful to collect essential clothing or household items from the charity shop next door.

THE IRISH TIMES

NEWS | SPORT | BUSINESS | OPINION | LIFE & STYLE | CULTURE

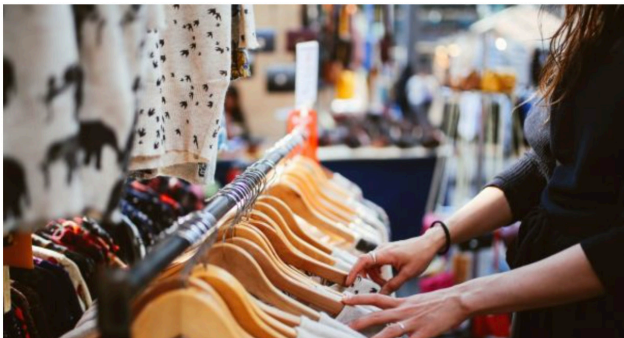
Social Affairs > Mother and Baby Homes | Religion & Beliefs | Papal Visit

St Vincent de Paul calls for charity shops to be classed as 'essential service'

Poorest households cannot afford high-street or online shops for clothes or homeware

© Wed, Apr 7, 2021, 19:44

Kitty Holland Social Affairs Correspondent



The multinational retailers who continued to welcome walk-in customers during lockdown were much better equipped to offer the type of "Click and deliver" service that the charity sector and smaller businesses were restricted to. Vincent's shops and OFCs offered a limited "click and delivery" system using eBay and Thriftify but this was beyond the reach of many low-income families who simply did not have access to credit/debit cards, WI-FI, digital devices or indeed the disposable income to buy their essentials on these platforms.

The Society openly appealed to Government to redesignate charity retailing as an essential activity for low-income families however the inequitable system persisted until the recent lifting of the lockdown.



The Importance of Supply Chain for Vincent's Retail

SVP has always recognised the importance of securing steady donations whilst developing a robust supply chain for our shops. When potential new sites are being considered, a key consideration will always be the ease with which a donation can be dropped at the shop.

The true value of our supply chain and logistical capabilities however became all too apparent when our shops closed during lockdown.

Who will cherish

your preloved clothes as much as you?



SVP

of course...

we give every donated garment a new home

Why donate to SVP?

- It's good for the environment, we slow down the harmful effects of "Fast Fashion"
- As a leader in sustainable fashion, we keep 100% of donated textiles out of landfill
- We are conveniently located in most communities - check www.SVP.ie for details
- We use your pre-loved items to fight poverty in your community

Donate today at your local Vincent's charity shop or SVP clothing bank



Thank You



Our Order Fulfilment Centres were able to operate a skeleton service throughout lockdown as the collection and recycling of clothes is seen as an integral part of waste management, and therefore permitted under level 5 lockdown. On that basis, our hard-working OFC teams in Dublin, Drogheda, Cork, Nenagh, Tralee and Waterford continued to clear and sort donations from our clothing banks across the country.

An additional pop-up OFC was opened by West Region and Galway Area with the generous support of Holy Family Church in Mervue.

This essential activity secured vital income for SVP during lockdown with a combination of online sales on Thrifty and eBay and recycling income whilst saleable and season – appropriate stock was sourced and prepared for sale in advance of reopening on May 17th. As shops have re-opened, donation cages have been placed outside many shops whilst our “Cherish Your donations” message has been circulated to all locations

Vincent’s - A global leader in ethical and sustainable fashion

The retail sector is susceptible on an ongoing basis to what Austrian economist, Joseph Schumpeter referred to as the “gale of creative destruction” with products, services and service providers entering and exiting the market all the time, however Covid -19 has replaced this perennial gale with a hurricane force 12 which has devastated our town centres and has retailers and consumers alike seeking shelter and certainty.

As we emerge from this trauma caused by the Covid 19, we have been reminded of how fragile our planet and our economy really are and conscious of storm clouds, caused by global warming, that have literally and metaphorically gathered and darkened on the horizon.

The global fashion/ textile industry is now the 4th largest polluter of our environment. Whilst the sector is producing 160 billion garments annually, the production of just one T shirt emits 2.6 kgs of harmful greenhouse gases.

