



# YOUNG SVP NEWSLETTER



AUTUMN/WINTER 2018





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# INTRO



Welcome to the very first edition of the college SVP newsletter! This short newsletter aims to highlight the work that each of the college conferences have been doing during the first term, so that we can all get a better sense of what everyone else has been up to, and build connections across the regions.

The work of SVP covers many different activities, all relating to the three pillars of our mission statement: Support and Friendship, Promoting Self-sufficiency, and Working for Social Justice.

Throughout SVP, including in Young SVP, conferences are engaged in a range of different activities, projects and campaigns.

College conference activities in particular vary from group to group, depending on the interests and skills of the conference members, and we hope that through creating spaces like this to share our work, we can all learn from each other.

At the end of this newsletter, you will find a list of contact details for each of the college conferences, so you can get in touch with them should you wish! You will also find my contact details, and those of the Youth Development Officers in each region. If you are interested in setting up a college conference, get in touch with either myself or your regional Youth Development Officer, and we can discuss further.

Síofra Dempsey,  
College Support Officer



UCDSVP set Semester One off to a flying start in September with great engagement during Fresher's Week, with a fantastic demonstration of enthusiasm from students & strangers across UCD's Belfield campus. UCDSVP haven't stopped since, with street outreach and child protection training oversubscribed at each session and the numbers of students heading into the city for street outreach swelling every week.

Keeping students involved at Ireland's largest university can present itself as a challenge, but to UCDSVP it's a challenge worth tackling. Fun, student-friendly events such as BYOB Bowling and Coffee mornings have attracted a growing number of new students to the society and to the work of SVP. Such interested students have engaged with SVP's work through our social justice meetings, where we have discussed issues ranging from loneliness in the modern world to the refugee crisis.





Student engagement and education has been one of our primary focuses this semester. Interest in our flat decorating initiative has found groups of students setting off every weekend to lend a hand and a creative eye in decorating people's homes. Indeed the keen interest UCD students have in playing a more active role within SVP was highlighted by the overwhelming response we received to our appeal for ordinary committee member applications. We were delighted to welcome 8 new OCMs to the committee and even created a fundraising committee to help address this key effort.

As semester one draws to a close, we are running our Genosistree Christmas present appeal to bring a little yuletide cheer to children across the country. As UCDSVP prepares for our semester two endeavours we are encouraged by our work and achievements these past few months and remain committed to 'do something worth doing';



# East Region



# TCD



Trinity Vincent de Paul is one of the biggest societies in Trinity College. With over 90 activity leaders and 40 weekly activities, the society provides assistance to those experiencing homelessness in Dublin through our street outreach programme, children from underrepresented areas through our kids clubs and school activities, and adults with additional support needs through our bi-weekly Trinity Clubs.

Highlights of the year for the society include the annual panto in which 40 volunteers, 100 kids and 20 adults with additional support needs come together for two nights in the O'Reilly Theatre to put on a production like no other - this year's panto is 'The Lion King'. We organise the national fundraiser Jailbreak where students race across Europe to a mystery location without spending any of their own money, while raising money for SVP. Every February, a group of 100 students walk the Camino de Santiago in Spain to raise money for the conference which is always a highlight for our members. 2018 was a busy year for Trinity VDP, and there is no sign of things slowing down in 2019!



# East Region

## DCU - SLEEPOUT

The DCU SVP annual sleep-out took place outside the main building in DCU between Tuesday 4th December at 12 noon and Wednesday the 5th. We sure did pick a bad day for it! At about 7pm on Tuesday it began to rain and it didn't stop until 8am on Wednesday. Despite the soaking of all our sleeping bags, we still had good numbers taking part. DCU president Brian Mc Craith joined us for a while! The terrible weather helped us raise awareness for the hundreds of people who face that daily reality.

Overall, we raised over €2,000 which will help us in the planned donation of €5,000 to SVP homeless services. The sleep-out has become a strong tradition in DCU and one that is widely supported by the community. This year's sleep-out may have not been as big as planned due to the weather reducing footfall on campus but the end result will hopefully make a difference to those who need it.



