



Society of Saint Vincent de Paul  
National Council of Canada  
ISSN 2560-824X  
Volume 5 no. 11 - August 11, 2021

### In this issue:

- Emergency Food Security Aid
- Student Retention, A Shared Responsibility
- After the School Bell Snacks
- Spiritual Reflection
- Social Justice News
- On The Street - SSVP Youth
- SSVP Saint-Jean-Eudes Women's Conference Into High Gear
- Twinning with Colombia
- Question & Answer

**Online version :** [Volume 5 no. 11 - August 11, 2021](#)

**Subscribe here**

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](http://www.ssvp.ca) - [editor@ssvp.ca](mailto:editor@ssvp.ca)  
Charitable Registration Number: 132410671 RR0001



## EMERGENCY FOOD SECURITY FUND

On August 4, the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, the Honourable Marie-Claude Bibeau, announced another \$100 million to help Canadians in need to access food.

The new funding will be divided between Food Banks Canada, Second Harvest, Community Food Centres Canada, Breakfast Club of Canada, Salvation Army, and La Tablée des Chefs, who in turn will distribute it to thousands of local food banks across Canada. Local organizations will use the funding to purchase and distribute food and other basic necessities to meet the emergency needs of the most vulnerable people. They may also hire temporary help to cope with volunteer shortages and adapt operations to help keep workers, volunteers and recipients safe.

This announcement is an extension of the Emergency Food Security Fund

<https://agriculture.canada.ca/en/agricultural-programs-and-services/emergency-food-security-fund>

August 9 announcement

<https://www.newswire.ca/news-releases/minister-bibeau-announces-another-100-million-to-help-canadians-in-need-to-access-food-876444159.html>



## STUDENT RETENTION, A SHARED RESPONSIBILITY

<https://ssvp-mtl.org/en/news/93/la-perseverance-scolaire-une-responsabilite-partagee>

**New partnership with the Centre de services scolaire de Laval (CSSDL) for a pilot project in art therapy for reception classes.**



In 2018, the high school dropout rate in the public sector was 13.6%; the rate for families below the poverty line was 20.1%; and the rate for immigrant families was 22.1%. A study conducted by the Réussite Montréal network (2020) confirms that the absence of a diploma leads to lower annual income and endemic unemployment. *"It is essential that the school community work with families as well as with organizations working in the field of school retention. We are therefore proud to collaborate with the CSSDL to offer a*

*caring environment and stimulating projects for students",* said Geneviève Dubois, director of the [Opération Bonne Mine](#) school retention program.

### **About the Centre de services scolaire de Laval (CSSDL)**

The CSSDL offers French educational services throughout the city of Laval, serving nearly 56,000 students. Laval has the second highest rate of immigration in Quebec, after Montreal. Several schools at the elementary and secondary levels include integration classes, which aim to introduce newcomers and allophone immigrants to the French language.

### **The Opération Bonne Mine art therapy pilot project for CASA (social-emotional adjustment class) integration classes**

With an often painful experience of uprooting, traumatic situations of war or violent social conflicts, often not speaking the language of the host country, these children have a great need for expression and psycho-emotional support. Through original and innovative art therapy projects, these students express their traumatic experiences and begin a healing process prior to the development of their academic learning potential within their host school.

### **More details on the partnership**

Thanks to a partnership and financial support from the Quebec government 15053 measure, through the CSSDL, schools will be able to experiment the benefits of art therapy for all their students in CASA classes. The pilot project was tested in four classes (one at Eureka Elementary and three at Saint-Maxime High School) in the spring. We are working closely with the Educational Services - Youth Sector development officers who are bridging the gap with the schools, to allow us to mobilize a safety net for students in need. The project is welcomed with open arms by teachers, remedial educators, psycho-educators, administrators and students. To be continued for the 2021-2022 school year!

## AFTER THE SCHOOL BELL SNACKS

*After the school bell* is a Food Banks Canada program that addresses various ways to meet the immediate needs of hungry children, while helping them to acquire a nutrition culture that will be useful to them for the rest of their lives.

The Saint-Jean-Vianney Conference in Longueuil, Québec uses this program to provide children aged 5-12 with nutritious food during the summer season, when schools are closed. The children appreciate the snack bags they receive at the weekly food distribution.





