



St Vincent de Paul Society  
*good works*

# Sydney Archdiocese NEWSLETTER

**Sydney Archdiocese Central Council**

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**DECEMBER 2020**

## MESSAGE FROM SYDNEY CENTRAL COUNCIL PRESIDENT, TONY CRANNEY AND METRO REGIONAL DIRECTOR, GAYL PURCHASE

With Christmas fast approaching, I wanted to firstly wish everyone and their families a happy and holy season.

I also really want to congratulate everyone for their outstanding efforts during such an unprecedented year with the bushfires and pandemic. So along with a Society restructure, it has been very challenging to say the least.

While we get about our work with humility and don't seek recognition, I believe all staff, volunteers and members deserve a big 'social distance' hug or pat on the back. I also think special mention should go to each person who put their hand up to take on roles such as President, Vice President, Treasurer, Secretary, Twinning Officer, Social Justice Representative, hamper coordinator and so the list goes on. I personally witness on a daily basis the generous acts of so many who give our organisation the best possible chance of fulfilling our Mission.

I would also like to take this opportunity to welcome any new members - I hope you find your time with St Vincent de Paul Society as spiritually nourishing and fulfilling as I have. I have worked with some Saint-like people and in part, offer all I do in honour of them and of course our dear Lord. Self-indulgently, I must also thank my beautiful wife Maggie because without her unwavering support I would have no chance of fulfilling my roles.



Finally, thanks to any recently retired members for all your efforts. Prayers for all those who suffer.  
God bless.

**Regards,  
Tony Cranney**

2020 has been a year like no other. I would like to express my heartfelt appreciation and thanks to our valued members, staff, and volunteers for their continued support, generosity of spirit and great efforts in supporting those who are most vulnerable in our community in the most difficult circumstances we found ourselves in this year.



While this has been a challenging year for all of us we have minimised impact of business as usual wherever possible. Centres, while not open to walk-ins initially, still operated throughout the

year and I am proud to say we have accomplished much in 2020. As at end of October, there are 971 active members in Sydney Archdiocese, many of whom remained active throughout the pandemic lockdown and afterwards. Across Sydney Archdiocese Central Council 10,467 people were assisted in the months from January to October, with over 19,187 visits and more than \$1.8 million of material assistance provided. Given these trying circumstances, along with staff reducing their hours, this has been an inspirational achievement and I would like to acknowledge and thank the staff across our 11 Sydney Archdiocese centres as well as our amazing members and volunteers. As centres reopened to walk-ins we have complied with

guidance and regulations from government and public health authorities and are grateful that we have remained safe and healthy.

While 2020 will soon draw to a close we will continue to work together and remain focused, passionate and determined to provide a 'hand up' to those who seek our support. It is with hope that I look forward to a healthy and fruitful year ahead that will continue to impact positive change. It has been my privilege to work with our dedicated staff and members to live the gospel message by serving Christ in the poor with love, respect, justice, hope and joy, working to shape a more just and compassionate society. *God bless!*

**Gayl Purchase**



## Metro Region Central Councils' Meet and Greet Gathering

On Saturday, 7 November, a combined group of Metro Central Council Members and staff gathered from Parramatta, Broken Bay and Sydney Arch. It was an opportunity for Members of similar and different roles to acquaint themselves with those in other Central Councils and share how each worked.

The morning gathering was wonderfully supported by the Central Council Presidents, Regional Council Presidents and each Central Council's Member Treasurers, Spiritual Advisers, Twinning Officer, Youth Reps and others in key membership roles.



### *The objectives were to:*

- ◆ *Provides a forum to bring Conference members from the three Metro central councils together to meet, discuss their roles with others in similar roles, share ideas, knowledge and learning.*
- ◆ *Improve member experience and engagement*
- ◆ *Explore new and innovative membership models for the future*
- ◆ *Discuss proposals for member and community engagement initiatives and member recruitment opportunities.*

*Each Central Council President shared a report. During the course of the morning, Members also reflected upon our share Missions and twice gathered in breakout rooms to discuss and share:*

- ◆ *What do you enjoy most about your role?*
- ◆ *How do you feel it contributes to the Society's mission?*
- ◆ *What works well in executing your role?*
- ◆ *What are 2-3 strengths you bring to this role?*
- ◆ *What would you love to achieve or to do differently?*
- ◆ *If you could make 1 change to your role, what would it be?*
- ◆ *How you would like additional support for working with those we assist?*

