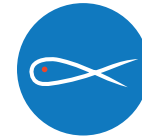


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The newsletter of the
Society of Saint Vincent de Paul
National Council of Canada
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COVID-19

The pandemic does not stop the work of the Society

Images have been removed for easy printing

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CLICKABLE!

November 15, 2020

WORLD DAY OF THE POOR

Information
and material:

[www.ssvp.ca/world-
day-poor-tools-
members](http://www.ssvp.ca/world-day-poor-tools-members)

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

THANK YOU

I take this opportunity to express my gratitude to all our members, volunteers, staff and employees for their continued service during this dark night of the COVID-19 pandemic. I have heard and seen examples of innovative transformations from normal service delivery protocols in order to ensure that no one in distress, who relies on our help, gets lost or forgotten.

Trusting in Providence, we go forward together to carry out the mission of the Society in the spirit of Blessed Frédéric and our founders. We are rapidly adapting to ever-changing conditions by finding new ways to serve that are designed to protect our clients, tenants, members, volunteers, staff and employees. We are also acting in full compliance to all government health and safety directives.

We continue to achieve our goal of serving the most vulnerable members of our communities, thereby witnessing to them God's love and care in a visible and palpable manner through our primary charism, person-to-person at-home visiting, albeit in a manner that provides a safe environment for all concerned.

I encourage you to share your stories with one another especially when it comes to how you have adapted or changed your local service protocols. What works for your conference or council may be the solution that others are searching for. I am so proud to see how we have been able to keep our home visitation services, stores, soup kitchens, food banks, etc. open and accessible and always with appropriate measures to protect the health and safety of all concerned.

Thank you, dear Vincentians for remaining active and connected to one another and with the most vulnerable during these difficult and stressful times. It is a witness to your competence by making the best of a bad situation, while remaining at peace with serenity and tranquility.

Let us pray:

Help us always to rejoice in your promise, Father, and to praise the glory of your deeds. Keep us united in the love of your peace; then we shall have little to fear. Amen

Yours in a unity of prayer and service,

*Joseph Claude Bédard
President, National Council of Canada*

WORLD DAY OF THE POOR

The Fourth **World Day of the Poor** will be observed on **November 15, 2020**. This year's theme "**Stretch forth your hand to the poor**" is a summons to responsibility and commitment as men and women who are part of our one human family, as we can read in **Pope Francis' text**.

The Society of Saint Vincent de Paul is in a perfect position to promote the World Day of the Poor. That special day is also a great opportunity for the Society to:

- increase the visibility of SSVP work and activities;
- make known the mission of the SSVP;
- foster closer ties between Vincentians and parishioners during Eucharistic celebrations, to live the message of the Gospel together by serving Christ through the poor with love, respect, justice and joy;
- recruit new members;
- conduct campaigns to raise fund or collect non-perishable food items in support of Vincentian work.

Tools are available on our website:

guide
poster
prayer card
PowerPoint presentation

www.ssvp.ca/world-day-poor-tools-members

BRITISH COLUMBIA & YUKON REGION

SACRED HEART ISOLATED CONFERENCE (WILLIAMS LAKE, BC)

Sacred Heart Isolated Conference is located in the bustling city of Williams Lake in central British Columbia. It lies between the Fraser River and the Cariboo Mountains, and is 240 km south of Prince George and 285 km north of Kamloops. We are a resource-based community with logging, ranching and mining as our main industries. We have a diverse population which numbers over 12,000.

Our conference started in 2009 and was aggregated in 2012. We are blessed with many volunteers who give their time, treasures and talents. Our parish is very supportive of our efforts and donates generously to our needs. Our Sacred Heart Catholic School is also a frequent donor of food items collected through various activities at the school.

Previously, on Monday afternoons, we provided an opportunity for fellowship and coffee, free clothing and household items donated by parishioners, as well as a modest bag of food to help get our friends through the week. About 10 volunteers regularly met to fill and distribute food bags.

Each Sunday we provided soup and sandwiches in the local park for those in need. After Sunday morning mass, parishioners were given the opportunity to help make and wrap sandwiches. Volunteers took turns making soup and a team of three would go to the park where they provided lunch to those who would otherwise go without.

