



Young SVP
National Newsletter
2018/2019





National Newsletter 2017-2018



Society of St Vincent de Paul

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Introduction

from our National Youth Committee

The National Youth Committee (NYC) was established in 2014 to support the SVP Youth Development Programme. It is made up of SVP members and consists of a Chairperson and a Regional Rep for each Region in the Country.

The NYC works in collaboration with the Youth Development team to develop and oversee the National Youth Strategy. The committee acts as a link between members at local, area and regional levels to ensure Youth engagement is supported, encouraged and recorded.

The NYC is very proud of the Young SVP programme. It is proven to inspire young people to take positive social action. It helps young people to understand social justice and the work of SVP. The most valuable part of the programme is that it is student led and this has empowered young people to develop personal skills and increased awareness of social justice. The Young SVP Programme aims to develop critical thinking amongst young people and the NYC sees this as an invaluable tool for the future development of our young people. All of this is done while linking to the ethos of SVP.

In school & university settings SVP is invaluable. It embraces and harnesses the spirit of Frederic Ozanam in a youthful & energetic manner. We see it as a win-win situation. There is fabulous work done and this work benefits young people greatly. It benefits them more than we can imagine.

Those on the committee agree that it is a great privilege & honour to be involved with such a positive programme and look forward to continued success in the future.

The youth development team have worked on this newsletter to offer an overview to all SVP members of all ages to see, relate to and understand the immense amount of work that has been undertaken by our Young SVP groups and team in one year...we hope you enjoy reading it as much as we enjoyed watching Young SVP continue to flourish and grow this year.

Ciara Reid,
(on behalf of the National Youth Committee)

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A Members View

Young SVP Programme & Youth Days

We often hear the words said, that our young people are our future, and one would most certainly agree with such a statement, because they are. They are the future teachers, doctors, nurses, farmers, accountants and every other person needed to keep our own country and indeed the world functioning on every imaginable level in the future.

But of course, this amazing and energetic group of people are also the present, the here and now. It has been amazing to see how our Young SVP members, gently guided by the Youth Development Team, has pointed this out to us in numerous ways.

The many young people engaged in the Young SVP programme have gone beyond any of our expectations and have achieved significant success over the past number of years. They have shown us that the token positions and perfunctory tasks we once thought up to try and 'involve' them in the Society were no match to their skills and levels of enthusiasm.

Take time out to attend any of the organised Young SVP Regional events and it soon becomes evident that the present - and in case you are worried for the future of SVP - is indeed in a very healthy state.

Young SVP Conferences are now functioning in many of our secondary schools and have so much to offer. Their activities and projects are wide and varied just a few examples include; offering support to their fellow students sitting Junior and Leaving Cert exams, hamper packing at Christmas, bringing some cheer and conversation to the elderly in our nursing homes, various fundraising events, supporting secondary schools in our twinned countries in Africa and so much more.

Each of these acts of kindness does in fact show that there is no act of charity foreign to SVP and our young people have opened up a whole new aspect to the work of the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul, that would never have been discovered if it was not for these young people embarking on this programme.

Continue the amazing work that you have begun and remember that the founder of this organisation that we all hold close to our hearts, Frederic Ozanam was your age when he began.

**Rev Alec Purser,
South East Twining**



Ardcoil na Mara Bishopstown Community School Presentation Warrenmount CBS Kilkenny Scoil Phobail Sliabh Luachra St Kevin's College Crumlin Tyndall College St Peters College Colaiste Mhuire Cabra Borris Vocational School St Leo's College Colaiste Iosogain Ardscoile na Deise Scoil Chriost Ri St Fintan's High School FCJ Secondary School Presentation Secondary School St Joseph's Rush Loreto Secondary School Meanscoil Gharman St Killian's Community School Heywood Community School Loreto Bray Youth Ignite Presentation Secondary School Waterford Castleknock College Balla Secondary School Presentation College Willow Park Colaiste Pobal Acla (Achill) Mercy Secondary School St Pauls College Abbey Community School St Augustine's College St Gerards St Ita's St Mary's CBS St Nathy's College Christ King Girls Ramsgrange Community School Lusk Community College Ballincollig Community School Waterpark College Catholic University School Deerpark CBS St Declan's Community School Mount Anville St. Aloysius Nagle Community College Pobalscoil Neasain Ballincollig Community School Millstreet Community School St Colmcilles Community School Youth-Reach Ballincollig Maria Immaculata CC Dominican College, Sion Hill Ashbourne Community College Colaiste Muire Gonzaga College SJ Bush Post Primary Colaiste Chriost Ri Caritas College Colaiste Chiarain Scoil Phobail Bheara St Josephs Secondary CBS Beaufort College Ursuline Convent St Josephs Cluny St Mary's CBS Schull Community School Loreto College Foxrock Presentation Primary School Pobalscoil Chorca Dhuibhne Loreto College Swords St Josephs SS St Patrick's College Maghera Donabate CC Athboy Community School Ratoath College St John Bosco CC Comeragh College St Vincent's Secondary School Coláiste Muire Youthreach Education Centre St Louis Secondary School St Flannan's College Youthreach Shanagolden Scoil Uí Mhuire Dunleer Kilrush Community School Bunclody VEC Our Ladys College Scarrieff Community College St Mary's Secondary School Jesus and Mary SS Gortnor Abbey St. Joseph's Secondary School Our Lady of Lourdes Secondary School Loreto Secondary School St. Joseph's Secondary School CBS Wexford St Pauls Community College St Caimin's Community School