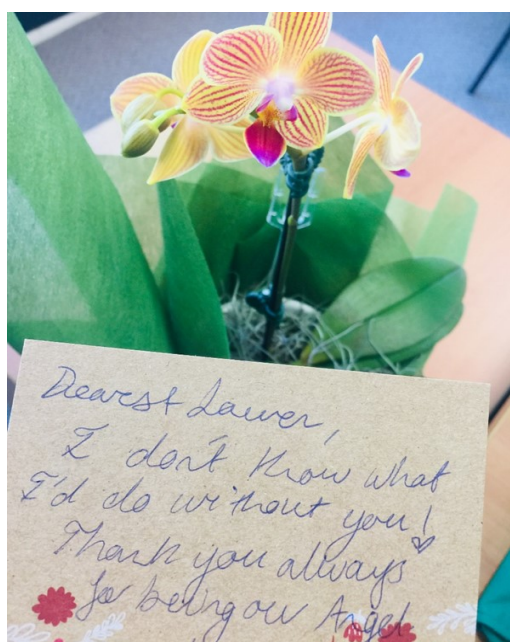




## REGIONAL COUNCIL AND VINNIES SUPPORT CENTRES

### A Kind and Heartfelt Thanks

A kind and heartfelt gesture from one of the very special people we assist who, after fleeing domestic violence and finding herself homeless, sought assistance from our Crows Nest Vinnies Support Centre. It was here that she met Lauren, one of our Client Support Assistants who was able to offer support with getting back in to the private rental market, emergency financial assistance and a shoulder to lean on when things seemed too tough.



Maureen Robinson with Marco

With Marco himself delivering 20 meals per week and Rozelle members and volunteers delivering 60 meals per week, there are now in excess of 80 people receiving a delicious meal each week through the 20forOne program. With the feedback being one of gratitude and warmth thanks to Marco's resourcefulness, generosity and Christianity, one could say the Rozelle Region is now also 'feeding the heart'.

#### Some client feedback:

*"It provides me with a decent meal that I would otherwise not be able to afford - thank you so much for providing it."*

*"So grateful to receive a delicious hot meal and the service is always very friendly they have time for a little chat."*

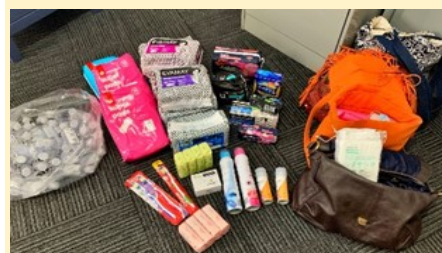


*"Receiving these meals prevents me from having to stand & prepare a meal at the end of the day when I am feeling at my worst. The meals are delicious & delivered with absolute generosity in the Vincentian spirit."*

*"Fabulous, I honestly look forward to Monday's the food is great. It's like having a home cooked meal made by Granma Thank you Vinnies for nominating me".*

### St George Region

St George Regional Council has established an ongoing relationship with Share the Dignity, a not-for-profit which works to make a real difference in the lives of those experiencing homelessness, fleeing domestic violence or doing it tough generally. They distribute ladies' sanitary products to those in need and to help address the high expenses associated with buying such products. We are receiving a donation of products from them once every three months.



### St George Collaborations

Miss Caroline Khouri. Acting Youth Ministry Coordinator from the Marist Catholic College at Penshurst, hosted a Hot Chocolate Stand at the school as part of the Vinnies Winter Appeal fundraiser. The students donated supplies of milk, hot chocolate and marshmallows with the school raising a magnificent \$640 for the Vinnies Winter Appeal. The students made a decision to buy Woolworths Food cards with the money raised. Members made the decision to distribute these food cards at Christmas to the most vulnerable in the Region.

We are beyond grateful to Ms Khouri and the wonderful school community for their amazing continued support of Vinnies in the St George Region.

### ROZELLE

#### Marco - An honorary Vincentian

Marco from "Our Place on Darling" located in Balmain, came up with the wonderful initiative of the 20forOne program – 20 meals, prepared by one team (Marco and his staff) with the meals to be given to people in need within the local community. Approaching Vinnies Rozelle, Marco offered his assistance to people we nominate as the most vulnerable, and through his genuine efforts to assist people in need, has evolved considerably with several local businesses now also joining the program.



