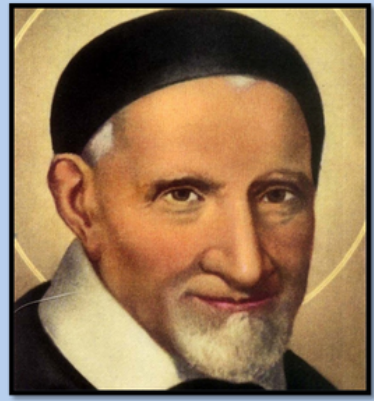




St Vincent de Paul  
Canterbury Area Council  
July 2024



## From Mike Moore Canterbury Area President

Dear Vincentians, Volunteers, Friends, Sponsors and Supporters

In my opening comments back in April – I acknowledged all those who support Vinnies. Today, demand for assistance is continuing to challenge the Society as more & more families continue to struggle with the increasing costs of living. So, we are indebted to all our supporters who are most generous with their support. To all our Volunteers, a big thank you also for your generosity, time and hard work. We are indebted to our Conference volunteers who visit families in their homes providing the food parcels or other needs.

It was also a pleasure to recently host our volunteers afternoon tea with both shop and conference volunteers attending. An enjoyable afternoon tea was provided and after the 'thank you' message from the President, it was time for some entertainment courtesy of Elvis!

At a national level, the new governance structure of the Society has been made available to Vincentians via their Conferences. The Society is now calling for nominations for the new Regional Representative role which will form part of the National Governance Board.

The Winter edition of this newsletter features a number of interesting articles including the recent arrival of the Refugee family from Afghanistan that was arranged by the Selwyn Conference, a 'thank you' to Ian Tennant who has stepped down as President at Selwyn and welcome to Bill Manning. Cyrene reports on the Young Vinnies / Young Adults Commissioning Mass held last June while Maurice Lawlor outlines the successful recruitment programme held recently at the Cathedral Conference. There is an update from the GM's Desk and details of some upcoming events and dates to note for Vincentians.

I wish everyone an enjoyable read and I would love to get your feedback and any ideas for our future newsletters.

God Bless

Mike Moore  
Area President



# Young Vinnies / Young Adults – Cyrene

## Commissioning Mass for Young Vinnies

In April, new Young Vinnie members, their families, teachers and many St Vincent de Paul Conference members filled St. Mary's Pro-Cathedral for their 2024 Commissioning Mass. This Mass was celebrated by Bishop Michael Gielen, assisted by Frs Simon Eccleton and Chris Orr. More than 200 Christchurch students were commissioned as new members of St. Vincent de Paul. This year, there are close to 600 Young Vinnies active in our schools. They carry out the mission of the Society to "Help Us to Help Others" in serving those in our community who face adversity every day.



## Young Adults

Meeting with the Young Adults (YA) on June 21st was a great success with the majority coming from Holy Family Parish. Mike Daly gave a brief history of the Society and help a conversational discussion with everyone present.

I took Q & A and the below are the main take away:

- YA have issue with commitment and availability.
- Want to volunteer at events that does not require a police vet. Most of YA are turned off from volunteering knowing they'll be police vetted.
- Evening and weekend events are preferred due to people working during the week.

Kai for the Community is a great event to start with. I have contacted Verity and she will send me the upcoming schedule.



# From the General Manager's Desk . . . .

A staff upskilling program over several months has recently concluded and we are now seeing the results in the business, with staff trying new skills and several staff continuing their learning journey. A big thank you to Nettles Lamont (Skills Highway) for providing funding for this course.



Donated wood has seen a group of hardy men spending time splitting this firewood and making it available for welfare purposes. Thank you Paul Gilroy, Brian Gardner & Brian McKenzie for your great service plus the 4 lads who helped stack the firewood from St Thomas of Canterbury.

Catholic Social Services and Vinnies are working together to support each other with our clients - we cover any food or welfare needs like clothes or furniture and CSS will support any advocacy or counselling requirements. This relationship also sees Vinnies support CSS with their soup kitchens held 3 times a year.

We celebrated Volunteers week with an afternoon tea function to say "thank you" to our many volunteers who work in the shops and assist in our community network (conferences) - thank you for all that you do. Simply put, Vinnies could not achieve half of what we do without volunteers. Your generosity of time and effort is appreciated

The environment we are operating in now is difficult with cost pressures affecting most sectors. The cost of doing business is high while the cost of living continues to increase. It is a long time since we have seen times as tough. Demand for welfare assistance is at record highs, across all areas - food, furniture including beds & bedding & fridge freezers. Domestic violence is on the rise due to financial pressures and other issues, mental health and substance abuse are regular issues that we also see and hear about. Some of this is very confronting but conversely, we see some great acts of generosity, some very appreciative recipients and then with our supporters some great responses to those in need. For instance, the winter woolies initiative run by Young Vinnies at our schools has seen a great response of warm clothes that will be quickly needed.

