



# NEWSLETTER

St Vincent de Paul  
Canterbury Area Council  
Easter 2024



## From Mike Moore Christchurch Area President

Dear Vincentians, Volunteers, Friends, Sponsors and Supporters

Thank you firstly, for your continuing support of the Society as we – like many charitable organisations and small business - struggle to fund the necessary funding for our mission. That is, our welfare programmes that provides food for many families, assistance with clothing, bedding & furniture along with other needs plus also assists our schools with a range of support such as uniforms, breakfast clubs, and IT equipment.

To our many support staff and volunteers – both at our shops and conferences – thank you for your continuing work that enables the wheels of the Society to keep turning- this despite the difficult times we have been experiencing due to the significant increases in the cost-of-living.

This Easter edition features some interesting articles including an Obituary on our former National President, Terry Jordan, and a highlight from our recent AGM held in Auckland where Helen Robinson provided an inspiring address. Ian Tennant (Selwyn) also outlines the amazing work his Conference members have undertaken recently supporting the imminent arrival of a refugee family. Kath Prins (GM, St John of God (Hauora Trust) provides Vinnies with an update on the Ozanam apartments that were opened by Bishop Michael in March 2023.

In addition, there is an update from Cyrene on his recent work with his Young Adults / Young Vinnies, a 'good-bye' to Anna Woods (recent Shop Manager at Stanmore Rd) plus an update from the GM's Desk.

May I conclude by wishing you and your families, a very blessed and happy Easter.

*Mike Moore*  
Area President



# A Highlight at the Annual AGM Auckland 16-17 March 2023

A highlight of our Annual Conference and AGM was the presentation provided by **Helen Robinson**, the Manutaki or City Missioner, based in Auckland. Her presentation entitled "Giving Thanks for What Was, Looking Forward to What will Be, Standing in the Now" was truly inspiring.

Helen opened stating that we were here at the AGM in Auckland because of our Whakapapa – the work that our ancestors/past generations have done for our Society in the past 150 odd years. We are also a part of something that is so much bigger than our Vinnies Organisation here in New Zealand.

"Overwhelmed" by the depth of need in our country was Helen's response to need – the restoration of 'what is right' by giving a hungry person food with dignity. Helen described our leadership as a 'gift we have been given' to help restore what is wrong and laying a pathway for the future. Currently, the City Mission in Auckland are providing **50,000 food parcels per year** (sized at 3 meals for 4 people for 4 days).

Her analysis of need shows that-

- 1 in 5 have insufficient money for food,
- 1 in 2 are located in South Auckland,
- The burden of providing food for a family is carried by women esp. those with children,
- The lack of adequate housing availability,
- Growing concern at lack of people at centres, churches providing the required leadership to help & guide our future generations,

She also stressed the importance of Youth Services to stand beside this emerging group.



Helen Robinson

Helen concluded that the reality that poverty in Aotearoa was that it has both a **colour and a gender** ! She sees 'poverty and desperation' as a huge burden across the country – that we need to right this wrong whenever possible!

Her dream is-

- **For homeless to be rare, brief, and non-recurring**
- **For Zero hunger**
- **For an equitable Aotearoa for all.**

Helen concluded that we must also stand by our younger generations. As our ancestors did many years ago, we need to "take the now and give birth to the future."

# Update - OZANAM APARTMENTS

In August 2023, the Ozanam Apartments opened their doors, providing transitional housing for eight young families so far. Transitional housing offers more than just shelter to a family, it offers stability and a safe space to work through life's challenges.

Grateful for the opportunity, families settled in, appreciating basic comforts. There was a lot of joy in the little things initially, an oven that worked, a drier, and space for their little ones to run around. Families have enjoyed hearing the stories of the many people who have donated and made this dream of housing support for young families, a reality.

With stable accommodation it became possible for families to start putting down roots and dreaming bigger dreams. Families have been enrolling their kids in preschool and school, while some parents got part-time work to help their family through challenging financial times. We have seen families supporting each other through difficulties and sharing together as they grow their community.