Despite producing and consuming more clothes than ever, an estimated 26 kgs for every EU citizen, we are wearing and keeping less and less of these garments. This consumption has been fuelled by the proliferation of “Fast Fashion” retailers in our shopping centres and High Streets.

The Fast Fashion sector promotes the linear economy of “Take, Make and Throw Away” by making garments as cheaply as possible. This has meant that the sector has become more dependent on cheaper synthetic non-biodegradable fibres like polyester which are now in 72% of new garments. A polyester garment can take up to 200 years to decompose in landfill and the production of that fibre uses 70 million barrels of oil annually.

Our planet is picking up the hidden cost of these throwaway garments.

Q. How can Vincent’s retail lessen the impact of global warming?

A. In many ways ... read on ...

At Vincent’s Retail, we are very conscious of our own carbon footprint and want to get to the point where everything we do is carbon neutral. Sustainability is becoming more and more important for the savvy shopper of today who wants more than just soundbites or promises from the retail sector. At Vincent’s we spare no effort in trying to re-use the preloved items that have been donated to us.

FASHION'S ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT



- ⚠ Over 100 Billion garments are produced globally each year, with over 70% going to landfill or incineration.
- ⚠ Synthetic non-biodegradable fibres like Polyester are in 72% of these new garments.
- ⚠ We use 70 million barrels of oil annually to make Polyester.
- ⚠ Every time you wash a synthetic garment, 1,900 microfibrils are released into our water.
- ⚠ The environmental cost of producing a T-shirt in terms of CO² emissions is 2.6kgs
- ⚠ A cotton T-shirt uses 2,730 litres of water.
- ⚠ A cotton T-shirt takes 6 months to decompose in landfill, a polyester T-shirt can take up to 200 years.
- ⚠ The Fashion industry is the 4th largest polluter of our environment. 'Fast Fashion' accelerates that damage.



WATER POLLUTION



WATER CONSUMPTION



MICROFIBRES IN OUR OCEANS



WASTES ACCUMULATION



CHEMICALS ADDICTION



GREENHOUSE GASES EMISSIONS



SOILS DEGRADATION & DESERTIFICATION

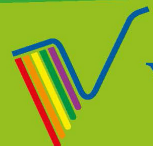


RAINFOREST DESTRUCTION

VINCENT'S SUPPORTS REDUCE – REUSE – RECYCLE



- 🌍 SVP is a leader in sustainable fashion and, by donating, you help us slow down the harmful effects of 'Fast Fashion'.
- 🌍 SVP is committed to eliminating textile waste in our retail supply chain.
- 🌍 We receive over 14,000 tonnes of pre-loved textiles a year and use our network of 230 shops and Order Fulfilment Centres to keep them in circulation, and out of landfill.
- 🌍 By donating to an SVP shop or Clothing Bank, you are supporting your local community and protecting the environment.



VINCENT'S

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

Any item that cannot be sold, distributed as Emergency assistance or through our Conference Referral programme is dispatched to our current network of OFCs for redistribution to other shops in need. Electronic Point of Sale (EPOS) has now been installed in over 90 of our shops and OFCs to ensure that we can track what we receive and ensure that the item goes to a shop where it is needed. Any item that has still not been sold will be sent on to one of our national recycling partners who, in turn, will reuse, recycle, or export surplus garments. We do not put any textiles into landfill and are committed to extending the life and use of every 'fit for purpose' donation.



Whilst we have launched several instore tactics to promote sustainability, including the launch of an instore T-Shirt messaging campaign, a reusable cotton donations bag, Repair stations and Kraft Clubs, we want to be able to quantify how efficient and effective we are in waste reduction. We will shortly commence a pilot study with Community Reuse Network Ireland (CRNI) to identify further efficiencies in our textile collection programme.

This June Vincent's are launching a Sustainable Fashion Movement in our shops and on social media where the public will be encouraged to become SVP volunteers and donors for the day by upcycling a pre-loved item of clothing, sharing photos or videos of the upcycled item on social media using #Recrafted4vincents and then donating it to Vincents.

Our focus for the month of June will be on T-shirts with a different garment type selected for the months to follow. National Volunteer Co-ordinator Rasa Visockiene said,

"We'll provide upcycling tips each month so keep an eye out in store and on social media and don't forget to reuse it all with St Vincent De Paul".

