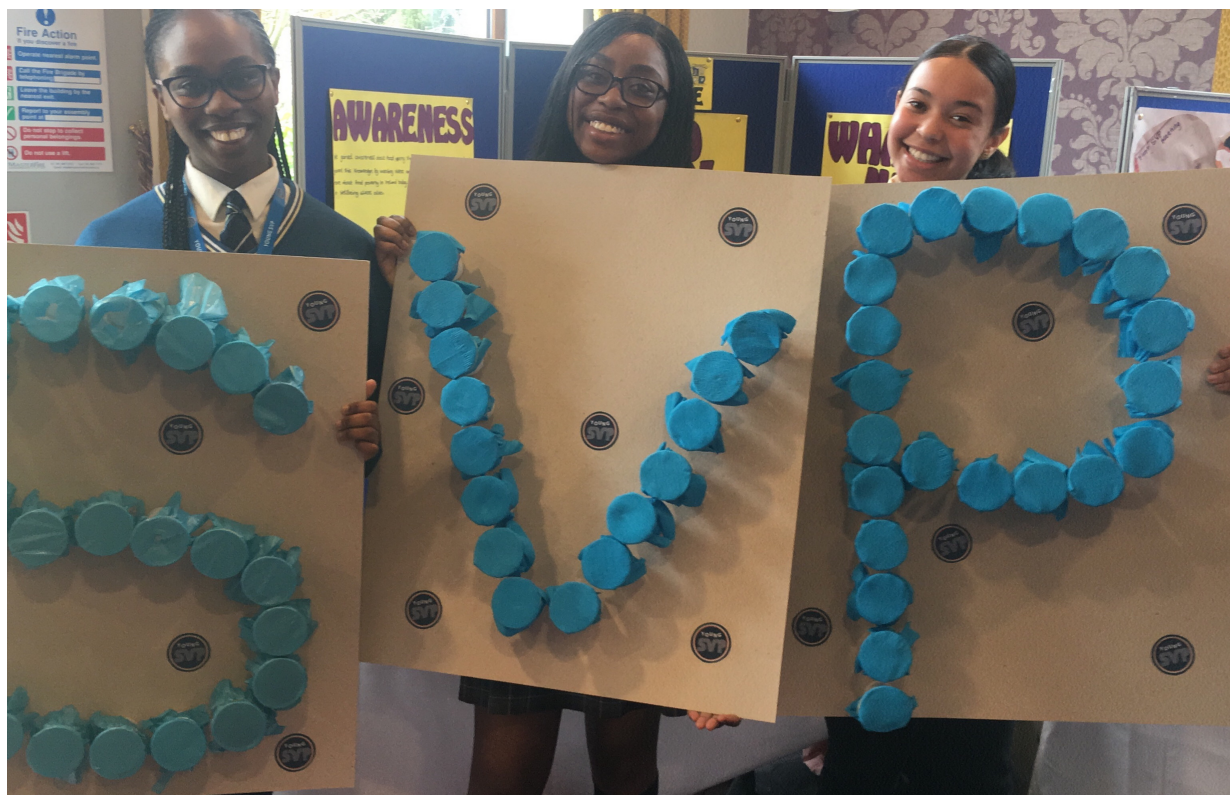


West
REGION



NEWSLETTER



2019-2020

WELCOME

Welcome to the first edition of the Young SVP West Region newsletter. I would like to take this opportunity to introduce myself. My name is Helen Ralph and I am the Youth Development Officer in the West Region. I work with students in the Mayo, Galway and Roscommon area, where I help to set up Young SVP groups / Conferences, facilitate the Young SVP programme and encourage our students to engage in social justice projects.

The Young SVP programme aims to help young people increase their social awareness and engage in social action within the ethos of SVP. I facilitate students to develop a deeper understanding of the world around us while exploring ways in which we can work together to eradicate social injustices and poverty using the three pillars of SVP as our foundation. I encourage students to recognise their own potential to affect change through their social justice projects. I feel privileged to work with all our amazing groups of young people every day, a day very rarely goes by that I am not inspired by what I see them achieve.

The media are often guilty of portraying young people in negative ways, taking examples of poor behaviour and painting them as the norm. In everything I see through my engagement with young people I know the opposite to be true. It is too rare that the positive things young people do make the headlines but I feel it is very important to tell these good news stories. Along with the media portrayal of young people, I find that celebrity culture, and a world where Instagram influencers have become self proclaimed 'heroes', our young people are bombarded with unrealistic norms - what they should have, what they should do, how they should act and look etc - all this mounts unnecessary pressure on them within this new digital age. This is why now, more than ever, we need to constantly be offering young people alternatives and highlighting the positive and achievable. It is important to recognise their achievements, encourage them to continue participating in programmes and to inspire their peers to get involved too. What I see every day is young people doing amazing things, young people not settling for unfairness, injustices and inequalities. I see outrage from them at the inequalities in our country - for example 790,000 people living below the poverty line & over 10,000 people experiencing homelessness. What I also see are young people not only saying but also, like Frederic Ozanam taught us, acting to show and highlight that this is not good enough; we need a better world for everyone within it.

This newsletter is just a glimpse into the work that young people in the Young SVP programme are doing in the West and provides the opportunity to share some of the good news stories from some of our young members.