## REGIONAL COUNCIL AND VINNNIES SUPPORT CENTRES NORTHERN SUBURBS

### Acts of community kindness



Sydney Harbour North Conference had the pleasure of working with Harris Farm Mosman to organise regular fresh food deliveries to a family in need in the local area. Harris Farm Mosman staff prepared a fresh food hamper each fortnight for two months to assist a young couple who were expecting a baby and whose income was severely affected due to COVID-19. Our Social Justice Representative, Elizabeth Corbett, picked up the hamper from Harris Farm and delivered it each fortnight to the

family. The family was extremely grateful for the fresh deliveries at a time when they needed it most. It was a weight off their shoulders to be able to cook fresh, healthy food from Harris Farm. They were overwhelmed that the community could come together to help with such a thoughtful and timely gesture.

### Mosman Council and Vinnies COVID-19 Wellness Pack Project

stay well

The Sydney Harbour North Conference provided 53 COVID-19 wellness packs to grateful locals utilising funds from a successful application under the Mosman Council 2021/22 Community Grants Program.

In recognition of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic through increased isolation, financial stress and fear of contracting the virus, Mosman Council decided to welcome grant applications that addressed themes of **connection, resilience and healing**, including those that would improve the social and mental wellbeing of the Mosman community and involve a partnership or collaboration with other community organisations.

In its grant application to Council, the Conference noted that through the COVID-19 pandemic:

- Clients are isolated and are fearful of COVID-19
- Many are aged, have physical or mental health issues
- Clients cannot afford the cost of

medical expenses; and

- Clients elect not to purchase items such as sanitiser and masks due to limited finances.

Sydney Harbour North was awarded a \$3,000 grant for its Mosman Council COVID-19 Wellness Pack Project.

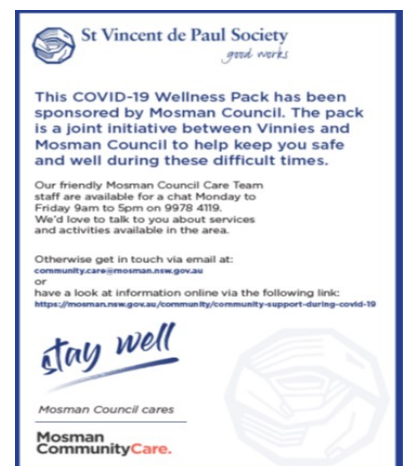
A total of 53 wellness packs, 47 for Vinnies' clients and six for Mosman Council clients were distributed. Each pack included a variety of items to assist clients stay well during the COVID-19 pandemic, including hand sanitiser, tissues, face masks, wet wipes, liquid hand gel, throat lozenges and tea bags.

The packs were accompanied by a joint message from Mosman Council Community Care Team and St Vincent de Paul indicating that:

***This COVID-19 Wellness Pack has been sponsored by Mosman Council. The pack is a joint initiative between Vinnies and Mosman Council to help keep you safe and well during these difficult times.***



Sally Severino (CARE Programs Co-ordinator, Mosman Council) was presented with Mosman Council's six wellness packs on 13 November by Kate Dufall (Wellness Pack Leader) and Peter Marshall (Conference President) on behalf of the Sydney Harbour North Conference.







## REGIONAL COUNCIL AND VINNIES SUPPORT CENTRES

### **FOOD FOR THOUGHT**

The Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS) provides critical support to people seeking asylum and refugees and migrants in vulnerable situations. Since the COVID-19 pandemic began, volunteers have been packing and delivering food, organising community support drives and assist more than 800 people per week. When it became evident to the North Sydney Our Lady of the Way Conference that there was a large surplus of non-perishable items at the Northern Suburbs office from a recent food drive, member Penny Ho coordinated a team of members who sprang into action and organised delivery of the surplus goods to a JRS pick-up point at Two Wolves Cantina in Chippendale. The goods will be provided to people in need who visit the JRS. Penny noted the impact COVID-19 has had on the people supported by the Jesuit Refugee Service and how their need for non-perishables is so great as they receive little to no financial assistance from government.