#recrafted4vincents

The Vincents Retail team are also honoured and delighted to announce that the Irish Girl Guides will be joining the sustainable fashion movement, with the first collaboration starting with the North East Senior branch who are now working with the Vincents team in Drogheda OFC to turn old T-shirts into tote bags and cushion covers whilst using the T-shirt yarn to crochet into floor mats, blankets, and baskets.

Anne Hyland, Regional Director Officer at Irish Girl Guides said

"The girls are delighted to get involved with SVP sustainable fashion movement, as it links in nicely with the Global Sustainable Development Goals - Responsible Consumption, Second Life. The challenge will be to make distinctive outfits suitable for different occasions. They will be creating them using cutting, sewing, tying knots and unique fashion design."

The Irish Girl Guides consist of 12,000 youth and adult members in Ireland, as a youth-driven, dynamic organisation offering a varied and exciting programme for girls and young women, and opportunities for women of all ages. As a girl-only movement, girls are free to develop and express themselves in a safe, comfortable, supported setting.

For more visit: www.irishgirlguides.ie



As the fashion industry and retail grapples with the existential crisis that is Global warming, Vincents is emerging as an unlikely leader in ethical and sustainable retailer, tackling the parallel problems of poverty and deprivation on one hand and the excessive consumption of fashion on the other.

New SVP Retail Strategy 2021-2025

By Joe O'Connor
Chair, SVP National Retail Committee

On behalf of the National Retail Committee, I am delighted to introduce the Society's New Retail Strategic Plan (2021 - 2025). This strategy will provide high-level direction and guide the work of the all-island network of shops.

This Retail Strategic plan was adopted by the NMC on 29th April 2021.

SVP Shops play an increasingly important role for the Society. The shops are located in communities across Ireland. They are supported by donors, volunteers, staff and customers from those same communities. Profits generated through the shops are then recycled into local conferences across the island of Ireland to support those in need.

There have been a number of notable developments over the last few years in SVP retail, these have included the appointment of a national retail team and the establishment of a national retail committee together with regional satellite retail committees providing oversight and direction.

Many of our shops now have professional managers. The implementation of a range of policies – across branding, health and safety and compliance – have helped to strengthen shop operations, enhance the shopping experience for customers and further develop the return for those the Society supports.

A RACI (Responsible, Accountable, Consulted, Informed) matrix was also introduced to provide greater clarity around the roles and responsibilities of each of the key stakeholder groups supporting retail operations, this is an established part of the policy framework.

SVP Retail is well placed to play a key role through enhanced revenue generation and an improved margin in ensuring that the Society is positioned to support those experiencing poverty and disadvantage through home visitation and other core Society services.

All shops must respond to changing customer expectations, to new competition, and the need to achieve greater efficiencies and agility in the way they operate. Expectations on the part of

donors, advocates and other stakeholders will also continue to heighten in respect of levels of transparency and performance.

This new Strategy provides an opportunity to build on recent developments, exploit the available market opportunities while also safeguarding this important income source for the Society for the future.

While 'one size may not fit all shops', this Strategy has allowed us to identify five relevant pillars of action which will protect this key revenue stream for the Society and ensure that the shop model is both relevant and sustainable across the coming years.

It is recognized that the place of the Conference is integral to the strategy, but it also must be noted this is not the case throughout the Society, where some Regions have opted for regional structures, whilst others have clustered models.

This retail strategy advances as vision for SVP Retail:

OUR VISION: To be the leading, progressive charity shop network that delivers a high-quality experience which provides value for our customers, accountability to our donors and contribution to those that the Society supports through its core services in communities across the island of Ireland.

OUR MISSION: The Society will support its shops to operate in line with best commercial practice so that the Society is well placed to assist those experiencing poverty and disadvantage.

THE SOCIETY OF SAINT VINCENT DE PAUL RETAIL STRATEGIC PLAN, 2021 - 2025



This will be achieved by:

Developing our shop network as an efficient, contribution driven programme that is clear about its sources of income and costs and is fully focused on supporting the Society in its goal to fight poverty in all of its forms.

Supporting shops to maximise the distribution of contribution so as to provide funds for much needed SVP services - and particularly through home visiting - for those in need.

