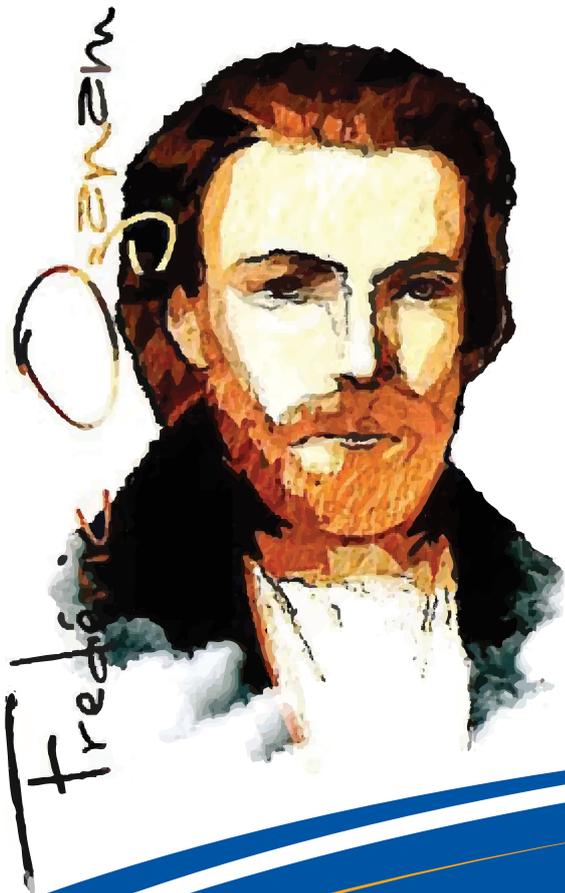




St Vincent de Paul Society
good works

Vision

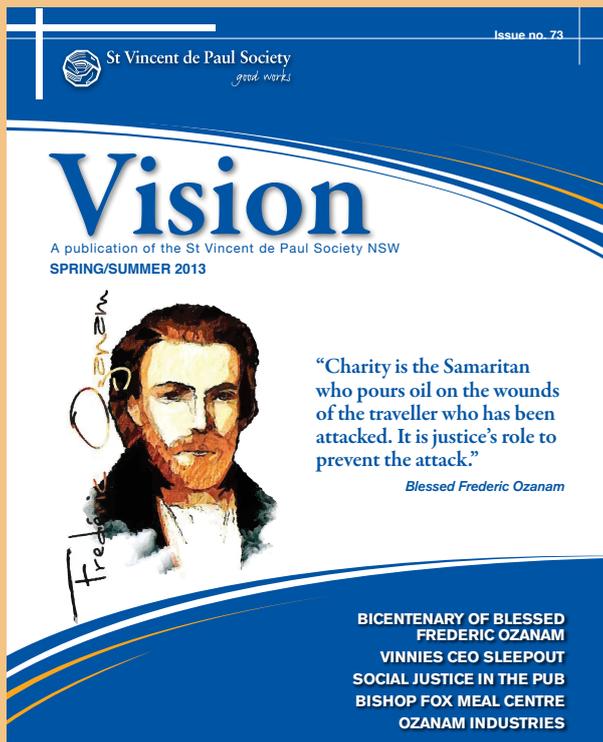
A publication of the St Vincent de Paul Society NSW
SPRING/SUMMER 2013



“Charity is the Samaritan who pours oil on the wounds of the traveller who has been attacked. It is justice’s role to prevent the attack.”

Blessed Frederic Ozanam

**BICENTENARY OF BLESSED
FREDERIC OZANAM
VINNIES CEO SLEEPOUT
SOCIAL JUSTICE IN THE PUB
BISHOP FOX MEAL CENTRE
OZANAM INDUSTRIES**



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We'd love to hear what the Society is doing in your area. Send us a letter or email, or call with an idea for a story or news piece: yolanda.saiz@vinnies.org.au or (02) 9568 0293.

Please DO NOT send original photographs.



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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



Dear friends,

It is with great pleasure that I present you with the Spring/Summer edition of Vision. A publication that allows us to tell the story of our Society and more importantly those of the people we assist.

This year, the Society has celebrated the bicentenary of Blessed Frederic Ozanam's birth, and in this edition you will read about how such an inspirational young man still motivates our members, volunteers and employees today.

As we head towards the end of the year, it is important to reflect on the great work that we have achieved as a network of members, volunteers and employees. We should be proud that we have made a real difference to the lives of so many people, who may otherwise have no one else to turn to. In the past year we undertook 210,000 visitations alone. The Strategic Plan 2013-18 will continue to guide us in our work, so that we can help even more people and bring some hope back into their lives.

We have also looked to the future with the development of a Membership Recruitment and Retention Strategy, which will stand us in good stead to attract new members so that we can continue to undertake the important and unique work of home visitation.

At this time of year, we should also reflect on Christmas, a time most of us will share with our family and friends. It is important that we spare a thought for the most marginalised and disadvantaged people in our community, many who will spend Christmas alone.

Pope John XXIII said, "Mankind is a great and immense family. This is proved by what we feel in our hearts at Christmas."

As Vincentians, we too form an immense family, one that takes care of its brothers and sisters in their time of need; serving Christ through the poor.

I take the opportunity to wish you and your family a blessed, holy and safe Christmas and thank each of you for your selfless contribution to the Society.

Yours sincerely,

Ray Reynolds

President, NSW State Council, St Vincent de Paul Society

CEO'S MESSAGE



Dear friends,

As the year draws to an end, I reflect on the many great achievements of the St Vincent de Paul Society NSW over the past year.

As the organisation continues to focus on social justice advocacy, we have shared some great successes. The

halve homelessness campaign saw us meet with politicians from both sides of government including former Prime Minister Kevin Rudd, current Prime Minister, Tony Abbott and then Shadow Housing Minister, Marise Payne. Supporting this is the great work of our members on the frontline, meeting with local MPs to highlight the issue of homelessness and the need for a commitment to the 2020 targets, and the targeted mainstream and social media campaigns.

This social advocacy is being supported by the work we are doing on the ground.

With over 100 Special Works in NSW, we recently completed a Special Work review which will ensure that we focus on providing the right mix of services that allow us to help as many people experiencing disadvantage as possible.

I look forward to 2014 and the continued work of members, volunteers and employees with the end aim of making a difference to the lives of those struggling with life's hardships.

I would like to take the opportunity to thank you for your dedication to the work of the Society and wish you and your family, a blessed and happy Christmas.

Michael Perusco

Chief Executive Officer, St Vincent de Paul Society NSW

SOCIAL JUSTICE IN THE PUB CONTINUES AROUND NSW



Michael Perusco, CEO St Vincent de Paul Society NSW, Terry O'Brien and Phil Glendenning

Over the past few months, the Society has hosted a series of successful Social Justice in the Pub events across the state. The events provide an opportunity for local communities to come together to discuss social justice issues and their impacts. Recent Social Justice in the Pub events include one in May in Albury where guest speaker, Australian Pentathlon Olympian Ed Fernon, spoke about his experience with mental illness and another in July at Belrose where Michael Perusco, CEO St Vincent de Paul Society NSW spoke about housing affordability and homelessness.

Mr Perusco explained that with more than 105,000 people in Australia experiencing homelessness, it is more obvious

than ever that investment must be made in improving the structures that force people into homelessness.

“Housing costs are the single biggest driver of poverty and disadvantage in Australia. We must have a debate on the range of options that could improve housing affordability. With over \$6 billion distributed on negative gearing and capital gains tax concessions each year, one option is to limit these concessions to investments in affordable housing or the supply of new housing.