I hope it will inspire you as a teacher or a student to get involved. Looking forward to working with you

Helen



"WHAT I SEE EVERY DAY IS YOUNG PEOPLE DOING AMAZING THINGS, YOUNG PEOPLE NOT SETTLING FOR UNFAIRNESS, INJUSTICES AND INEQUALITIES"



MESSAGE FROM MICHAEL MC CANN

Regional President of St. Vincent de Paul West Region

The Society of Saint Vincent de Paul was founded in Ireland in 1844. It is the largest voluntary charitable organization in Ireland. Inspired by our principal founder, Frederic Ozanam, and our patron Saint Vincent De Paul, we seek to respond to the call every Christian receives to bring the love of Christ to those in need:



“I was hungry, and you gave me food”

(MATTHEW 25).

No work of charity is foreign to the Society. We are involved in a diverse range of activities characterized by:

Family Visitation: Our members visit families in their homes on a weekly or fortnightly basis or as required. Through person to person contact we offer material support by providing food or vouchers or help with household bills or education costs. We always assure confidentiality and endeavor to establish relationships based on trust and friendship.

Promoting self-sufficiency: It is not enough to provide short-term material support. Those we assist are also helped to achieve self-sufficiency in the longer term and the sense of self-worth this provides. When problems are beyond our competence, we enlist the support of specialized help.

Working for Social Justice: A very important part of our work is to advocate for the changes required to create a more just and caring society



**PROMOTING
SELF-SUFFICIENCY**

**SUPPORT and
FRIENDSHIP**



**WORKING for
SOCIAL JUSTICE**

Other Services: The society also provides social housing, hostels for the homeless, holiday homes for people in need. Our shops are an important part of the work of the society. Not only do they provide people with new and lightly worn items at affordable prices, they also provide an income source for the Society.



WHAT IS YOUNG SVP AND HOW DOES IT WORK..

Young SVP is a youth development programme designed for young people attending secondary school / Youth Reach 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

Initial visit from YDO - Introduce the programme and decide best way for it to operate in your school

October / November

Set up your Young SVP group and start to explore issues of poverty and Social justice. Start to think about your first action project

November - December

Continue to explore issues through workshop(s) with your YDO while also working on your first action project.

January - February

Review the actions from first half of the year and continue working with your YDO around issues and planning your next project.

March - April

Continue working on your projects and also get ready for your Regional Youth Day - YDO will support you through this.

April - May

Finish your projects and review what you have achieved through the year, your YDO will help you.

BENEFITS OF THE PROGRAMME

FOR SCHOOLS

Free and non competitive Supports from the team are ongoing through the year flexibility allows it fit into your school / group structure

FOR PARTICIPANTS

Young people are at the centre of their own learning & activities are youth led. They will gain positive, meaningful experience of volunteering and social action. Develop personal skills and increased awareness of social justice issues

AND MORE..

Links to various subject curricular Invited to Regional Young SVP events Can complement other activities eg Gaisce, JPll award...

9398
STUDENTS REACHED

911
VISITS


195
YOUNG SVP
GROUPS


209
SCHOOLS ENGAGED

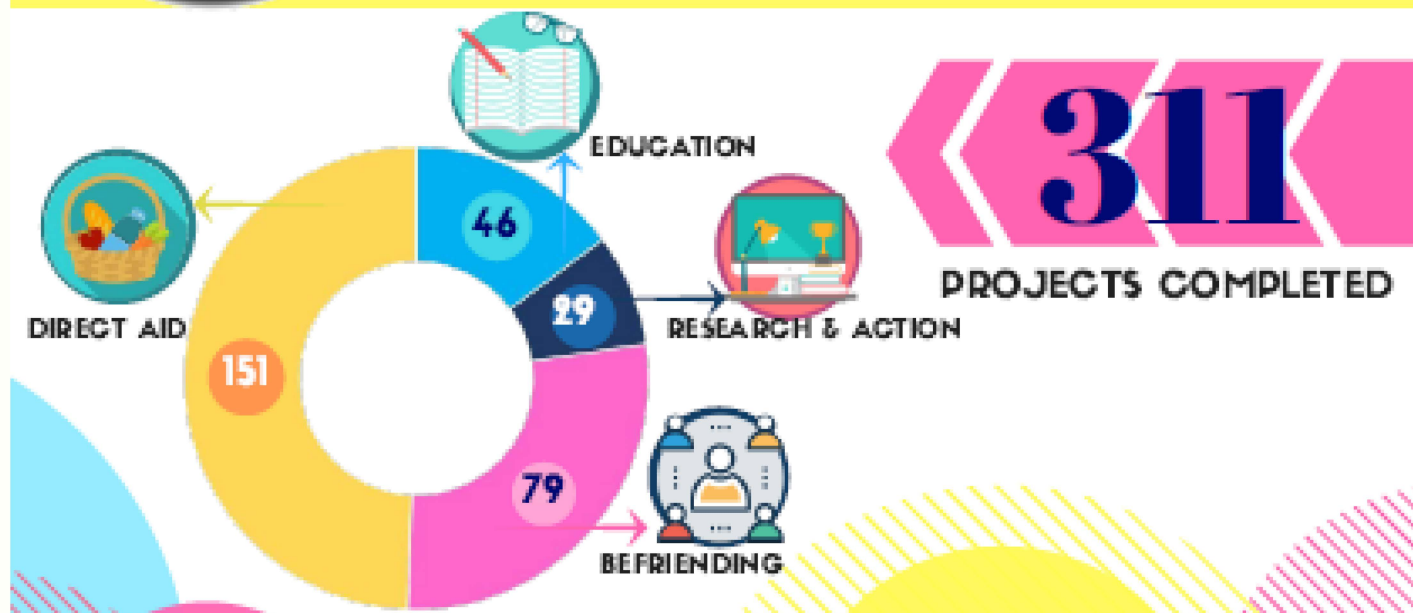
349 social justice w/shops
324 visit to Conference
206 guest speaker talks
32 other