### **Coping with Covid-19 Pandemic - Burwood and Bankstown**

Unprecedented times have challenged the way we work within our Vinnies Support Centres and in particular both Burwood and Bankstown Offices were impacted with sudden staff and volunteer shortages. At the onset of the pandemic, one staff member had travelled overseas and persons over 70 were restricted. The volunteer support once relied upon, was not able to be maintained for the foreseeable future.

After several months, staff discussed how to best maintain both services and address the well-being needs of staff so it was decided in the interim, that Burwood and Bankstown Centres would join forces, with all of Bankstown operations moving to the Burwood site. Still the lack of volunteer inclusion had impacted the significant workloads that had been tasked, so a joint effort was made to advertise, interview and recruit a new team of volunteers to maintain our work with the community. Approximately 40 applications were received for the combined Centres, recruiting a number of dynamic and motivated volunteers who all come with a variety of skills and attributes that are valuable in the provision of support we provide.

Our aim was to create a multi-cultural and inclusive hub that would assist in addressing the needs of our diverse communities, and this has now become a reality as we welcome culture and familiarity within our combined team to assist in the removal of social barriers for our vulnerable people.

The feedback from our clients has been rewarding, encouraging and accepting. Many who have struggled with

language in the past have been able to communicate with our various bi-lingual volunteers. The relief in their faces can be seen as they show appreciation for the new inclusive service we have been able to provide.

We warmly welcome Tony Thieeos, Pamela Moreira, David Monaghan, James Wong, Osman Al-Balushi, Jennifer Cheung, Sarah Leslie, Cidnie Rose Dela Rosa, Anna Chalhoub, Smruti Patel, Roqaya Ebrahimi, Sonika Madan and Fabiane Lucheta to our team and look forward to the support and personal contribution they all provide to Vinnies as they accept and assist with delegations of workloads.

So far we have a team that can assist us communicate in Tongan, Greek, Farsi, Arabic, Hindi, Mandarin, Cantonese, Marathi, Gujarati and Brazilian, all of whom can help us learn more about culture and indifference, an important experience that assists us in learning more about cultural diversity and things we can do better to promote inclusivity.



Back – Peter, Anna, Sacha David, Maggie (Centre staff) Front -Cidney and Smruti



*Pictured, John Walden receiving his award*

### ***Congratulations to John Walden !***

President, SE Sydney Regional Council  
Maroubra Junction Conference for being recognised for all his charitable work with St Vincent de Paul Society at the Kingsford Smith Community Service Awards. John modestly said he was representing all members from the South East Sydney Region. The award was presented by Matt Thistlethwaite, Federal Member for Kingsford



*Tony Cranney (Left) and John Walden*

### **MAVS site**

#### **Have you seen the updated Member and Volunteer Support website?**

This site exists to share resources, news, contacts, and events with our members and volunteers. We want to provide members and volunteers with the tools, information and resources that will assist you in your service.

<https://mavs.vinnies.org.au/home/>

We really want to know what you like and want in the Member and Volunteer online resources platform. Sydney Central Council has its own page:

<https://mavs.vinnies.org.au/conferences/sydney-central-council/>

For requested updates, please email [Paul.Longobardi@vinnies.org.au](mailto:Paul.Longobardi@vinnies.org.au)

Looking for a way to let your Community or Parish know more about Vinnies? For suggestions on additions to Parish Bulletins or a speaking notes for a few minutes after Mass about upcoming Social Justice events and the work Vinnies does to address Social Justice, please visit the Social Justice page <https://mavs.vinnies.org.au/social-justice/> and look for 'Social Justice Diary 2020 – Resource for Members'.

There are also lots of other updates happening on MAVS which you can check in on anytime here:

<https://mavs.vinnies.org.au/mavs-latest-updates/>

The Vinnies Members Induction video has been updated - please refer to the bottom of this page.

<https://mavs.vinnies.org.au/resources/recruitment/>



## SOCIAL JUSTICE

### SACC Social Justice Network News

The last meeting of the Sydney Arch Central Council Social Justice Network on 20 October was attended by each Regional Council's Social Justice Rep, SACC's Social Justice Rep in Mary Yaager and Michael Murrie, SACC staff and State Social Justice staff. The meeting reviewed progress of the Society's *Build Homes, Build Hope* petition, identified local actions and issues around the stigma of social housing within the community. Consultation has occurred with a variety of providers including Amelie Housing. Acknowledged is the role of Vinnies via Conferences' home visitations in their provision of support and service referrals.