“There must be a continued commitment to public and social housing which would provide security of tenure and rent set at a level that allows people to rebuild their lives,” said Mr Perusco.

More recently Phil Glendenning, Director of the Edmund Rice Centre, Board Member of the Refugee Council of Australia, and recipient of the Sir Ronald Wilson Award for Human Rights was the guest speaker at the Social Justice in the Pub event in Parramatta. Mr Glendenning spoke about the plight of refugees and asylum seekers and addressed many of the myths that exist amongst the media and community.

Speaking about the policies of both major political parties in regards to asylum seekers and refugees, he said: "I have terrible problems with the language of "solution", which has echoes of the terrible European history. It's not a border safety issue, it's not a military issue; it's a humanitarian situation that requires a serious humanitarian response."

The St Vincent de Paul Society has a long history of helping migrants and refugees. Catholic social teaching places a special onus on us to help those who seek asylum, having fled war, persecution, injustice or intolerance.

The highly successful Social Justice in the Pub events will continue to make their way around NSW.

If you would like more information about any upcoming events or to find out how you can get involved with social justice issues in your local area, please contact the Social Justice Coordinator, Lukas Rajnoch on (02) 9568 0279.



KEVIN'S DEDICATED SERVICE

Kevin McGrath has dedicated 45 years of service to the St Vincent de Paul Society. While many of his peers are relaxing in retirement, Kevin has been heavily devoted to the Maternal Heart Conference in Inner City Sydney.

During his time with the Society, Kevin has been involved in many areas of work including organising clothing drives with Our Lady of the Rosary Fairfield Conference; home visitations and nursing home visits with St Mary's Conference Concord; and volunteering at the West Ryde Assisted Employment Workshop before joining the Maternal Heart Conference in 1984.

Kevin said that Mini Vinnies is one of the greatest changes he has seen in the Society. "I am so pleased

to see the children helping one another in the classrooms raising money for other children and families struggling to pay their school fees," he said.

After being involved in a hit and run car accident outside their own home, Kevin and his late wife Marie experienced first-hand the generosity and kindness of the Society.

"Marie was left in hospital for 11 weeks and was lucky to survive. The next morning, Billy and Mick from the Society were the first people to arrive and see if they could help," said Kevin.

Kevin's dedication and commitment does not go unnoticed. Maternal Heart Conference President John says that Kevin is a valued member of the Conference. "He does a great job and is very popular with the people that we assist," said John.

When reflecting on his time with the Society, Kevin said that he would encourage others to join if they want to make life easier for people in their community who are experiencing disadvantage. In the end, he feels that helping others is quite simple.

"At times people just want to talk and have someone listen to their problems," he said.

GRASSROOTS ADVOCACY



Lukas Rajnoch, Peter McNamara,
Kate McNamara and Paul Fletcher MP

This year, the St Vincent de Paul Society has been calling on both sides of federal government to recommit to the 2008 The Road Home White Paper's target of halving homelessness by 2020.

The Society undertook an advocacy campaign, which included high level Government lobbying; a mainstream media campaign; recruiting key CEOs to back up the campaign's key message; a social media campaign on Facebook and Twitter; and a grass roots campaign which involves Society members approaching local Members of Parliament asking for a commitment to the 2020 targets.

Peter McNamara has been a member of the Society since joining as a passionate young university student 28 years ago. Peter is still an active member of his local Conference and is also the Chair of the State Council's Social Justice Committee.

With over 100,000 Australians experiencing homelessness each night, Peter was inspired to take action about this issue and ensure that it receives bipartisan support at both federal and state level.

Peter organised a meeting with his local Member of Parliament Paul Fletcher to discuss the targets to halve homelessness by 2020.

Peter explained that he was really encouraged by the experience.

"Paul was very supportive of our advocacy plan and pointed out that a meeting says more to him than a letter. Our willingness to commit our time indicated to Paul the importance of the issue to the community and he said that he would write to Tony Abbott in support of our campaign," said Peter.

Peter encourages other Conference members to do the same.

"If you see the need, or get the opportunity, I urge you to have a go. It takes a little organisation, however, it is worth it. Your efforts will pay long term dividends in forging strong community relationships to assist people experiencing disadvantage," he said.

If you would like to meet with your local Member of Parliament about social justice issues, please contact the Social Justice Coordinator, Lukas Rajnoch on (02) 9568 0279. For more information on the #HalveHomelessness campaign, please contact the Communications Manager, Yolanda Saiz on 0417 446 430.

ST PATRICK'S CONFERENCE, TAMWORTH CELEBRATES FREDERIC'S BICENTENARY

On 23rd April, the 200th anniversary of the birth of Blessed Frederic Ozanam, the combined St Vincent de Paul Society Conferences in Tamworth and the two Vinnies Shops marked the occasion with a celebratory Mass at St. Patrick's Church, West Tamworth concelebrated by Fr. Ross O'Brien and Monsignor Wilkes of St. Nicholas Parish.

Cheryl Backhouse, President, St. Patrick's Conference, West Tamworth said, "Fr. O'Brien gave an inspiring homily about the life and work of Frederic Ozanam, highlighting the importance of deepening our own spirituality as we love and help others. Before the final blessing, members recommitted themselves in the service of the Society and prayed the Canonisation Prayer for Blessed Frederic."



BUDGET COUNSELLING TRAINING IN WAGGA WAGGA

Members of the Care and Support Centre in Wagga Wagga provide assistance in the form of budget counselling, food and EAPA vouchers and a No Interest Loan Scheme.

Members attended a budget counselling program with training and follow-up provided by Wagga Family Support.

This was an invaluable experience strengthening an already great relationship between the two agencies. Six of the original members and volunteers completed the three stages of budget counselling and are now practising at the Care and Support Centre.



Members learnt new skills at Stage I of the Budget Counselling Program

SOCIAL JUSTICE IN ACTION

This year the Society has focused on social justice and inspiring action amongst our members, volunteers and local communities.

Our Strategic Plan has guided the formation of a new social justice advocacy agenda and the enthusiasm shown by our members at this year's State Social Justice Forum generated great energy for action.

Since the Forum in March, the Society's members, volunteers and employees have worked together to focus and enact our new Social Justice Agenda. A few highlights in 2013 include:

- re-established the State Council Social Justice Committee;
- created a new Social Justice Statement for the Society in NSW;
- prioritised three key social justice advocacy areas: affordable housing and homelessness; utility costs and cost of living pressures; and refugees and asylum seekers;

- developed clear policy statements for each of these issues;
- hosted 'Social Justice in the Pub' community events to raise awareness and inspire local action; and
- as part of a broader #halvehomelessness media and social justice campaign, lobbied local Members of Parliament to commit to these targets by 2020.

To continue to build on these foundations and deepen the impact of our local action we need your support. That's why the Society is inviting you to consider the role of Social Justice Officer in your Conference and Regional Council. If you are interested in this role or would like to find out more about it please speak to your Conference President or contact the Social Justice Coordinator on lukas.rajnoch@vinnies.org.au

Following the success of this year's inaugural State Social Justice Forum, the Society is now planning to host the next Social Justice Forum in March 2014 and all members are invited.



SOCIAL JUSTICE IN THE PUB

St Vincent de Paul Society
and more

The St Vincent de Paul Society is bringing social justice debates to your local pub.

This is your opportunity to do something about it and address the injustices within your local community.

Affordable housing and Homelessness

PRESENTED BY:
Michael Perusco CEO
St Vincent de Paul Society NSW

WHERE:
The Belrose Hotel
5 Hews Parade
Belrose

WHEN:
Wednesday 31 July
at 7.30pm

Enquires: 94151492 / lily.basdeo@vinnies.org.au



WHY VOLUNTEERING?