298
GROUPS VISITED


5069
STUDENTS ENGAGED



2018/19 IN NUMBERS



FEEDBACK FROM STUDENTS

Because of SVP I have new friends that I never would have made before

Young SVP made a difference to my self-esteem

to help people. I don't feel helpless anymore

Young SVP means not only helping yourself but helping others and feeling good and proud when it is done

Young SVP gave me a greater understanding of Social Justice

I got involved because I wanted to make (even if it was the slightest) difference in my school spreading positivity

I learned that even giving a small amount of your time can make a huge difference to someone & give them something to look forward to

Young SVP is very encouraging, involving & welcoming

Young SVP helps young people to further their education about problems in Ireland. They allow people to take part and help out

I learned to be more considerate & mindful of people & their situations

Young SVP helps young people to further their education about problems in Ireland. They allow people to take part and help out

It opened my eyes regarding the amount of people that need help, big or small, & the good we can do by simply talking or spending time with someone

It wasn't about money, it was about how we could make a difference

I liked the fact it was all done by us the students #youthempowerment

I liked the moments with people, the joy & smiles on peoples faces & being given a platform to make changes

YOUNG SVP YOUTH DAY



THE YOUTH DAY IS AN OPPORTUNITY FOR ALL YOUNG SVP GROUPS TO GATHER TOGETHER TO CELEBRATE THEIR WORK AND MEET OTHER LIKE MINDED YOUNG PEOPLE



Foxford

SECONDARY SCHOOL



Foxford Secondary school started their conference in November. They got straight to work and their first project was to do a litter pick in the local community



'We all felt that some people in the community thought that it was the students who made the mess around town so we wanted to show people all the good & positive things young people were doing'

On Monday, the 20th of January, a cold winter's morning, we gathered the troops of Young SVP Foxford and began our work on cleaning up our beautiful town of Foxford. We previously had organised the date and time for the litter pick and we all met in our school hall on the big day. We put on our high vis vests, grabbed our bin liners, gloves and litter pickers next we divided into groups. Each group were given an area to clean and off we went. We worked from morning to small break and we gathered a total of 10 bin liners of litter! Another group of litter pickers spotted us. They were extremely grateful and overjoyed that young people were getting involved in cleaning up our town! Young SVP Foxford proved to our community that students can improve our environment too!



Scoil Muire & Padraig

SWINFORD



I am a TY student in Scoil Muire agus Padraig, Swinford and I had the opportunity to take part in young Saint Vincent De Paul program this year. It started when we received a talk about all the work done by SVP and we were told how we could contribute through TY. A week or two later we elected ourself and then we were voted to be a part of it by our other class mates and luckily I got in. Myself and the other committee members tried to meet weekly to plan our projects and other things we could do.

At Christmas time we did a food collection and asked other students to donate food to those who couldn't afford it during the Christmas season. We also held a non-uniform day and charged €2, with this money we could buy food to fill the remaining boxes. We spent a few days working on this as we had to work out prices, quantities and which products were essential. We tried to shop as much as possible at local businesses to support them however it made it a lot more expensive so we ended up doing the majority of your shopping in Tesco. The 16 of us went to Tesco, split into groups and filled up trolley while following a shopping list. We then brought the trolley back to school and we had help from the other students we started to sort and pack the decorated boxes. I don't remember the exact amount of boxes we did but we were all very proud of ourselves looking at the boxes full of Christmas goodies for people in our community.

For our project we initially wanted to work with the national school kids and take them for an hour a week to do various educational and physically active activities however, Garda vetting was an issue so we decided to do something similar but work with the elderly people in the swinford daycare center. My classmate and I went down and organized what we planned to do and how it would all work. We had planned to start after our two weeks of work experience however little did we know that would be our last week of TY. It's very unfortunate that we didn't get to finish what we started but I really enjoyed being apart of the program while I could and I learned the importance of helping people in your community who need it.



Castlerea

COMMUNITY SCHOOL

All TY students studied religious education and CSPE for Junior Cert, Some of us completed projects on the role and value of the St. Vincent de Paul in rural Roscommon in 2018/2019. This is why we as TY students are very interested in finding out why people volunteer to spend time and energy working to make life easier for people at times of challenge, crisis or sudden loss.

Each of us as members of Young SVP feel strongly that the Irish Government doesn't do enough to support or help local people when they get bad news like sickness, inadequate broadband, loss of a job, a house fire or sudden death, lack of wheelchair access to trains, poor roads and abysmal support for young men on their release from Castlerea prison.