Safeguarding SVP and its reputation through good governance and investment in our people and associated structures.

Strengthening our Sustainable Competitive Advantage through the delivery of a high quality and unique 'blended' in-store experience which:

- Provides for a focus on sales return,
- Facilitates social interaction
- and Promotes social justice.

This is an overarching Strategy for the entire shop network and this document represents a 'call to action' to all Society members, shop and order fulfilment center volunteers and staff involved in supporting retail operations.

Successful delivery of the Strategy will require Society wide buy-in. While this Strategy will be driven by the National and Regional Retail Committees it must be 'owned' and supported by all those involved in shop operations across the island of Ireland if it is to be successfully implemented.

The road ahead may be challenging, but the gains for those who the Society serves will be worth the effort. The National Retail Committee looks forward to working with you to make it happen.

Chair, SVP National Retail Committee



National Children and Family Services

A new area of function within the national services structure

by Tony Rock
National Children's & Family Services Manager

The Society of Vincent de Paul have recently developed a new area of function within the national services structure - Children and Family Services. This new function now encompasses all of SVP's child and family services throughout the island of Ireland. In total we have 41 different services in this area operating in 43 locations across the country.

The variety of services in this area include;

- Childcare Centres
- Youth Clubs
- Day Care Centres for the elderly
- Drop in Services for the homeless
- Holiday Homes for Families
- Seafarers Club
- Breakfast Clubs
- Community Resource Centres
- Residential Units for the elderly
- Holiday Homes for children
- Meals on Wheels / Hamper services
- Prison Visitor Centres



These services are incredibly well supported with 430 volunteer members working in our child and family services network throughout the year. This number rises significantly during the summer months when hundreds of volunteers join us to support our summer youth projects and our holiday homes across the country.



Members take on such a variety of roles in our services, acting as role models and mentors to the children in our youth clubs and youth groups, sharing talents and skills in adult education classes, being a listening ear and support to older members of the community in our day care centres and social activity groups, offering advice and support to people who find themselves homeless, delivering meals to those most in need, having a cup of tea and a friendly chat with sailors who arrive at port or supporting children and families as they visit loved ones in our prisons.

We also have 144 staff working in our child and family services and all of our members and our staff support up to 3,500

people across the country who benefit from these services every week. Throughout all of our child and family services, the ethos of the Society is strong and evident in all that we do. The care and compassion that is central to our mission is witnessed in every classroom, every club, care centre, holiday home and visitor centre in every corner of the country.



To oversee this new area of function the National Management Committee have established the new 'National Children and Family Services Committee'. This committee was established in February this year and its membership is made up of Regional Presidents, Regional Coordinators, Conference Presidents and members from across the country. This Committee will oversee and provide governance on the ongoing development of child and family services in a collaborative and cohesive way.



It will establish a support network for services across the country and agree an action plan to develop and deliver our strategic objectives in child and family services while complying with our legal, regulatory and constitutional obligations.



One of the key roles the committee will have is to provide support to the new National Children and Family Services Manager, Mr Tony Rock. Having recently commenced in this role, Tony has worked with the Society for almost 20 years in managing childcare and community services, the most recent of which was the largest single child and family service we operate in the country in 'Ozanam House Resource Centre' in Dublin. Tony is bringing great experience and understanding of the organisation and of our child and family services to this new role.



"I am looking forward to working with and supporting such a variety of services across the country. The work we do in our child and family services and the unique care and support that our members and our staff offer in such a compassionate way is so special and I feel very lucky to be a part of that. We will be developing our network of services more over the coming months and sharing all of the great experience and wisdom we have with each other. It is great that this new function is now in place, to continue to support and give voice to the great work that we do in SVP in our child and family services".



CHY3 TAX EFFICIENT GIVING SCHEME



Increase donations for your Conference today at **NO EXTRA** cost to your supporters.

Through the CHY3 Tax Efficient Giving Scheme, Revenue allows charities to claim tax relief on all eligible donations, single or multiple that amount to **€250** or over in a calendar year from both PAYE and Self Assessed donors.

This means SVP can get a **45%** tax refund from Revenue on donations from supporters who give **€250** or more in a calendar year.



