



Volume 2; Issue 1

# SVP Youth Newsletter

## Camp Vincent 2014



Greenhill YMCA, Newcastle

### *In this Issue:*

- Cross-Community Project with Youth Link NI
- Social Action Project Ideas
- Habitat for Humanity's Summer Project





## **Editorial** by Claire Morgan, Youth Officer SVP

**I**t's that time of year again where we're all getting ready for school. By this stage you will have a few weeks under your belt! Beginning the school year can be daunting for all - parents, teachers and pupils - whether you have exams this year or another area of your learning you want to overcome, we can all get overwhelmed at this time of year!

If I can pass on any advice to pupils beginning this new school year it is this - as a past pupil, student and Teacher, it is vital to take each day as it comes and always be organised. Also always try to consider others around you. As Young Vincentians, try to remember one of main pillars of SVP - Support & Friendship. As Vincentians, we can always try to look around us, step back and understand other things going on around us. So lend that hand of friendship this year and you never know where it could take you!

This advice also lends itself to your conference work, as even though you are helping those in your community, I would ask you to help those in your conference too! I will leave you with a quote from Pope Francis speaking at the World Youth Day in 2013:

*"Put on Christ!" In your life, and you will find a friend in whom you can always trust...."*

<b>Page 1</b>	Editorial & Contents
<b>Page 2</b>	Fr. Ray - Love is Enough!
<b>Page 3-4</b>	Cross-Community Project
<b>Page 5-7</b>	Camp Vincent 2014
<b>Page 8</b>	SVP Action Projects - Intro
<b>Page 9</b>	Niamh - Minding Our Health
<b>Page 10</b>	Protect Your Online Reputation
<b>Page 11</b>	Homelessness Prevention
<b>Page 12</b>	Loreto Grammar School
<b>Page 13</b>	St. Colman's College
<b>Page 14</b>	Future Projects
<b>Page 15</b>	Next Issue...



# Love is enough!

***A Story from Fr. Raymond McCullagh, Spiritual Advisor for the Youth Council on his trip to Ethiopia with Habitat for Humanity***



Those words were part of a poster on the wall of Tigist's house in Debre Berhan, Ethiopia. Our *Living Youth* team from the diocese of Down and Connor visited Tigist and her family this summer while building houses in partnership with Habitat for Humanity, the world's largest poverty housing charity.

The house was structurally very insecure with limited space for Tigist, her parents and two brothers. They share a kitchen at the back with four other families so that means they can cook just twice a week, barely enough to provide their basic daily bread. However soon things will change! Tigist and her family are due to move into their new Habitat house on the other side of the town where they will be part of a vibrant community, built up like the houses themselves. They will have their own kitchen and also a small garden to grow basic crops – a new place to call home. Tigist worked alongside our team this summer and we quickly became friends, people from different parts of the world united in the building of God's Kingdom.

Every day in more than 70 countries around the world Habitat for Humanity is working in partnership with local people to alleviate poverty through housing. Every 4 minutes somewhere in the world Habitat serves a family in need. Habitat for Humanity Northern Ireland (HFHNI) was established in Belfast in 1994 and since then nearly 5000 people have travelled from here to work alongside families in some of the world's most vulnerable communities. Local people have raised over £2.5 million, helping to fund and build more than 1,250 homes and empowering families to build their own way out of poverty.



The unique partnership with HFH Ethiopia (HFHE) began after a Global Village team from the University of Ulster travelled to Ethiopia in 2005. Since then teams and the support of the wider community have helped transform the future for entire communities in one of Africa's poorest nations. Talking about this exciting collaboration Kebede Abede, former National

Director of HFHE, said: *"From the bottom of my heart I give thanks for our partnership and lives we have transformed together."*

That work of transformation is two way as reflected in the following words on another poster, this time in HFHE's National Office: *"Blessed are those who give without remembering and receive without*

*Forgetting."*

This summer our Living Youth team received so much more than we could ever give because love is always enough. I'm reminded of the words of St Paul in his letter to the Romans: *"Love is the one thing that cannot hurt your neighbour; that is why it is the answer to every one of the commandments."* (Romans 13:10).