Just like Federic Ozanam, the founder of SVP, as TY students we are inspired by the attitude and action of Jesus in helping the less well-off and sick people when and where possible. Over the years some of the TY students got involved in after school activities, such as in the homework club, visiting the local old people's home and all of us lobbied local councillors, TD's and our local MEP to improve the lives of the people of Roscommon. Issues which we raised with them was the need to reduce food waste by encouraging local supermarkets to join 'food cloud'. Areas with poor broadband, the consequences of climate change on our lives, the lack of recreational facilities for youth in Castlerea, the fire station closure and the need for a pedestrian crossing in our town. These are only but a few issues we raised. As TYs we protest that this is neither acceptable nor fair to anyone in the community.

Young SVP students were involved in supporting our schools 1st years homework club and some of us volunteered every Monday with the special Olympics group. During Advent we were also involved in the choir for the carol service On the night a collection was held and the money raised was donated to build up the Young SVP Vincent de Paul fund within the local St. Vincent de Paul branch.

We displayed all of our work and our social justice concerns on a display wall in the canteen for other students to view.

Presentation College

ATHENRY

The Young SVP programme has been running in our school for only two years now but the enthusiasm amongst the students is fantastic. Thanks to Helen for her help and fantastic support throughout the year. Our recruitment drive in September 2019 saw over 50 transition year students turn up to be on the Young SVP committee. After much voting we finally got a committee with many other TYs ready on standby.



"Our new committee didn't waste time in putting their heads together coming up with some very good ideas for the year ahead as regards projects and fundraising."

Early on the committee made contact with the Swan day care centre in Athenry town. This is a day care centre for young and older adults with intellectual disabilities. Taking it in turn, members of the committee engaged with these young people bringing them swimming in the Raheen Woods hotel going for walks and playing board games and such with them two days a week. Before the coronavirus spread to Ireland the committee were ramping up their efforts for fundraising in the school and had great plans afoot but unfortunately these will have to be postponed for the moment. As their coordinating teacher there was very little I needed to do with this group of young people, they were so motivated and enthusiastic and clued in that I only needed to pass on a project or piece of information to them and they would take ownership of it from there. I think the benefits of joining such a group as the Young SVP are immeasurable. It's taught this group of young people how to be organised and operate within the structures of a committee. The good work that they carried out during the year was witnessed by many other students and cannot but show good example to all. It would be my wish that this group of students would carry on their fantastic work and effort into 5th year next year. I would just like to end by saying a huge thank you to all the Pres Athenry Young SVP committee

.Eoin McGillicuddy (Teacher & SVP Memeber)

It has opened their eyes to to the different roles people play in our society and the importance of a group like St Vincent de Paul in in the local community. They have built up a strong bond with the young people of the day care centre but also they have built strong bonds and friendships with each other over the course of the year.



Ballinrobe

COMMUNITY SCHOOL



This year as TY students we had a Young SVP committee in our school. We had 16 students on the committee who were each assigned a role.



Christmas shopping list

Treats	Tinned Food	Beverages	Cereals & Carbohydrates
Christmas Cake / Pudding	Tinned Fruit eg. fruit cocktail	Tea and Coffee	Breakfast Cereals
Christmas Selection boxes	Tinned Vegetables	Sugar	Muesli
Biscuits	Custard	Soft Drinks	Noodles
Chocolate	Packet / Tinned Soup		Rice
Mince Pies	Tinned Spaghetti Baked Beans		Pasta
Crisps	Tinned Tuna / Fish		Pasta/Rice Sauce
Popcorn			Muesli Bars
Sweets			
Turkey / Ham voucher			
Box of Christmas crackers			
Festive Table napkins			

Guidelines

- Please ensure that all food items are non-perishable
- Please ensure that all food items have an expiry date well into 2017

Early in the year we planned meetings and met with Helen, the regional SVP rep, to discuss ideas and learn about what SVP do for people in our local community but also all over the country. We began to realise how important SVP is for people.

Our first idea was a food collection which took place before Christmas. We had a trolley outside Tesco and collected food people donated for our local SVP and it was a great success. Throughout our meetings we had various ideas. We were planning a colour run, where people would pay €2 to enter and all funds would go towards SVP.

We also had a bake sale in mind, to have outside the church, also to fundraise.

As an SVP committee, collecting funds and food is very important but what we learned was also important is to be able to educate people on SVP, as so many people don't know the great work they do in our community.

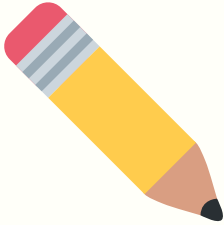


Ballinrobe COMMUNITY SCHOOL

One of our main ideas was to organise a talk for local 6th class students and invite Helen in to talk about the work and everything SVP does to help in our community. Later, our committee would take what Helen talked about and what we learned and then talk to 2nd years, explaining to them what SVP do. We had high hopes for this plan but unfortunately, due to the coronavirus, everything had to be postponed. Next year we hope our main Young SVP project - a homework club - will take place, once a week in the primary school.

Great Plans!

THAT WE
COULDN'T CARRY
OUT



"When the schools closed on Thursday March 12th we were so disappointed we didn't get to go ahead with the project. However, we enjoyed planning it."

The main idea behind this project is to help younger kids with their homework, especially those who might not have the help they need at home. We met with the principal of the local primary school earlier this year, to see what she thought about this idea. 4 of our SVP group explained the idea behind the project and what we were planning to do. Luckily she loved the idea and then brought it to the teachers of the primary school. A few days later we went back at the primary school and she outlined the plan. We would help senior infants pupils for an hour a week, with homework and then play educational games with them. They would have the chance to complete their homework, and still have fun. We went back to our school and set up a rota for the weeks ahead. Our first week would be a test run to see how the kids would like it.