KNOW MORE ABOUT CHY3 ON
WWW.SVP.IE/CHY3

FUNDRAISING UPDATES

Increase donations for your Conference today at NO EXTRA cost to your supporters

Through the CHY 3 Tax Efficient Giving Scheme, Revenue allows charities to claim tax relief on all eligible donations, single or multiple that amount to €250 or over in a calendar year from both PAYE and Self Assessed donors*.

This means SVP can get a 45% tax refund from Revenue on donations from supporters who give €250 or more in a calendar year. For example, if someone donates €250 to your Conference this means that their donation could actually be worth €363 to your Conference with tax relief.

CHY Information Sessions

Fundraising is now regularly running CHY Information Sessions for Conferences. In the sessions, we explain to members how the scheme works, how easy it is to participate, National Office Fundraising's role in helping Conferences and to answer any questions.

How to claim?

To claim the tax relief on eligible receipted donations and increase the value of donations, whether you are a donor or an SVP Conference, just follow these easy steps:

- 1. Conference Treasurer:** Record details of each donation received (monthly, annual or other) by donor name in the Treasurers Ledger/Agresso. Records of each donation must be maintained as Revenue may ask to see them. Send all donors whose donation(s) amount to €250 or more in one year a CHY3 cert and return envelope with their thank you letter / receipt.
- 2. Donors:** Donors simply sign the form once and return to National Office in the freepost envelope provided.
- 3. National Office:** National Office then processes the claim directly with Revenue and will return eligible funds directly to the local Conference.

Not claimed previously?

If your Conference has not claimed the tax back on donations made to your Conference in the 4 previous years, we can submit claims

for each year that has not been claimed going back 4 years, e.g. in 2021 we can claim tax back on donations for 2020, 2019, 2018 and 2017.

Want to know more?

To get the dates of the next CHY Information Sessions, order forms or to get more information on the process call Deirdre Mullen on 085 8700827 or email deirdre.mullen@svp.ie.

** Donations from Ltd Companies are not included in CHY3 Tax Effective Giving Scheme*

New Natural Language Feature

During Covid, facilitating donors to donate to directly to their local community was essential. To do this we have added a new box to our online donation page labelled 'Specific location to help'.

Donors can now be more specific about where they would like their donation to be directed - whether that be a Conference, Area or town.

This addition proved very popular with donors during the annual appeal with over 30% of all online donors opting to direct their donation locally.

www.svp.ie/donate

The screenshot shows a portion of a web form. At the top, there are two rows of checkboxes: 'By Email' with 'Yes' and 'No' options, and 'By Phone' with 'Yes' and 'No' options. Below this is a section titled 'Specific location to help' with a dropdown menu. The dropdown is open, showing a search bar with the text 'bl Michael Archangel, Cuffesgrange' and a list of suggestions: 'Bl. Michael Archangel, Cuffesgrange', 'Blacklion', 'Blackpool', 'Blackrock, Cork', 'Blackrock, Dublin', 'Blackrock, Louth', and 'Blackwater'. To the left of the dropdown, the text 'Reason for donating' is visible.

New holders for Conference Blue Envelopes available

Building on the popularity of Conferences using blue envelopes for their own fundraising, envelope holders are now available.

These holders are branded with SVP's logo and details and can be placed in churches, shops etc for donors to easily pick Conference blue envelopes in order to donate.

If you would like to order some holders, please contact:

South West Region: Anne McKernan 086 0249 518
Email: anne.mckernan@svp.ie

East Region: Sorcha Holmes 085 871 6589
Email: sorchaholmes.east@svp.ie

All Other Regions: Deirdre Mullen 085 8700827
Email: deirdre.mullen@svp.ie



The Positive Space

The Positive Space presents an exclusive photography exhibition selling prints from leading Irish photographers. The Positive Space, in association with the Gallery of Photography, has a BIG exhibition in Brown Thomas with 40 amazing Irish photographers. Each print is available for purchase, with a portion of the proceeds going to the Society of St Vincent de Paul. Discover the exhibition in Brown Thomas's Dublin store or online.

<https://www.brownthomas.com/brands/positive-space/>

St Vincent de Paul South West Golf Classic at Douglas Golf Club Cork - Thursday 26th August 2021

THURSDAY 26TH AUGUST 2021
SVP GOLF CLASSIC 2021
 PROUDLY SPONSORED BY PJ HEGARTY



DOUGLAS GOLF CLUB
3 PERSON TEAM.
COST: €390 PER TEAM
(MEAL INCLUDED)

All proceeds will be used to support local families/individuals struggling with education costs.