# East Region

## MAYNOOTH UNIVERSITY

Charlotte Counihan

Here in Maynooth, we have had a quiet but productive semester on the run up to Christmas. We started with our hiring fair in October, with over 100 members signing up to join our society for the year. To kick off the year we had our EGM to let everyone know what they had signed up for and get to know each other, then jumped straight into our Street Outreach Training which we got 35 people trained up to go out to the streets of Dublin and spread the love.

While waiting for those forms to go through, a few of our members studying Music Tech wanted to link up the society with one of their module projects in which they had to do something to raise money for a charity to do with Music. Their idea was fantastic, and we were delighted to be involved in what they were doing. To start off, they held a bake sale in a general area of the Arts building which everyone passes through, telling them about SVP on campus and about their next few events coming up. This raised over €300 which will be joined to the rest of the money raised and donated to our society. Next, they set up a drop off location for people to give in old musical instruments, CDs, music books and anything else to do with music. They sorted all this out and are planning a day where they have it all available for people to buy at discounted prices (with all proceeds again coming in to our society). They also hope, before they finish up, to hold another bake sale as part of our Christmas festivities.



# East Region

## MAYNOOTH UNIVERSITY

For the rest of the society, we hope to run our annual Giving Tree week on the run up to Christmas. For this we host a movie night where anyone can come along and bring tinned/wrapped/sealed food that can be donated. We have a Christmas tree in our SU where people can donate money and food to put a ribbon on the tree to remember or give a wish for this Christmas. All food collected gets donated to our local SVP Conference here in Maynooth, and the money raised goes to our society Welfare fund which goes back to students in our college that need help. That's what we've been up to here and hope to get more events up and running in the New Year and grow as a society in our college and encourage people to join us in giving back to our community.



# South-West Region

## UCC - HOMELESS WEEK

Eilís Cooney

Homeless week opened with a movie night - Into The Wild was played in one of our lecture theatres, while the audience had some yummy pizza. A nice relaxing evening was had by all ahead of the sleepout the next day!

At seven am on Tuesday morning, our thirty-six hour sleep out began! This was held in conjunction with both the Simon society and the Feminist Society, it was honestly a great way to meet other people from different societies. Fem Soc had a stand selling the tea, cakes and Knit Soc's knitted hat keyrings, which was such a nice touch to the day as it created such a friendly atmosphere! I was amazed at how generous and kind people were to the cause, many people giving large donations to our buckets and others giving food donations to those sleeping out. I was very surprised at the generosity of the people on campus, we even received our last donation of the night after two am!

It was such a dark and rainy night. When we began early in the morning, it was dry, everyone kept checking the weather forecast and it never said anything but "ninety percent chance of rain". For a change the weather forecast was correct, it rained all night, non-stop. We attempted to put up the gazebo, but it kept filling up with water and either soaking the participants or just general passers-by.

# South-West Region

## UCC - HOMELESS WEEK

We were woken up early that morning by both a street cleaner going past and a fire alarm from the library! It was such an eye-opening experience, with nothing but a thin blanket and cardboard separating you from the ground, it made me realise what a hard time homeless people really have. I was thinking about how after the thirty-six hours I could go home and have a nice warm shower, but that's not a reality for most. It's such a good event because it raises awareness for both the people involved and the others on campus.

At seven pm the sleep out ended, we packed up our stuff and headed to the discussion on LGBT\* Homelessness and the studies being done currently on this overlooked topic. Our final event was a great talk from Sharon Lambert from UCC psychology department and Alison Aldred from Good Shepherd and Edel House about homelessness, mental health and homelessness in a Cork context. We also had an online campaign that ran throughout the week outlining the impact of homelessness on an individual as well as cardboard signs throughout the campus of facts and statistics on homelessness.