We were preparing and distributing about 90 food bags per week, providing fellowship for about 125 people and feeding about 40 people in the park.

Since the outbreak of COVID-19, we have had to change our operations to respect physical distancing protocols and ensure the safety of our members, volunteers and friends we serve. We have been unable to gather in groups in the church basement so are no longer able to provide coffee and fellowship or the access to free clothing and household items. However, we have continued to distribute food bags in the parking lot to those who are comfortable in venturing out. We no longer buy in bulk and portion out small bags of rice, oats, sugar or pasta. Instead, we buy items that are individually wrapped to decrease the chance of passing on any germs.

On Sundays, we now provide a bagged lunch consisting of sandwiches, fruit, juice and a muffin, the latter of which are donated fresh from McDonalds. A rotating team of four people, wearing protective equipment, make enough sandwiches to fill 40 lunch bags and a team of two takes the bags to the park. We are able to provide lunch to those in need while continuing to respect physical distancing.

Of all the changes we have had to make, I believe our friends miss the fellowship and coffee the most. Being able to connect with one another in a comfortable environment, seek advice from volunteers, and generally socialize with each other is sorely missed. Often, individuals would stay for an extended time to visit with Vincentians and each other.

Our main source of income is through the generous donations of our parish and community. Since masses have been curtailed, our Poor Box does not generate revenue, and since we have not met in person since March, our Secret Bag remains empty. However, we are fortunate to receive donations from individuals who continue to support our efforts. The number of friends we serve has decreased, as many are reluctant to move about the community and are respecting physical distancing recommendations. We have been able to weather the reduction of revenue because of the reduction of food bags distributed.

This pandemic has provided us all the opportunity to reflect on how much we have to be thankful for. We have been given this moment to appreciate the things we have and the gifts we are able to share with others. Our faith in God is strengthened and we know he will see us through this. We pray that all will be spared from the negative effects of the virus and that the many lessons learned during this time will remain with us.

*Lynn Paterson, President
Sacred Heart Isolated Conference
Williams Lake, British Columbia*

WESTERN REGION

NORTH OF 60

The Western Regional Council shipped eight sea containers this year by truck from Edmonton to Hay River where they were transferred to barges to sail down the Mackenzie River and then by ocean barge for movement across the Beaufort Sea.

The Western Region of SSVP serves the following Arctic Communities:

- Tuktoyaktuk
- Ulukhaktok
- Paulatuk
- Inuvik
- Aklavik
- Sachs Harbour
- Tsiigehtchic
- Fort Good Hope
- Fort McPherson

*Peter Ouellette, North of 60 Team
Western Regional Council*

NORTH OF 60 ARCTIC COMMUNITY VISITS TO INUVIK, TSIIGEHTCHIC, AKLAVIK, TUKTOYAKTUK, YELLOWKNIFE

A highlight of our northern experience last January was sharing food with the people we visited. Sharing a commodity in high demand and short supply reinforces the sharing nature of those we met. The whitefish locally caught was delicious cooked in a cast iron fry pan on a pot-bellied stove. It joined the caribou stew, caribou soup and caribou macaroni as we shared with folks after a small Mass celebration. I mirror this with the homemade buns and caribou stew whose aroma filled the cabin of our contact Grace in Tsiigehtchic before our tour and meeting with local assistants at the school. We were told that people know where to get food if they are hungry and we can attest to the warmth and welcome that goes with the food. The pelts curing outside showed the prowess of nephews enhancing our experience of the north. People told us how much they appreciated the goods shared with them and we received the thanks on behalf of those who shared from the south. The -45 degree weather was warmed by the relationships we shared in the five communities we visited.

*Mary Dunnigan and Stef Michniewski
WRC North of 60 Team, Edmonton, Alberta*

TWO STORIES, ONE FROM A DONOR AND ANOTHER FROM A RECIPIENT

Holy Family Knights of Columbus (on behalf of the Neil M. Ross Elementary School children) donated \$500 to the North of 60 Project. Here is an excerpt from the letter that accompanied the cheque. "Every year our council provides a Shrove Tuesday breakfast for the children and staff at Neil M. Ross Elementary School. This year the precious little children at the school brought in donations to give to our council. This year they donated \$500. Our council has decided to pass along this donation to North of 60."