Land holdings in the Archdiocese and their potential in terms of development and use for some social housing was discussed, with actions set for the Network. It is also proposed that the Network form a delegation to meet with the Premier and/or housing and refugee portfolio MPs, from the Government and Opposition.

Tips for successful advocacy were also shared as it is acknowledged that many Conferences are in tune and active in local issues.

For more information on any of the above, contact your Regional Council Social Justice Rep.

Next meeting is 8 December via Zoom. Focus: **Issue of isolation and loneliness- effects on mental health and daily life**

### Vinnies, Social Justice and Community Engagement

#### Recent Social Justice days:

- ◆ Anti-Poverty week - 12/10 to 19/10,
- ◆ NAIDOC week- 8/11 to 15/11
- ◆ World Day of the Poor -15/11

For suggestions on additions to Parish Bulletins or a speaking notes after Mass about upcoming Social Justice events and the work Vinnies does to address Social Justice, visit the Social Justice page <https://mavs.vinnies.org.au/social-justice/> and look for 'Social Justice Diary – Resource for Members'.

### NSW Social Justice Network NEWS

To get all the latest updates on Vinnies Social Justice, sign up to the newsletter: <https://socialjustice.vinnies.org.au/join/>



### Build Homes, Build Hope' Petition

On Wednesday, 21 October, St Vincent de Paul Society CEO, Jack de Groot, and Vice President Social Justice (and SACC Sydney Harbour North Conference Member), Brooke Simmons, delivered our *Build Homes, Build Hope* petition of 11,733 signatures to NSW Parliament. Alex Greenwich, the Independent MP for Sydney, received the petition and committed to table it in Parliament this week. He will also arrange for the petition to be debated, necessitating a response from the Minister for Housing in the Legislative Assembly. Thanks go to everyone who collected petition signatures and to those of you who signed the petition too. The response from SACC was typically strong, enthusiastic and large. Together, our efforts will go a long way towards reminding the NSW

Government that they need to make a big investment in social housing in the upcoming Budget.







## SCHOOLS AND YOUTH UPDATE

### Saint Ignatius' College, Riverview

Despite the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic, school communities across Sydney have exhibited ongoing generosity. Exemplifying this, is the Saint Ignatius' College, Riverview community, who have demonstrated great commitment to serving those experiencing hardship. In response to the Sydney Vinnies Vans Services snack pack initiative, students and staff of the College collected, prepared and donated a total of 6,600 snack packs to the St Vincent de Paul Society in just 3.5 months. Thank you so much – this has been a tremendous help!



### Adapting to Online Learning:

Like most others during this time, the Metropolitan Schools and Youth Engagement Team, has adapted the delivery of our services in order to maintain engagement. In doing so, the team now offers online live presentations (via Zoom or Teams), or the option of a pre-recorded presentation for schools to play during classes and/or school assemblies. Some examples of online presentations that have been delivered so far include: How does Vinnies live out Catholic Social Teachings? (180 Year 10 students); Refugees, Migrants and People Seeking Asylum (20 Year 6 students); The Sacrament of Confirmation: How Vinnies lives out the gifts and fruits of the Holy Spirit (24 Year 6 students).

### Duke of Edinburgh during COVID:

The Duke of Edinburgh Award (Duke of Ed) Scheme is an international leadership in action program that provides students the opportunity of personal achievement through individual challenge, teamwork and fun. During ordinary times, Duke of Ed students are encouraged to volunteer with Vinnies in our retail stores, Night Patrol kitchen or at our Auburn Office and Distribution Centre.

Unfortunately, the COVID pandemic has meant that many of these volunteer opportunities have been temporarily suspended. To account for this, many dedicated Duke of Ed students like Paul from St Patrick's College, Sutherland, have become extremely creative and used their skills to provide assistance in other ways. Throughout the last six months, Paul has spent time baking cupcakes and creating 'Bookmarks of Hope' for clients as well as purchasing items and preparing snack and toiletry packs for clients of Van Services. Thanks Paul!