St Vincent de Paul, in his day, witnessed to the power of that love that it is always enough. He reached out to those in need and was blessed by the poor. Every day members of the Society of SVP share and experience that love in many different ways. It is the love that continues to inspire the work of the Society and that of Habitat for Humanity because it is the foundation of the Kingdom of God.

As well as moving into her new Habitat house Tigist is preparing to start preparatory school and the future is bright with hope. Habitat for Humanity is all about people like Tigist, seeking to build houses, community and hope wherever they are needed most. And the need is great! Today, in our world of plenty, 1.6 billion people live in poverty housing, 100 million are homeless and more than 1.3 million have no access to clean water. The current humanitarian crisis in Iraq and conflict in Gaza are only increasing those statistics. It's easy to feel helpless but it's important to remember that the most important number is always one. Who is the one person, family you can help? Together could we build one house in one community to bring hope? In a world that so often divides people because of economics and war we have to power to bring them together again. Remember Tigist! Remember love is always enough!

*If you would like more information about HFH Ethiopia or future volunteer opportunities please contact*

***Fr Raymond McCullagh on: 07739223293 or [r.mccullagh@ulster.ac.uk](mailto:r.mccullagh@ulster.ac.uk)***



# CROSS-COMMUNITY PROJECT

WITH YOUTH LINK NI

BY CLAIRE MORGAN

The Society of St Vincent de Paul has always prided itself as being a charity for everyone, as we are a Christian Society. With that in mind, we understood that with our Education Programme, we always operated from Catholic Schools, however, we do want to change that as we feel the need to reflect the current NI Curriculum and our ethos. Earlier this year, we partnered with Youth Link NI who are a fantastic organisation who work with young people and adults from the the four main churches of Northern Ireland. Jim McDowell, from Youth Link NI, offered us a great opportunity through one of their courses titled, "*Cultural Diversity and Good Relations.*" This course focused on three main areas: History, Religion and Politics. As Jim liked to coin a phrase by stating, "*...the three things people in Northern Ireland don't like to talk about!*" With all this in mind, we choose two schools: Regent House School, Newtownards and Assumption Grammar School, Ballynahinch. Both schools take part in the SEELB's *Learning to Live Together Project* and we felt this was a perfect opportunity to pilot this project.

On the first day, the pupils were brought to Youth Link's building on the Springfield Road where they participated in a few icebreakers, found out the purpose for the project and also participated in a few activities relating to their *hope and fears* for the project. Afterwards, they went on a Walking Tour of the Peace Walls with Jim. During the tour, they heard about many different stories relating to the Troubles, asked questions and finally got to sign the Wall. The real significance here was that even though they stood facing a physical boundary, boundaries were broken that day as they started to make friends with one another. Lastly, they participated in an activity whereby they explored each other's cultural background through symbols used in everyday life.

On the second day, they focused on Religion through visiting three different churches in Belfast - The Jewish Synagogue, Woodvale Methodist Church and Clonard Monastery. Each church had a representative whereby they were able to give the group a talk on the dogmatic principles and traditions of their church, so plenty of questions were asked by all!

On the last and final day, the group took a trip to Government Buildings at Stormont. Here, they toured the Building, received a talk from the Education Officer, Marina, sat in a Q&A session with a



representative from all political parties and finally sat in the gallery of the chamber to listen to the First and Deputy First Minister's Question Time. By the end of the day, friendships were made and in September of the new academic year, Jim and I will be back at both schools and the group will be joining together to create a Social Justice Research and Action Project. Finally, we hope that both groups will attend our Annual Youth Day in February 2015 also.

*If your group or school would like to participate in SVP's Cross-Community Project as a part of their Social Action Project, please contact me on [claire.morgan@svpni.co.uk](mailto:claire.morgan@svpni.co.uk)*





# Camp Vincent 2014

By Claire Morgan



Camp Vincent 2014...well what can I say? It was the highlight of the SVP Youth Programme 2014! We decided to have two locations this year to facilitate for all our young members across the Northern Region - Todd's Leap, Ballygawley and Greenhill YMCA, Newcastle. The purpose of Camp Vincent was to give our young members the opportunity to meet up with other Young Vincentians from their region, take part in team building activities and SVP workshops. In total, we had 60 young people who took part across both camps, which was fantastic for our first year out!