We also took part in Survive on 5



Convent of Mercy



ROSCOMMON

Our Young Saint Vincent de Paul Experience - Convent of Mercy Roscommon At the start of the year our teacher Ms. Fitzmaurice invited Ms. Helen Ralph from the Young St. Vincent de Paul Society to come and give a talk to Transition Year Students in the Convent of Mercy Roscommon. The hope was that after hearing Helen speak about the work of Young St. Vincent de Paul our students would be inspired to set up a society in our school. Immediately we all wanted to become involved so that we could help those less fortunate than ourselves and we went ahead and formed our Young Saint Vincent de Paul committee. The official committee was voted in and it was made up of the members Kawany, Ava, Alexandra, Laura, Limani, Nicole and Emily, but a lot of other transition year students were very helpful and gave a hand when it came to organising fundraisers and making donations.

Christmas Time SVP Fundraisers We were especially busy at Christmas time organising the 'Food Drive' and the 'Giving Tree'. With the help of our supportive students and staff members, we were able to raise food for those less fortunate at Christmas time. We also helped Ms. Coleman to organise the SVP giving tree, where people gifted presents to those less fortunate. This was an extremely rewarding experience.

Our 'Lollipop-Day' Fundraisers After our success for the Christmas fundraisers, we were eager to host another fundraiser. We decided to hold a 'lollipop Day', where we sold lollipops in our school to raise money for Saint Vincent de Paul. We hosted two of these lollipop days over the year and raised almost €200 in total. We had a lot of fun during this fundraiser and were delighted with the money we raised. All of the girls agreed that this was definitely one of the highlights of the year. We also found having done something good for others made our Christmas so much more enjoyable."

Another part of the Young Saint Vincent de Paul programme not only the committee but also the whole transition year class got to enjoy, was the visits by Helen Ralph. We got to learn about people from all different backgrounds and social issues including poverty. The class all agreed this was a real eye-opener into the struggles of living with poverty. Overall all the girls on the committee agreed this was a rewarding, insightful and great experience and we really enjoyed the programme. The Young SVP team had planned to also do a social project in the community and we had begun brainstorming different ideas. Unfortunately due to the school closures from Covid-19 this has not been a possibility for this year. But we hope to get the chance to carry out a social project sometime in the future.

Presentation College

TUAM

This year St Vincent De Paul has been a very large part of my TY experience. At the start of this year I was thrilled to get on the young SVP council in our school along with 9 other girls from TY. From there we went to a massive talk in nuig Galway which I thoroughly enjoyed.

There we had a lot of motivational speakers in particular Joanne O'Riordan who has no limbs and who I think sent a message to all of us which was if she can do it so can we. We also learned about what St Vincent De Paul is and as young SVPs what we can do for our school and community



"Overall I would say SVP has played a major part in my Transition year. It has opened my eyes and made me get more involved in my community. I hope to continue being involved in SVP after TY"

Clodagh Gilligan



For my Ty John Paul II award it inspired a few girls and I to do our community involvement hours in the St Vincent de Paul charity shop in Tuam every Thursday evening. We all loved it there. We had planned to paint a Dr Suess themed mural in the kids section but due to schools closing down that has been postponed. Hopefully we can get back there soon.

"Our TY hosted a swap shop for our school. The idea was to bring in old clothes and swap with fellow students through a token kind of exchange. It was a massive success for TY and the girls involved and I know that every single one of us definitely enjoyed it. Everyone had a part to play whether it was sorting clothes, making posters, bringing in clothes, rails, hangers etc and working in the swap shop on the day. The leftover clothes were donated to our local SVP."

We also had Helen in from St Vincent de Paul to talk to us about Poverty. She then brought forward to us Survive on 5 to get in the mindset of what it's like for someone under the poverty line in Ireland every day. This meant we had to survive on €5 for all our food costs. I found this very challenging. It was hard living on mostly dry crackers and water for the week but it really opened my eyes to how poverty affects people in Ireland.

Abbey Community College **BOYLE**

Helen Ralph paid school a visit several times throughout the year initially brainstorming interest and formation of young SVP in the school again. Our students targeted a number of activities. Raising €150 in guess the weight of the cake for local conference of SVP.!



Local Boyle conference were instrumental in the setting up of our young SVP with advice from Fr Gerry and Teresa O'Dowd . We intended visiting nursing homes after Christmas however TYs busy schedule interfered with this plan . At Christmas some of our members hosted the Gleann Aoibhinn Christmas Party providing presents and entertainment for its residents. We look forward to this project continuing next year



Our students providing awareness about the work of Young St Vincent de Paul on open night. We are grateful for such a wonderful bunch of students who we had the pleasure to work with this year.

Colaiste Na Coiribe

KNOCNACARRA

These students sold Valentine Cards for SVP and they had a super plan for a pop up shop and fashion show. The students also took part in social justice workshops.