## SSVP SPIRITUAL REFLECTION – AUGUST 2021

I am sure that all of us in the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul must feel particularly saddened by the current and seemingly continuous discovery of the atrocities committed under the supervision of the Catholic Church in the residential schools. How could our brother and sister Catholics, especially those consecrated individuals within religious educational orders, have been so cruel or so naïve as not to know that they were causing terrible harm to the little boys and girls as they executed the policy of forcing them away from their natural homes for such a long time – over a hundred years. I am sure that no amount of apologies and atonement would be sufficient to remedy the pain on the human level. Any consolation must have to come directly from our all-knowing and all-loving God. I want to urge each of us, whoever reads this spiritual reflection, to ask our Lord and our God to embrace with love all those who suffered and died under that system, and grant the survivors and all the families who suffered, the knowledge to understand God's providence and plan for them, through which they can find the peace to forgive. Also, that God grant the rest of us, including the Catholic administrators, educators and ordinary Catholics, the courage and wisdom to know the full extent of our fault and how we can learn from this grave error.

What does this have to do with today's Vincentians? Through our works of charity, we believe that we are doing good to the poor by our services, just as, I am certain, the Catholic policy makers and teachers of the residential schools believed that they were providing a service to the children who were disadvantaged and marginalized due to their native culture. Though we may never fully understand why their methods had become excessively violent and cruel as we now discover, and we can promise ourselves that we will never knowingly adopt such policies, it seems to me today that it is appropriate to reflect on our foundational motivation and values and remain vigilant so we may not commit the same error.

Our fundamental motivation is love, which can be defined as “wanting totally for the good of others as themselves”. In this context of serving the needs of people of different cultures, as we often do, I think that our principal Vincentian virtues of humility and meekness can be the two most important guideposts for our methods and decisions. Humility is recognizing one's own and others' true worth and limitations. We know that whether we are the ones who give or the ones who receive, however powerful or weak we perceive ourselves to be, all people are totally and equally dependent on God's continuous grace and sustenance. There is no room for superiority or inferiority. Meekness is recognizing equality in diversity among different peoples and cultures and acting accordingly with respect and justice.

Our North of 60 program, which is well known among Vincentians, is a good example of Vincentian humility and meekness in practice. In the program, Vincentians simply respond, to the best of our ability, to the specific requirements expressed by the northern communities, without questioning in the slightest way their continued similar needs year after year, or why it is that they seem not to be able to make themselves more self-sufficient. We can and do pray along the way that the northern communities can come out of requiring outside assistance someday, but our continued assistance is not conditioned on any change on their part. Could there be a more expedient way of changing the economic and social conditions of the northern communities that could result in their becoming more self-sufficient? Perhaps, but if this required a violent change to their living culture and traditions, such as being moved away from their natural habitat, then we would not be acting out of love for their sake, but for our own expedient satisfaction.

There are many opportunities for Vincentians as an organization to serve people of different cultures and traditions, either explicitly or by virtue of the reasons for poverty, such as in immigration and



refugee assistance programs, prison ministry, or conference twinning. We can truly witness to God's love by being humble and meek in our policies and methods, so that, to the extent of God's willing, we can contribute to the reconciliation of the wrong done in the past by our fellow Catholics.

On the individual level, in many cases, our work simply involves distributing food, furniture and other material support for the poor in a fairly transitory manner. In Canada, many of the poor we meet are of a different cultural background and different tradition. Humility and meekness arising from sincere and mature practice can provide us with the right disposition to meet and serve these people. Though transitory, we can be assured that we do readily communicate our subconscious disposition, whether it be one of condescension, indifference or appreciation of the culture and civilization that the people represent. If we are, in the final analysis, called to share the good news of God's unconditional love, the only correct attitude and disposition we can have is one of genuine acceptance and respect, which can only result from our attention to humility and meekness.

We know that God can and does turn evil acts, however diabolic, into redemptive grace as part of His salvation plan. Let us pray that we, Canadian Vincentians, can continue to be one of the channels for healing and grace for our Indigenous brothers and sisters in this wonderful country of ours.