We recently invited Society volunteers from a range of services to share with us why they continue to volunteer. We share some of the responses below with the hope they will inspire you in some way.

"My first involvement with the Society was going to Matthew Talbot Hostel at Christmas to help with the Christmas lunch. Going home, I'd see so many of the men getting ready to sleep the night in the gutter outside, and wonder to myself, why? Thirty years on, the need is still as great as when I first started volunteering." **(Central Council President)**

"I volunteer to help those in need in the community and to keep myself connected to the community. I get a lot of satisfaction from doing so." **(Volunteer, Vinnies Rozelle)**

"It's lots of fun, rewarding, and it's good to do something different." **(Volunteer, Doorknock Appeal, Wollongong)**

"I continue to volunteer because it is a very pleasant and rewarding experience." **(Volunteer, Humanitarian Settlement Services in Wagga Wagga)**

"I volunteer because I care about those less fortunate. I accept and help them without charge or judgement." **(Village Court Resident and Night Patrol volunteer, Sydney)**

"Because there are people who need help. I am capable of giving, it is a way of saying thank you, life has been good." **(Volunteer, Sydney Archdiocese Central Council)**

"Because I grew up in a family touched by mental illness. I relate to the difficulties and struggles experienced by those living with mental illness particularly isolation and loneliness. I volunteer as a friend to make a difference." **(Compeer volunteer, Maitland/Newcastle)**

"This was one of the best experiences I've had in my whole life. It has made me want to do more volunteering. I no longer think that I'm too young to help others in a great way." **(Bright Sparks volunteer, aged 17)**

"I have always believed that I am no better or worse than anyone else and have a belief that I should never stop being grateful, and in doing any form of volunteering it allows me to focus on my gratitude to God." **(State Support Office volunteer)**

We are always inspired by your reasons for volunteering and believe others benefit from reading or hearing about your experiences. To share your member or volunteer story email volunteer@vinnies.org.au .

MANAGING CHALLENGING BEHAVIOURS

Broken Bay Central Council requested Training Services to deliver a Managing Challenging Behaviours program in seven locations throughout their Central Council area.

Pictured are the enthusiastic members from the Hornsby Region representing Pennant Hills, Pymble, Waitara, and Normanhurst Conferences.



RECRUITING AND RETAINING MEMBERS



Members of the Volunteer Development Advisory Committee.

“Many opportunities, One Society” is the Recruitment and Retention Strategy for members and volunteers developed to address the decreasing numbers of members and volunteers across the Society in NSW.

It has been recognised that the declining numbers of members and volunteers is an issue that will impact us moving forward. The focus for the Member and Volunteer Engagement team is to work with Central Councils to attract new members and volunteers to ensure the continuation of Blessed Frederic Ozanam’s legacy.

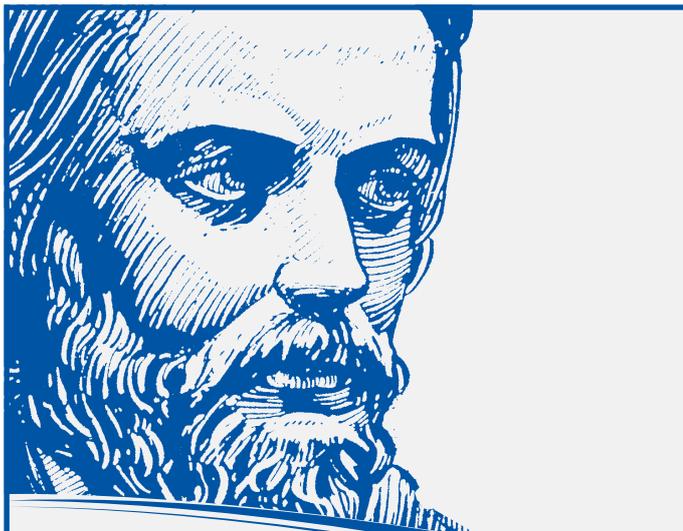
Early this year a Discussion Paper was released to targeted groups within the Society including the Volunteer Development Advisory Committee; Youth; Volunteer Managers Network; and a selected member group, seeking feedback on the areas which need to be addressed. These areas were: preparing for new members and volunteers; recruiting new members

and volunteers; retaining and supporting our members and volunteers; developing leaders; and finally, recognising and valuing our members and volunteers. Following on from this initial targeted consultation, a revised paper was released for general feedback from members and volunteers across NSW.

The Strategy has now been endorsed by State Council and a pilot program will be run in four Regional Councils to implement the “Many Opportunities, One Society” Strategy.

The State Support Office is available to work through the “Many Opportunities, One Society” Strategy with Regional Councils to help prepare them for new members and volunteers as well as help them identify ways to retain the wonderful members and volunteers already on board.

To discuss what you can do in your region please contact Melissa Green, Manager Member and Volunteer Engagement on (02) 9568 0250.



Charity must never look to the past, but always to the future, because the number of its past works is still very small and the present and future miseries that it must alleviate are infinite.

Blessed Frederic Ozanam

INVITATION



St Vincent de Paul Society NSW invites our valued members, volunteers, supporters and staff to join us for our Annual Festival Mass.

Please join us to celebrate the Bicentenary of our Founder, Blessed Frederic Ozanam.

Bishop Terence Brady, Auxiliary Bishop of Sydney will celebrate Mass at St Mary's Cathedral on Tuesday 3 December 2013 at 10.30am

Cnr St Mary's Rd & College Street, Sydney

Mass will be followed by a light luncheon in the College Hall.



RSVP to (02) 9568 0262 or events@vinnies.org.au.

Please also indicate if you will be attending the luncheon. If you are unable to join us at the Cathedral, please join us in prayer.

HOME VISITATION ENHANCEMENT WORKSHOP

The Northern Suburbs Home Visitation Enhancement Workshop was held in Crows Nest earlier this year and was attended by 26 enthusiastic members.

The workshop was facilitated by the State Support Office Training Services team and focused on developing the home visitation skills of members.

The participants listened to a presentation from the local Mental Health Director about the best way for members to assist, refer and advocate on behalf of people who are experiencing mental health issues.

Members participating in the workshop



BARING LEGS FOR CHARITY

Long-time Vinnies supporters Samuel Smith & Son found a creative way to fundraise by hosting a Shorts Day in their offices across Australia. Staff made a gold coin donation to bare their legs on a casual Friday and all funds raised in NSW went directly to support the St Vincent de Paul Society Support Services to assist people experiencing homelessness. We thank you for your ongoing support!



Samuel Smith & Son staff bare legs for Vinnies

AGL CONTINUES PARTNERSHIP

AGL staff lend a hand at Matthew Talbot Hostel



The 2012-13 financial year marks the second in a five-year partnership between the Society and AGL. Committed to educating communities on smart energy use and in support of the Society's crucial Conference work, AGL are making a second donation of over \$120,000 to the Society directed to home visitation work in high need areas such as Western Sydney.

Recently, the Executive Team from AGL including CEO Michael Fraser spent a day volunteering at the Matthew Talbot Hostel in a bid to better understand the importance of our work and connect with the people assisted through the partnership.

LEGAL AID FOR PEOPLE EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS

Inspired by the Vinnies CEO Sleepout, a group of solicitors in Orange decided to spend a night sleeping rough to raise important funds for people experiencing homelessness in their community. John Carpenter and eight of his legal colleagues raised close to \$2000.



Legal eagles sleep out in Orange

(Photo: Luke Schuyler / Central Western Daily)

CITY 2 SURF

Thank you to the nineteen dedicated runners who put in a tremendous effort participating in the City 2 Surf this year raising a staggering \$9145 for the St Vincent de Paul Society. A special thank you to the team from Hilton Sydney who participated for the third consecutive year and raised close to \$4500.