Schools engaged in Young SVP in 2016/2017

Tullow Community School Mountrath Community School Colaiste Mhuire Abbey Community College St Angela's Secondary School Laurel Hill Coláiste Fcj Clonaslee College Mountmellick Community School Laurel Hill Secondary School Fcj St Peters College Presentation Secondary School Castletroy College St Gerald's College Colaiste Mhuire Ardscoil Ris St Colemans College De la Salle College Waterford Salesian Secondary College St Josephs Community College Deer Park CBS St. Brendan's Community School St Josephs (Foxford) Colaiste na Sceilge St Mary's Secondary School St Tiernans Colaiste Muire, Buttevant Árdcoil na mBráithre /CBS High School Castlerea Community School Colaiste Chroi Naofa Presentation Secondary School Scoil Mhuire agus Padraic CBS Roscommon Loreto Secondary School St Kevins Secondary School Colaiste Nano Nagle St. Anne's Secondary School St Michael's Holy Faith CBS Sexton Street Nenagh College St Aidans CBS St. Munchin's College North Presentation Farranree Rosmini Community School Scoil Mhuire St Raphaels Priory Youthreach Our Lady's Secondary School Ard Scoil Mhuire Skerries Community College Pleasant Street Youthreach Colaiste Na Coiribe Pobalscoil Neasain Northside Youth Space Dunmore CS Belvedere College St Mary's Holy Faith Glasnevin Scoil Phobail Mhic Dara Blessington Youthreach St Mary's College Arklow Clarin College Colaiste Chill Dara Blessington Community College St. Jarlaths Coolmine Community School Ardgillan Community College Presentation College Holy Faith Secondary School Terenure College St. Brigids Loreto Beaufort CBS Westland Row Jesus and Mary Salerno Killarney Community School Adamstown ETNS Calasancius College Scoil Bernadette Pobalscoil Isolode Portumna Community School Colaiste Naomh Cormac St Kevin's Community College Scoil Chuimsitheach Chiarain Limerick Youth Service Gaelcolaiste Reachrann Presentation College Crescent College Comprehensive St Joseph's College Elphin Community College East Clare Youthreach Blakestown Community School Wexford Youthreach Gallen Community School Bremore ETSS Tramore Youthreach Colaiste Iosaef Community College Colaiste Mhuire Co-Ed Creagh College Gaelcholaiste Cheitinn Kilrush Youthreach Grennan College Presentation Secondary School West Clare Youthreach Vocational School Kilkenny Gaelcholaiste An Chlair Scoil Mhuire agus Ide Sacred Heart Villiers School Seamount College St. Louis Community School Presentation College Terenure Colaiste Mhuire Glanmire CC St. Josephs Sec School

What is Young SVP & how it works

Young SVP is a youth development programme designed for young people attending secondary school / YouthReach and other educational settings; those taking part in youth groups / clubs; and those at 3rd level – be it in college / university. The programme focuses on social action within the ethos and mission of SVP. Young people are offered opportunities to learn about SVP, about social justice and about how to engage in social action in a positive, purposeful and meaningful way.

The Young SVP youth development team offers ongoing support to all those engaging in the Young SVP programme – whether part of a Conference, class or Young SVP group. Your Youth Development Officer (YDO) will visit your group a number of times through the year to work with you on a number of topics. An example of this could look like:

September	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Initial Visit from YDO - introduce the programme and decide best way for it to operate in your school
October/November	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Set up your Young SVP group and start to explore issues of poverty and social justice. Start to think about your first action project - eg Christmas activity.
November/December	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to explore issues through workshop(s) with your YDO while also working on your first action project.
January/February	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review the actions from first half of the year and continue working with your YDO around issues and planning your next project.
March/April	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue working on your projects and also get ready for your Regional Youth Day - your YDO will support you through this.
May / June	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Finish your projects and spend time reviewing what you have achieved through the year while also thinking about your next steps, your YDO will help with this.

Benefits of the Young SVP Programme

for school / group	for participants	and more...
Free and non competitive	Young people are at the centre of their own learning & activities are youth led	Links to various subject curricula
Supports from the team are ongoing through the year	Gain positive, meaningful experience of volunteering and social action	Invited to Regional Young SVP events a during the year
Flexibility allows it fit into your school / group structure	Develop personal skills and increased awareness of social justice issues	Can complement other extra curricular activities eg Gaisce, JPII award...

For details about how your school / group / college can get involved please contact the Youth Development Officer in your region, they will be delighted to discuss with you how best to fit our programme to your needs. For details visit: www.svp.ie/youngsvp

Young SVP Resources



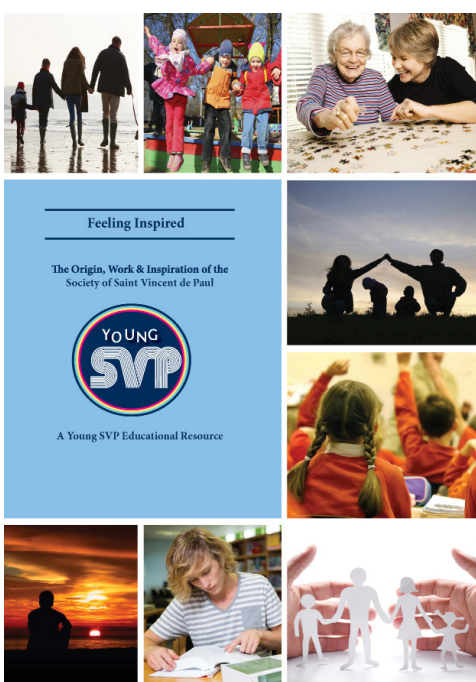
Young SVP Education Resource Pack

This pack is a resource for use with students of secondary school age. There are seven core lessons within the pack that address and encourage exploration in the areas of poverty, social justice and social action; all key aspects of the work of SVP in Ireland and around the world. The lessons are designed primarily for use with Transition Year students and there are also clear links to junior cycle CSPE and Religious Education. The resource could also be useful for those completing LCA and LCVP.

Social Action Superstars

The activities in this resource will facilitate students to develop the following skills: Identification/Awareness, Analysis/Evaluation, Communication and Action. Students are encouraged to reflect on their attitudes and values.

This resource makes suggestions for social actions to undertake. Where links can be drawn between the work of SVP and the core concepts of CSPE, these will be highlighted.

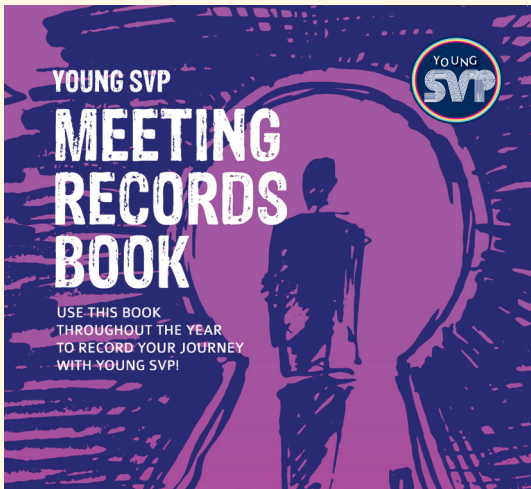


Feeling Inspired

This resource was designed to support teachers of Junior Certificate Religious Education to deliver Section A of the syllabus 'Communities of Faith'.

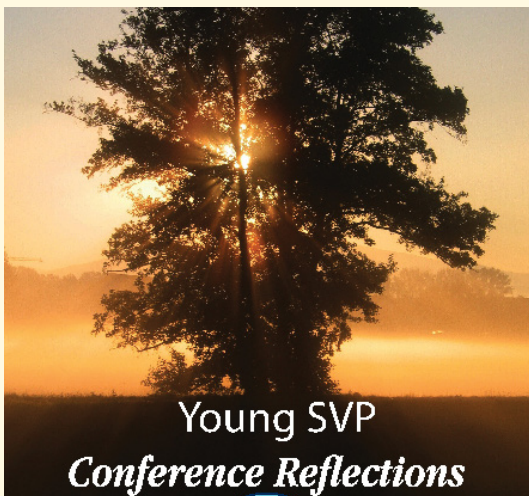
Other syllabus links can also be drawn. It may also be useful for groups taking part in a Diocesan Award such as the Pope John II Award or as a starting point for students undertaking a project.