The young parents development team are slowly and steadily building relationships with families. As expected trust takes time to build, especially as we operate in a system where our young people have been met with discrimination and judgment. We continue to make significant progress in establishing our commitment to non-judgmental support that enhances the lives of our young people.



There is a lot of challenge within our communities with the cost of living crisis, it is indeed tough times. Our young families are feeling the brunt of this with housing discrimination and extremely difficult financial times. Yet they amaze us with their resilience and their ability to keep moving forward for their family. The young parents development team are enjoying walking alongside these young families. There have been challenges and successes that we have walked alongside.

We look forward to continuing to journey with our young families as they build community and work towards the dreams they have for their little ones."

**Kath Prins, General Manager - Community, Youth and Child Services**

# REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT IN SELWYN

St Teresa of Calcutta Conference located in Selwyn is a relatively new Conference and came into existence about June 2021. This is when we opened a bank account and began serving the needy of our district. We serve the whole of District, which is a huge area, running from the Rakaia River to the Waimakariri River and from the sea to Arthur's Pass. A year later, Mike Daly - then President of the Canterbury Area Council - approached me about assisting in resettlement of a refugee family, through the CORS program. Our Conference accepted this challenge, albeit with little real understanding of what was involved. With God's help and considerable help from the St Vincent de Paul CORS group in New Plymouth, we became officially recognised as a CORS group early in 2023 and so were able to sponsor refugees. The immigration process is a long one. We have developed a resettlement plan and all the attendant paperwork, as well as allocating responsibilities and a resettlement timeline. As part of this process, we have developed good relations with other charitable Christian organisations, most particularly in Rolleston with the Hope Church and Salvation Army. Their help has been most valuable.

We are now in the position where we will shortly welcome the new arrivals, who are expected in April. I earnestly ask you all to pray for the success of this mission, and the successful integration into New Zealand society of this family of eight, whose journey to join us began well over a year ago.

**Ian Tennant - St Teresa of Calcutta Conference, Selwyn**



## From the GM's Desk

As I write this on the news in the background there is more restructuring and more potential layoffs of people. That leads to thinking of the impacts for Vinnies and our operation. Last month our food bank supermarket bill was \$10,000 odd dollars. This amount is more than double what it was 12 months ago - so the impact of higher prices, more demand, school assistance program and closure of a supplying food bank is being felt.

Our welfare program for society finished the calendar year (Jan 2023 - Dec 2023 inclusive) with 8689 completed and closed cases, up some 1560 cases or 22% up from the previous year. We saw furniture supplies run out several times and demand for food up. Pressure on grants and donations is increasing. And shop trading has had its highs and lows. Polly Fisher the shop manager from Papanui held a "Vinnies Meets Vogue" sale on St Patrick's day - in an hour and a half she took \$5,100 and proceeded for the next week to have a great sales week earning \$25,555 for 6 days trading. Well, done Polly and the team. The reality is these funds are needed to ensure we achieve what we can for our mission.

We welcomed Cyrene (Young Vinnies / Young Adults) and Wayne (Logistics) to our team and recently, we bid farewell to Anna - the Stanmore Shop Manager. Anna made the decision to pursue working for herself. In the 2 years Anna has been with us she ran an auction window, focus on antiques, and then put together a skill-based training program for paid staff. Well, done Anna, and thank you for the contribution to our society over the last 2 years - we wish you all the best for the next stage in your life.

And finally, a big thank you to our many supporters who have generously donated to the Society during the past months. **Robyn Casey**

# WELFARE UPDATE

Our key welfare focus for 2024/2025 has been to develop a new initiative that will directly benefit school students, and their families, and also – indirectly the staff and management of both Catholic and non-Catholic schools here in Christchurch.

“Making a real difference “and identify what is not happening that really should be happening in our schools, but for the want of money.

We asked the schools to tell us what many families struggle with financially. The main areas identified were:

- E devices
- Stationery / Books
- Clothing ( uniforms, sports clothing & equipment)
- Camp fees
- Kai for breakfast/lunch
- Transport (bikes)

This financial year we will have helped a mix of six Catholic and non-Catholic high, and primary schools with financial support. For our next financial year, we plan to again continue this welfare initiative for the children and teens at our schools here in Canterbury.