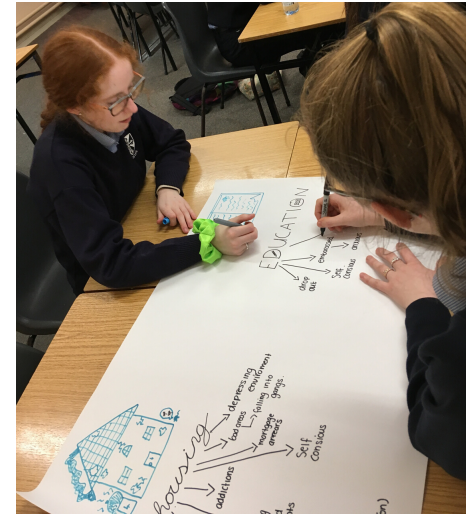
Dominican College

TAYLORS HILL

This was the first year the students in Dominican College did the Young SVP programme. The girls were so enthusiastic from the first visit.

When we started to explore possible projects, it became very clear that these girls wanted to help.

The ideas included doing something for the homeless, baking cookies for local nursing homes, visiting children in hospital and putting together Christmas boxes for children. The girls did a bake sale to survive on 5 challenge and hoped to carry out more projects.



West Region TWINNING PROJECT MALAWI

WHAT IS TWINNING

Twinning is a direct link between branches of SVP in different countries. Through Twinning we share resources, experiences and mutual friendship

THE AIMS ARE ...



- EXPANDING THE WORK OF THE SVP
- CREATING LINKS AND WAYS TO COMMUNICATE
- SUPPORTING EACH OTHER THROUGH UNDERSTANDING, FRIENDSHIP AND SOLIDARITY

THE PROJECTS OPERATED BY THE SVP IN MALAWI AND SUPPORTED BY THE WEST REGION HAVE THE PRIMARY GOAL OF ALLEVIATING POVERTY AND AIDING PEOPLE TO BECOME SELF-SUFFICIENT.

"We should love one another now and ever, far and near, from conference to another, from town to town, from nation to nation."

Federic Ozanam

Projects in Malawi include:

AGRICULTURAL

The SVP in Malawi use funding from Twinning to purchase fertilizer and sow maize to feed hungry families in their parishes.

The families work in the fields and support themselves with the harvest. The surplus crops are sold and the profits are used to reinvest in similar projects leading to more sustainable futures for the families supported.

FLOOD RELIEF

In 2015 heavy rains in Malawi resulted in massive flooding displacing more than 336,000 people. The floods destroyed homes, ravaged farmlands and compromised vital services such as clean water and sanitation. Funding was provided through the local SVP Conferences to assist in providing food, medical supplies and temporary accommodation. On 3rd March to 9th March, 2019, Malawi experienced another catastrophic of floods and Cyclone Idai, that affected thousands of people, such that crops, animals were washed away by floods, people lost their lives and some were left homeless.

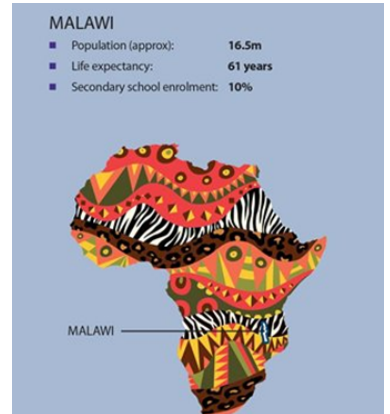
EDUCATION

With funding from the West Region, St Vincent de - Paul Society in Malawi is sponsoring 62 students for Secondary Education. These students are coming from eight (8) Diocese of Malawi. The school calendar in Malawi starts in September and ends in July.



SMALL PROJECTS

As one way of supporting the conferences and the diocesan councils, submitted small project proposals to twinning seeking for funding for pig farming, for goat farming and crop production



*West
Region*

TWINNING PROJECT

MALAWI

Why not Twin your school with a school in Malawi

CREATE A
VIDEO DIARY
ABOUT A
DAY IN THE
LIFE OF
YOUR
SCHOOL

SHARE ADVICE, FOR
EXAMPLE, PREPARING
FOR EXAMS, GETTING
TO KNOW PEOPLE IN
SCHOOL



REMEMBER THE
OTHER SCHOOL
AT CEREMONIES
AND SERVICES
E.G. SCHOOL
MASS, ASSEMBLY
OR
CELEBRATION

HAVE A CLEAR PLAN OF
YOUR GOAL/ WHAT YOU
WOULD LIKE TO ACHIEVE
FROM THE LEARNING
EXCHANGE. ASK THE OTHER
SCHOOL WHAT THEY ARE
HOPING FOR.

KEEP THE OTHER
SCHOOL INFORMED OF
KEY DATES AND EVENTS
IN YOUR COUNTRY E.G.
NATIONAL HOLIDAYS,
ELECTIONS OR EVENTS
IN YOUR SCHOOL E.G.
GRADUATION OR THE
SCHOOL MUSICAL

SHARE THE CULTURE OF
YOUR COUNTRY: POEMS,
STORIES, SONGS, DANCE,
SPORTS, GAMES,
RECIPES AND SO ON

SUPPORT YOUR
TWINNED SCHOOL TO
LEARN ABOUT THE
HISTORY OF YOUR
COUNTRY/ LOCAL AREA
AND
KEY EVENTS

TELL THE SCHOOL
ABOUT WHAT YOU
ARE
DOING WITH
YOUNG SVP

DISPLAY THEIR
FLAG IN YOUR
SCHOOL
AND LET
PEOPLE KNOW
ABOUT YOUR
TWINNED
SCHOOL

ASK THEM FOR
SUGGESTIONS ON
WHAT
PROJECTS YOU MIGHT
BE ABLE TO DO TO
HELP THEIR COUNTRY
I.E. FUNDRAISING
PROJECTS, CLIMATE
CHANGE PROJECT ETC

St. Nathys College

BALLAGHADERREEN

Being part of Young SVP -Katie O Grady

Our year got to visit the Ozanam House in small groups of four and six members twice a week.