## SCHOOLS AND YOUTH UPDATE

Vinnies Metro Youth consists of a diverse group of passionate and fun young people from Sydney Arch, Broken Bay and Parramatta Central Councils. These amazing youth volunteers give their time and talents to help those in their local communities all throughout our Region. We have volunteers who are keen to participate in our Youth programs (once resumed following COVID), we have Members who meet regularly with their Vinnies Young Adult Conference and we have many who also serve on various Vinnies leadership teams- they truly are a passionate and skillful group. If you would like to know more about or connect with Vinnies Youth in your local area, please get in touch with Kate Conroy, Vinnies Metro Youth Engagement Officer [kate.conroy@vinnies.org.au](mailto:kate.conroy@vinnies.org.au)

We would like to introduce you to one of our wonderful Metro Youth Volunteers, who is also a Sydney and Broken Bay Youth Volunteer & Member - Jacinta McGrath. Jacinta has been part of Vinnies Youth since 2017. Jacinta has since become involved in Sydney Vinnies Van Services; she is an

executive Member of the Sydney Uni Young Vinnies Conference and was recently elected to join the Vinnies State Youth Team as the Vinnies NSW Youth Social Justice Representative. On top of all that, Jacinta is currently studying a Bachelor of Applied Science in Occupational Therapy at Sydney University.



Jacinta is particularly passionate about youth and of her involvement with Vinnies she says, "I love the community both between volunteers, and between volunteers and clients – whatever the event or gathering in the name of Vinnies, it is such a warm and welcoming affair."

### UNSW Young Adult Conference

The UNSW Young Adult Conference held a Vinnies Winter Appeals Week this year to raise awareness and funds for The Marian Centre. We firstly held a movie night where we



got everyone involved to watch 'The Blind Side'. We also held a Guest Speaker Night that was focused on careers in charity and non-profit organisations at this event our guest speakers were Jack De Groot, CEO of St

Vincent de Paul Society NSW as well as Carmel Mussap, the Inner West Manager for Homelessness and Housing. Both Jack and Carmel discussed their experiences and what their role is like in their field of work. Everyone really enjoyed this and learnt a lot through the conversations, asking questions to both of our speakers.

**Claudia & Helen – UNSW Vinnies Young Adult Conference President & Vice President**

### Sydney University Young Adult Conference

Otherwise known as Sydney Uni Young Vinnies, they held their annual Vinnies Sleepout despite the challenges faced due to COVID restrictions. This year it was a virtual Sleepout, with Members, friends and supporters getting together online and sleeping out in their backyards, in their cars or on the couch! The Sleepout was a huge success, raising over \$6,400 for Sydney Arch Central Council as well as bringing together many young people to raise awareness and understanding of the challenges faced by those experiencing homelessness. The event included great guest speakers, Paul Longobardi (Vinnies Member & Community Engagement Coordinator) and Rachel Boffa (UNSW Young Adult Conference founder) for a meaningful discussion about Vinnies Youth engagement with their local communities.





## New Twinning Project : COVID-19 Relief Support to an Indigenous community in the Philippines



In July this year, Clemton Park/Earlwood

Conference and SACC jointly supported a project for a Conference in the Philippines. The Philippines

Conference was very pleased to receive this project grant, so much so that Fr Sarabia, the Conference Spiritual Adviser, wrote a letter to Raul Manongdo (North Ryde Twinning Officer / NSW Overseas Partnership) who he knows. It is unusual to get feedback on a project like this so early in the piece.

Raul has kindly summarised Fr Sarabia's letter and included photos with captions, which is a very positive story to include in our next Newsletter.

The Society of St. Vincent de Paul (SSVP) Australia recently responded to the request by SSVP Philippines to feed and support sustainable livelihood to indigenous (Dumagat) families in the far island of Polillo, Quezon. The Dumagats had been experiencing hunger, isolation and

with movement restrictions surrounding Covid-19, are unable to work fully and sell their produce.

Fifty families were identified as target participants in the ongoing virgin coconut oil and palm sugar livelihood program. In addition, a community wellness garden will be developed with the goal of having sustainable local food source. The donation received will be used to buy production inputs and vegetable seeds with ongoing skills *training and values formation*. *The mothers' group of volunteers called **Bono Mari**, who are leading and facilitating the program, are assisted by local government officials, while the seminarian conference members act as community organizers.*

The proponent and coordinator of the project is Fr. Joselito Sarabia CM who had served several communities in the island for four years and is the spiritual director at the distant St Vincent Seminary.