The lessons are intended to facilitate an exploration of the ethos, vision & mission of the Society and the key aspects of the work of SVP in Ireland.



Young SVP Meeting Record Book

This resource supports students to record their meetings and plan actions they would like to take. It includes useful information on setting up and running a Young SVP Conference.



Conference Reflections

This booklet offers variety of reflections that can be used by Young SVP Conferences at their meetings throughout the year. (These reflections are also included in the Meeting Record Book.)



Young SVP Conference Manuals

These manuals provide key information for young people, teachers and leaders on how to set up and run a Young SVP Conference.



Appropriate Activities Leaflet

This leaflet lists suggestions of appropriate activities for SVP members and volunteers aged under 18 and all those attending school.

Please note our resources are frequently updated. Contact the Youth Development Team for more details.

Curriculum Links

The Young SVP Programme aims to provide positive and meaningful opportunities for young people within an SVP experience. This includes:

- Personal & social development
- Understanding of the ethos, mission & aims of SVP
- A better understanding of social justice
- Learning to identify issues
- Developing projects to improve the lives of others
- Engaging in social action
- A positive experience of volunteering

The Young SVP Programme compliments & enhances the secondary school curriculum in a number of ways. This includes, but is not limited to:

- The Principles of the Junior Cycle
- Junior Cycle Key Skills
- Senior Cycle Key Skills
- Religious Education, CSPE & SPHE
- Mission, Aims & Approaches of Transition Year

In the Northern Region:

- RE & Citizenship for Years 9-13
- Religious Education Key Stages 3 & 4
- Learning for Life & Work
- Thinking Skills & Personal Capabilities



Engagement & Participation



Choice & Flexibility



Creativity & Innovation



Working with Others



Communicating



Managing Information & Thinking



Promoting Self-Esteem & Self-Confidence



Reflecting & Discussing



Personal Development

For more information on how Young SVP can support & enhance the delivery of the curriculum please contact: youth@svp.ie



9622

STUDENTS ENGAGED



883

VISITS



213
SCHOOLS VISITED



122
YOUNG SVP GROUPS

- social justice workshops . 265
- guest speaker talks . 204
- group check-in . 85
- project planning . 82
- review & reflection . 63
- initial visits . 62
- event preparation . 54
- skills development . 19
- other . 45



2017/18 IN NUMBERS



DIRECT AID

120



EDUCATION

36



RESEARCH & ACTION

19



BEFRIENDING

68

243

PROJECTS COMPLETED

YOUNG SVP PROJECTS

Befriending

Befriending is one of the central works of SVP. At its heart is the person to person contact with people. In befriending another person the visitor is giving of their time, their talents and themselves. In 2017/2018 Young SVP groups ran 68 different befriending projects. These are some examples:

- **Mountrath Community School:** Our Young SVP group held its annual ceili for the local community centre. They invited a local group of elderly people into the school for some ceol agus craic and of course a dance or two!
- **Loreto College Swords:** An exciting new initiative for our Conference was linking with the parish liturgical group and the 6th class in our local primary school to work on the confirmation programme with them. We also held an evening of entertainment for our Senior Citizens Group with beautiful singing, performing and dancing from the students. The evening was greatly appreciated by all.
- **Dominican College Portstewart:** Our Young SVP volunteers painted the garden area of our local care home, Madelayne Court, to make it more attractive & stimulating for the residents, particularly those with dementia. It was a huge success. Residents and visitors loved the garden and were so impressed with the work undertaken that the girls were also invited to paint a bus stop near the care home café.
- The students from **St. John Bosco Community College** sold friendship roses for Valentine's Day. One of their long running and favourite projects is their regular visits to socialise with elderly members of the community at their local Wednesday Club.
- **Donabate Community College:** For our Young SVP project we decided to try to address social isolation in our community. We hosted a coffee morning and welcomed a group of senior citizens to our school. As well as tea, coffee and cakes, we arranged live music and bingo. Overall it was a very successful morning and was enjoyed by everyone!
- **Tullow Community School:** Our students made a Buddy Bench and donated it to the ASD unit in the school. The idea behind the bench is to encourage students to look out for each other and if they see someone sitting on this bench alone, go and ask them to play or join your group.



Education

One of the main areas that SVP focuses on is education. Education is a way out of poverty for many. Children can fall behind in their education in the crucial early years, but a little help at the right time can make all the difference! In 2017/2018 students engaged in 38 difference education projects. Here are some examples:

- **St Leo's Carlow:** We focused on peer positivity & encouragement for exam students. We made stress kits and stress balls, put messages of positivity in school lockers, hung encouraging posters and set up stands with hot chocolate and baked goods for students coming out of the exam hall. The thought that someone else could empathise with them and cared about what they were doing was well received and appreciated.



- **St Caimin's Secondary School:** We organised visits to their local primary schools, where we taught students about SVP and social justice, as well as, providing support & friendship.



- **Rosmini Community School:** A group of our TY students trained as mentors and set up a Homework Buddies club to assist first year students with their written homework and revision tasks. They offered instruction, guidance and support. They did a fantastic job!



- **St Declan's Community College:** We organised paired reading in the local library.

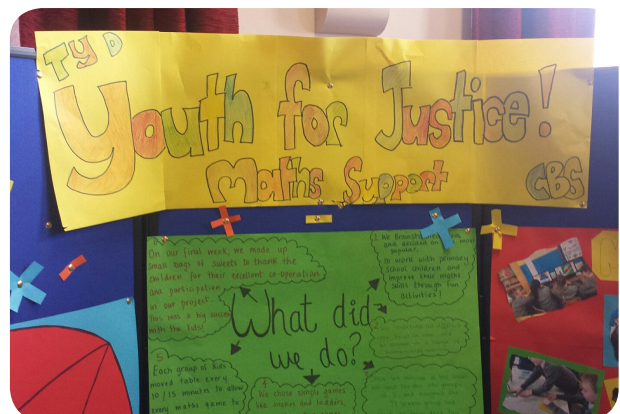
- **St Aidan's CBS:** We invited 6th class pupils to our school for a transition morning to give them a feel for the school and help them to feel more relaxed when they come in September. We played ice breakers, ate lunch together, showed them how to use the lockers, told them about the different school clubs they could join and took them on a tour of the school. We also had a chat about the worries they might be having about moving to secondary school and how to overcome these worries. We even had a penalty shoot out competition!