## Mike Moore's observations re welfare

A couple of weekends ago, I had the privilege of meeting Helen Robinson, City Missioner in Tamaki Makaurau (Auckland). During her presentation she advised that currently, the City Mission are providing some 50,000 food parcels each year. She stated that she was “overwhelmed” by the depth of need in our country.

In Canterbury, demand at Vinnies is nearly 20% of what is provided in Auckland by the City Mission. However, that volume in itself has been challenging for many of our Conference volunteers and our staff given the limited volumes of food that is currently available for repurposing from the supermarkets. This situation has not been helped of course, by the closure of Foodbank Aotearoa late last year that has resulted in a number of smaller foodbanks in Canterbury also being forced to close.

The Society is hugely grateful to the many parishioners across Canterbury who willing donate dry foods each week whilst others donate financially to the Society. This, nevertheless, is insufficient to meet the current demand for food and must be supplemented by purchases by the Conferences and at the Area Council level. Demand for support in January and February 2024 has jumped by a hundred cases compared to the same period last year – and since the January - February period in 2020, demand has grown by over 35% for this same period in 2024.

*Thank you again to all our donors and supporters for your generosity and help.  
The Society is truly grateful.*



# Young Adults / Young Vinnies

## Cyrene Tionko: About me

With over 20 years of involvement in ministry, my passion for serving our youth and young adults of the Diocese has never wavered. Though much of my service was through Couples for Christ (CFC) it was there my prayer journey of finding full-time work for the Catholic Church and therefore be working with young people in schools, parishes, and our universities.

God answered my prayers in 2020 when I started working for the Catholic Youth Team (CYT) as the Mission and Outreach Coordinator, and then moving to the Event Coordinator role in the middle of 2022. Both roles aim to support young people in schools and Parishes through various activities such as, Youth Camps, school retreat days, sacramental programs, sporting events etc. Coupled with my 12 years of experience in customer service, sales, and marketing, I believe that God has moulded me to acquire and develop the necessary tools to handle the demands and responsibilities of being the Vinnies Youth and Young Adult Coordinator, which I started with Vinnies in December 2023.

## Vinnie Youth and Young Adult Coordinator

This year as the Young Vinnies Coordinator, I aim to continue in instilling the important work of the Society in the hearts of our Young Vinnies in schools. I want create activities and programs that not only allow our Young Vincentians to grow and strengthen their faith in Jesus, but to also keep them connected and attracted to the work of the Society as they move into their next stage of life i.e. primary schools into high schools, then into university. It is important that our young people see that the work of St. Vincent de Paul is relevant as they grow up.



“...TO SERVE THE POOR  
IS TO GO TO GOD...”

St. Vincent de Paul



# Obituaries



Let us pray for past members of the St Vincent de Paul Society who have died recently.

Veronica Gray & Bev McLorinan.

May they rest in peace!

## Tribute – Terry Jordan

*Part of a tribute by Fr Alan Roberts & Gerry Stevens*

Terry sadly passed away on 27 December 2023 following a short period of ill health whilst in the role of National President. Terry joined Vinnies at the request of his twin brother who was on his death bed. Terry became involved with Vinnies in the 1980's. He took on the call to explore new ways and ensure the Society was adapting to the needs of the country.

For him, 'Faith' and 'Good Works' were not two separate virtues – they went hand-in-hand. He became National President in 2021 and embarked on a programme of updating & revitalising the society. He knew that change was needed and a statement of 'but we have always done it that way' was guaranteed to spur him on even more.

Rest in peace, Terry

– you will always be remembered by your fellow Vincentians.



*For all our fellow Vincentians, who were laid to rest in 2024*

Eternal rest grant unto them, O Lord,  
and let perpetual light shine upon them.

May the souls of the faithful departed,  
through the mercy of God, rest in peace.

**Amen**

**Blessing**  
As we go on our way, May God go with us. May he go  
before us to show the way, Behind us to encourage, beside  
us to befriend, above to watch over,  
And within to give us his peace. Amen