# South-West Region

## IT TRALEE

In IT Tralee, our big thing is to keep students that are less fortunate than ourselves in education. With this in mind, we have decided that we'd set our fundraising goal this year at €2000. We had a masquerade ball on December 6th in Ballyroe Heights Hotel. The 'enchanted evening' was a huge success, and raised over €500, which will be donated to our local conference in Tralee. On the night and throughout IT Tralee in the lead-up to Christmas, we had a Giving Tree, where students or staff members can leave Christmas presents that we will deliver to St. Vincent de Paul in Castle Street and Friary Lane branches in Tralee Town Centre. These branches benefit our students immensely and the local area hugely benefits also, and we want to commend the whole group, led by Paddy Kevane, for the tireless work they do.

In the New Year, we hope to bring SVP to "new heights", and organise our first IT Tralee SVP skydive, which we hope will raise a lot of much needed funds for our conference. This is the first event of its kind in this conference and in our college, so we hope that we can get people involved and raise some money!

The work carried out by our group in the IT Tralee SVP conference has been immense and we want to thank each and every member for their contribution to make sure that kids have a present for Christmas and that we can raise as much money as possible for St. Vincent de Paul.

## CORK COLLEGE OF COMMERCE

John Warren

This year the Cork College of Commerce Conference has hit the ground running with weekly meetings and a strong 8-12 members attending regularly. For Christmas this year the conference are running a giving tree along with a food and donation drive. There is fantastic energy and drive within the conference along with great support from Lecturer David Tyrell. One great aspect of the work this conference is doing is the level of awareness they are bringing to the college community around the work of SVP but also the needs within our community.



# West Region



## NUIG



The society has expanded this year with a completely new council elected to continue the work of the SVP within NUIG. The first event we had was our social night in September. This involved a group bonding session in the college bar to make sure everyone got to know all the new members that had joined this year, followed by a trip to Carbon for a boogie.

When everyone was well acquainted, we started getting stuck into some real work. Firstly, there was organising the pub quiz. Every member played their part in promoting the quiz, with many going around to local businesses securing spot prizes for the quiz and the raffle that took place on the night too. We received support from the likes of Doughbro's pizza, Mr Waffle, Chilishack, Brona chocolate, Wholly Cow and the Roisin Dubh. Red Bull provided free drinks for the evening. In total the quiz raised over €400 which was given directly to the local SVP office in Galway.

We also had our childcare safety training night with Becca Gallagher in preparation for our school homework club in second semester with Scoil Chroí Íosa. Members found this evening fun and engaging and look forward to the volunteering in second semester.





## NUIG



We are currently organising a Christmas food appeal alongside members of the chaplaincy in NUIG running from the 9th to the 21st of December. This will run within the college and in the Newcastle area of Galway.

We will be attending the evening service in the local parish on the 9th of December to promote the event to some of the older people in the community.

We have begun planning for second semester. We hope to work with Ability West organisation again in the coming semester, to continue on from the events we had last year and to reconnect with the group of kids we were working with.

Ability West is an organisation dedicated to enabling people with an intellectual disability realise their dreams and ambitions. They work with children and adults, and we have run events with young people there for the last number of years!





# ONE WORLD WEEK 2018

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Clare Mander

Young SVP in the East Region were delighted to receive a grant to assist them with activities from the National Youth Council of Ireland as part of One World Week 2018. Young SVP was chosen from among a large volume of high quality applications from all over Ireland. The work of Young SVP members at a local level will play a vital role in supporting Ireland to create a better world for current and future generations and in setting Ireland on a path to achieving the SDGs.

## What is One World Week?

One World Week is a week of youth-led awareness raising, education and action that takes place throughout Ireland during the third week in November every year. One World Week invites youth groups and young people to think about the issue of Activism and young people – on a personal, local, national, and global level.

During One World Week young people learn about local and global justice issues and take action to bring about change. Youth groups all over the country run activities, public events, quizzes and debates, invite guest speakers, have intercultural evenings or express themselves through drama and art.

