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Society of Saint Vincent de Paul - National Council of Canada
2463 Innes Road Ottawa ON K1B 3K3
Tel: (613) 837-4363
Toll-free: 1-866-997-7787 (1-866-997-SSVP)
www.ssvp.ca - editor@ssvp.ca
Charitable Registration Number: 132410671 RR0001



UPDATE ON KEVIN GALLAYS' CONDITION

(Initial news in the October 13 Newsletter)

Kevin is now fully conscious & speaking from his bed. However, there are more body surgeries to come.

Your prayers have been greatly appreciated!



2021 Financial and Statistics Annual Report Forms for Conferences and Councils now available

The Annual Report document is designed to provide a consistent reporting format that will accomplish three things:

- provide a template that will lend itself to assisting the members of the National Council of Canada to speak with some authority and knowledge regarding the activities of all conferences and councils in Canada;
- provide a template for conferences and councils to measure the scope of service according to the Rule and Canadian statutes;
- enable a comprehensive annual report to be prepared for the International Council General.

The updated 2021 annual reports are available under the National Operations Manual at

<https://www.ssvp.ca/annual-report>



NORTH OF 60 PROJECT

We are very happy with this first delivery in this project, and this is just the beginning!

On Wednesday, October 13, under a small autumn sun, while the mercury was 13 degrees, the team from the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul - Quebec Regional Council (SSVP-QRC) was preparing boxes of winter clothes for First Nations and Inuit people as part of the initiative funded by the Secrétariat aux affaires autochtones and coordinated jointly by the the Ungava Lodging Center in Kuujjuaq and the SSVP-QRC in Montréal.

This was the first delivery of a 750 kg batch of clothes, 300 kg of which were sent to Kuujjuaq by Air Inuit and nearly 450 kg delivered to indigenous organizations in Montréal.





WORLD DAY OF THE POOR

The Fifth World Day of the Poor (WDP) will be observed on 14 November 2021. This year's theme "*Open the Doors of My Heart*" is a summons to the responsibility and commitment as men and women who are part of our one human family.

The national action campaign on *Safe, secure and affordable housing is a human right* launched on February 7, 2021, the feast day of Blessed Rosalie Rendue, is aligned with Pope Francis' message, that everyone deserves to have safe and adequate housing for their families. This fourth WPD national campaign is an opportunity to collectively raise the visibility of the SSVP in Canada, and to appeal to potential benefactors, to let them share the gift of assisting persons in need.

The tools for members are available at:

<https://www.ssvp.ca/world-day-poor-tools-members>

*Richard Pommainville, Executive Director
National Council*



MARIE-CLAIRE GINGRAS-LETARTE
FIRST WOMAN NATIONAL PRESIDENT
1977-1983



Ms. Marie-Claire Gingras-Letarte was born in Sainte-Foy on August 11, 1917, and died in Québec City on May 12, 2011. She studied at the Collège Notre-Dame-de-Bellevue in Québec City, directed by the ladies of the Notre-Dame Congregation.

Involved in the foundation of the first Women's Conference of Sainte-Foy in 1956, Mrs. Gingras-Letarte was the President of the Women's Superior Council of Canada, and ex officio President of the Women's Central Council of Québec City, starting in 1966. Then, in 1969, she was appointed Vice-president for the three Americas and the West Indies by the international President Henri Jacob. In 1971, she co-founded, with other companions, the Ozanam Center of the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul of Québec (women's section), of which she was President from 1971 to 2001. This Ozanam Center then took over the activities of the original Ozanam Center which had closed its doors in 1970.

In 1975, after the merger of the two national councils, she became national Vice-president of the newly formed National Council.

In 1977 she was elected President of the National Council of the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul of Canada for a six-year term, making her the first woman to be elected President of a mixed National Council, with Canada leading the way in this area.

Also, during her mandate, a major survey was conducted by the Institut québécois d'opinion publique (IQOP) among all Vincentians in Canada, in order to prepare a multi-year development plan. In addition, Mrs. Gingras-Letarte promoted the establishment of flying teams to ensure the training of Vincentian members across the country.

In 1983 Mrs. Gingras-Letarte was named a member of the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem, as Dame de Commanderie. In 1995 she received the Canada Volunteer Award from Canada's Minister of Health, Diane Marleau, for outstanding service in the volunteer sector.