- **Colaiste Naomh Cormac:** We designed a workshop for Junior Cycle students and went to teach them about volunteering and helping others through the story of the Good Samaritan.

Direct Aid

Fundraising is one way that you can help SVP. It is important that you understand what the fundraising is for. You could do some research and learn about the causes and effects of poverty and exclusion. 120 different Direct Aid projects were organised through Young SVP this year. Here are just a few examples:

- **Colaiste Iosagain:** Our Conference decided to take action to support people experiencing homelessness. With UCD SVP we organised a clothes drive in our school as we thought this would be especially beneficial in the colder months of the year.
- **Gaelcholaiste An Clair:** We organised a clothes drive in school and then managed a Vincent's shop and tested our sales and customer service skills!
- **Bremore Educate Secondary School:** We organised a winter wonderland themed bake sale to raise funds for SVP. We invited Clare to come out to our school and speak to everyone about SVP and where the funds raised were going to. We were delighted to hear that the money raised was going to help people locally and that our hard work could make a difference. We are really looking forward to working with SVP in the future, this is only the beginning.
- **Heywood Community School:** organised a uniform drive for their school.
- **Priory Youthreach Tallaght:** After our Young SVP social justice workshops we held a group meeting and came up with an idea of what we could do to help families in need. Our idea was an Easter Hamper. We got permission, made posters and decorated a box. We did great and ended up with three hampers. We donated our hampers to SVP in Tallaght. We felt a great sense of accomplishment!
- **CBS Portlaoise:** We helped out with church gate collections to support their local SVP Conference.



Research and Action

This type of project involves learning about social justice and social policy in Ireland, choosing a cause or issue you want to research and explore, planning and carrying out an action to address your chosen issue. 18 different groups engaged in Research and Action projects in 2017/2018. Some examples of these include:

- **Dominican College Sion Hill:** One of our 4th Year classes ran a workshop for the rest of TY. We wanted the workshop to be a positive way to learn about mental health. We spoke about the signs of mental illness and how to deal with stress. We also talked about relaxation and meditation. We gave everyone a home made positive mental health card. We felt that we had achieved our objective and learned many new skills!
- **Ramsgrange Community School & Presentation Wexford:** We held 'Blue Days' to highlight the work of SVP nationally and in their local communities.
- **Kilrush Youthreach:** We organised a research project around smoking in our community. We identified this to be a particular issue within our age group and wanted to learn how prevalent it is so that we could plan an action to address it.
- **St Mary's College Arklow:** Our Conference started this year with an awareness raising project about homelessness. We put together a poster campaign to portray facts about homelessness in Ireland. The posters were striking and generated a lot of attention. We also ran a poetry competition to give students a chance to showcase their talent while also raising awareness about this important subject. It is safe to say that the entire school knows about our awareness raising campaign.
- **St Angela's Secondary School:** We held a whole school kindness campaign to encourage people to think about what they were grateful for. We asked students to reflect on times that others were kind to them and asked them to pay it forward. Simple acts kindness can make a huge difference.



- **Laurel Hill College FCJ:** We researched the difficulties faced by women experiencing homelessness, went into various classes in our school to raise awareness and teach about the subject. We finished our project with a donation drive for homeless women which was of immense help to services provided by SVP in Limerick City.

Spotlight on Social Justice

by Tricia Keilthy
Social Justice and Policy Team

Thinking about & doing social justice?

Working for social justice is one of three key pillars of SVP's mission and requires us to challenge the structures that create or perpetuate poverty in Ireland today. Support and direct assistance for people experiencing exclusion are important. However, if we do not challenge unjust policies we will not address the root causes of poverty.

How can we better understand poverty in Ireland today?

The issues SVP highlight and the solutions we propose are based on the experience of the people we are helping on the ground, through our membership or through analysis of both our request for help and the types and levels of our expenditure. Data from the Central Statistics Office (CSO) on income and poverty tells us the groups with the greatest risk of poverty and exclusion (children, lone parents, migrants, and the unemployed) and allows us to measure trends in poverty and social inclusion over time. Without this information, we couldn't highlight that over 139,000 children are living in consistent poverty or hold the Government to account on their track record on tackling poverty.



SVP also plays a role in highlighting the lived experience behind the numbers – children who are going without basics like secure housing, healthy food and suitable clothing and are excluded from participating in everyday activities that other children and families take for granted.

Developing solutions is not always straightforward. Research shows that the causes and consequences of poverty are interconnected and complex such as:

- low paid and insecure work;
- high cost of living;
- poor quality services;
- unemployment;
- low educational attainment;
- the way the social welfare system works;
- discrimination and stigmatisation;
- social isolation and exclusion; and
- poor health and illness.

As a result, SVP has a very broad range of issues to advocate on, including:

- Social welfare and income supports for children and adults, especially one parent families
- Housing and homelessness
- Education – in particular early years, cost of school, and access to and participation in third level
- Debt and financial exclusion
- Energy costs (electricity and heating) and efficiency.



How can we make a difference?

At a very practical level working for social justice means ensuring that the decisions made by those in government bring about positive change for the people SVP assist. Using traditional and social media, submissions to Government Departments, meeting with Ministers, their advisors and political parties, and by working jointly with other NGOs such as Focus, The Children's Rights Alliance and Barnardos, we raise awareness of issues of concern and propose solutions.

Campaigning can also achieve change in these areas. In 2012, SVP ran a public campaign to highlight unnecessary school book edition changes which was widely supported from the public.

This resulted in a code of conduct from publishers in which they promised less edition changes. The campaign also paved the way to an increase in funding for school book rental schemes in primary schools.

The Hidden Homeless campaign, which ran in October 2016, served to highlight the inadequate, unsuitable and overcrowded living conditions many people are forced to accept.

Working for social justice is long term and the desired outcome may not happen immediately. Neither is it easy to judge whether it was your campaigning which secured a new support or service, or if it was due to another's efforts.

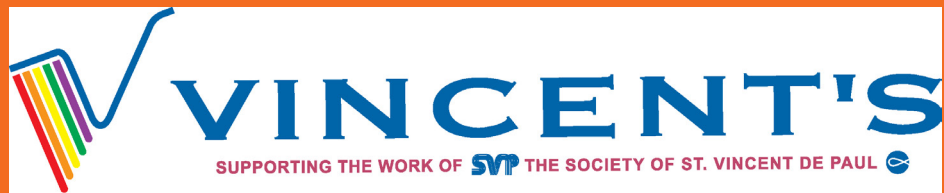
Some days it can seem our impact is small or insignificant but a question we need to ask is if organisations like SVP weren't speaking out and challenging injustices, what kind of society would we have?