For entries call or email: Anne on
 ☎ 086 0249518
 ✉ Anne.Mckernan@svp.ie
 CHY 6892

HEGARTY
 BUILDING & CIVIL
 ENGINEERING CONTRACTORS

SVP
 Society of St Vincent de Paul

This is our fifteenth year organizing the event which to date has raised more than €100,000 for those in need in Cork. All proceeds raised will be used to assist families & individuals struggling with education and living costs.

The format this year is a scramble. The cost of entry to this year's Golf Classic is €390 for a Team of 3. You and your guests will be treated to fabulous hospitality at the newly refurbished Douglas Golf Club. Your day will include a meal, (subject to Covid Guidelines and Restrictions) not to mention superb prizes.

If you are unable to enter a team in this year's event, perhaps you would consider sponsoring a Tee Box or a Green. Tee Box and Green sponsorship ranges from €200 to €300.

Please make cheques payable to The Society of St Vincent de Paul.

Be sure to put the date in your diary, grab your golf clubs and support those who are most in need in your local community.

To reserve your preferred tee time email: Anne at anne.mckernan@svp.ie or phone 086 0249518.

SVP Annual Car Draw

Lord Mayor of Cork Cllr Joe Kavanagh drew the First Prize of a 2021 Ford Focus ST Line kindly donated by CAB Motors, Mahon Point, Cork on Tues 18th May.

A huge congrats to Gillian Tyrrell, from Boreenmanna Rd, Cork who received the keys to her new 2021 Ford Focus having won first prize in the South West Car Draw 2020.

Thank you to all our other sponsors and everyone who supports us. Results of the draw were published in the Irish Examiner on 22nd May.



Welcome to our new Regional Coordinators

Mid-West Region welcomes its new Coordinator – Ann Bourke

Ann a native of Co.Tipperary has worked in Limerick City in the Community and Voluntary Sector for over 23 years. Ann brings with her a wealth of knowledge and experience of working in Community Development, Group Facilitation, Caseload Management and Project Management.

Over the years Ann has gained a deep insight and appreciation of the challenges faced by those who experience disadvantage, marginalisation and exclusion. Ann would like to acknowledge the sterling work her predecessor Michelle Putti did in the Mid-West Region and wishes her well in her new role.



Deeply committed to Social Justice and Equity Ann is looking forward to working with the Society of St.Vincent de Paul and to taking on the challenges of this role.

Finally, as a Tipperary native it goes without saying that she is an avid supporter of GAA Hurling!



West Region welcomes new Regional Coordinator - Deirdre Swords

My name is Deirdre Swords and I am the newly appointed Regional Coordinator for the West Region. I have taken over from Madge McGreal who recently retired from the Society. I am acutely aware of the big shoes I have to fill, I hope I can show the same levels of dedication and commitment to the society as Madge provided.

I have spent the last 13 years working in the Tusla Education Support Service and prior to that I worked for the Irish Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children and in residential care. I have received a very warm welcome from staff and members alike and I looking forward to taking on the challenge of the role and working with you.

Thank you from St Malachy's Conference, Co. Tyrone

Maeve McElduff and Conal Ward presenting a cheque for £675.00 to members of St Malachy, Conference, Beragh, Co Tyrone. The money was raised by performing a music session on Facebook.



New Bridal Suite opens at Vincent's Portadown

A new bridal suite has opened at Vincent's in Portadown. Located in the Mayfair Business Centre, the bridal suite has a beautiful range of wedding dresses to suit any style and budget.

Vincent's Wedding Suite includes a separate changing room and a viewing area where the mother of the bride can sit back and enjoy the once in a lifetime experience of seeing her daughter trying on her wedding dress.

There are more than 50 new and preloved white and ivory dream wedding dresses for brides to choose from and they can reserve an appointment to view and try on a selection of dresses in privacy. Mother of the bride, bridesmaid and flower-girl dresses, formal attire and a range of hats and accessories are also displayed in the suite.

