

NORTH OF 60 - WESTERN REGIONAL COUNCIL

Society of Saint Vincent de Paul continues with support to those in need living in the Canadian Arctic. Conferences throughout Western Canada provide food, and finances to assure that families living in the far north can access emergency food supplies that are shipped annually by truck to Hay River and by river barge up the Mackenzie River. For more isolated Communities transfer to ocean barges move sea containers along the Beaufort Sea.



Tuktoyaktuk was the first Northern Community that the Society started to support. The presence of Sister Fay Trombley at Our Lady of Grace Church, and her work with Community Leaders over several years, allowed for the start of a Saint Vincent de Paul Community food and clothing distribution centre. The next venture was with the help of Sister Dorica Sever in Gjoa Haven. Food is stored, repacked into weekly hampers and distributed to those in need in this Community. Clothing and household items are also distributed.

Five years ago, we added Paulatuk to the list of communities supported by SSVP. Here we are also working with this Community in the restoration of the old mission house building (built in 1935) which once served as a small trading post and Paulatuk's religious Centre. The building will be repurposed as a SSVP Distribution Centre.

Our Vincentians then began to support the soup kitchen at Our Lady of Victory Parish in Inuvik. The Society arranged for a sea container to deliver food products for their program, as well as further support for both the Community Food Bank and used clothing distribution. This was also an opportunity to work with Tsiigehtchic, a community that can be reached by road. Our program now supports both Communities with one sea container.

The addition of Taloyoak was relatively easy because Father Lukasz Zajac OMI, ministers to both this Community and Gjoa Haven. The organizers in Taloyoak have done a great job sorting and distributing sea container contents. Since the ocean barge no longer reaches the Western Nunavut Communities, they are being supported by the Society in Ontario Region and sealifts from Port of Montreal.

Three years ago, we were fortunate to be introduced to Rev. Stuart Brown from the Anglican Diocese of the Arctic. He then introduced us to other Anglican Ministers which allows us to open conversation with representatives from Sachs Harbour, Aklavik and Ulukhaktok. Sea cans are now shipped to these Communities.

The airlines have donated flights for our Vincentians to make Community visits to all locations. Visits have allowed for open discussion on systemic change programs such as new mother support through collaboration with Baby Box Canada and sewing lessons for youth provided by Community Elders with support from fabric supplied from the Steven Lewis Foundation in Edmonton.





Most of our food is donated in smaller lots from Conferences, churches and community groups in Edmonton area. These donations are sorted in a warehouse, repackaged and allocated to sea containers. Whole powder milk is purchased directly from the processor in bulk and is available thanks primarily to the generous support of the Knights of Columbus Foundation Alberta and NWT.

Special note to Gleaners across Western Canada who have supplied dried vegetables and fruit in large quantities. Suppliers of other bulk food products are being developed.

Clothing, bedding, household items and other necessities are also shipped, as well as other items specifically requested by our Arctic Community contacts. These items could include special project building materials, prefabricated sheds, handyman tools, hockey and other sports equipment, and many other products.

Many private donors, SSVP Conferences, CWL, and others provide cash donations for this program which helps with the last-minute purchases of food items to assure that our food security program is balanced with the required products.

To hear some feedback and tour some of the Arctic Communities view the [VIDEO](#).

Thanks to all who have helped.

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Western Regional Council*