What role can Young SVP play?

'Thinking about and doing' social justice requires patience, knowledge, persistence, and conviction – all characteristics that Young SVP members possess. In particular, you can play an important role speaking out on issues that affect your generation such as youth homelessness, child poverty, education costs, inadequate mental health services and inaccessible third level education.

By researching and understanding an issue, planning a campaign with your peers and making your voices heard, there are no limits to what you can achieve.

SVP Retail



Did you know that SVP is actually the third largest retailer in Ireland, by the number of outlets? We have more than 225 shops, branded as 'Vincent's', each of which is at the heart of the community it serves.

Walking into one of our shops for the very first time brings with it a sense of surprise and wonderment – surprise at how different a shop it is from what many people expect, and wonderment at the wide array of great stock that's available for an incredibly reasonable price.



Our shops are a virtual Alladin's cave, where all manner of treasures can be found on our shelves, or on our rails. Everything we sell has been donated by members of the public, who entrust us to sell their previously loved goods in order to raise much-needed funds for our charitable work.

Most of the items that people donate are second-hand, but we also receive brand-new items – often these are unwanted gifts, or books that the donor never got around to

reading, or clothing that they bought on a whim and never actually wore!

All donations go through a rigorous process of sorting and checking, and only the very best quality goods makes it our shop floor, which allows us to give our customers the best bang for buck!

Apart from the great offerings of reasonably priced stock for our customers, our charity shops also serve many other vital functions and are at the heart of the communities they serve.

For example, we have a professional manager running each of our shops, but most of the people who work in our shops are volunteers. We have an average of about 30 volunteers in each of our shops, and most of them do 3-4 hours per week, although some love it so much that they work many more hours!

Many people volunteer in our shops to improve their confidence and to make friends, some volunteer simply because they enjoy the experience of working alongside people from a wide variety of ages and backgrounds, and of chatting with their neighbours and friends in a warm and welcoming environment.

Whatever the reason for volunteering, all of our team members get a lot out of the experience. It provides an opportunity to engage with different people within our

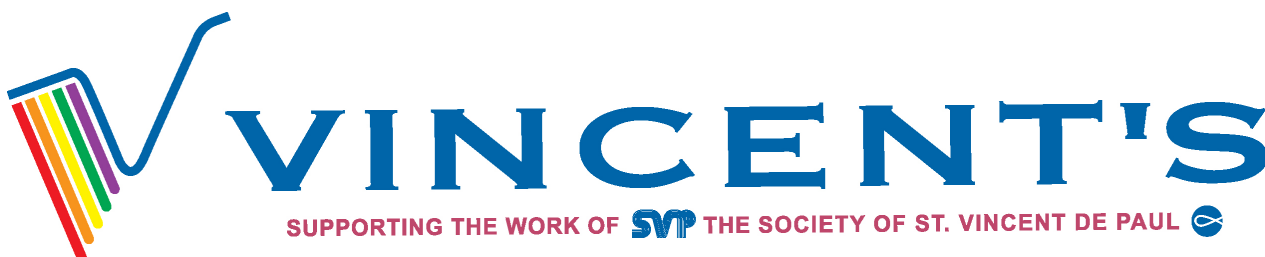
community who we mightn't otherwise get a chance to interact with – for many, it provides valuable work experience in retail, and many of our volunteers have used what they've learned in our shops to gain employment in the retail sector.

Our shops also provide a crucial benefit to the environment – by promoting the re-use of goods, we give a second life to goods that would have otherwise been destined for landfill.

Fast fashion is one the world's most polluting industries, and people who buy lightly used clothing reduce the demand for yet more new clothes, which is a little kinder to our planet!



The final benefit which our shops bring is that every cent of profit goes back into our community. Our shops are a vital fundraiser for the work of SVP, and the proceeds of our work is used to fund our work to support some of the most vulnerable people in our community, and for the creation of a society that is more fair and just for all.



Young SVP at College Level

by Síofra Dempsey
College Support Officer

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

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



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

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



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



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

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

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



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

This year we saw an increase in the social justice work being done by college volunteers. UCD and Trinity have dedicated social justice clubs, where students meet to discuss social

justice issues such as the homeless crisis, inequality, racism, poverty, the refugee crisis and other relevant topics. Many Conferences involve this kind of research and discussion within their activities. It is important to put these discussions into action, as they learn about social justice issues, Young SVP volunteers put that knowledge into action by running campaigns and effective activities.

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

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

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



Meet the Youth Development Team



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



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

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

John Warren; South West (Cork & Kerry)

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

Helen Ralph; West (Mayo & Roscommon)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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





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

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

Clare Mander; East (Dublin, Kildare and Wicklow)

Hello! My name is Clare and I have been working for SVP for two & a half years. Before I worked here I had a few different jobs, mostly focused on education and working with young people. My favourite things about being part of Young SVP are: seeing the action ideas young people come up with, working with the rest of the team and SVP members (they are all super!) and helping create our Young SVP resources.

Síofra Dempsey; College Support Officer (National)

Hi! I'm Síofra, and I'm the College Support Officer for Young SVP. I'm based in the National Office and I work with our third-level Young SVP groups nationwide. I've always been interested in all things social justice, and in 2016/17 I did a Masters in Equality Studies in UCD. I started at SVP in October 2017 and had a wonderful year working with all the college volunteers and the Young SVP team.

Becca Gallagher; National Youth Development Coordinator

I recently celebrated my 5th anniversary in this role, which in some ways is hard to believe, but then I look at where we are now and realise how far we have come in what is in fact a short enough space of time! It is my job to work with and coordinate the youth development team & programme around the country. To do this I learn from YDOs, from the young people engaging in the programme, while also linking in with the membership of SVP to gather their insight too – I take all this information and make sure that what we are doing within our Young SVP programme remains relevant, useful and indeed purposeful for everyone...while I am not doing this I enjoy playing team sports namely cricket and hockey but I also love to cook and bake...so I do!

Looking forward to meeting lots of you at Young SVP events later in the year...please do say hi!

Regional Presidents/Members

by Michael McCann

Q1. What is your role within SVP

I am one of 8 Regional Presidents in the country, I was elected to carry out this role for the western region. SVP is structured and organised according to the 'Rule' which sets out the purposes and objectives of The Society. I am an active member of the National Management Council, which means I play a part in the direction, control and management of the activities within The Society at national and regional level. I am also a trustee which means I have shared responsibility for the good governance and management of the Society



Q2. How would you explain SVP's contribution to seeking social justice?