Well done to all our Vinnies champions!



Above: The Seeber Girls raised an amazing \$1500 for Vinnies and said, "We thoroughly enjoyed the walk and feel very proud of the amount we raised. Getting together with sisters is always great and Sydney turned on the beautiful weather for us!"



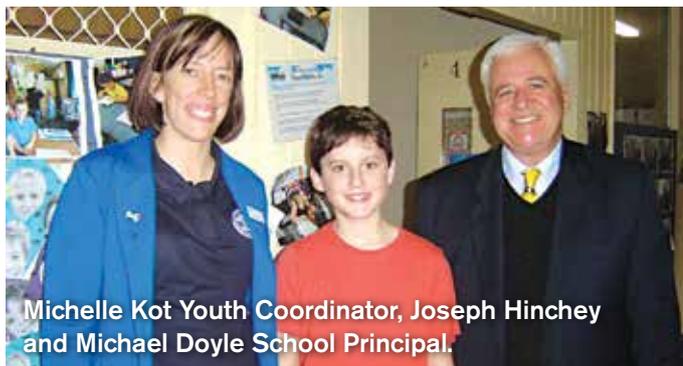
ST PATRICK'S PARISH LITHGOW COMMUNITY SLEEPOUT



On the shortest day of the year 60 enthusiastic parishioners braved an icy Lithgow winters night to raise more than \$4000 for the Society's homeless services in Bathurst and across NSW. St Patrick's Parish event coordinator Marie said the event was a great success with participants aged from 5 to 60 sleeping rough in minus 2 degree conditions.

"Many thanks are due to all who made it such a great night. Nothing could have been accomplished without team work. The Lithgow Catholic community is strong," said Marie.

LOCAL SCHOOLBOY SLEEPS OUT FOR HOMELESSNESS



Michelle Kot Youth Coordinator, Joseph Hinchey and Michael Doyle School Principal.

After hearing about the Newcastle Vinnies CEO Sleepout at several school assemblies and with his school supporting Ray Collins (Director of Catholic Schools and Sleepout participant), Joseph Hinchey from Year 5 at St Joseph's Primary School Merewether thought he would hold his own Community Sleepout to support the St Vincent De Paul Society.

Joseph and his mother Jessica slept out in their driveway on Thursday 8 June to brave the cold conditions. Joseph attracted sponsorship from friends and neighbours and raised over \$170 which he presented to Michelle Kot from the St Vincent de Paul Society in front of his proud classmates.

Michelle spoke to Year 5 about the success of the Vinnies CEO Sleepout and how funds will be used at the Matthew Talbot Centre for men at Wickham, which St Joseph's and their active Mini Vinnies members have previously supported with blankets, sheets and food drives.

BROKEN BAY WINTER SLEEPOUT

On Saturday 27 July, members of the Central Coast Youth Conference (CCYC) along with Broken Bay Youth staff supported the Broken Bay Winter Sleepout organised by the Diocesan Youth Ministry team. This wonderful event coincided with World Youth Day celebrations. Emily, Shana, Gerard and Rianne from the CCYC and 20 young people from across the Diocese had a lot of fun with games, a BBQ and time of reflection and prayer. With very cold temperatures on the night, it was also a great opportunity to raise awareness about homelessness with people sleeping outside on the cold hard ground. \$3500 was raised on the night. A great effort!



Broken Bay Sleepers



Students on the green team get to work

GREEN TEAM

Earlier this year, six students from Year 11 and 12 at St Mary's High School in Casino ran the first ever Green Team session in Lismore Central Council.

Eager students helped weed and mulch an elderly person's garden and hope to maintain the garden on a monthly basis. Importantly, the work also allows the student's to form a friendship with someone from another generation.

ANNUAL MINI VINNIES SYDNEY GATHERING



Students participate in the Mini Vinnies gathering

In June, 235 students and 47 teachers from 29 Sydney Mini Vinnies schools gathered for a memorable day of celebration, learning, reflection and prayer. The day was generously supported by the following staff and volunteers

who shared their experiences and expertise in Social Justice Workshops: Josie Charbel (Homelessness); Micaela O'Reilly (SPARK); Lauren Fearnley of Mary MacKillop Outreach (Disability); Vanessa Julien (Mental Health); Vivian Facchin (Domestic Violence); Gabrielle Russell-Mundine (Indigenous); Mike Reynolds (Assist-a-Student); and Brooke Smith (Compeer).

In addition, representatives from Casimir College of Marrickville, Marist College of North Sydney and a large group of Sydney Vinnies Young Adult volunteers gave of their time. Appreciation is also extended to State Support Office's Fundraising and Communications team and Sydney Catholic Education Office staff for their support on the day.

HOW A STUDENT HELPS A STUDENT



Penelope, Elias and Katie, Year 6 Mini Vinnies members

"In Australia, we are so lucky to have the opportunity to attend school. Unfortunately in some other countries, including our neighbouring countries in the Asia Pacific, this is not the case. At St Therese Catholic Primary School Mascot, the Mini Vinnies group decided to give underprivileged children in other countries the opportunity to attend school for a year. We thought the easiest way to raise the money was to have a cake stall after school. The Mini Vinnies group made and donated the cakes. They sold out in less than ten minutes! We raised over \$600, all of which we donated to the Assist-a-Student Program. With the money we were able to sponsor nine students who can attend school for a year, including school uniform, school fees and books. The Mini Vinnies group of St Therese School is proud that we were able to help so many students." (Year 6 Mini Vinnies student)

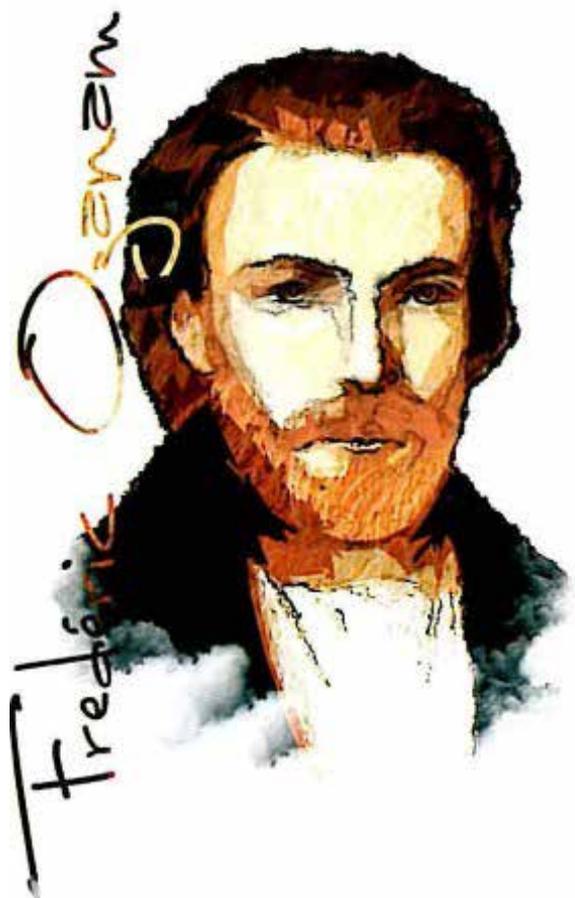
HOLY TRINITY SUPPORTS WINTER APPEAL

A fantastic effort by Holy Trinity Primary School in Wagga Wagga whose Mini Vinnies members organised a Winter Appeal drive asking for kids clothing. Students donated over fifty new clothing items including scarfs, jumpers, beanies and gloves which were distributed to local families.