On September 27, on the Feast Day of St. Vincent de Paul, families were given purified drinking water, rice, canned goods, and noodles. They were delighted to hear about the livelihood projects and a participant, Mrs. Gerly Salgo, aged 29 said, "I am happy that I

was chosen as a beneficiary among the many residents here in the village. The relief goods will enable us to eat three times a day as a family and have peace of mind that we will not get sick because we are drinking purified water."

She will be working with non-indigenous community residents and exclaimed that "most of the time Dumagat families do not mingle nor work with Tagalogs (non-indigenous)".

Indeed, this project would break indifference and create opportunities for engagement and openness.

Fr. Sarabia, St. Vincent Seminary Conference and SSVP Philippines are grateful to SSVP Australia, particularly donors from St. Bernadette Conference in Clemton Park/Earlwood Parish in Sydney, its Twinned Conference in Australia, and the significant support by the Sydney Archdiocese Central Council. It is envisaged that a local St. Vincent de Paul Society Conference will be established in the near future. For information on SVDP Australia Twinning, see [https://www.vinnies.org.au/page/Our\\_Impact/International\\_Impact/Partnerships\\_with\\_other\\_countries/](https://www.vinnies.org.au/page/Our_Impact/International_Impact/Partnerships_with_other_countries/)



The community agents, leader mothers' group, Bono Mari



Dumagats at Barangay Magdalo receiving clean water and food provision during the recent Feast of St. Vincent de Paul



Community wellness garden at Barangay Bonifacio





## *The Revised “ASSIST A STUDENT” Program*

The Assist a Student program provides funding to support the education of a student in one of our partner countries in South East Asia and the Western Pacific, for one year. This program is one of the three forms of support which the St Vincent de Paul Society provides for our neighbouring countries, aimed at improving their economic and social circumstances, irrespective of their nationality or religious belief. It is interesting to note that this program, which commenced as a National Program in 1995, is unique to Australia.



The other two forms of support are Twinning with overseas Conferences (sharing prayer, friendship and resources) and donating to specific projects which produce useful community development, initiated by our overseas Twin Conference.

An extensive review of the Assist a Student (AAS) program was undertaken by Coffey International last year, to examine the impact of the program and its effectiveness. The report was accepted and endorsed by our National Council in February 2020. The key review findings were:

- ◆ The AAS partner countries really valued the program, as it helped many students to be educated (in primary, secondary, or tertiary education) and hence find employment
- ◆ The AAS scholarships not only assisted students to attend (by providing tuition costs, uniforms, or books), but also encouraged them to complete their courses, as they felt supported and valued.

### **IMPORTANT CHANGES TO THE AAS PROGRAM**

- The sponsorship of the program has increased from \$70 to \$100 per annum per student. See how to donate online:  
[https://www.vinnies.org.au/page/Our\\_Impact/International\\_Impact/Assist\\_a\\_student\\_today/](https://www.vinnies.org.au/page/Our_Impact/International_Impact/Assist_a_student_today/)
- Systems are now in place to follow up on donors to request that they continue supporting another student each year.
- The online donations page will allow donors to better budget their giving, by automatically donating \$9 per month (or more if they wish) for each student, to provide more consistency in funding
- The certificates will no longer include the name of a particular student. This change was made to ensure we are following the Society's Safeguarding Our Children Policies and because the names on the certificates did not necessarily coincide with the child who was receiving the money from the donor. The new certificate will have the sponsored student's country and include a case study of a student who was sponsored in that country. These case studies will also change twice a year to provide our donors with updated case studies.

**THE POWER TO CHANGE A LIFE  
IS IN YOUR HANDS.**

*Do something about it*

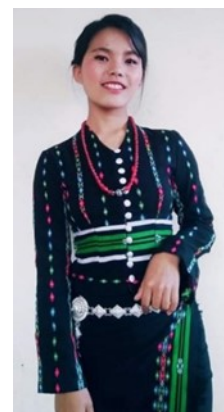


## ***Some Feedback from Students who have been supported by the Assist a Student program this year (note, all names have been changed):***



**Andre** is in Year 3 and lives in Indonesia with his family. Andre likes playing football and wants to become a policeman one day. He likes helping his parents and goes to Sunday School. Andre says, "Thank you and God Bless all the people who have helped me"

**Patricia** is aged 11 and in Year 6 at school in Indonesia. Her father is a fisherman and works hard. The AAS support has meant less worries for her family as her parents are now able to pay her school fees on time. Patricia said "I am very grateful for the funds from all the kind-hearted donors".