*Joseph Tsui, National Spirituality Committee  
Western Region*



## SOCIAL JUSTICE NEWS - AUGUST 2021

Questions often asked by our membership are “What is social justice?” and “Why is SSVP involved?” If we consider the term *systemic change* as the overarching theme of our social justice efforts, it may become clearer. Systemic change simply means to look at more than the short-term assistance we provide to persons in need via our charitable works, including food, clothing and shelter. If we look more holistically at ways we can actually change systems that adversely affect persons living in poverty and look at ways we can advocate for and take actions that lead to positive systemic changes that address the root causes of poverty, then we can have an ongoing effect on reducing poverty in Canada.

We need look no further than Frédéric Ozanam to see why we should be active in social justice issues. Ozanam was a university professor, lawyer, linguist, writer and newspaper editor. He spoke of the need for worker rights, including jobs, just wages and pensions. Ozanam saw the widening gap between the rich and the poor and the need to address issues such as employment, just salaries, education, nourishment, health care and spiritual care for all. His newspaper articles and other writings demonstrated the need to advocate for change. At his beatification, Pope John Paul II stated: “He understood that charity must lead to opposing injustice. Charity and justice go together. He had the courage to be engaged on the front lines socially and politically.”

September 9<sup>th</sup> is the feast day of Frédéric Ozanam. I would encourage all SSVP members to consider recognizing this day of celebration as a national SSVP Social Justice Day. Look at ways you can celebrate Ozanam’s life and commitment to both charity and justice.

There is a need to advocate having social justice raised to an equal level with charity. Every council/conference should include social justice and allow adequate time to discuss various issues. We must address all forms of injustice that have a profound and negative effect on persons living in poverty. Today’s world has many challenges and injustices that cry out for effective and compassionate advocacy and systemic change.

While Frédéric Ozanam’s body lies in tomb in Paris, and his soul rests in heaven with God, his spirit resides in every one of us. Please join our social justice efforts.

### Social justice survey

Our national committee recently conducted a survey for current social justice reps and supporters. I shall review the results of this survey in the September SSVP newsletter. While the survey targeted members who are active in social justice, we did include the survey in the July newsletter for any members to complete and submit. I would encourage you to complete the survey and submit it, even if it is past the deadline, as your response can still assist us as we develop a social justice strategic plan. I shall share results of the survey in the September newsletter.



## Sub-committees

Our national social justice shall also be planning the creation of several sub-committees to enable a more effective level of work on specific issues, including advocacy, multi-cultural diversity, prison ministry and Indigenous issues. We invite any SSVP member with an interest in any of these topics to consider joining our efforts.

## Indigenous news

September is an important day for all Vincentians. As mentioned earlier in this update, September 9<sup>th</sup> is the feast day of Frédéric Ozanam and I would recommend that we reflect on his social justice efforts on this day every year.

In addition, September 27<sup>th</sup> is the feast day of our patron Saint Vincent de Paul. September 30<sup>th</sup> is Orange Shirt Day in Canada. On this day, we reflect on the story of Phyllis Webstad and her time spent at a residential school in Williams Lake, BC. To read about her story go to [www.orangeshirtday.org](http://www.orangeshirtday.org).

I would encourage every conference to recognize Orange Shirt Day as the beginning of actions that help to educate our members about Indigenous history, culture and faith traditions. I have already heard of several councils and conferences across Canada that are planning actions to enhance our understanding and appreciation of these issues. We would like to hear from you about your plans for such action as we gather this information. If you would like further resources for your council or conference, please email me at [ssvpjp@gmail.com](mailto:ssvpjp@gmail.com).

September 9 <sup>th</sup>	<a href="#">Ozanam Feast Day</a> and Social Justice Day
September 27 <sup>th</sup>	<a href="#">St. Vincent de Paul Feast Day</a>
September 30 <sup>th</sup>	<a href="#">Orange Shirt Day</a>

*Jim Paddon, Chair*  
*National Social Justice Committee*





## ON THE STREET – SSVP YOUTH

*On The Street* is an event hosted by the Society of Saint Vincent De Paul's Youth Conference in London, Ontario. The event took place on the corner of Horton Street and Wellington Road on Sunday, June 27, 2021 from 12:30 pm to 3:30 pm. In preparation, we purchased and collected an array of donations, which included many different items for the less fortunate. Some examples of supplies we had at the OTS event this year were non-perishable food items, clothing, utensils, and hygiene products. As someone who has been a part of the SSVP youth group for four years, I have come to learn that every single event is enjoyable, but as this was my first time attending *On The Street*, I was thoroughly shocked at how rewarding and enjoyable it truly was. It was an event that brought many people from our community together for the greater good.

