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Opération Bonne Mine

*A provincial
program
that encourages
student
retention.*

ARTICLE ON THE WEB SITE OF
COUNCIL GENERAL INTERNATIONAL:
www.ssvpglobal.org/News/National-Councils-news

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT



NEW YEAR WISHES

Dear Vincentians,

Happy New Year 2018! May your volunteer work nourish you all year round. I wish you excellent health because, as we say, if health is good, everything is good! So, if you enjoy good health and your volunteer work not only occupies your free time, but nourishes you as well, I believe that we may hope for another very good year. We will need it, since, as all of you know very well, assistance requests keep increasing. In addition, to be able to respond to all in a Vincentian way, we will need a lot of creativity. But I am not worried because I am convinced that we will make it. I will always remember when I started volunteering for the Society. It often happened that our conference lacked the necessary food, money, and even the workforce. Then one of our members told me, "Do not worry, young man. Things will work out." Interestingly, the necessary help always arrived in a timely manner. Therefore, let us focus on the work we need to accomplish, and I am certain that everything required to serve the people who need us will be there on time.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

The recruitment process for the position of Executive Director at the National Council of Canada has been finalized. I am pleased to announce that Mr. Richard Pommerville has accepted our job offer and began his new role on January 3, 2018. He will report to the National Board of Directors and work in close cooperation with the National President and Treasurer.

Richard is from Ottawa, is fluently bilingual (French and English) and has a lot of experience in project management, product line management, people management and as project leader.

Please join me in wishing him a warm welcome and many successes with the Society.



AGA 2018

Since the university's cafeteria contract has not been concluded yet, we are unable to obtain final meal prices before February, and therefore, we cannot publish the AGA registration form at this time. As soon as we receive all necessary details, we will provide the registration form through the current edition of VP. As well, you may visit our web site for updates: www.ssvp.ca

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT... continued

2018

As you probably know, the new President General of the Society, Mr. Renato Lima de Oliveira, has decided to make our main founders more visible by dedicating an entire year to each one of them. 2017 was the Bailly year, and several activities took place to highlight the major influence that he had on the fledgling Society of Saint Vincent de Paul. Emmanuel Joseph Bailly was President of the first conference and the first President of the International General Council. We may easily imagine the influence he had on the young Society. At 39, he was the oldest of the group and, therefore, his experience was often solicited for difficult decisions.

This is the François Lallier year

François lived from 1814 to 1886. He made Ozanam's acquaintance at the Law Faculty of the Sorbonne and became one of his closest friends for the rest of his life. He was godfather to Ozanam's daughter Marie. He participated in the debates of the Conférences d'histoire and was actively involved in all the steps leading to the founding of the Society. In 1835, he was entrusted by Bailly to write the first Rule of the Society. In 1837, he was appointed Secretary General of the Society and signed documents that form an important part of the Vincentian tradition. In 1879, the then President General commissioned him to write an account of the Society's origins and he produced a brochure in 1882. In his professional life, he was first a lawyer, and then later was named a magistrate in Burgundy, where he was born. (Rule and Statutes of the Society, pages 148,149).

In conclusion, I wish to thank you for your fantastic work, helping people who, without you, would go through even more difficult moments. Continue taking the time to listen to them and give them your love, taking the time to make them feel that they are God's children, as we all are. Those few minutes that you give are greatly beneficial to them and, who knows, during your conversation with them, you might together find the solution that will help them out of their misery. It is the grace that I wish for you.

*Jean-Noël Cormier, President
National Council*



François Lallier
1814-1886

SPIRITUALITY

THE SOCIETY OF SAINT VINCENT DE PAUL INFINITE LOVE... CREATIVE LOVE

“And whatever you do, whether by speech or action, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus (...).It is the Lord Messiah whom you are serving,” (Col. 3, 17-24)

“Blessed are those who commit themselves fully to God, to accomplish the works that Jesus Christ accomplished and to practice the virtues that He practiced, such as poverty, obedience, patience, zeal and all the others...!”

(Vincent de Paul - V. 584)

Ever since the foundation of the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul in Canada, it is pleasing to note how faithfully the members work in a similar spirit of charity, to provide help to our sisters and brothers, the poorest of the poor in our society.

We may note also that it is through the observance of our spiritual roots, aiming to remain inspired by the faith of our patron saints, saint Vincent de Paul, the blessed Frederic Ozanam and the blessed Rosalie Rendu, that the leaders and members of the Society have had the audacity to testify to the infinite merciful love of the Father for our lords and masters: the needy among us.