Some of the great items donated by the kids at Holy Trinity, Wagga Wagga



CELEBRATING THE BLESSED



April marked the bicentenary of the birth of the St Vincent de Paul Society's founder, Blessed Frederic Ozanam, who was born in northern Italy on 23 April 1813. Frederic is not only an intriguing personality who can help us better understand France in the first half of the 19th century but his work and teachings provide insight into the issues and opportunities that exist for a worldwide St Vincent de Paul Society in 2013.

Blessed Frederic Ozanam founded the St Vincent de Paul Society in Paris in 1833 after witnessing first-hand the devastating effects the turmoil of the French Revolution had on society's underclasses. Startled by the disparity between the wealthy and the poor, he saw the marginalised forced into the depths of poverty with disease, unemployment and alcoholism rife among these communities.

Frederic's story is still very relevant today. The lesson we learn from Ozanam is that social justice is not just about giving people a hand out or a place to sleep but instead trying to understand the underlying causes and circumstances that cause these great social divides in the first place.

"Charity must never look to the past, but always to the future, because the number of its past works is still very small and the present and future miseries that it must alleviate are infinite," he once said.

Lord,

You made Blessed Frederic Ozanam a witness of the Gospel, full of wonder at the mystery of the Church.

You inspired him to alleviate poverty and injustice and endowed him with untiring generosity in the service of all who were suffering.

In family life, he revealed a most genuine love as a son, brother, husband and father.

In secular life, his ardent passion for the truth enlightened his thought, writing and teaching.

His vision for our society was a network of charity encircling the world and he instilled St Vincent de Paul's spirit of love, boldness and humility.

His prophetic social vision appears in every aspect of his short life, together with the radiance of his virtues.

We thank you Lord, for those many gifts and we ask, if it is your will; the grace of a miracle through the intercession of Blessed Frederic Ozanam.

May the Church proclaim his holiness, as a saint, a providential light for today's world!

We make this prayer through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

Amen.

LEGACY OF FREDERIC OZANAM

WHAT DO I ADMIRE ABOUT FREDERIC OZANAM?

**KERRY MUIR,
ST VINCENT DE PAUL SOCIETY PRESIDENT
ARMIDALE CENTRAL COUNCIL**

What I admire about Frederic Ozanam, in addition to his undoubted intellectual capacities, was his fundamental belief that changing the social and economic conditions that reduce vast numbers of humanity to living in poverty is as valid as relieving the immediate needs of people experiencing disadvantage. His understanding of social justice and the importance of advocacy for the disadvantaged were revolutionary for his time, yet the ideals he espoused are as relevant today as they were in the nineteenth century. His view was that unemployment, insufficient wages and the impoverishment of workers were social factors that kept people at the margins of their community and were barriers to a just and fair condition of existence.

**NORMAN ROBERTS,
ST VINCENT DE PAUL SOCIETY VOLUNTEER**

A person who at a young age had attained such academic success and therefore among the elite at that time of history, highly talented and yet so humble and caring. People experiencing disadvantage touched his heart and rather than just feeling sorry for them he did something concrete in alleviating their plight. His generous and caring characteristics became a contagion in others around him who were attracted

to follow him and join in the great journey at that time and which is still continuing with successive generations joining in.

I am so grateful to our Blessed founder for the opportunity for me to contribute in a small way.

**SARAH LENTERN,
ST VINCENT DE PAUL SOCIETY NSW STATE YOUTH
AND YOUNG ADULTS COORDINATOR**

As a young person, Blessed Frederic Ozanam was able to create significant and lasting change around him by taking simple steps to make a difference in the lives of those around him. In my role working with young people in the Society, I have the privilege of being inspired by the generosity, enthusiasm and commitment of young people in making a difference in the lives of others.

Working together with young people is critical in bringing about real change in our world. When we support young people they engage with their peers to create large movements for social justice and change. This will result in young leaders who will retain a strong commitment to helping those in need throughout their lives.

In my work I am challenged to look at how young people can be empowered to use their unique skills and gifts. To embrace youth in the Society we need to remember that each and every one of them has the ability to make massive change, just like Frederic did. At the age of 20, Frederic Ozanam remarkably founded the St Vincent de Paul Society. What might our 20 year old members and volunteers be capable of?

“Charity must never look to the past, but always to the future, because the number of its past works is still very small and the present and future miseries that it must alleviate are infinite”

SPIRITUALITY AND FORMATION WEEKEND BY CASSIE WRIGHT

For young volunteers, spirituality takes on many forms. Often, our most spiritual moments are those spent in quiet conversation with the people we assist, long after a Night Patrol has ended, discussing life and meaning under the hazy city night sky. For many, we have found a meaning and purpose in volunteering that has taken us by surprise. Practising the act of valuing people as God values them; for themselves and not their actions and achievements. The Bible encourages unconditional love, which is a hard sell in a world that values achievement, money and prestige.

To lead young people in spirituality and reflection can be daunting. We value our ability to keep reflection accessible and meaningful to all volunteers, regardless of their religion. The NSW State Youth Team recently led many young leaders in a training weekend, to help us involve spirituality and reflection as an integral part of our work. The weekend was an amazing experience, bringing together people from many backgrounds and personal beliefs, and helping us to build tools to run spiritual reflections in a way that works for our Conferences.

Here are some of the tips we learnt:

- create a time for reflection during meetings, and create a reflective space;
- keep things you find that can be used in reflection exercises such as poems, quotes, passages, songs, stories and pictures;
- change it up, everyone in your Conference can lead reflections;
- use symbols such as pictures, drawings and candles that can help create the right mood;
- use and share personal stories of why you came to Vinnies and experiences you have had at Vinnies; and
- embrace the silence. It can feel weird to ask a question and be confronted by a silent group. But let people consider their answers and responses; silence is sometimes what we need to gather our thoughts.

NOWRA GETS BEHIND ASSIST-A-STUDENT AND VINNIES VAN

St Michael's Primary School, Nowra Mini Vinnies organised a week of delicious breakfasts to raise money for the Assist-a-Student Program and the local St Vincent De Paul Society van. The menu included pancakes, smoothies, fruit with yoghurt and tea and coffee for the adults. Mini Vinnies members along with other students, parents and teachers prepared the food and set up a cafe atmosphere for parents and children to sit down and enjoy each other's company before their busy school day began. It was a wonderful week of community bonding that raised \$600.



PARRAMATTA STUDENT 'DOES SOMETHING ABOUT IT'



Almost two centuries on, Blessed Frederic Ozanam's story is being replayed today in Western Sydney. In Parramatta Central Council, Vinnies staff and members were contacted by a high school student, Catherine who had decided that she wanted to do something to help. After thinking about the people who she may be able to engage in her action, and the needs of the local area, she decided to organise her own Winter Appeal. She designed and hand delivered flyers and collection bags, spoke to neighbours and arranged to pick up items. Items will be provided to the people we assist where possible and the remainder will be sold at Vinnies Shops. This clothing drive began with one young person's desire to do something and to make a difference, and serves as a reminder to us all of how powerful some good will and hard work can be.