Thank you message from Emily Kudlak and Brenda Egotak, Community of Ulukhaktok, Northwest Territories: "Quana so much for all the hard work the volunteer group does to provide a means to sew clothing for their families." The Fabric from Grannies for Africa donations gets distributed to the Ulukhaktok Anglican Women Sewing Group.

*Linda Tutt,
WRC North of 60 Team, St Albert, Alberta*

ONTARIO REGION

NORTH OF 60 SURVIVED COVID!!

This summer has indeed been very different for all our councils/conferences struggling to gather food items amid the COVID-19 pandemic. School and parish closures created a huge loss in food donations as well as financial support.

COVID-19 created new dilemmas - bare grocery shelves, limited purchasing power. Regardless, we will be sending five sea containers northward. There will be no community without assistance; however, the volume of goods sent will be reduced for most communities.

Rankin Inlet (Ottawa CC) will receive one sea container. Gjoa Haven (via pandemic donations), Taloyoak (St Patrick's Conference in Markham), and Kugaaruk (Peel PC) will be receiving crates of food. Whale Cove (St Raphael's Conference), Arviat (Peterborough PC), Chesterfield Inlet (Kitchener-Waterloo PC) and Naujaat (St Catharines CC) will receive their containers.

We have helped eight communities in Nunavut, sending five sea containers and three crates of food.

*Pegg Leroux, North of 60
Ontario Regional Council*

NORTH OF 60, HELPING RANKIN INLET – COULD IT BE DONE?

This is the fourth year that Ottawa has partnered with Rankin Inlet (Nunavut), continuing to send non-perishable goods to Mary, our Mother Catholic Church's Sharing Centre to assist persons in need. 2020 had more than the usual number of challenges to accomplish this.

As in previous years, people and organizations throughout Ottawa were advised as early as January about this year's needs in Rankin Inlet and the goal of shipping the donated goods from Ottawa by early June. Such an early shipping date is needed to ensure that the shipment makes it on one of the first sea freighter voyages from Montreal to Nunavut before the ice freezes up. Sea travel is definitely a fair-weather operation up north, keeping in mind that Nunavut is the most isolated of Canada's northern territories as there are no roads between southern Canada and Nunavut; shipment by air is very expensive.

In February, presentations of the program and the needs were given to several churches and schools. One challenge was to access the French-language Catholic schools, due to the work-to-rule situation at that time as part of contract negotiations with the Ontario government. Interest was obtained from the English Catholic school board. By March, donations of goods and money were beginning to come in.

Hanging over our heads during this time was the ever-increasing concern about the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic. By mid-March, various levels of government announced a major lockdown. This brought an almost complete halt to our fundraising efforts. Some donations were still being received into April, but only at a trickle. At the time, there was no way of knowing if any shipment could be made at all.

By late May, some lockdown restrictions were being lifted. It was now possible to determine that sufficient donations could be collected for the shipment. These were all donations from the local community. It was clear that it would be unlikely for us to ship our usual two 20-foot-long sea containers, given the schedule delays and reduced donations.

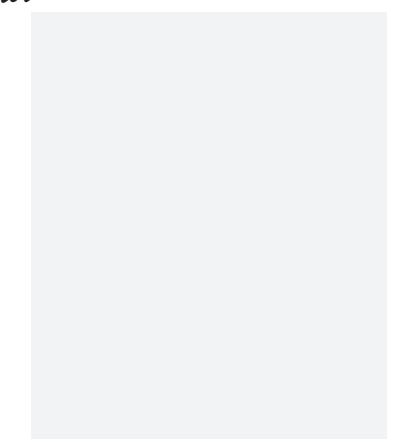
Even filling one sea container had significant challenges. It was decided that in the spirit of maintaining safe physical distan-

cing, it was best to make use of only a few volunteers to pick up donated goods, procure goods with donated funds, and pack and move the boxes with goods.