Those interested can find out more about One World Week check out [www.oneworldweek.ie](http://www.oneworldweek.ie) and [www.youthdeved.ie](http://www.youthdeved.ie)

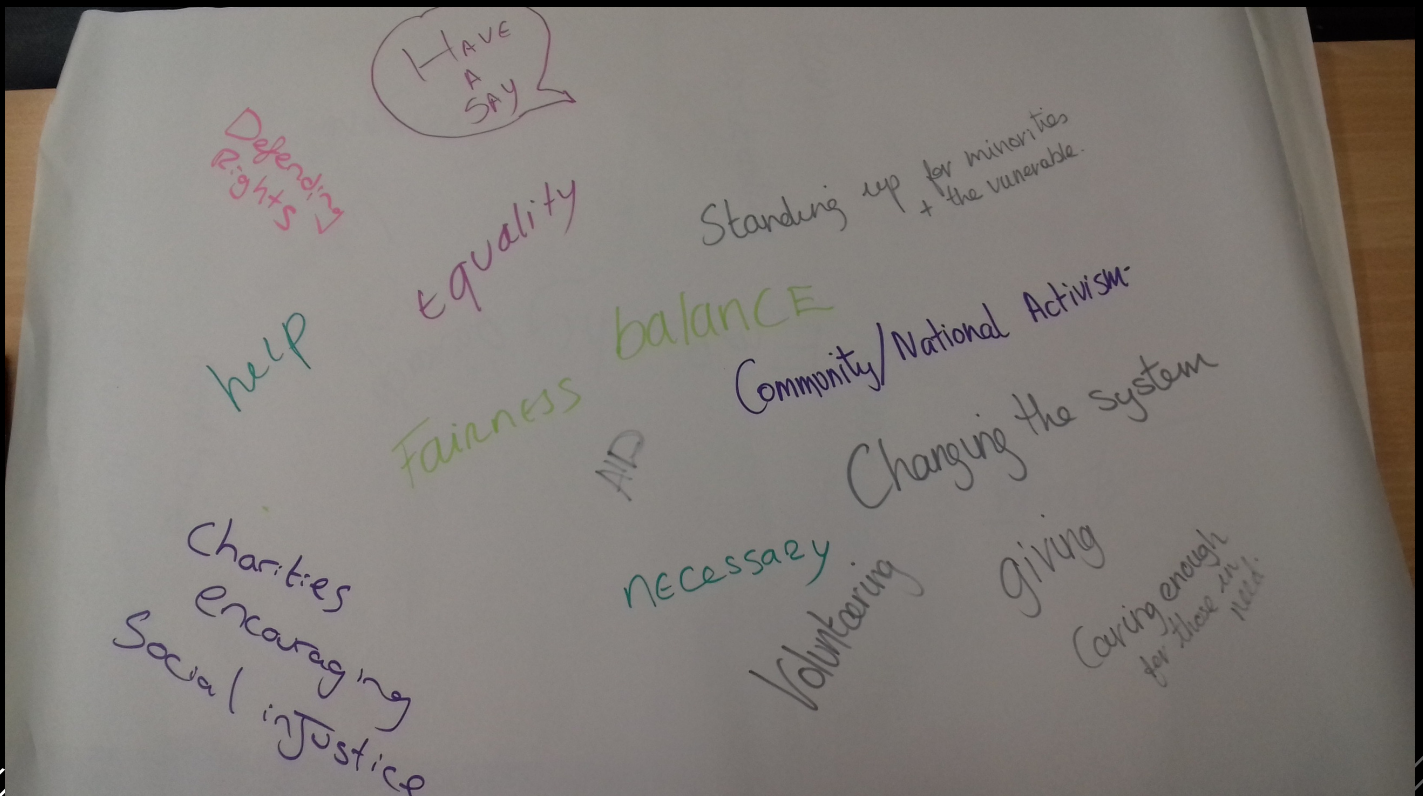


# ONE WORLD WEEK 2018

## Far & Near at Dublin Institute of Technology

On the 19th of November the SVP Conference in DIT hosted a workshop for their fellow students "Far & Near: Young SVP Thinking Globally & Acting Locally". Through the workshop we; developed our understanding of different approaches to development and considered the links between development and the work of Young SVP. We also thought about the power dynamics inherent in representing others in social justice work.