To all our supporters - who provide the cash, the goods - furniture, bedding, food - thank you for your generosity. Please continue to support Vinnies as the need is greater than ever now and would be most welcomed.



# FINDING AND RECRUITING NEW VOLUNTEERS

## BEST PRACTICE



**By Maurice Lawlor  
(Cathedral Conference)**

St Vincent de Paul is no different to most other charities in that recruiting and keeping volunteers is overwhelmingly the biggest challenge we face.

We also must be mindful of the need to future proof our organisation/conferences so that we are moving forward towards our mission. Sustainability and growth are an aspirational goal that we all need to embrace.

Recently, the Cathedral Conference had to face up to the challenge of attracting new volunteers to address the trend of reducing membership and increasing calls for help. Several of the loyal and long serving members were deciding to transition away from active service, and despite several attempts to advertise for new members to step up, it was accepted that this was no longer being successful. The conference knew it had to adapt and change the approach to meet this challenge. Over recent months there has been focus on recruitment and the Conference has been successful in getting twenty new volunteers onboard. The new volunteers came from different cultures, age and backgrounds and represent a standout success story for the Cathedral Conference. The key learnings and best practice from this initiative have been shared at a regional conference level and with others who are also facing similar challenges.

### **The Approach**

- A small team (3 members) led the recruitment drive. There was a dedicated focus.
- At an early stage, the focus was on getting out and talking to as many groups and individuals as possible, promoting the work of St Vincent de Paul, why we needed more help, and how you could make a difference. Emphasis was on “an opportunity to put your faith into action.”
- Personal invitations proved to be the catalyst behind more people agreeing to come forward and wanting to learn more – and ultimately volunteering.
- 95% of our new members came from the conversations and invitations that members initiated.
- The targeted profile of people that we wanted to have the invitational conversations with was:
  - Those recently retired or semi-retired people.
  - People who had a social justice/faith in action leaning.
  - People new to the parish who may be looking for ways to get involved and meet people.
  - People who were referred or known to members through personal interaction.
  - Group discussions – actively seek out opportunities to talk to groups within our parish to generate interest (diverse cultural groups, wider parish groups like young adults or new parishioners).

The recruitment focus had visibility around the parish and within the conference including targeted messaging in newsletters and on social media channels. There were regular progress updates to build momentum. These updates complimented the initiative - talking one-on-one and group discussions.

### **Induction**

A well thought through and planned induction is a critical aspect to attracting and retaining new volunteers. The new volunteers need to feel welcomed and well supported, and there was an emphasis on adopting a professional approach around the induction, including one on one mentoring, until all new members had settled in. The drive to grow the conference has been a real success story. Not only have twenty new volunteers from different back grounds joined the conference but it has enabled the conference to be well placed to meet the growing needs and it has also been refreshed by introducing new thinking.

# Vinnies Volunteers Recognition Afternoon Tea

Vinnies Canterbury held a recognition afternoon tea at St Joseph's Papanui for all our volunteers on Saturday 6 July 2024. Volunteers in our 13 Conferences total over 250 members and they are often the face of Vinnies when visiting our clients delivering food parcels or assessing other needs for the family.

We also are fortunate to have 100 shop volunteers who are involved in a variety of tasks such as sorting goods or assisting on the shops.

The contribution of all our volunteers is critical as without them the Society could barely operate. Area President Mike Moore thanked all our volunteers for their generosity of service and their hard work in whatever area they are called to volunteer.

All volunteers were awarded with a Volunteer Recognition Certificate and enjoyed a scrummy afternoon that was put on by our shop managers and other paid staff and were then entertained by Elvis.



# Thank you, Ian Tennant (Selwyn)

Ian was the founding President of the new Selwyn Conference some 3 years ago and led the members with dedication and hard work. He is seen as a very positive person who is modest, kind and caring and goes the extra mile for you. He stepped down last week as President of the Conference, passing the leadership to Bill Manning.



Outgoing President Ian Tennant (right) with incoming President Bill Manning (left).

Ian will always be remembered for his leadership needed for the Conference's Refugee initiative that has taken some two years' work prior to it finally happening! This work has seen Ian in many meetings with Immigration NZ, undertaking a number of courses plus online paperwork. And finally with the arrival of the refugees – the work needed to prepare the property for mum dad and 6 children.

Thank you, Ian for all your efforts and hard work – enjoy your spare time golfing, on your bike, travelling around NZ or just being a great handyman at home or in the community!

Photo shows the work being undertaken for the Refugee family's home.

**Thank you!**

## New President at Selwyn Conference

### Welcome Bill

The newly elected President at the Selwyn Conference is Bill Manning (replacing Ian Tennant). Bill joined Vinnies later in 2023 after he retired following a successful business career that has covered farming, accountancy, and as a business and eBusiness advisor with Inland Revenue. Bill was born and educated in the Hawkes Bay and attended St John's school in Hastings. When he reached Forms 5-7, he became a member of Vinnies Young Adults Conference at this secondary school. One of their roles was to visit the older retired people at the Little Sisters of the Poor home in Hastings.