As well as practical help supporting individuals, the society plays a strong advocacy role for social justice. Alongside other SVP members I lobby and voice my concerns. Each year social injustice in Ireland is brought to light through the pre-budget submission, this document helps highlight issues around housing, education, low income vs the living wage, etc.

The SVP website has a comprehensive report that focuses on barriers and inequality in our society. Importantly, the Vincentian Partnership for Social Justice (VPSJ) carries out research and makes recommendations to the government to help alleviate poverty within Ireland. (Check out justicematters.ie). I believe we all have a role to play when it comes to tackling poverty and exclusion.

Q3. Who is your inspiration?

Fundamentally the teachings of Jesus Christ who made it a condition of discipleship that we love one another and that love is expressed in how we care for those less fortunate than ourselves.

Q4. You wear many hats with SVP, how do you juggle all the different areas?

I feel it's important to be organised, a skill I hope I acquired whilst working as a school principal. It is often necessary to prioritise or to distinguish between the urgent and the important.

All the work of SVP members is important but sometimes quick action is required, it may be vital to respond without hesitation when needed. What's more, I have learned to use the support network here in Ozanam House, Galway and to call on the expertise of the members throughout the west.

Q5. Have you noticed any changes over the last number of years in terms of support that people are seeking?

The biggest challenge is to get to the people who need us most and to reach those who don't have a history of contacting The Society. There is, however, an increase in people seeking help on a once off basis, this is likely due to an unforeseen life event, that has changed their situation.

Within SVP, we try to help those from all walks of life through a period where support is needed. I feel strongly about giving everyone a chance to avail of opportunities to progress. Government funding does not cover all expenses associated with education and parents/carers are expected to make voluntary contributions to schools which many are not able to afford.

Increasingly SVP is committing more resources to education right through from pre-school to third level. Investment in proper preschool education with concomitant supports for parents and guardians could be a major help in alleviating poverty and disadvantage.

SVP recognise the importance of giving individuals the opportunity to continue their education at third level. SVP provide financial support in the form of education grants, see SVP training and education bursary on the SVP website.



Q6. Do you have any advice for young people setting up a conference?

Use the resources you have at hand, you can access to teachers and the youth development officer at school, use them initially as a source of information and guidance. Seek permission and ask for advice.

Think carefully about your projects, it will be a rewarding experience if the activities you choose are meaningful, otherwise you will quickly become frustrated.

I have my own fond memories of volunteering whilst I was at school, one of my first projects was to cut fire wood for some elderly folk in the community. The experience and gratitude had a lasting impact on me.

Q7. What else would you like to say to young people in the west region?

Volunteering is a two-way process, it'll be beneficial for those you are helping and beneficial for your self-development. You'll gain knowledge and skills that will stand by you in situations that you'll not even realise.

You'll get to know others and learn about their lives (good and bad). You will meet interesting people and your experience may even help you put your own life into perspective.

Volunteering requires commitment and sometimes your patience will be tested. I'd say to you, don't give up and you'll soon discover why.

“Great acts are made up of small deeds” (Lao Tzu)

by Debbie O’Halloran

We live in a very fast paced world. We have so much on our mind, constantly. From school exams to friendship dramas to keeping our snapstreaks alive! From work deadlines to health or financial worries to what are we going to have for dinner later!



We are all so caught up in our own thoughts and emotions that sometimes it’s incredibly difficult to see others around us.

When I begin my journey each September with my Young SVP groups there are a couple of key phrases I will always use and continue to use throughout my time with them. The first one is that ‘time is sometimes our most valuable commodity’.

Take the time to look and you might actually see, that there are injustices all around you. Use your time to do something about this as it’s not enough just to be aware of these injustices. If it costs nothing but time to do be socially active, to make the world a better place, let’s all do it together. Another key phrase that I use again and again is that ‘small and simple acts can change the world’.

Big and significant changes in the area of social justice unfortunately take time. As Anne Frank once said, “nobody need wait a single moment before starting to improve the world” and by this she meant we need to be kind to one another. This too costs nothing and is so very easy to do.

This year in the South East region over approx. 500 students from 33 different schools took part in the Young SVP Programme. These students signed up of their own accord and came together in the name of SVP with one common goal and that was ‘to make a difference’ and in their own ways, each group certainly did that.

Examples of young SVP activities in the South East can be seen in the Projects pages of the newsletter.

Everyone involved (schools, teachers, local and regional members) were very encouraged by the array and diverse range of projects chosen by the students this year. The young people took ownership of their groups this year more than ever before and quickly realised that they didn’t need to wait for someone to tell them what to do to make a difference, they could do it themselves.

28/33 groups came to the regional youth day in the WIT Arena in April to share their experiences with other Young SVP students. The sense of community amongst the young people that day and how they supported each other was noticed by everyone and it’s something I will never forget.

As the book closed on year five of the Young SVP Programme in the South East Region, I thank everyone for their continued support and I’m excited to see what year six will bring.



What being part of Young SVP means to me

This year the Young SVP team had the privilege to work with thousands of young people (and their teachers/ leaders in a range of different settings; schools, youth services, YouthReach centres, colleges and universities. Each young person and group is unique and brings something special and creative to the Young SVP programme.

Over the course of the academic year Young SVP members have taken the time to learn about Social Justice, to consider the needs in their communities and worked together to make sure their actions were effective. All of this learning, research and planning has resulted in a wonderful array of Young SVP projects.

185 years ago SVP was founded by young people who looked at their community and decided to take action and try to make a difference. Young SVP members today are continuing this work by giving as Blessed Frederic Ozanam asked, of their time, their talents, themselves.

We asked Young SVP members to tell us 'What being part of Young SVP means to me'. Here's what they had to say:



Things I Appreciate

You've got to learn to appreciate
the little things in life,
Like a good cup of tea, or a fresh
smelling flower,
We are not our age, or the clothes we wear,
We are not our weight, or the colour of our hair,
We are all the books that we read
and all the words
that we speak,
We are the future, we have to stand together,
We will impact this world and
we will make it better,
We are all part of St. Vincent De Paul,
So lets be appreciative and follow this call.

By Charlotte
Young SVP Conference member



Origins and work of SVP

In the beginning...

The Society of St Vincent de Paul was founded by Blessed Frederic Ozanam and his friends in Paris in 1833. Frederic was a young person in college at the time. So SVP has always been an organisation with young people at its centre- right from the very beginning! It was a time of great poverty and social unrest.