The poem below was sent to us by Judith Doobov whose grandson wrote a poem about poverty and homelessness. Tai Oshlack, aged twelve, explains why he wrote the poem:

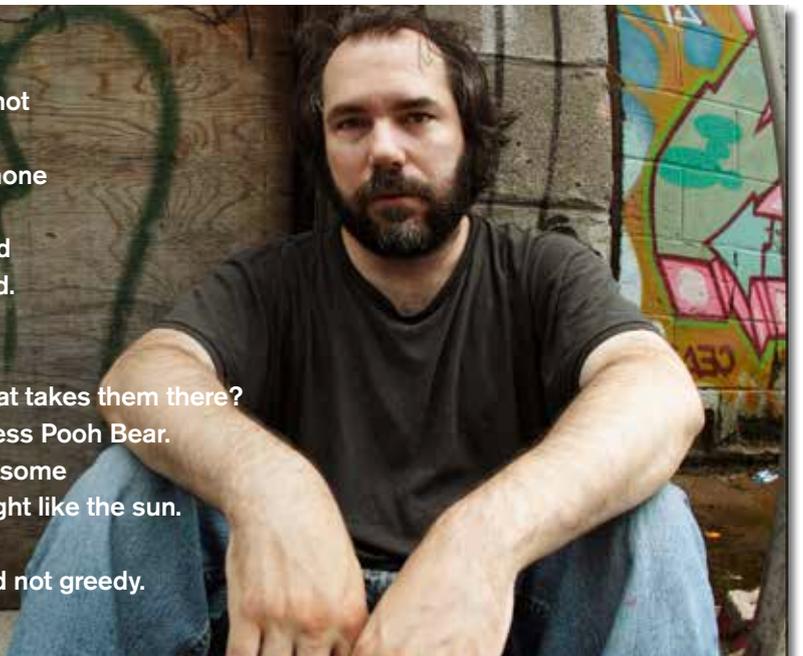
I have chosen to write about poverty and how we take things for granted in Australian society. I chose to write this poem because it is appalling that the majority of long-term

homeless in Australia are found in the large cities of Sydney, Melbourne, Perth and Brisbane. It is estimated that on any given night approximately 105,000 people are experiencing homelessness and I would like to make a change to those numbers. I wrote this poem to create awareness of being grateful for the things we have and open people's eyes to helping make a difference.

GIVE

Australia is taken for granted more often than not
 We have a nice house a big couch and a yacht.
 We often complain about wanting the latest iPhone
 When some people don't even have any home.
 Living on the street is as vicious as a dark cloud
 Living in a home you feel happy, safe and proud.
 Why do you think people live on the street?
 With dirty clothes, messy hair and tired feet.
 Is it mental health or an unsupportive family that takes them there?
 However you look at it, it's as sad as a honey-less Pooh Bear.
 Australia is called the lucky country but not for some
 And yes, you too can make someone shine bright like the sun.
 Give to charity and help those that are needy
 Be grateful for what you have, be generous and not greedy.

Tai Oshlack



CEOs NIGHT OUT IN THE COLD



In June, almost 1200 CEOs nationally and over 300 CEOs in NSW slept rough for one night to raise vital funds and awareness for people experiencing homelessness. Surpassing previous year's totals, the event raised \$5.6 million across the country and over \$2 million in NSW.

Leading fundraiser for the night was Holly Kramer, CEO Best & Less who raised over \$148,000 with the generous support of her staff and customers. She was followed closely in NSW by George Frazis of the St George Banking Group with \$113,000, Matt Comyn of the Commonwealth Bank with \$112,000 and Paul Nicolau of the Australian Hotels Association NSW with \$90,000.

It is a shocking reality that in Australia today, over 105,000 people are experiencing homelessness each night. This figure demonstrates that there is still a lot of work to be done

to address homelessness and that far too many Australians are being pushed to the margins of society; struggling to find a way out and rebuild their lives.

In NSW, 28,190 people are either sleeping rough or living in unsafe or insecure housing such as boarding houses, tents or caravan parks, with a significant and growing number living in overcrowded housing.

When considering these figures it is important to remember that behind each number is the story of a fellow Australian who has experienced the extreme isolation and desperation of homelessness.

In 2008, the Federal Government issued the first White Paper in Australia on homelessness, *The Road Home*. It provided a national framework to effectively address homelessness and most significantly committed to the goal of halving homelessness by 2020.



Deborah Hutton and Jenny Brockie



Ray Reynolds, Holly Kramer and Michael Perusco



Malcolm Turnbull gets ready to bed down

In practical terms, these targets have created a situation where state and territory governments have been trialling new approaches to see what works best in reducing homelessness.

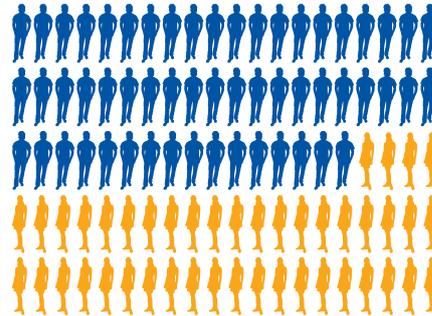
It is important to note that reducing homelessness was never going to happen quickly. It's a complex issue that takes time and over the last four years the foundations have been established to get some strong results.

This is why the St Vincent de Paul Society used this year's Vinnies CEO Sleepout as a platform to call on both sides of federal government to make an unwavering commitment to *The Road Home* White Paper targets to halve homelessness by 2020.

An enormous amount of work has been done and it is imperative that the new Coalition government not walk away from the targets.

In Australia
105,000 people are experiencing homelessness

44% of people experiencing homelessness are women



60% of people experiencing homelessness are under the age of 35

17,000 Australian children under the age of 12

39% of Australians experiencing homelessness are living in severely crowded dwellings

10,900 young people between 12 and 18

In NSW 28,190 people are either sleeping rough or living in unsafe or insecure housing



OPPORTUNITY THROUGH EMPLOYMENT

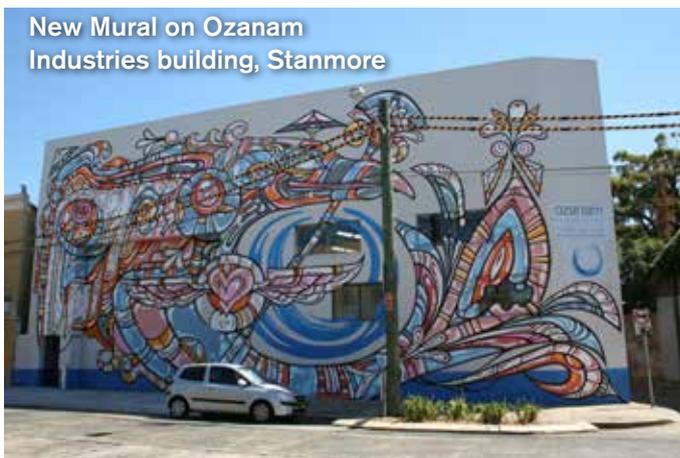
Ozanam Industries has proudly provided employment opportunities for people with a disability for over 40 years. The service is dedicated to supplying high quality service solutions to the Australian business community and currently employs over 100 people in supervised, monitored and supportive work environments at West Ryde, Stanmore and Castlereagh Industries in Coonamble.

All work centres produce a wide array of products and services including sorting and assembling various commercial products for packaging and distribution such as show bags, conference bags and bulk retail items and mail fulfilment and envelope supply.

Recently, Ozanam Industries, Stanmore underwent a significant redevelopment including an entirely new internal fit out. Complete with a new roof, large eating space and balcony, internal elevators and climate control, the service has been transformed into a modern and light-filled work space.