Bill decided to rejoin Vinnies after hearing about the work of Vinnies at his parish church in Lincoln.



**Put your trust in Him and following His example, always act humbly, graciously, and in good faith.**

**St Vincent de Paul**

# Refugees from Afghanistan

The journey to bring the Safi family to New Zealand began two years ago. The family are refugees from Afghanistan.

The process was led by Ian Tennant and involved the whole of the Selwyn Conference. After a long process of preparation we finally got the official news on Friday 28 June that the family were already on a plane for Doha, and would be arriving in Auckland at 2:45 am on Sunday 30 June. Panic set in as we needed to find accommodation as a matter of urgency. Shabir's brother organised accommodation for a week at a motel, which gave us breathing space for a week. Exactly one week after we knew they were arriving, we managed to find *temporary* accommodation at the old rectory in Wharenui Rd in Riccarton. The only issue was that the property was in a filthy dilapidated state as students had left in a hurry after being evicted. You can imagine the mess, well multiply it by 5 and you have the reality we faced. It took the Selwyn SVDP team along with Eva from junior Vinnies three days to get it to a liveable state for the Safi family.

We are now *urgently* looking for a permanent home in either Riccarton or Rolleston for Shabir, Samira and their family of six lovely children. If you can assist or know of a suitable property contact Bill on 021 027 93763 or [billmanning22@gmail.com](mailto:billmanning22@gmail.com).



Some of the team that worked to get the house ready for the family.

## Dates to note and add to your Calendar

- **St Vincent de Paul Feast Day and Commissioning Mass:**

The annual celebration of St Vincent de Paul will be held on Friday 27 September at St Gregory's church in Cotswold Avenue, Bishopdale. Start time is 5.30pm with a light supper to follow.

- **Annual Festival Day:**

This year's event will be held at the new Marian College facilities on Saturday 19 October 2024 starting at 10am. Details about the days programme will follow in September.

## Morning Tea Held for Retired Vincentians

Cathedral Conference recently formed a Membership Welfare Group whose aim is to not only look after the many in need today but to also look after our own volunteers and their needs from time to time.

The team oversees the sending of cards such as get well, sympathy, and thank you cards, and arranges visits to the retired or lonely members, if required. Recently, a morning tea was held in the Parish's Assisi Lounge, with a particularly focus on our 'past members' to show them that their support and work for our Society has not been forgotten.

This event was a great success and during the morning tea, retired members were presented with a 'Certificate of Thanks' that recognises all their amazing work that they contributed over the many years!

We intend to hold more of these events in the future as means of showing our thanks and appreciation.



## SVDP Papanui celebrates volunteers!

A fantastic lunch shared with volunteers. [Congratulations Sophie on winning the More FM work shout and thank you for sharing with the Vinnies team](#) . Our volunteers do such an amazing job!



### Teen Miss Universe

Congratulations to 14-year-old Flounna Mosa from Christchurch for winning Teen Miss Universe and Best Model at a special ceremony in Turkey! Flounna proudly represents her rich heritage, being half Iraqi and half Filipino.

Congratulations 



# Obituaries

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

## **RIP Mike Hanham** (mid Canterbury)

Mike sadly passed away on 8th June 2024 at his home Ashburton. He was aged 83 years and the current Area President for Mid & South Canterbury Area having been actively engaged as a Vincentian for over 60 years. Indeed, he was aged 18 years old when he was a founding member of the Ashburton Conference.



**ABOVE:** Mike being awarded lifetime membership of MCRU

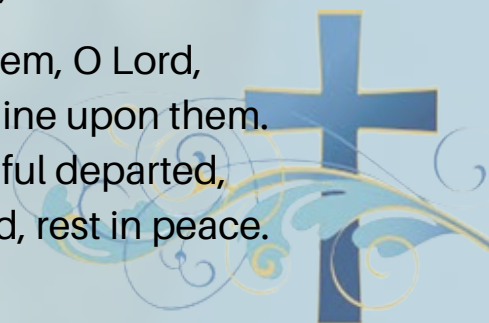
Mike also enjoyed sport and was an active member of the Celtic rugby club in Ashburton having Life membership awarded to him in 2011 and was honoured with Life Membership of the Mid Canterbury Rugby Union. At his passing he was the President of the rugby union. A big loss to the Society and to the Mid Canterbury community. Eternal rest grant unto Mike, O Lord. And let perpetual light shine upon him. May he rest in peace. Amen

*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

*Newsletter compiled by Mike Moore and Trish O'Keefe with contributions from Robyn Casey, Cyrene Tionko, Bill Manning, and Maurice Lawlor.*

**"...TO SERVE THE POOR  
IS TO GO TO GOD..."**

**St. Vincent de Paul**