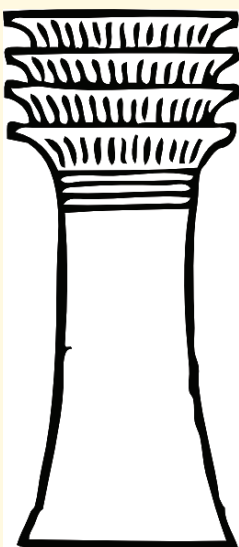
Frederic and his friends often discussed the needs within society and were challenged to act on their discussions. To put their faith in to action and help others in their community, they set up their group (Conference) and started visiting people to give them food and fuel. They worked closely with Sr. Roslaie Rendu, a Daughter of Charity, who helped them to identify those in greatest need of assistance.

Overall they "*wanted a Christianity that would influence everyday life; one that would help create a peaceful and just society for all*". St Vincent de Paul was adopted as patron of the Conference in 1834 and the group was renamed the Society of St Vincent de Paul.

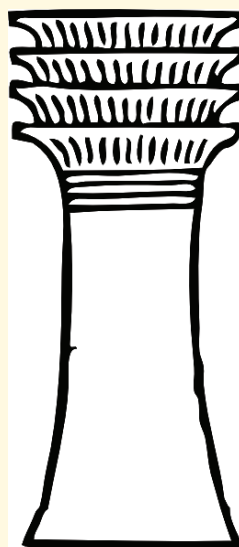


St Vincent de Paul dedicated his life to helping those in need. He was chosen because of the example he set. He was the type of person that Frederic and his friends aspired to be. SVP are involved in a diverse range of activities which are characterised by the three pillars of our Mission Statement, which are as relevant today as there were 200 years ago:

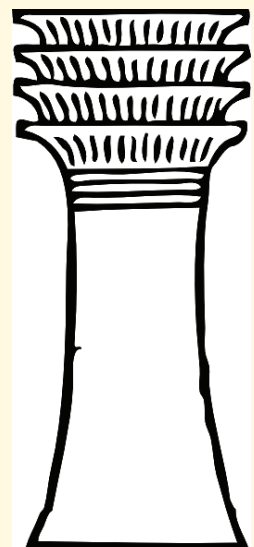
Support & Friendship



Promoting Self-sufficiency



Working for Social Justice



In Ireland...

SVP came to Ireland in 1844 when the first Conference was set up here. Conference is the name given to a group or unity within SVP.

Today there are around 1300 Conferences and 11,000 volunteers across the country. We seek to make Ireland a fairer and better place for everyone to live in.

The lives of hundreds of thousands of people in Ireland are affected by low income and the effects of debt, unemployment, educational disadvantage, poor health, relationship breakdown, bereavement, addiction, violence, loneliness, disabilities, overwhelming caring responsibilities and other challenges.

Poverty, homelessness, lack of opportunity, isolation, the increasing gap between the rich and poor, long waiting lists for health services, the high cost of housing, energy, childcare and education are some of the social injustices that SVP is challenging.

We are working to make Ireland a fairer place; where caring for each other and our children, older people and people with disabilities is valued and supported; where individuals, families and communities can participate fully in work and society; and where an adequately resourced state, a strong economy, employment and business support the type of society that we wish to live in.

We are guided by the vision of Blessed Frederic Ozanam who said:

"Justice is a fixed star which human societies try to follow from their uncertain orbits. It can be seen from different points of view, but justice itself remains unchanged".

Working together as Vincentians

In everything we do it is important to remember we are not alone – all our Young SVP activities and projects are part of the bigger SVP picture. Just as Young SVP is part of something bigger so too is the wider organisation of SVP. We are all part of what is known as the Vincentian Family; a group of organisations that all have their origins and purpose following the values and ethos of our Patron – St. Vincent de Paul.

Some of the Vincentian values that are included in how we should all engage in all our SVP work are:

- We respect the rights of every person to participate fairly both economically and socially in our society.
- We support those who are less advantaged / disadvantaged to have a voice in matters that affect them. When planning our projects and activities we ensure that the voice of those we are supporting strongly influences what we decide to do.
- We believe that reflection and spirituality are important throughout our journey and that these will enrich not only our lives but also the activities we deliver.
- We value diversity and are non-judgemental, caring, confidential and respectful of all those we encounter; i.e. those we help, co-volunteers and staff alike
- We are welcoming to all those who wish to join us in our work while always being respectful of our ethos and values.
- But above all else we must always remember that what we do is about those we serve, those we help and those we are supporting...we are servants to others.

The VINCENTIAN FAMILY in Ireland



Youth Delegation to Salamanca

Ruairí Fry
Regional Youth Rep. South West



In June, the International SSVP youth world meeting was held in Salamanca Spain. 75 countries were represented, with over 120 young Vincentians. The meeting lasted for six days and was held over three locations; Salamanca, Ávila and Madrid with each location holding a significant impetus to the trip; e.g., we visited the Cathedral of St Thérésa alongside places that the Society has a significant influence in tackling poverty.

The aim of the meeting is to hear issues that face young people within SVP including homelessness, refugee crisis & youth poverty.

Productive discussions also happened with fellow Vincentians in informal settings which encouraged learning opportunities. Discussions were linked with moments of spirituality and prayer. The relic of Blessed Fredrick Ozanam was also present throughout the meeting, allowing for reflection and remembrance of our principal founder. I also had a role in the prayer ceremonies in Salamanca and in Madrid where I read a reflection on Blessed Fredrick Ozanam and I offered up the candle of St Vincent de Paul in the closing ceremony.

I built many friendships with my fellow Vincentians from across the world, making links with the

countries that Ireland are twinned with for example Zimbabwe and Malawi. I discussed the strength of the Society in Ireland with SVP International President Renato Lima de Oliveria who was very interested in Young SVP and proud of how Ireland actively promotes youth development and engagement in the Society.

The international youth council was selected with 12 representative members. The council will receive regular updates from the youth delegates from all countries. I also have regular discussions with my fellow Vincentians through a Whatsapp group. Many of the issues that young people face are the same across the world. Vincentians can help and support each other without any barriers.

As Vincentians we could express freely and unite under the ethos of the Society, language was never an issue even with the vast dialects. As a Vincentian it was inspirational to meet fellow like-minded and motivated people. I made friends for life and I'm looking forward to seeing the outcome of our meeting, future meetings and seeing how the Society progresses into the future.

An rud a líonas an tsúil líonann sé an croí – what fills the eye fills the heart.

Electric Ireland

Without the ongoing support we have received from Electric Ireland over the past number of years (2013 -2019) we would not be where we are today.

Electric Ireland agreed to support a pilot youth development programme back in 2012/3. They offered us support over a three year period during which time:

- We evaluated how we engage with youth people within SVP generally;
- We explored different methods of working with young people in different settings; and
- We trialled a number of different engagement methods / options in different locations.

Within two years of this exploratory and experimental piece of work we took stock through an evaluation and made some strong decisions regarding the future direction of what was to become the Young SVP programme.