The event began with the 26 volunteers working as a team to set up different tables that corresponded with the items we gathered, as well as assigning people to look after the different tables. Once the tables were in place and organized, we began letting people come through and encouraged them to take whatever was needed, in the end we served around 90-100 people.

The dedication and commitment of everybody involved was truly amazing. The perseverance demonstrated by the group to get everything set up in the heat, and the fact that everyone gave up their Sunday afternoon to come out to the event, was truly a testament to how meaningful experience it was.

Thank you to the St. John the Divine and St. George SSVP conferences, and the Holy Family Life Connect Group for asking for volunteers, as well as all of the families and friends that came out to help with *On The Street* this time. We were also truly blessed with all of the donations made by Clothing Works/Goodwill, and the Hyde Park Lions for lending us their tables and trailer. Without any of you, this event would not have been possible.

The *On The Street* event meant a lot to me. As I said before, this was my first time participating in this event and it definitely will not be my last. In addition to feeling a strong sense of community while working with the volunteers, I also enjoyed conversing with those who came out to the event. It was an amazing and rewarding experience to attend an event where I was able to talk to a group of incredibly kind-hearted and respectful people that, despite difficult circumstances, were still able to remain appreciative, compassionate, loving, and generous. It is so easy during these times to turn a blind eye to helping others and to forget to see the good in the world. I left the *On The Street* event with a new, more positive, perspective.

Volunteer work is something that is so unique and unlike any other experience. Not only does it teach you about others and the community around you, but it also teaches you about yourself. For as long as you volunteer, you will never stop learning, developing new skills and passions, and gaining insight about yourself and the world around you.

By Adria and Olivia Gioiosa







## SSVP SAINT-JEAN-EUDES WOMEN'S CONFERENCE INTO HIGH GEAR

We are taking this opportunity to tell you about our SSVP conference, which has undergone a lot of upheaval over several months. We experienced some problems at our thrift store, located for several years in the old school Pavillon Pedneault at Saint-Jean-Eudes. With advice from an expert, it was decided that the building environment was not adequate. Then, in early 2020, COVID-19 came along and we were told that the city was going to demolish the old school. We were thus forced to move.

Our volunteers rolled up their sleeves and negotiated with the city and two city councillors, Carl Dufour and Jean-Marc Crevier, and we were able to find a new location. We visited the building with our volunteers to make sure that it was suitable for us and the premises were prepared at the city's expense. Despite the sanitary constraints caused by COVID-19, it was possible for us to move there in the fall of 2020. Everything had to be boxed up and moved to our new location at 2127 Deschênes Street in Arvida. It was a good task that required many hours of work, and we cannot forget the great collaboration of the city and the owner of the location, Marc St-Gelais, who lent us his staff to set up our new location.

All the volunteers were extraordinary and they did not count their time. We now have a very well organized location that is more accessible and closer to downtown, which allows us to reach a larger clientele in need. We have established a two-day-a-week alternating work schedule and are strictly following sanitary guidelines when open to the public.

*Esther Laferrière, President  
Saint-Jean-Eudes Conference*







## TWINNING WITH COLOMBIA

We give our sincere thanks to Our Lady of Lourdes Conference, West Kelowna, BC, for their twinning with Our Lady of Perpetual Help Conference, Andes Antioquia, Colombia, which benefits many families and our nursing home.



Andean families receiving Sunday lunch at St. Vincent's headquarters.



Grandparents of our nursing home at breakfast time.



Families waiting to receive food vouchers.



## QUESTION & ANSWER

**Q:** We receive non-Catholic books or videos in our donation bins; is it appropriate to resell them?

**A:** Part of a circular economy, our social enterprise side of the Society, donations from the community are very important; this special works is very anchored in Pope Francis' encyclical Laudato Si', On Care for our Common Home, by providing a second or third life to goods.

Donation of books or videos that are non-Catholic / Christian need to be processed for general appropriateness, e.g. no pornographic material.

Since the Society assist anyone, regardless of creed, there are no judgement on other religions, as many are intertwined in history; as an example, in the Koran, they do talk about the prophet Jesus.