I really enjoyed this experience and went pretty much both days every week if I was lucky enough. I really enjoyed being able to speak to all the members of the day care centre and found that we made great friendships while we visited the centre. Every Tuesday we all took part in Bingo which was great fun as I had never really played Bingo before. We all sat around tables together and had a great laugh and I was lucky enough to get a full house sometimes too! Then every Thursday there was live country/folk music for everyone. This got everyone involved and was also great exercise. As a fan of country music and dancing I really enjoyed Thursdays when I could get up and dance with both my school friends and members of the centre. Our school's traditional music players also joined us twice at the centre for extra entertainment for the members to enjoy which went really well both days. I was very sad when this had to come to an end but hope to visit again. I also decided to send a letter to an elderly person who is alone at this time of lockdown and tell them that we will pull through this if everyone plays their part. I want to reach out to people like this to let them know they are not alone and always have someone to talk to. I feel grateful that nobody in my family is alone at this time and that everybody is safe and well.

My Contribution to Covid 19 front line workers

Anna Murphy

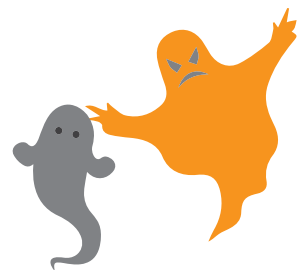
Between my family and I we decided that I would move into my Uncles house with his wife and two children. Both my Uncle and his wife are front line workers and had no one to mind their children. I can no longer go to my own house as my granny is staying with us and she's 91, we don't want to put her at risk of catching the virus. I don't miss home that much. My Mum and Dad drive by and i am able to talk to them i just have to stay two meters away from them.



St. Nathys College

BALLAGHADERREEN

THRILLER
FLASHDANCE



Halloween Thriller Festival

In October myself and several other TY students and special needs students from different schools in Co Roscommon took part in the Halloween Thriller Dance with The Brothers of Charity. The dance was part of the festival. It was held on the 31st of October, and we dressed as zombies and danced Thriller in the square in Ballaghderreen. We began learning the dance in September and danced every Monday after lunch for two classes. Students from the special needs school in Castlerea also came to St Nathys to learn the dance with us. We danced in the PE hall and we followed a dance tutorial from YouTube. Unfortunately we ran out of time to learn the full dance, so we had to shorten it and repeat parts of it. During the Halloween break we had to get our zombie costumes. We also practised the dance in the Phoenix centre with the other students from schools in Roscommon a few days before the event.

On the day we met with several hours before hand, everyone gathered in the square and we performed the dance. Everyone enjoyed it. I really enjoyed the whole experience and I thought it was a great way to involve students with special needs in the community. I'm glad that I got to take part, not only because it made me realise that I really like dancing, but also because I got to see the happy faces on the special needs students faces when we were dancing. It was definitely worth all the practice,



BAKE SALE FOR THE
LOCAL SVP



St. Gerald's College

CASTLEBAR

The students in St Gerald's are great supporters of the local SVP. They raise money every year and also take part in the food appeal



The students also organised a sports day in the local special needs school St Anthony's. Here they played a wide range of inclusive sports. They had also planned to visit the local nursing home but we ran out of time when the schools closed.

St. Coleman's College

CLAREMORRIS

St. Coleman's had a busy year. They helped the local SVP distribute envelopes at Christmas time. They visited the elderly in the local nursing home, they sang songs, played music and cards, made tea and chatted with the residents.

They also had a befriending project with the 1st years. They set up an obstacle course and helped the younger students get to know other students not in their class,

The students also took part in the Survive on 5 challenge. They found the week to be hard but said it opened their eyes to a lot of things they take for granted.

We also had several social justice workshops. The students were always very passionate about the issues we were discussing and exploring.



Jesus & Mary Secondary School

GORTNORABBEY



Jesus & Mary Gortnorabbey in Crossmolina have been involved in Young SVP for many years. The school always focuses on social justice awareness projects. .

Last year the group took part in three different projects. They undertook two different befriending projects, they visited a local nursing home and they visited a residential house for adults with special needs



The group also ran a campaign in the school called 'disconnect to reconnect' where they challenged 1st years to go 24 hours without their phones.

More Schools

ST. MARYS BALLINA

ST BRIGIDS TUAM

These girls did great projects throughout the year. They upcycled and sold Christmas decorations



ST LOUIS CS KILTIMAGH

Education Project for the 1st years and fundraising at Christmas time.



ST JOSEPHS CC CHARLESTOWN

St Josephs raised money for SVP and took part in several Social Justice Workshops



SACRED HEART SCHOOL *Westport*

The students in Sacred Heart raise money every year for the local SVP. They run a campaign every Advent on the importance of SVP to families in need



Well Done!