The first camp was in Todd's Leap Activity Centre during the last weekend in June and as soon as we arrived, the staff set the tone from the very beginning as our team challenges that evening gave us all the opportunity to have a laugh and get to know one another! The next day was filled with high-octane activities such as the climbing wall, paint balling, off-road rallying and off-road driving! Towards the end of the second day, the group got the chance to power-down with SVP workshops based around our three pillars - support & friendship, promoting self-sufficiency and working towards social justice. This also gave them the opportunity to have a few more ideas for their SVP projects when they go back to school.

On our last day, the group were off to the zipline, except for me, as I am scared of heights! I know, I know....you would think I would know better eh? Anyway, after their thrilling ride down the zipline, we once again gathered our thoughts and came together for one last workshop, finishing off with a group photo with our Young SVP hoodies. The young people on this trip were a fantastic bunch and they seemed to really enjoy themselves!







**Getting ready for the Zipline...**



**Ah the midgies!!!**

**Nothing worked....**

*“I really enjoyed the trip and it was great to meet other young people involved in SVP. It was so generous to run the camp and provide us with hoodies and memorable activities and I am so grateful!”*

*(Hannelie, OLSPCK)*

Next, we were off to Greenhill YMCA, Newcastle for Camp Vincent, Round Two! Once again, we had another great bunch of young people with us, ready to get mucked in! After we got dinner and got settled in, we were off to do some Team Challenges with the YMCA volunteers. This was great fun and a real chance for all to get to know each other. The next morning our group was split into four groups and throughout the day, each young member participated in various team building outdoor activities such as Ziplining, Tree Ropes Challenge, Archery and Canoeing. That evening after dinner, all members came together to engage in SVP workshops examining the work of SVP and how they can become social justice advocates.

At this stage of the Camp, all members including the adults were exhausted, so we could think of nothing better to do other than have a cinema night and eat much-loved popcorn! Finally, on the last morning, we once again came together to reflect and evaluate the trip. We ended the trip by once again taking our traditional ‘Young SVP hoodie’ group photo and then off on the buses to go home!

All in all, both Camps were well received by all young people involved and we will be running it again next year! I would like to take this opportunity to thank all SVP staff and Adult members involved such as Cathy Carroll, John McDonald, Shay O’Neill, Deirdre Walsh, Tom Mulholland, Maria McGilly and Jamie McGregor for helping with all the preparations- see you all June 2015!





# Camp Vincent 2014



Sacred Heart Girls, Newry - Todd's Leap



Red High, Downpatrick & Our Lady of Lourdes, Ballymoney



Getting ready for Off-Road Rallying with Shay



Getting ready to go Canoeing - YMCA



Waiting for the Zipline....



Professional Canoeists!!



Group Photo - Todd's Leap!



Group Photo - Greenhill YMCA!





# SVP ACTION PROJECTS

## WHAT CAN YOUR SCHOOL/YOUTH GROUP DO THIS YEAR??

It's that time of year again, where we all have our thinking caps on within our Youth Conferences! So if you're wondering what to do this year or would like something new to do, there are plenty of ideas within our new project structure and resources there to also help guide and support you. There are four types of projects:

- Befriending
- Education
- Social Justice Research and Action
- Direct Aid

When deciding on your project this year, always try and remember, "what is the purpose of your project?, What would you like to achieve from this at the end?" These are really important questions and will keep you and your classmates focused throughout. The other thing to remember, when doing any project, always remember to have fun!

Furthermore, SVP Youth have teamed up with a few other organisations such as Youth Link, Living Youth (Down & Connor), Youth Action NI, The Simon Community, Niamh (mental health and wellbeing), Beat the Cyber Bully (Wayne Denner) and the Michaela Foundation and if you would like to do a project on homelessness, for example, we can help organise and guide you through the process, but also we can book speakers from these organisations on your behalf to let you know some more information for your project. So always remember - we are here to guide and support!

Over the summer, I have had the opportunity to meet up with these organisations and asked a few of them to write an article for our SVP Youth Newsletter and they very kindly agreed, so over the next few pages the Simon Community, Wayne Denner and Niamh have written articles which could give you a few details for projects based on poverty and social exclusion...ENJOY!