(Source: Gingras Family Archives and the Vincenpaul-Canada magazine, 1990, volume 18, number 2, pages 20 to 24, *Ceux qui ont bâti la Société au Canada*, Marie-Claire Gingras Letarte, by Éric Gosling)



SPIRITUAL REFLECTION

I thought that by way of this submission of spiritual reflection, I would share an article I read from an elderly indigenous-related gentleman on his personal experience and observations on the Residential School uproar in Alberta. I think it is appropriate because it gives an example of courage against the biased secular culture and prominent media outrage, and presents a more just and complete picture of the Residential School situation.

“Lorne (A Sun Paper Columnist): I have been a follower of your writings for many years and although I agree most of the time with your opinion, even when I don’t, I still respect the way you present it. Suffice to say I am a fan. The time has come for 70 year old people like me to speak

I grew up surrounded by 4 reserves and a large community of indigenous peoples. (95%). It was a community of wonderful, kind, very generous, very humorous people that remained that way even when very poor. Also I have a wonderful successful indigenous daughter with grandkids and great granddaughters. I am not a Catholic and I do not belong to any church. I belong to me and my family but I like Christian values.

It should be noted that the missionaries though were very essential to our success in the northern communities at that time. I had my first TB test administered by a missionary trying to stop a TB outbreak. (I hated her at the time for the scratches on my back. LOL). I got my first stitches from a wonderful nun. I got my first tooth pulled by a missionary. My first X-ray by the nuns. My first teacher was an angel called Sister Rita. I will never forget her and her deep love of all the children she met and taught over the years. My best teacher ever and she was not qualified by Government standards. So although I have never been a Catholic, their church has been very good for me and although I now do know of one very bad priest, most of the people were wonderful. I can still see brother Fillion who later became a priest working all by himself outside the school window making a wonderful merry-go-round for the school yard.

There also were two residential schools in the community. When I arrived in the community, there were no phones, very poor roads, mostly winter access, and not a lot of services other than the churches. The mission school was there long before my time. It has been told to me by elders that many small children, some way younger than school age, were dropped off at the missions sick, hoping the nuns could heal them. Sad to say many died from measles, diphtheria, TB, smallpox, flu and many other conditions of the poor. Just the reality of the north. Years ago most of the dead were placed in the trees so the birds and other animals could take them back to nature.

It was the churches that convinced them that that part of their culture should be changed so that to stop the spread of disease so they started to bury the dead. If the dead were Christians, their grave was marked by a painted rock of a small wooden cross which rotted away in 25 years or so. No one could afford a headstone and if they could there was no one that made them at the time. Times were hard and in fact desperate in the 30’s. Many people owed their lives to the missionaries and we tend to forget that.

They were not always right, no of course not, but they actually wanted to educate, feed and make the lives of all people better regardless of where they came from. The churches do not need to apologize for trying to educate the poor in the only system that would work for nomadic peoples, they need to say sorry though for protecting and moving about the few bad apples (priests).

The Government saying they are sorry is meaningless. They didn't have a clue of the impact of their decisions at the time and they don't have now. Most of the older generation that did suffer are long dead and gone or have forgiven. It seems to me that many of the new generation just want to be victims and feel money would solve their pain. We need to understand that very few people wanted to live in the north under the isolated conditions at the time just to help out with a few indigenous peoples. After the federal government took over the school system, most of my junior high school teachers were immigrants from the British Commonwealth (India, England, Ireland and other countries) as no Alberta teachers wanted to live up there when they could live in or near a city with a doctor, bank, good grocery store, ambulance and my goodness even Policeman.

The quality of my education suffered because all of a sudden the nuns were not qualified to teach us in 1967 thus I had to try and take lessons from teachers with a very heavy accent and hard to understand and wanting to move close to the cities as soon as they could. Thank goodness the missionaries were there for the past 300 years. Were they all good? No, but many were wonderful and now that seems to be forgotten.

How many of today's critics have relatives that went up to those communities in those times to try and help? Not many, I bet. The media today is only telling half the story, so I feel we as witnesses have to speak up and speak to the truth. If you want I will take you to a sacred ground where hundreds of people were left in the ramps and trees or layed on the ground when they died. No one but historical memory marked their graves.

Please believe me when I say that the missionaries were not a bunch of evil persons out to kill little children like it sounds in today's media. That is not what I witnessed. The missionaries knew that the ancient peoples of our land could not continue to exist in a nomadic and isolated society, so they tried to educate them and of course change their culture to be more compatible with the conditions of the times. Were they right? Maybe, I don't know, but at least they were willing to try and help.