Thank you to DIT SVP for hosting the workshop!



One of our worksheets from the workshop!



# ONE WORLD WEEK 2018

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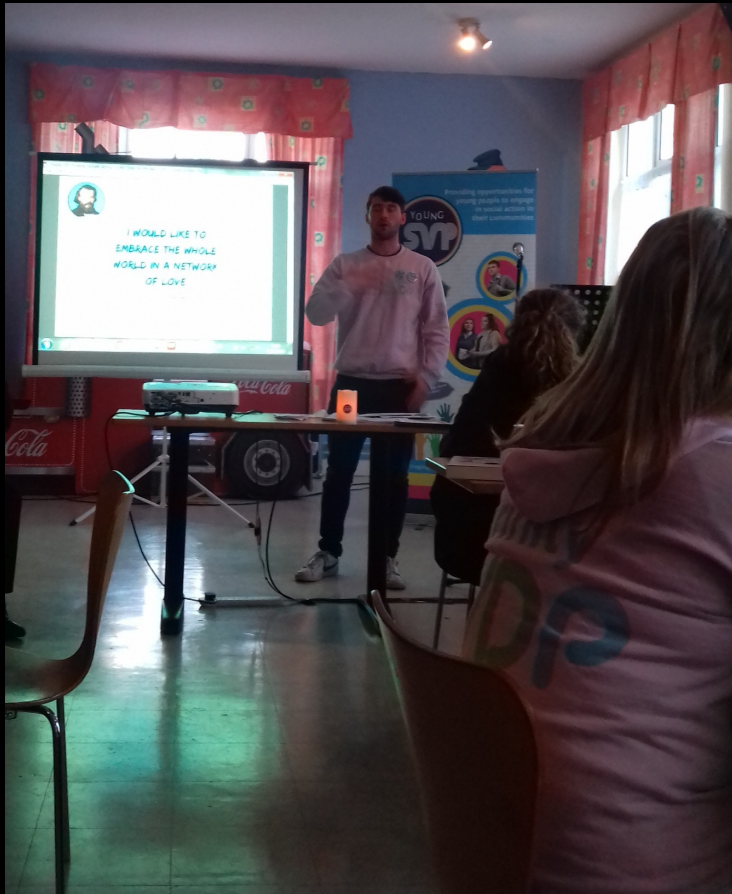
## Young SVP Schools Get Together

On the 22nd November students and teachers from nine different schools came together in Sunshine House Balbriggan for 'Young SVP Thinking Globally & Acting Locally'. The Get Together was officially opened by Mary Ita Niall from SVP in North County Dublin, who reminded us of the words of Frederic Ozanam "I would like to embrace the whole world in a network of love". Next, we heard from Bobby McCormack from Development Perspectives, who explained the background of the SDGs and encouraged us all to be vigilant in recognising our own blind spots. Becca Gallagher, SVP National Youth Development Coordinator, facilitated a session on Poverty in Ireland. After lunch, the students learned how to be peer facilitators and received certificates of achievement. They then returned to their schools to facilitate their own workshops of poverty for their classmates. A highlight of the day was Jack Natin, President of TCD SVP, inspiring us all to take action to make a difference.

A big thank you to Jack, Emma, Lara and Conall from TCD SVP for their invaluable support and enthusiasm on the day!

Thank you to the students, teachers, SVP members and staff and Bobby from Development Perspectives who supported the day. Thank you also to the NYCI and SVP North County for funding the event and Sunshine House for hosting.

# ONE WORLD WEEK 2018



Some of the students at the Get Together

Jack Natin, President Trinity SVP, speaking to the group



# SOCIAL JUSTICE



Caroline Fahey

## 'Stories of Struggle' Research

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.

# SOCIAL JUSTICE

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.

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](http://www.svp.ie/storiesofstruggle)

This research was commissioned by the Society of St Vincent de Paul and carried out by the Vincentian Partnership for Social Justice.