*If any groups would like any assistance with their project, please do not hesitate to contact Claire Morgan at Regional Office.*





# Minding Our Mental Health & Stamping Out Stigma...

By Bronagh Sharpe

Mental health, like physical health is important at every stage of our life. It determines how we manage stress, relate to others and make choices. Good mental health is not just about the absence of mental illnesses such as depression or anxiety; it is about our overall wellbeing and how we cope with life's challenges, build strong relationships, and recover from setbacks. This doesn't come naturally to everyone, so it is important that we understand how to build our mental resilience to bounce back from stressful situations, loss or change. The result? We are one step further in building our emotional and mental wellbeing.

Niamh – Northern Ireland Association for Mental Health – is a regional organisation which has thirty-six locations across Northern Ireland providing support, advice and services to people with long-term, enduring mental illness and residential support for people with learning disability. Niamh's vision of "Mental Health and Wellbeing for All" is at the core of our services and our recovery-focused, person-centred ethos. With our vast experience and expertise on mental health, learning difficulties and emotional support therapies we hope to make a positive impact on the wellbeing of individuals in our society.

When 1 in 4 people will experience a mental illness at some stage in their life, Niamh works tirelessly to make positive changes in society and at government level to serve the best interests of those who need support. Our campaigning journey to "Stamp Out Stigma" took us to Parliament Buildings, Stormont where we worked closely with politicians to gain their commitment in eradicating prejudice towards mental illness. We engaged and informed them with a clear message that people with mental illness and learning disabilities should not be stigmatized or excluded; there is no place for stigma in our diverse and inclusive society. We have produced short films and commissioned music albums that address mental illness and share the message that discrimination is wrong. This is still our message. Over the coming year, Niamh will be undergoing some exciting changes and we will be championing anti-stigma in all sections of society in Northern Ireland. And we hope to take it further...stigma isn't just towards mental illness. Stigma and discrimination can be directed at others within society and so we believe that by developing a strong network of groups, organisations, individuals and community champions we can tackle stigma and improve the overall mental wellbeing of many in society. Niamh will engage the public to work alongside us in fundraising, campaigning and raising awareness of mental health and stamping out stigma. Through a combined effort, it is possible to achieve for society our vision of mental health and wellbeing for all.

Contact us via our website  
[www.niamhwellbeing.org](http://www.niamhwellbeing.org) if you want more  
information or want to get involved.



Follow us on social media for more news:  
Niamh Wellbeing



@NiamhWellbeing





Wayne Denner  
Digital Ninja

Protect Your  
Online  
Reputation...

## Applying for Uni or your first job?

Your Online Reputation can define the college you get into (or not), the job you get, even your relationships. 87% of young people now own a smartphone and many of us live out our lives online. The UK Safer Internet Centre recently reported ¼ of its cases being related to Online Reputation.

So SVP enlisted the help of me, Wayne Denner, Digital Ninja for some sound advice on staying ahead of the game in a digital world and to understand how young people can feel excluded because of other people's behaviour online.

According to execu.net, 90% of recruitment companies will check you out to delve deeper than your application or CV. The same survey reports that 50% of recruiters have eliminated a job candidate due to information which they found publicly online. So what can we do to keep our Online Reputation in Shape?

Here's Wayne's Top Five Tips:

**#1 Google Yourself** - But not in a needy way :) As a rule do this every few weeks and most importantly, before a potential employer carries out their search on you. Stay ahead of the posse. It's a good idea to set up a Google Alert, which is FREE! - On your name which will notify you, via email, should any new content about you appear online.

**#2 Privacy is Key** - Keep your personal information private. When it comes to keeping stuff private on social networks, it's harder than you think. Pay attention to the content you upload to social-networking sites and adjust the privacy settings accordingly to suit who you want to be able to view and potentially share it on.

If you use a mobile app for social networking, it's also important that you visit the privacy settings on these, as they be different to your more traditional web based platform.

**#3 Tagging** - Even if you are taking care to keep your own privacy in check on social network sites, it can be difficult to manage the content others will post up on you and tag you in - and this can cause some serious problems. Pay attention to the images your friends are posting online and tagging you in and also the comments they are associating you with and remove any tags which are embarrassing or negative, even if they're 'funny'.