St Patricks

New to the programme. St Patricks had a great year with loads of successful projects..



LACKEN CROSS



Toy appeal
Food Appeal
1st Befriending Projects
Social Justice workshops..

ST TIERNANS COLLEGE

crossmolina

St Tiernans have been involved with the Young SVP for many years. One of their projects is to visit a residential home and play a sport called Bocia with the residents



St Josephs

CASTLEBAR

THE GIRLS IN ST. JOSEPHS HELPED OUT WITH THE FOOD APPEAL AND HAD SO MANY GREAT IDEAS FOR BEFRIENDING PROJECTS.



Last year the girls ran a Pop Up Shop at lunch time with clothes from the local Vincents Shop

St Jarlaths College

TUAM



St Jarlaths College are great supporters of the local SVP. They always raise food and funds at Christmas time. They also attended the Galway social justice day.

CLARIN COLLEGE *Athlery*

CLARIN COLLEGE DO GREAT WORK THROUGHOUT THE YEAR. THEY TAKE A WHOLE SCHOOL APPROACH AND SO EVERYONE GETS INVOLVED. THE STUDENT COUNCIL RUN THE FOOD APPEAL EVERY YEAR. THE TYS ORGANISE A COLOR RUN AND ALSO VISIT THE LOCAL NURSING HOME



St Raphaels Loughrea

Almost all of the students in TY wanted to get involved in this years Young SVP group. The group took part in social justice workshops and had great plans to help 1st years pick core subjects in school



St Brigid's College

LOUGHREA

St Brigid's are also new to the programme this year. They elected their conference, attended the Galwy Social Justice day and took part in workshops throughout the year.



Well Done!

COULD YOU SURVIVE ON

FIVE?

Young SVP Conferences and groups in schools, colleges and other youth settings across the country were invited to get involved in our inaugural Young SVP Challenge Week from 2-6th March. Over 700 students, teachers and staff members registered to take part and help to raise awareness of what it could be like to live on a low income with very little money left for food.

THE CHALLENGE

Individuals were asked to consume no more than €5 worth of food and drink each day for 5 days. Every single item of food/drink consumed needed to be accounted for, the value calculated and then to make sure it fits into their tight budget. There was no option to accept/eat freebies-absolutely everything consumed was to be incorporated into the daily limit including food given by others, food eaten at social events, food already in fridge/cupboard, condiments added to meals, cups of tea/coffee right down to the last drop of milk and each grain of sugar...EVERYTHING!

The concept is based on the idea that a person living on a low income has minimal leeway in terms of how they spend the money that they have, and very often the one area they can be forced to make cuts is on their variable costs. In essence, one of these areas is food and groceries.

I found this very challenging. It was hard living on mostly dry crackers and water for the week but it really opened my eyes to how poverty affects people in Ireland.
Presentation College Tuam

MENTALLY EXHAUSTED FROM THINKING AND CALCULATING ALL DAY

For us all it was a tough test, as we would normally go through the day without considering the price of our food. We all thought it was a great life experience. I learned how important SVP is for each community, as it ensures people have the basic needs for everyday life. ...
Ballinrobe CS

I started off doing Survive on 5 thinking that it wouldn't be too difficult to get through and that the week would just fly. I couldn't have been more wrong. Doing this challenge really put into perspective how difficult it must be for people that have to go through their everyday lives living under these conditions. I struggled for just the week so I can't imagine how difficult it must be for them. I'm glad SVP gives people the opportunity to do things like this as well as helping those who are really dealing with these problems.
Presentation College, Tuam

"I was very guilty of saying it's so easy to eat healthy..that is simply not the case."

IT MADE ME REALISE HOW WASTEFUL I AM WITH FOOD, I WILL TRY AND CHANGE THIS

Struggled today, not with hunger but with boredom.. I miss fruit!

It's actually very difficult if you simply don't have the money



THANK YOU!

Thank you to everyone who contributed to this newsletter. Thank you to all the students, teachers & members throughout the year for their hard work and dedication to St. Vincent de Paul

Want to get involved?

Contact Helen Ralph, Youth Development Officer, West Region



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Young SVP



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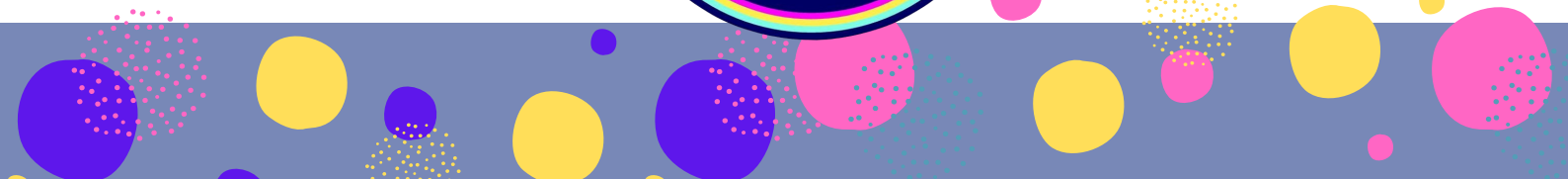
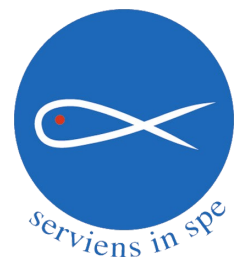
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