# WORKSHOPS



This year, we have rolled out our new programme of workshops available to colleges, and I have had loads of fun doing some of the workshops in colleges around the country, including UCC, NUIG, and DIT. The workshops can be run within your SVP society, in conjunction with other student societies, or with the general student population. We designed them to be useful and relevant to college students engaged in a variety of social justice work, activism and study.

## Poverty and the Cost of Living

This workshop challenges misconceptions about poverty and prejudices against those experiencing poverty. It aims to instead build understanding of what poverty is and its effects on our lives. The workshop uses research carried out by the Vincentian Partnership for Social Justice, as mentioned in Caroline's piece, in practical activities that root our understanding in real-life experiences and knowledge.

## Power and Society

This workshop takes a broader look at the root of social inequalities - power and power imbalances. Through these activities, you will develop an understanding of what it means to hold power in social situations, the powers that influence us, and the different types of power available to us. We will also look the relationships between power, privilege, and oppression, and explore the idea of 'intersectionality'. After this workshop, we will be enabled to identify and challenge power imbalances and oppressive forces.



# WORKSHOPS



## Far and Near

Through this workshop, we situate our work and social justice struggles in the global context, and explore concepts of global inequalities - what does it mean to extend an equality-based framework to the international stage? What are international injustices, and how do we either contribute to or challenge them? This workshop considers the programme of global development and analyses power dynamics inherent in representing others in social justice work, and finally attempts to create a more equal programme within our groups.

## Equality and Campaigning

This workshop examines in more detail the very nature of equality and inequalities, establishing dimensions in which equality matters and thus giving us tools to examine instances of equality in every aspect of our lives. Through these exercises we will identify the barriers to equality, and then explore practical ways of tackling these through social justice campaigns.

## Social Justice and Social Action

This final workshop is designed to bring together what we have learned through the other four, and to knit together our knowledge of a broad range of social justice issues - poverty, racism, gender inequality, etc - into a cohesive understanding of society and, crucially, our role within it. This workshop moves beyond planning campaigns and, through discussion of effective social actions, moves to planning social action we can undertake in our conferences, universities, and communities.



# COMING UP...



The second term promises to be even busier than the first! Each of the conferences will continue with their activities, working with their communities through educational, outreach, befriending and social justice projects. Furthermore, the second term will see some big national events coming up.

The first of these is the annual Jailbreak Race, which will take place 23-24th February 2019. During Jailbreak, teams of two have 36 hours to escape the starting point in Dublin and race to a mystery location, revealed over the course of the competition through a series of clues. The catch? The teams cannot spend any of their own money to get to the destination, and will fundraise in the run-up to the race and over the course of the weekend. Jailbreak 2018 raised €60,000, with a total of €285,000 raised since 2013. The funds are raised in aid of Amnesty International and St. Vincent de Paul. See [jailbreakrace.com](http://jailbreakrace.com) for more information, or the Jailbreak HQ Facebook and Twitter pages.



# JAILBREAK 19





COMING UP...

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# Intervarsity 2019

Our second big event of the term is the annual Intervarsity Weekend. Intervarsity brings together students from each of the college conferences across Ireland for a weekend of developmental workshops, socialising, building bonds, and sharing work from the year. This year we hope to focus on issues around housing, immigration and anti-racism, global justice, and activist mental health and self-care. There will also be opportunities for conferences to share what they've been up to for the year, for us all to reflect on the 2018/19, and to plan for the coming academic year. Intervarsity 2019 will be held from 1-3rd March, and is open to all college SVP volunteers. Each conference has an Intervarsity rep, who will be organising sign-ups in the college, so if you're interested in coming along please either get in touch with your conference or with myself.

Welcome back all, and hope you had a restful break. Looking forward to seeing all of you in the coming term!

Thank you to everyone who contributed to this newsletter, and I hope you enjoyed reading it.



# KEEP IN TOUCH!



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# KEEP IN TOUCH!



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