**#4 Oversharing** - Way too many of us are sharing absolutely everything going on in our lives via social media. As a rule of thumb, be an Internet Wiseguy and keep views, you may have in relation to religion or politics, off social networking sites. Equally, be careful about sharing content which may be unsuitable and joining groups which in hindsight might be of an inappropriate nature.

**#5 Generate Positive Content** - As a whole we need more positive content to be generated via social media. Way too many people use platforms as their own personal soap box to rant and rave about all sorts of crazy things. Posting on your interests, or careers you would like to pursue, connecting and following people who inspire you and achieve good things are all ways to boost your reputation and improve opportunities online.

In regards to your Online Reputation, it is smart to start as you mean to go on. Start taking action - clean up any current material which is out there now and think about ways to build and improve your image online. Think about the content which is associated with you. When it comes to employability opportunities, what's online needs to tell a positive story about who you are. And it could make all the difference between landing your dream job or landing in the job queue.

If you would like to find out more about Wayne, visit: [www.waynedenner.com](http://www.waynedenner.com)

Or you can check out his social media:



Talk2wayne or



@waynedenner



# Homelessness Prevention

By Rachael Power



Delivering a message on homelessness and its related issues, in a local context, to young people can be a difficult task yet it is something that Simon Community Northern Ireland knows is key to homelessness prevention. Communicating this message is made harder if the correct tools aren't available to engage with young people in a meaningful and productive way.

The Homelessness Prevention Team deliver over two hundred interactive and engaging workshops a year to young people all over Northern Ireland. In these workshops our Homelessness Prevention Coordinators work with the group to challenge the stereotypes which surround homelessness and look at the startling realities of homelessness in Northern Ireland. We have a range of follow up resources and some groups visit their local hostel. We also deliver workshops to teachers, professionals and community/church groups.

We have developed and launched a specific resource for Youth Work settings. This resource looks, in more depth, at the reasons why people become homeless. There are seven sessions, but it has been designed to be very flexible, the group can work through all sessions or choose the sessions they think are most relevant. The seven sessions are; Homelessness Awareness, Financial Capability, Conflict – Cause and Resolution, Mental Health, Alcohol Use, Drug Use, Antisocial Behaviour.

We are in the process of launching a resource specifically for young people who are attending Education Other Than At School/Alternative Education Providers. This resource compliments which ever portfolio based curriculum they are following as the young people produce different pieces of work which can be included in their portfolio. There are four workshops which are then followed up by four projects. The four categories are Homelessness Awareness, Reality of Housing, Independent Living Skills and Hostel Life.

We have also developed resources to keep up with how young people interact and communicate; we have an interactive educational website [www.simoncommunityresources.org](http://www.simoncommunityresources.org)

You can contact Rachel for further information on:

[rachaelpower@simoncommunity.org](mailto:rachaelpower@simoncommunity.org)

You can also check out their social media and they are also developing an app:



@HPPSimonCom



# CONFERENCE CORNER

## PROFILE ON A YOUTH CONFERENCE...

### LORETO GRAMMAR SCHOOL, OMAGH

BY CORAGH HYLAND, CONFERENCE PRESIDENT

As part of our Year 13 Community Outreach Programme we are members of the Saint Vincent de Paul Youth Conference. We are 18 students who aim to reach out to people in our local and international communities in a practical way. Initially we researched some background information on St. Vincent de Paul Society and discovered lots of interesting facts about the history and work of the organisation.



We volunteer in SVP 'Vincent's' in Omagh. We carry out many tasks in the shop to help the volunteers. These activities can be anything from stacking shelves to sorting through bags of clothes which have been donated. Many of our students also participated in Bag Packing in ASDA and Dunnes, Flag Days and our Teenage Stall at the SVP Annual Sale raised £600.

At Christmas time we arranged hampers to be given to people in our community. We were given basic information about the families who would receive the hampers and sorted them out accordingly. Each person in our school donated an item of food from a set list. Everyone was extremely generous and on a busy morning we sorted out the hampers. The hampers

were presented to Ben Quinn and May Mullan, representatives of St. Vincent de Paul in Omagh at Junior Assembly.