Like I tell my children, I cannot become indigenous like them but they can become Canadians like me and they are. There are more success stories out there than even you realize. The missionaries did not just throw bodies into the ground. Most were marked by a small wooden cross made by the brothers of the mission or parents of the child. Those crosses are long gone. Sad but true. I can also take you to the unmarked graves of many people that were not indigenous as well if you want. That was the way of the north.

Sorry to ramble on for so long but many things need to be said and if the elders of our society lack the moral courage to say them, we are doomed anyway. Please encourage people to stand up and be heard for the good not just the bad. Thanks and keep writing.

Jim Bissell”

As I said in my earlier (August) submission, we should mourn for any injustice done by our Catholic brothers and sisters to anybody including the indigenous, and Residential Schools is an important lesson on how we should serve all the “Poor” going forward. However, we should also stand up and proclaim to anybody our Christian faith and values in the spirit of truth and justice (that Jim recognizes). Vincentians are not just charity workers, we carry a vocation and a mission far beyond meeting the physical needs of people. Indeed, we hold in some real way their opportunity to share with us eternal life and happiness. We should be honoured to be of the same crop of missionaries as described here by Bissell who were willing to brave the harsh environment of the North to bring our Christian hope and values to the indigenous.

*Joseph Tsui, National Spirituality Committee
Western Regional Council*



New Action Handouts available in the National Action Plan on *Safe, Secure and Affordable Housing is a Human Right*

Since the launch of the national housing campaign, several conferences and councils have been engaged in housing related topics. Pope Francis reminds us in his World Day of the Poor message,

Serving the poor effectively moves us into action and makes it possible to find the most suitable ways of raising and promoting this part of humanity that all too often is anonymous and voiceless, but which has imprinted on it the face of the Saviour who asks for our help.

The question that Pope Francis is ultimately asking:

What path of justice must be followed so that social inequalities can be overcome and human dignity, so often trampled upon, can be restored?

The National action campaign on *Safe, secure and affordable housing is a Human Right* is aligned with Pope Francis' message, that everyone deserves to have safe and adequate housing for their families. Please find the updated National Action Plan for new Action Handouts here: <https://www.ssvp.ca/housing>.

CHANGING TIMES

October 2021

Society of Saint Vincent de Paul - National Housing Campaign

In concert with the launch of the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul's Canada-wide multi-year National Action Plan on Housing, this is the fifth in a series of newsletters to help you and your conference address the housing needs in your community.

We hope and pray the content in this and future editions will inform and inspire us to serve in new and holistic ways!

[CLICK HERE TO SUBSCRIBE](#)
[National Newsletter](#)

**Safe, Secure and Affordable Housing
is a Human Right!**



Changing from "Not In My Back Yard" to "Yes, In My Back Yard"

Things Your Conference Can Do

- Reach out to those you already serve to determine their housing concerns, the challenges of paying rent and how precarious this situation is for them. Are they facing evictions? Can you think of ways to improve the situation?
- Determine what housing support programs there are in your area and how to contact housing support workers.
- Try to identify the severity of homelessness in your conference area by talking to your pastor, parishioners, police chief and local health officials, particularly those in the emergency service.
- Determine if homeless people are being housed in shelters, hotels or motels in your area and how many. Has the number been increasing lately, and by how much?
- Begin a dialogue with other faith groups, shelters, warming centres, social agencies, charities, native groups, etc. on the possible solutions to your local housing issues. Consider partnering with one or more of these other groups.
- Arrange a brief presentation during a weekend mass to discuss housing and homelessness. Solicit the involvement of interested parishioners, especially those with social services skills to become advocates and perhaps join your conference.
- Consider identifying at least one conference member as your Social Justice representative or Housing champion.

Examples of "Yes, In My Back Yard"

- Discover how a Kingston couple decided to provide a home for someone in need! [Article](#)
- A Toronto tiny home builder's effort to create roofs over those most in need! [Article](#)
- St. Mary's Church initiative to provide housing for those without a home! [Article](#)
- Pope Francis converts part of the Vatican into a home for those in need! [Article](#)
- Page 2: Discover how Halifax Particular Council is making a difference!

Share what your council and/or conference is doing to make a difference!

E-mail us at: sj-nac@ssvp.ca

Champions Corner

Become a housing champion for your Conference or Council!

If you need help getting started, reach out to us at sj-nac@ssvp.ca.

HALIFAX PARTICULAR COUNCIL

Emergency (Tiny) Shelter Initiative

The purpose of the Tiny Shelter initiative was to help with the immediate problem of homelessness and those living “in the rough” in HRM (Halifax Regional Municipality) during the winter. Another objective was to create public awareness that the needs of the homeless are not being met. Homelessness has been exacerbated due to the Covid-19 pandemic with 440 individuals considered homeless in HRM. The Halifax Mutual Aid organization saw an immediate need for emergency shelters but the lack of land availability was a major obstacle.