Michael Lavery, Manager of Vincent's Portadown, said:

"At Vincent's we appreciate that planning a wedding is such a special time in any bride's life. When we were investing in developing the Wedding Suite we wanted to create a welcoming environment where brides could visit with their bridal party and enjoy the experience of choosing their wedding dress without any pressure."

Anne Crossan, Regional Retail Manager, SVP NI, said:

"The new Vincent's Wedding Suite is a wonderful addition to the service that we are providing to the local community in the Portadown area. I think it's really important that brides feel comfortable and enjoy the experience of buying their wedding dress and being able to offer private appointments is a lovely way of personalising the experience for them and their families. I wish Michael and the staff well with this new offering for the store."



Brides wishing to visit Vincent's Wedding Suite can be accommodated by appointment during normal shop opening hours and also on evenings and at weekends.



To make an appointment, telephone: 028 3839 4219.

Staff are ensuring that current COVID-19 guidelines are being adhered to.

SVP North Region Celebrates Volunteers Week with a Garden Party

Representatives from across St Vincent de Paul Northern Region joined Fr Perry Gildea at a garden party to celebrate Volunteers' Week and those who have devoted more than 30 years service to the Society.

Speaking at the event, Fr Perry congratulated those who have emulated the founder of SVP, Frederic Ozanam, in their selfless acts of helping those in need.

Throughout the pandemic although not able to meet in person, Conferences have been hosting Area Gatherings via Zoom with regular meetings taking place across the Region.

Mary Waide, Regional President of SVP North Region, said;

"It's a privilege to recognise volunteers who have given a lifetime of service to the Society. Without their support in the heart of our local communities across the North, the extent of the work of SVP would not be possible. Undeterred by the pandemic, our volunteers have shown resilience in how they have continued to safely help those in need and how they embraced online meetings to stay connected and committed to society. During this Volunteers' Week, on behalf of SVP, I would like to take the opportunity to express our gratitude and thank all our volunteers for their faithful and continued service."

Those attending received certificates and a memento of their service whilst enjoying afternoon tea in the gardens of Laurel Villa in Magherafelt. If you would like to become a volunteer or make a donation to SVP, please visit: www.svp.ie.



Harpist Ellen Bradley from Magherafelt entertained guests at St Vincent de Paul garden party to celebrate Volunteers' Week and those who have devoted more than 30 years service to the Society. www.svp.ie



John Mooney from St Brigid's SVP Conference in Belfast is pictured with Fr Perry Gildea, SVP Spiritual Advisor, and Mary Waide, Regional President of SVP North Region, at St Vincent de Paul garden party to celebrate Volunteers' Week and those who have devoted more than 30 years service to the Society. www.svp.ie



Sandra McAuley and Geraldine O'Donnell, representing Vincent's Volunteers from 33 shops across the Region are pictured with Mary Waide, Regional President of SVP North Region, at St Vincent de Paul garden party to celebrate Volunteers' Week and those who have devoted more than 30 years service to the Society. www.svp.ie



Members of St Pius X College Young SVP attended a Volunteer's Week event at Laurel Villa in Magherafelt. Pictured with Mary Waide, Regional President of SVP North Region, are teacher Ms McNulty, Nathan Hatton, Katie Craig, Aimee Moore, Hollie McManus, Eimear Kevin and Hannah McLernon. Gerardine Kielt who hosted the event is also pictured.

A background image of white flowers, likely baby's breath, filling the top and bottom of the page. The flowers are small and delicate, with green stems and buds visible.

In Tribute

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

Mr. Leslie Matson
St. Anne's Conference,
Waterford City

It was with great sadness that the Members of St. Anne's Conference,
Waterford City of the death of Leslie Matson on March 12th.

Leslie was a very compassionate man and was always willing to help someone in
need. He was very loyal to St. Anne's Conference and was a regular attendee at our
monthly Church Gate collections regardless of the weather.

He took a very keen interest in the cases that he visited and often went above and
beyond the call of duty to help them.

A couple of years ago Leslie was the recipient of an SVP long service medal awarded
to him by the Area President.

When cases were discussed at Conference meetings, Leslie brought a level of insight
and understanding that was unique and always worth hearing.

To his wife Joan and daughters Kristin and Sheila, we extend our deepest sympathy.

Ar dheis Dé go raibh a anam dílis

REGIONAL OFFICES

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North West Region

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