We also helped with the Christmas Toy Appeal by sorting bags of toys for families in Omagh. We were given the ages of children and selected appropriate toys. We all enjoyed this and felt like we were children again!

During Lent the SVP Year 13 Youth Group in school have been helping Vincent's Shop in Castle Street appeal for clothes, bags, belts and bric a brac. The motto is '**Donate, don't dump!**' We had a clothing bank located in our school foyer for staff and students to donate unwanted items.



Year 13 students attended the SVP Annual Youth Conference 27<sup>th</sup> February in the Glenavon Hotel, Cookstown. Here we met SVP Youth members from other schools across N. Ireland. We enjoyed the icebreakers and motivational speakers who inspired us about being agents of social change in the world today.

We were also visited by Claire Morgan, Youth Officer in SVP in February. Claire spoke to our group about the work of SVP and explored the issue of poverty in a local and global dimension.

Four Year 13 Loreto students will be attending **Camp Vincent** (organised by SVP) at Todd's Leap at the end of June 2013. We all had a great time!





# CONFERENCE CORNER

## PROFILE ON A YOUTH CONFERENCE...

### ST. COLMAN'S COLLEGE, NEWRY

St Colman's College Newry's first ever St Vincent de Paul Conference was founded in 2006 and has been an overwhelming success since its inception. It has also been running for 9 years! SVP is co-ordinated by Mr Mc Mahon and is made up, by and large, of S4 pupils. It has, however, relied on the great support of pupils from throughout all year groups for bag packs etc.



The Conference meets weekly at break time but its most valuable contributions come through its varied and wide ranging areas of fundraising and support.

The SVP Conference has succeeded in recruiting literally hundreds of volunteers over the past 5 years, many of whom have gone on to join SVP Conferences in 3rd Level Institutions. St Colman's is indebted to the selfless nature of the volunteers and the staff of Violet Hill is very proud of their efforts in fundraising, community outreach and education.

Below are just some of the many activities that the SVP Conference in St Colman's has been involved in;

- Visitation to guests in Ashgrove Nursing Home Newry
- Attendance at SVP Youth Conference in Belfast
- St Colman's Got Talent (talent competition fundraiser)
- Battle of the Bluebottles (5 a side tournament)
- Fundraising thousands of pounds
- Assisting St Joseph's Conference with smooth running of Annual Christmas Charity Lunch
- Backpacks
- Contributing to the Clare Lodge Project Newcastle
- Hosting a morning with Bishop Mc Areavey, highlighting the good works of SVP in St Colman's
- Homework Club for Non-National primary school pupils





# Future Projects

*What to look out for over the next year...*

## Northern Region's Annual Youth Exhibition

This year we have decided to hold the Youth Day in the Tullyglass Hotel, Ballymena on Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> February 2015.

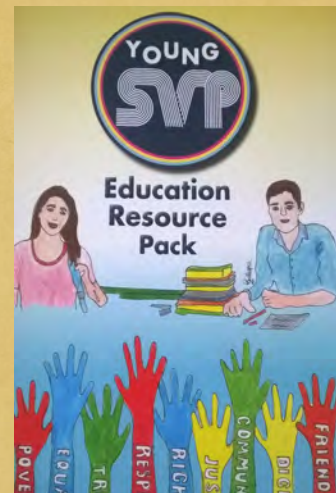
Watch this space for further details - We would love to see you all here again this year!!



## SVP's Key Stage 4 Education Pack

We have completed our pack for Transition Year in the South of Ireland and we are currently adapting for the Revised NI curriculum.

This pack will be available from January 2015!



## Development of Youth Conferences

We have developed workshops and resources for your school/youth group to help guide and support you through your projects.

Your projects can be on anything to do with poverty and social exclusion and if you would like further assistance, please contact Claire Morgan.





What to  
look out  
for in the  
next issue  
in January  
2015...



- Christmas Appeals
- Social Action Projects
- Conference Corner
- Student Articles
- And much more!

If your group would like to send in pictures, write an article on their project or their conference, please contact Claire Morgan:

Claire.morgan@svpni.co.uk

Or ring

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