Working down to the wire, it was possible to completely fill one sea container and ship it from Ottawa on July 15, first by truck to the port of Montreal and then on its long trek north by sea. This was a month later than we had planned at the start of the year, but still early enough to safely ship by sea this year and arrive well before the winter ice sets in. It is hoped that these goods, although only half of what was sent in previous years, will be at least sufficient to help the most needy in Rankin Inlet.

A note of appreciation: For the last three years, Rankin Inlet's Sharing Centre was managed by Cecilia Ayaruak, a member of the church's congregation. Through her leadership, the Sharing Centre's goods were distributed to the community in a fair manner. Cecilia wishes to step back from this major activity and enjoy her honourable retirement; she is passing on the reins of the Sharing Centre to Maani Brown. We expect that Maani's enthusiasm and community spirit will keep the Sharing Centre running smoothly, even with the challenge of having fewer goods to share this year. We hope that all Vincentians will wish Cecilia, Maani and all the other volunteers in Rankin Inlet well in their endeavours.

*Claire Heal
Ottawa-Rankin Inlet Coordinator*



QUEBEC REGION

NORTH OF 60, WHERE ARE WE AT IN QUEBEC?

In Western Canada, Vincentians were quick in sending containers with goods to Nunavut. In Quebec, however, for lack of means, the Regional Council is still at the preparatory stage in responding to the needs of the Nunavik population. The first attempt, sending a few boxes of clothing via Air Inuit in 2019, aroused great interest in the communities of Kuujuaq and its surroundings and now that the project is better structured, the people are eagerly awaiting the containers from Montreal to meet their needs.

The Quebec Regional Council (QRC) needed to ensure that all safety measures related to COVID-19 would be in place and they received the support of the following organizations:

- the Nunavik Regional Board of Health and Social Services;
- the Tulattavik health centre in Ungava;
- Kuujuaq city council, which, through its resolution of June 17, 2020, committed \$100,000 to the project;
- the airline company Air Inuit, whose contract was extended until May 31, 2021 for the transport of products.

All arrangements have been made by the QRC to start the project this fall. The thrift store, which serves as a transit centre to receive and sort donations for the North, has now reopened under COVID-19 safety measures. Hundreds of boxes of clothing, children's clothing and other items requested are ready to be sent to Kuujuaq. The QRC is only waiting for the financial contribution of the Quebec Aboriginal affairs secretariat and believes that it will be received soon.

COVID-19

Capitale-Nationale and Chaudière-Appalaches regions

The 66 conferences of the Québec Central Council have adapted their operations to ensure continued assistance to people in need. This resulted in the delivery of more than 600 bags of food, contributing to the assistance given to more than 10,000 families in difficult circumstances during the COVID-19 period.

Gatineau

The central council and its members increased the assistance provided to families in vulnerable situations by 30% during the COVID-19 period, thanks to the financial contribution of Centraide.

Montréal

More than 50 conferences have taken up the challenge of continuing their work with the population by adapting to the limitations imposed by the virus. They were able to help 25% to 30% more people. Centraide, the boroughs, towns and villages, as well as members of Parliament, municipal councillors and the general population have generously responded to the financial needs of the various conferences so that they can accommodate more people in need. It is therefore a source of pride for the volunteers who took part.

Whether it is within the framework of the North of 60 project or in their help to those in need in their communities, **the members of the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul work together to accomplish their mission to meet the poor and serve them with love, respect, justice and joy.**

*Baudouin Kutuka Makasi, Coordinator
Quebec Regional Council*

ATLANTIC REGION

COVID-19 IN MOUNT PEARL, NEWFOUNDLAND

This year, we have seen our whole world being turned upside down with the global pandemic. While we learned to live in uncertainty and having to adhere to strict guidelines with regard to serving our families and keep everything going, two of the SSVP conferences in Mount Pearl were blessed to have the City and a Ministerial Group comprised of all faiths within our City help ease our burden.

The Ministerial Group set up a Go Fund Me account to help us, as we were no longer able to accept food donations. They, along with the City of Mount Pearl, helped St. Peter's Conference and Mary Queen of the World Conference and a small food bank at the Salvation Army, and it was a great success.