Allyson Morrison, Disability Services Vocational Coordinator at Ozanam Industries believes that the real benefit of the

New Mural on Ozanam Industries building, Stanmore

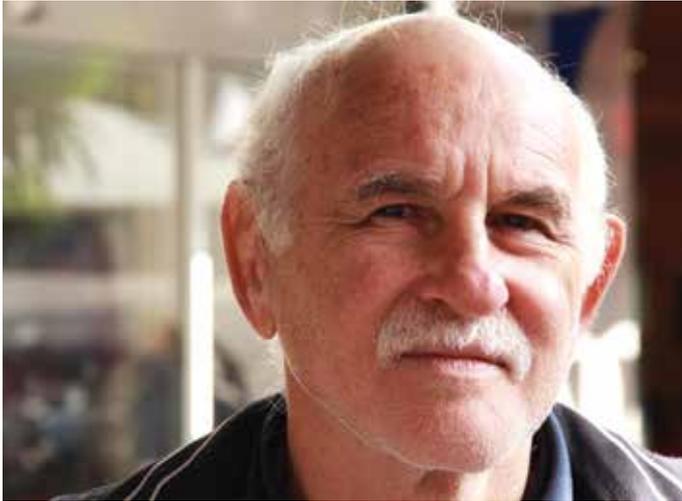


redevelopment is providing the supported employees with better opportunities.

“It shows people living with a disability that the Society recognises them as valued employees and that they deserve to have excellent conditions of employment. The new space will also optimise opportunities for each employee to develop to their full potential,” says Allyson.



A PLACE CALLED HOME



After living in an acute psychiatric facility for two years, Tom's options had almost run out and he was faced with a bleak future living on the streets. Having had a difficult life, Tom's situation was compounded by drug and alcohol abuse, family breakdown and chronic mental illness.

Unfortunately for Tom, many services are unable to cater for people with high dependency needs. After some time struggling to find the right help, Tom was referred to Frederic House, a long-term care facility for men who have previously experienced homelessness and are unable to live independently due to their complex health and support needs.

Sadly, many Frederic House residents have similar histories to Tom, most living with a mental illness, acquired brain injury or other cognitive disorder, complicated in many instances by substance abuse.

Frederic House provides support with healthcare and medical appointments; pays for medications and treatments; and provides emotional support as well as practical help such as clothing and footwear.

Four years since moving into Frederic House, Tom still calls it home.

"I am so thankful that I can call this place home, it provides me with a safe and secure environment every day and I have built authentic relationships based on trust and care," said Tom.

BETTER SUPPORT FOR MEMBERS AND VOLUNTEERS

There are a number of important initiatives which will be implemented over the next 12 months that will transform the way members and volunteers are trained, supported and recognised for their contributions. These initiatives will help to attract new people to the Society and improve the retention of current members and volunteers so that we can continue to make a real difference in the lives of the people we assist.

After a process of discussions and consultations across the State, the Society has recently developed a Member and Volunteer Charter. This Charter is part of the Society's response to one of the Strategic Plan 2013-2018's key strategic goals, 'Developing our Membership'.

The Charter details the rights and responsibilities of members and volunteers while undertaking Society activities.

Many have been practiced for years but have never been formalised. The Charter will help clarify what members and volunteers can expect from the Society and in turn what is expected from them, particularly if they are considering joining or starting work with the Society.

In August, the NSW State Council approved a Code of Conduct for members, volunteers and employees covering expected standards of behaviour at work and new grievance reporting and management arrangements for members and volunteers. The Code of Conduct will progressively be implemented through familiarisation training over the next 12 months.

Copies of this document will be available from Central Council Presidents and local Central Council Executive Officers and by volunteers and employees from their respective Executive Officer.



SAFE HAVEN

Helen was happily married. After her second child was born, she left her job to stay home and care for her children while her husband, Tom continued to provide for the family.

Things started to go wrong when Tom began to feel the pressure of being the sole-provider. Initially, there was no physical violence, but the constant verbal put downs deeply affected Helen and by the first time he hit her, she had started to believe that everything was her fault.

It was only when he started to become violent towards the children that she walked out of their home and turned to the St Vincent de Paul Society for help.

Helen was offered a place at the Marian Centre (Sydney Archdiocese Central Council), that provides crisis and outreach accommodation for families who are escaping domestic or family violence. The children smiled as they were welcomed with bags filled with games, puzzles and lollies

to help them settle in. Since she had come with nothing, Helen was immediately given toiletries and a small amount of money to tide her over until she could apply for support.

It was the first time in months that Helen and her children felt safe. Like many victims before her, Helen was touched by this kindness and told the staff, "I feel you treat me like royalty."

Within a few days, the children were enrolled at the nearby school. The teachers worked closely with staff at the refuge to offer ongoing emotional support. Meanwhile, with the help of her caseworker, Helen was busy making plans for her future. Access to income support, health services and most importantly housing were top priority.

After spending some time at the Marian Centre healing as a family, Helen and her children were able to access an outreach home owned by the St Vincent de Paul Society on the North Shore, where they are continuing to rebuild their lives.



LEADING THE WAY

At the age where many women look forward to retirement and spending precious time with family, some women are faced with the shock of homelessness as a result of an often unspoken occurrence; family or domestic violence.

In Sydney's West, Our Lady of the Way provides accommodation for single women over the age of 60 escaping home situations where they face violence from their partners or quite shockingly, their own children or grandchildren.

Up until three years ago, Sarah had been working full-time and living with her partner. Their relationship was very volatile and he often became violent. Sarah was

diagnosed with kidney cancer and was abandoned by her partner. She was taken in by her cousin and after major surgery was back at work after just four weeks.

Despite her best efforts, Sarah found that she was struggling with her illness and work demands. Eventually, her cousin told her she couldn't support her anymore and asked her to move out.

So at 64 years of age, Sarah found herself battling her own body, alone and with nowhere to go. This was when she was referred to Our Lady of the Way. With appropriate counselling and case management, some months later, the service had assisted Sarah in accessing community housing. They have provided Sarah with outreach support for the past two years.

Sadly, Sarah was recently diagnosed with cancer again and is currently in and out of hospital. Our Lady of the Way staff continue to support Sarah through her battle ensuring she receives appropriate care when she is at home and in hospital.



LENDING A HAND TO PEOPLE IN NEED

The St Vincent de Paul Society has a wide-reaching network of members that provide care and support at a grass-roots level. Members visit people in their homes who are struggling either financially or emotionally or sadly both.

In NSW alone, the Society has over 5,000 members who undertake this crucial work on a daily basis around the State. Last year, Conference members and volunteers made over 209,000 home visitations and an additional 14,000 hospital, prison, nursing home and Special Works visits.

In Redfern, a special task force has been at work since 1976, providing assistance to residents in the inner city, which includes some of the most disadvantaged people in Sydney.

The Redfern taskforce was established by Conference members from other areas, especially the Forestville region, many of them University students or recent graduates. Initially, Task Force volunteers carried out visits to homes from Darlington to Darlinghurst as well as Chippendale, Redfern, Waterloo and Surry Hills. The demand was so overwhelming at the outset, that volunteers found themselves making up to 30 visits a night. This hectic schedule has changed over time and now an average of six to eight homes are visited per evening.

Siva Markandu, who has been with the Task Force for around 30 years, explains that at present there are over 80 registered volunteers, the majority of these aged under 35.

“The Task Force is now managed by a committee who were not even born when the original Task Force was established. It gives me pleasure to know that its future is in safe hands. The Society was founded 180 years ago by a group of young people so it is fitting that youth continue to contribute by helping some of Sydney’s most vulnerable and disenfranchised people,” said Siva.

Siva said that unfortunately, very little has changed in the nature of help sought by people coming to the Task Force and feels that people on Newstart, especially those with young children, are now worse off than ever.

“We must always have them on our radar and be willing to listen and cater appropriately for the individual’s immediate situation. Loneliness leads to mental health issues and addiction and addiction leads to other health issues,” explained Siva.

Numerous cases over the years have stayed with Siva, many of which continue to haunt him.