**Peter** is 16 and is completing Year 12 in Sri Lanka. Anton's favourite subject is Accounting and he also studies Economics, Business Studies and English. He lives with his mother, two sisters, grandmother, aunt and cousin. Peter did well in his exams last year and has now moved to Advanced level in Commerce to fulfil his dream of becoming a Chartered Accountant. The AAS funds have assisted him to purchase books and to pay for travel to

### *The Revised "ASSIST A STUDENT" Program*

**Anton** is in his second year of a four-year Production and Technology Management degree at the University of Sri Jayawardenapura in Sri Lanka. He is 21 and uses his AAS sponsorship to assist with his food and lodging. He is from a fishing family and had to work very hard to gain his entrance into university. Anton enjoys being on the university soccer team and is a member of the Catholic Student Movement.

**Saw Naing** is a 21-year-old student in Myanmar where she is studying to become a teacher. She lives with her mother and 3 siblings and is studying Method-Education Science, ICT, Domestic Science, Agriculture, Psychology and Visual and Performance Art. Saw Naing is very grateful for the AAS funds which help her to buy books and pay for her school fees.

**Ma Run** is aged 22 and lives with her Aunt while attending West Yangon University in Myanmar. Ma Run is studying Translation and Interpretation, as well as Burmese, Short Stories, Poetry and Drama, English and Communication Skills. Ma Run knows that an education will help her "earn money and I, too, will support others". She is very appreciative of the AAS funding which she uses to help her travel to university and to pay fees.

**Ester** is a student at Phaang Educational College in Myanmar. He is 21 and likes the discipline and teaching at his college. Ester is studying Burmese, English, Mathematics, History, Geography and Economics, and used his AAS funding to buy textbooks and pay school fees. He thanks donors for their "kind help".

**Gil Vella, SACC Twinning Officer**





## Community Sleepout



On Friday 23 October, we held our first ever virtual NSW Vinnies Community Sleepout. 209 participants across the state slept out at home in their car, backyard or couch and came together in solidarity to shine a spotlight on homelessness and disadvantage in the outer suburbs of Sydney and regional NSW.

They were connected via a live stream hosted by Channel Nine and 2GB presenter, Deborah Knight and tuned in to our brave speakers, inspiring videos and live crosses around the state. Over \$156,000 has been raised for Vinnies Services and programs in twelve NSW locations from Bathurst to Albury, Maitland to Wagga Wagga, Armidale to Western Sydney and many more towns in between. The funds raised in each location goes directly back into local communities where the good work of Vinnies Services, Programs and Conferences continue to support locals through tough times. Thank you to everyone involved. In a year like no other, we have never been more grateful for the dedication and generosity of our supporters.



Deb Knight and Jack de Groot in the live stream studio



## Rosalie Rendu Forum

During Anti-Poverty Week, the 2020 Rosalie Rendu Forum brought together a collection of exceptional speakers to discuss how the disruption created by the pandemic and other recent crises could be used as an opportunity to bring about a more just and compassionate society.

More than 140 Vincentians came together online to hear from Nicki Hutley, Partner at Deloitte Access Economics; Jody Broun, CEO of the Aboriginal Housing Office; and Kirsty Robertson, CEO of Caritas Australia. Hosted by Geraldine Doogue (ABC Radio National) our three panelists discussed the theme: *Reimagining the Future: Can we create more equitable communities post pandemic?*

## Club and Council Grants

### Club and Council Grants 2021

In NSW there are Grants that could be applied for Vinnies Conferences, member programs and volunteers for projects that support communities directly. Club Grants and Local Council Community Grants are offered in all areas, but it's important that we know when they open, close and how much we can apply for. We ask that if you become aware of any funding opportunities in your local area, that you send the information to Maryann Novakovic (Philanthropy and Development Coordinator)

[maryann.novakovic@vinnies.org.au](mailto:maryann.novakovic@vinnies.org.au) or call 0412 617 150