We presented our plans once again to Electric Ireland and they very thankfully agreed to support us for a further three years while we rolled out the full Young SVP programme across all eight SVP regions in Ireland. Again, without this support we could not have achieved all we have to date.

Thank you, Electric Ireland, for recognising the potential of this programme before it knew what it would be itself, your support has helped us support 1000's of students through a journey of discovery while they have also supported countless others in their own communities through their well thought out projects and activities.

Our Young SVP members bring energy and enthusiasm to a world they want to see as better and fairer for everyone.

We thank you for your support to help us get there.

Young SVP Youth Events

Mid-West Youth Day

The Society of St Vincent de Paul Mid-West hosted their second Young SVP Day in Thomond Park on March 14th. This was a fantastic opportunity to acknowledge all the young people in our communities who selflessly give of their time and talents to help others through the Young SVP programme.



During the day, the young volunteers not only inspired each other, but also learned and shared advice on how to plan their activities and ensure they have impact. Each group had a stand where they interacted with others, and some groups were also asked to present one of their projects on stage, to share tips & tricks with others who might never have done such a project.

East Youth Day

On the 12th of April 200 young people, their teachers and members of SVP gathered together for the Young SVP East Region Youth Day 2018. The event was an opportunity to acknowledge the hard work and dedication of the young people involved in the Young SVP programme in the East Region. It was a chance for them to meet young people from other schools and centres and to share ideas.



The theme for the day was 'Social Action Superstars' based on a quote from the founder of SVP Blessed Frederic Ozanam who said that "Justice is a fixed star" and also to acknowledge all the ways in which Young SVP members have been Social Action Superstars this year.



On the day the young people: set up their own interactive display stands, took part in fun activities, learned more about SVP, listened to speakers, gave presentations, took part in workshops, received certificates of achievement, visited the reflection space and had lunch together.





In the afternoon there was a talk and Q&A with our Key Note speaker Joanne O'Riordan. This was a fantastic experience for the attendees and Joanne received a standing ovation.

Our group photo highlights what a fun and positive celebration and learning opportunity this was. Thank you to everyone who attended, supported the event and made the day a success!



West Region Youth Day

On the 18th April Young SVP members gathered to exhibit their projects and advocate on behalf of others on issues that the group felt passionately about. It was notable that we can learn a lot from each other!



Students were rewarded with certificates of recognition for their hard work and there was a common consensus that youth conferences within our secondary schools are invaluable for both young people and the wider community.

South East Youth Day

Over 400 students and teachers from 28 schools across the South East attended the Young SVP South East Youth Day in the Waterford Institute of Technology Arena on April 26th, which was our biggest event to date.



Students got the chance to showcase their social action projects at their exhibit stands and they got to see what other students in the region achieved in their Young SVP groups this year.

The students got a chance to mix and mingle with each other and take part in all the organised activities, all of which were designed with a particular social justice issue/action in mind. Each school then had the chance to take to the stage and share their Young SVP journey and reflect on what they have learned about themselves from being part of the programme and what they hope to continue to do in the future.



Everyone commented on the sense of comradery, support and respect that each school had for each other and they really spurred each other on. It was so positive and lovely to witness. The youth day is a wonderful chance to bring SVP members, staff and Young SVP members together as one. It's a real joy to witness everyone mixing and learning from each other on the day.



The students get to really feel like they are part of something much bigger than their school group and the SVP members and staff get to see the importance of the Young SVP programme and the impact these students are making in their schools and communities all in the name of SVP.



South West

The South West Youth Day was held this year on April 24th in the Clayton Silver Springs Hotel. The event welcomed over 210 young people, almost 35 teachers along with numerous volunteers, colleagues and SVP members.

The day saw 16 schools arriving from all over Cork and Kerry with projects, presentations and gifts for other groups. The positive atmosphere and buzz of young energy throughout the day was unavoidable.





Each group/school set up a project display to demonstrate their achievements from the past academic year. It really was overwhelming to see so many young people positively engaging with the program but also having great fun doing so.

Several presentations, performances and speeches were given throughout the day along with a series of work-shops for the young people which were facilitated by the great 'Young SVP' Team.



Presentations including an inspiring piece from Cian Power from U.C.C. a long-term friend of the Society and great supporter of the programme. The day was then finished out by a wonderful presentation from Young SVP Co-ordinator Becca Gallagher along with presentation of certificates to all attending schools.

Young SVP events will also be taking place in the Northern & North East Region in Sept. 2018!



Why Young SVP is so important

by Becca Gallagher
National Youth Development Coordinator

I have had the pleasure of working as National Youth Development Coordinator since July 2013. Over the past 5 years I have seen an incredible amount of passion and enthusiasm from Young SVP members across the country as you all plan and deliver projects and activities that strive to make the world a better place for people living in it.

Whether your activities provide support for small groups in their local / school communities, involve raising awareness of issues that many don't know much about or they organise big events that include many different people across society there is one common and significant thread – you are making a difference. Understanding the impact of the work that you do, and the difference that you make, is really important and I hope that all involved realise the significance of what you do.

Every young person who gets involved in Young SVP does so voluntarily. This is different from many school / college activities because with Young SVP there is always a choice.

Young SVP groups, projects and activities exist not because students 'have to' do them – but because they want to. For me this is what makes Young SVP so important; it is about young people and your views, your voice and your actions.

Young SVP is an opportunity to do so much, including; to explore what social justice, poverty, inclusion and equality mean in real terms – and importantly what it means to people when these things do not exist, to identify issues in student's own areas, and to act on issues that they decide need to be changed!

With every opportunity there also, of course, comes responsibility. It is each individual's responsibility to make sure you are putting their best into your Young SVP, to make sure that you really explore the issues you are dealing with so that you can design activities in a way that they will be as effective and purposeful as possible.

It is important to find out about past and existing responses to issues, find out what works and what needs to change, work in collaboration with others to find solutions and always ensure that the response is



useful, required and purposeful – most importantly you should be confident that what you do will have a positive impact for everyone. The responsibility is to the outcomes you hope to achieve through the activities – these should be kept in mind always.

The world is changing and while many things stay the same our approach to issues of social justice need not. Let's not keep doing the same thing over and over again – let's find new, informed and positive ways to make changes for those in society who need change so that we can all live in a more inclusive, accepting and fairer place.

It is my hope that young people take what they learn from their Young SVP experience and carry it through everything they do.



YOUNG PEOPLE
engaging
IN SOCIAL ACTION
in their
COMMUNITIES!



PROMOTING
SELF-SUFFICIENCY

SUPPORT and
FRIENDSHIP



WORKING for
SOCIAL JUSTICE





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