“You encounter people who are students or recent professionals, from homes not unlike your own, who come to the Centre asking for short term assistance. But those who need most support are people with mental health issues, drug addictions, refugees, the elderly and single parent families living in boarding houses,” said Siva.

THERE ARE MORE WAYS THAN EVER TO HELP VINNIES THIS CHRISTMAS



Our friends at IGA are back on board to support the Vinnies Christmas Appeal 2013

From December 4th 2013 buy specially marked IGA Community Chest products at participating IGA stores to help Vinnies provide food and support to thousands of people living in poverty across Australia over Christmas.



Or buy a paper Christmas bauble for \$2 at participating IGA stores across Australia or donate directly online at iga.com.au/christmas. All monies raised will provide a life-line to many families who struggle at Christmas. IGA has over 1400 stores nationally, all of which continuously help to support their local communities.

Please get behind IGA this Christmas to help the Vinnies Christmas Appeal.

Visit iga.com.au/christmas or vinnies.org.au for more information



St Vincent de Paul Society
good works



Beverley Kerr, Pat Leonard, Matthew Cleary and Pat Davis

BISHOP FOX TURNS 40

The Bishop Fox Meal Centre in Broken Hill recently celebrated 40 years of service in the community providing meals to people experiencing disadvantage.

Long-time Vincentian Pat Leonard served on the original Bishop Fox Meal Centre committee and has been involved since the service's humble beginnings in 1973. Pat said, "Since opening 40 years ago we have served 266,566 meals - that's about 26 a day."

A commemorative dinner was held at the local Musicians Club in Broken Hill and attended by St Vincent de Paul Society members, volunteers and employees, as well as local community members.

The dinner was a great success and Mr Leonard took the time to make a special mention of those people who keep the service going. "We want to thank all of our wonderful volunteers who have helped out over the last 40 years," said Mr Leonard.

John Williams, the Nationals Member for Murray-Darling delivered a Private Members Statement in NSW Parliament congratulating Bishop Fox Meal Centre after attending the commemorative dinner.

"I congratulate Bishop Fox Meal Centre on such a remarkable and selfless milestone. I wish the centre and its volunteers all the very best for the future," Mr Williams said during his statement.



BUILDING INDEPENDENCE

Cardinal Freeman Centre located in Sydney's West offers medium to long term accommodation for men experiencing homelessness.

Unique to Cardinal Freeman Centre is a 12 week program called Beyond the Link. People who take part in Beyond the Link enrol in TAFE and participate in courses including first aid, computer skills, financial management and men's health.

Service Manager, Georgina, believes that the Centre plays a crucial role in building self confidence in the men.

"The programs available for the men at Cardinal Freeman Centre aim to develop life and personal skills allowing them to gain a great sense of independence to move forward with their lives," says Georgina.

At just 28, Adrian had hit his lowest point. Adrian and his partner had a long history of alcohol and drug abuse resulting in verbal and physical confrontations. Their relationship broke down and their two year old daughter was taken into protective care by Community Services.

Adrian had nowhere to go and nobody to turn to.

He was then referred to Cardinal Freeman Centre where staff supported him through case management in his journey to getting his life in order. Through the Family Court, Adrian applied for custody of his daughter and after several months was given monthly supervised access.

During his 12 month stay at Cardinal Freeman Centre, Adrian attended a variety of approved parenting and anger management courses and participated in drug and alcohol counselling.

After some time, the Family Court granted Adrian full custody of his daughter. Throughout the process, staff built a close relationship with Adrian supporting him through each step of his journey including assisting him to link with community housing providers.

Nearly three years on, Adrian and his daughter are living in their own rental home and are both doing very well.



ABILITY VALUED

Ability Links is the NSW approach to local area coordination, where people with disability are placed at the centre of decision making about their lives. Ability Links is community-based, building welcoming communities to foster inclusion of people with disability, their families and carers.

St Vincent de Paul Society NSW is delivering Ability Links in the Hunter Region across 11 local government areas: Newcastle, Maitland, Lake Macquarie, Port Stephens, Cessnock, Dungog, Singleton, Muswellbrook, Upper Hunter, Wyong and Gosford. Ability Links is contributing to the objectives of the National

Disability Insurance Scheme and is a new approach of the NSW Government to foster full and active participation of people with disability in their community.

Thirty five Ability Links Coordinators, known as Linkers, are providing information and support to people with disability aged 9 – 64 years, their families and carers, and their local communities. Linkers are working with local Society members to discuss the needs of the community and to work together to shape a more inclusive society for people with disability and their families.

Ability Links commenced on 1 July 2013 and since that time, over ninety people have contacted the program.

One such person was Madge. Madge had suffered a stroke that resulted in physical disability and some loss of vision. Madge withdrew from her active community roles due to the challenges she faced. Walter, her husband, focused on caring for Madge and the couple became socially isolated. With support and information from their local Linker, Madge is now enrolled in a supportive writer's group after identifying her passion for poetry and desire to re-connect with her community. Walter is also a member of the local Men's Shed and is re-building his social networks and confidence. The couple said they were overjoyed to regain social connections and a place in their local community.

Ability Links is a Special Work of the Maitland/Newcastle Central Council, and is funded by Ageing, Disability and Home Care, NSW Government Department of Family and Community Services.

VINNIES HELPS THOSE WITHOUT A WILL

Statistics show that up to 50% of people in Australia will die without a valid will. Unfortunately, not having a legal Will can mean that instead of being given the space they need to grieve, many families are faced with unnecessary stress when one of their loved ones passes. Without a valid Will the wishes of the deceased person may not be carried out in accordance with their intentions.

With these concerns in mind, the St Vincent de Paul Society Bequest team partnered with local solicitors to present a Community Wills Day event held at Ryde. Local solicitors volunteered on the day to write simple Wills free of charge. The day was an overwhelming success with 53 Wills prepared.



MY FRIEND OZANAM



In recent years, the single best source of insight into the remarkable person that Frederic Ozanam was, has come from Father Joseph Dirvin's publication of his correspondence, *A Life In Letters*. This work covers the period from 1821 to 1844 but does not extend to the final years of his life to his death in 1853.

Which is why the short account of Ozanam's distinguished contemporary, Father Lacordaire, is so important, in that

it helps to round out the final details of Frederic's life and complex, rich legacy. The English translation, published by the St. Vincent de Paul Society in Australia in 1957, describes the already chronically unwell Ozanam through the eyes of his renowned Dominican friend, with detail to the very last day of his life. This is how Lacordaire, in the style of his own time, completes his tribute to the servant of God whose life we celebrate in this bicentennial year:

Dear Frederic Ozanam...Accept these pages wherein I have tried to reproduce a faint shadow of what you were to us... If there were weaknesses in you simply because you were human, they only made still dearer that unshakeable constancy in those things you loved and defended. You were the teacher of many, the consolation of us all. Chosen by God to recall the glories of the camps of truth after long years of humiliation, until the last day of your life you faithfully accomplished this noble mission of peace. The poor man saw you at his bedside. You stood erect before a generation on the platforms of literature. The Press, that other instrument of good and evil, had in you an honest and conscientious workman. You have left no wounds save those which heal from mortal ills because they are inflicted from the motive of charity. Living after you, we no longer have the joy of seeing and hearing you, but the joy of praising you remains, and no matter what destiny may have in store for us, the even greater joy of imitating you from afar, if God permits.



**THERE ARE HUNDREDS
OF REASONS TO DONATE.**

YOU ONLY NEED ONE.

**MAKE YOUR CHRISTMAS
DONATION HERE.**



Vinnies Christmas Appeal



St Vincent de Paul Society
good works

Do Something About It.
Call 13 18 12 or visit
vinnies.org.au/dosomething