It appeared that St. Ignatius could play a role by providing the needed land on a secluded area on church property. A presentation was made to the St. Ignatius Parish in January 2020. Assisting those in need is rooted in Catholic teaching. It speaks to advocating for the dignity of every person, basic human rights, our civic and spiritual responsibilities toward one another, and the urgency with which we must act on behalf of the poor.

Each unit costs about \$1300 with all materials and labour have been donated. The shelters would be removed in the spring. St. Ignatius Parish Council approved accommodating five tiny shelters. The initiative was then accepted by the Archdiocese. They facilitated insurance and liability issues.

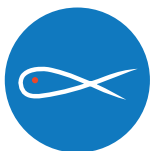
Occupants have played an active role in the project. Outreach workers will support the users of the shelters and help meet their needs as they arise. Occupants are also trying to build relationships with each other as community members to meet their immediate shelter needs, and in doing so build autonomy, self-actualization, and dignity.

St. Ignatius has had one occupied shelter from early February to mid August. We have provided an onsite portable toilet and trash cans. The parishioners have been very supportive. Their generosity has been shown with donations of clothing, shelter comforts, money and gift cards.

Our occupant related that the shelter and the parish provided a secure environment, improved his mental and physical health and allowed him to positively move his life forward.

This project has allowed parishioners to become aware of the homelessness crisis and to also make a vital difference by living their faith through action. The tiny shelter initiative has deepened our faith in action and has allowed the parish to serve the needs of those most marginalized in our community.

*Ray Burke, Secretary, St. Ignatius Parish Council Chair, St. Ignatius Society of St. Vincent de Paul;
Chair Social Justice Committee (reports to Halifax Particular Council)*



○ God, as we recall the life and virtues of Blessed Frédéric and Blessed Rosalie, grant that we may continue their work of bringing good news to the poor. We ask this in Jesus' name. Amen.





NATIONAL HOUSING CAMPAIGN

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 20TH 1.00PM (EASTERN)

Our national housing/homelessness subcommittee is inviting you to a webinar on housing and homelessness across Canada. This webinar is for all involved in our social justice network or are interested in learning more about housing and homelessness issues and its relation to persons in situation of poverty.

There will be two speakers. Garth Brown on the topic of secondary suites, an option available in many of our cities; Garth brings years of experience in this area and will provide an extensive overview of the value of secondary suites. Michele Biss from the National Right to Housing will provide us with valuable information and recent news regarding housing in Canada.

Please note that Monday November 22 is National Housing Day in Canada.

There will be a question & answer time after these two presentations.

When: Nov 20, 2021 01:00 PM Eastern Time (US and Canada).

Please register in advance for this zoom via this link: [Register here](#)

After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the meeting.

*Jim Paddon, Chair
National Social Justice Committee*



QUESTION & ANSWER

Q: Is there a vaccination policy for SSVP?

A: The vaccination question has multiple angles, as it could be for persons in need, our customers, our employees, or our volunteers at our special works such as a store or a shelter/refuge, or for home visits, or even just for Vincentians meeting.

Since the beginning of the pandemic, regular statements via the National newsletters have primarily been around:

... prevention and precautions are in order in this constant evolving situation. It is important to listen to the advice of Public Health authorities:

- Wash your hands often and well;
- Avoid touching your face, nose, or mouth with unwashed hands;
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick;
- Clean and disinfect surfaces that are frequently touched;
- Stay at home and away from others if you are feeling ill;
- When sick, cover your cough and sneezes and then wash your hands;
- Wear a mask;
- Practice social-distancing.

Note that all Public Health authorities are recommending vaccination, but governments are not explicitly mandating for the general population.

Throughout Canada, the use of proof of vaccination is being applied for places considered “non-essential” such as bars, restaurants, gyms, theatres/entertainment. However, for essentials, such as grocery stores, pharmacies, health services places, general retail which includes thrift stores and food banks, a vaccine passport, and by extension, proof of vaccination, is **not** required.

There are currently no federal or provincial governments that have mandated vaccination for the entire population; the only known aspect is, at the federal government level, for federally regulated-employers, including public and private sector employers who are subject to the Canada Labour Code, to follow a mandatory vaccination; plus, for people travelling by air or train, there will be a need to also demonstrate proof of vaccination.