Along with that, the City of Mount Pearl, in the past couple of months, has hosted four drive-in movies. While adhering to all social distancing guidelines set out by our Chief Medical Officer and the government, we were able to accept monetary donations. The support within the City has been absolutely fantastic. We live in a City with great community spirit, where helping others is paramount. They have supported us so much over the years and for that we are eternally grateful. The City of Mount Pearl and all of our residents know and acknowledge how important our work is in helping vulnerable members of our community. In the coming months, things are not likely to go back to normal but we have learned to embrace a «new normal».

We are blessed that our volunteers have stuck it out with us during this difficult time and we are able to continue our work. Although things look a little different and our approach to helping others got a little more creative, we persevere. God bless everyone and please stay safe. Hopefully, we can all get together soon.

*Sandra Milmore for
St. Peter's and Mary Queen of the
World Conferences
Mount Pearl, Newfoundland*

ST. PATRICK'S CONFERENCE, CARBONEAR, NEWFOUNDLAND

Due to the global pandemic, our conference had to adapt, finding new ways to engage and continue to connect with not only the neighbours we serve, but also our community and business partners.

This summer we were fortunate to be approved for 12 summer student positions (federal and provincial funding) and additional co-workers. After a busy and anxious spring of volunteers working tirelessly to maintain the services and connections with our neighbours in need, the students were a welcome addition! Some of those hired had been volunteering with us before, while others were completely new to our organization. This summer, with their input, energy and enthusiasm, we were able to assist even more households in our region. Lawn care, grocery deliveries, household repairs and deck building were just a few of the weekly projects completed by the students. Students also created cards with decorated gift boxes of goodies to deliver to those in our communities who are even more isolated due to the pandemic.

We gained new energy and hope as these talented and wonderful young people shared their passion for service to neighbours in need.

*Katherine Burke, Youth member
St. Patrick's Conference
Carbonear, Newfoundland*

IN MEMORIAM

IT IS WITH DEEP REGRET THAT WE ANNOUNCE THE FOLLOWING DEATHS:

Louise Schurman

Divine Mercy Conference
Edmonton, Alberta
January 17, 2020

Eugene Mailloux

Good Shepherd Conference
Tecumseh, Ontario
February 3, 2020

Robert Trudell,

St. Vincent de Paul Conference
Windsor, Ontario
April 4, 2020

Lambert (Bert) VanBerlo

St. Simon and St. Jude Conference
Belle River, Ontario
April 5, 2020

Gerald (Gerry) Chartrand

Precious Blood Conference
Windsor, Ontario
April 6, 2020

André Bélanger

Saint-Léonard Conference
Montréal, Quebec
April 9, 2020

Richard Kropf

Holy Family Conference
London, Ontario
May 9, 2020

Marcella Garneau

Saint Matthew's Conference
Surrey, British Columbia
May 27, 2020

Ria Ling

Saint Matthew's Conference
Surrey, British Columbia
May 29, 2020

Noël Gilbert

Notre-Dame-du-Foyer Conference
Rosemont, Montréal, Quebec
June 14, 2020

Bonnie South

St. Michael Conference
Dunnville, Ontario
July 11, 2020

Réal Cournoyer

Saint-Enfant-Jésus Conference
Pointes-aux-Trembles, Montréal, Quebec
July 23, 2020

Don Schurman

Divine Mercy Conference
Edmonton, Alberta
August 15, 2020

John Gilbert

St. Catharines Central Council
Ontario
5 septembre 2020

They were our brothers and sisters serving the poor.

Lord, we pray that all the good they did bear fruit and be continued.

Help us keep their memory alive in our hearts.

Let us keep them in our prayers.

Please send your death notices to
editor@ssvp.ca



MISSION

The Society of Saint Vincent de Paul is a lay Catholic organization whose mission is:

To live the Gospel message by serving Christ in the poor with love, respect, justice and joy.

VALUES

The mission of the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul implies that as Vincentians we:

- see Christ in anyone who suffers
- come together as a family
- have personal contact with the poor
- help in all possible ways

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**Society of Saint Vincent de Paul
National Council of Canada
2463, Innes Rd.
Ottawa, Ontario K1B 3K3
Tel.: 613 837-4363 / Toll free: 1 866 997-7787
Fax: 613 837-7375
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national@ssvp.ca



www.ssvp.ca



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