Not only have we testified to an infinite charity, but every region in Canada has been able to adapt to various situations, whether economic or material, to alleviate the misery of our brothers and sisters in need. Thus, we have demonstrated a creative love, adapted to the reality of today, in our own environment.

Let us thank the Lord for so many wonders achieved during more than a century, here and now.

“Charity cannot remain idle; it entices us to save and console others.”

(Vincent de Paul, XII, 264)

*Roger Dubois, Permanent Deacon
Spiritual Advisor of the Quebec Regional Council
Member of the National Committee of Spirituality*



TWINNING

OUR SSVF TWINNING PARTNER IN THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC



In 2012, the Saint-Léonard Conference in Montréal, Quebec, decided to twin with a conference in another country. Since Dr. Ruiz, a long-time member of our Conference, is a Dominican, we chose the Dominican Republic. Our Conference is now twinned with the Conference Divina Misericordia, in San Francisco de Macoris, Dominican Republic.

Since the beginning of the twinning, our conference has sent funds regularly, every quarter. Communication takes place by postal correspondence and by phone. Dr. Ruiz sometimes visits his country of origin and he takes the opportunity to contact a member of our twin conference.

The people living in that area are greatly affected by their country's very fragile economic situation. Thanks to the twinning funds they receive, the members of the Conference Divina Misericordia can provide food and material assistance to the poorest, as well as support the sick, helping to pay for medicine, consultations and medical examinations. Their mission is to show solidarity with the poor and help them in all possible ways.

That conference also helps a nearby conference, by paying travel expenses for its Chairman to attend superior council meetings.

Here are the details of the distribution of funds equivalent to 2 quarters of twinning:

- 2,000 pesos to their particular council, to help conferences that are not twinned;
- 3,400 pesos for medications, specialized tests and medical tests;
- 1,815 pesos in food products;
- 300 pesos for stationery, stamps and office supplies for the group;
- 8,020 pesos in school supplies for children from low-income families.

Our members appreciate receiving regular news from our twin, who acknowledges receipt every time we send funds. Twinning is a wonderful way to live out the wish of Blessed Frédéric Ozanam: «I would like to embrace the world in a network of charity.»

*The twinning committee
Saint-Léonard Conference, Montréal, Quebec*



OPÉRATION BONNE MINE

OBM: A PROGRAM CREATED BY THE SSVV IN QUEBEC

It was in 1985, because of a contest held during the International Year of Youth, that young people from the Québec City Society of Saint-Vincent de Paul created the Service d'aide aux jeunes étudiants (SAJE – Young Student Support Service).

At the time, support was being offered in 25 schools to help pay for school supplies for disadvantaged children.

In 1994, the Montréal SSVV joins the program and, in 2001, the initiative was extended province-wide, to all the SSVV in the province of Quebec (more than 300 conferences).

In 2007, SAJE took on a provincial name, Opération Bonne Mine.

The provincial Opération Bonne Mine (OBM) program helps elementary and secondary students whose parents have limited financial capacities.

THE OPÉRATION BONNE MINE PROGRAM PERSUES THE FOLLOWING OBJECTIVES

- Help to prevent kids dropping out of school
- Give tangible help to youth
- Fight isolation and exclusion
- Improve self-esteem and build a future
- Improve awareness of the importance of socialization
- Minimize delinquency, precarious employment, homelessness and addiction issues

Depending on the region of the province and what each conference has managed to collect in donations, the program can have three tiers:

TIER 1: I GET BACK-TO-SCHOOL SUPPORT

The goal is to meet the essential and material needs of a child for a successful return to school. Financial aid is given to elementary and secondary school students from disadvantaged families, to be applied to the child's school expenses.

TIER 2: I AM A STAKEHOLDER IN MY SUCCESS

The goal of the second phase is to meet children's need to belong, by helping kids develop their talents in a personal and social learning process.



OPÉRATION BONNE MINE... continued

TIER 3: MY EFFORTS ARE RECOGNIZED

Perseverance scholarships are given to elementary (\$250) and secondary (\$500) school students who show great perseverance. They aim to encourage perseverance rather than performance.

Financial aid over the years:

- 2001, 3,895 children, for a total of \$183,418
- 2016, 8,269 children, for a total of \$531,567

Notably, the amount of aid, per child, for the back-to-school period has increased to take into account the rise of fees charged to parents by schools.

Since 2001, 142,708 children have benefited from aid totalling \$6,534,472.

LE GALA DES BOURSES (SCHOLARSHIP GALA) IN QUÉBEC CITY AND MONTRÉAL

Québec City

For the 21st edition of the perseverance scholarship ceremony, the Québec City SSVP is proud to have been able to hand out, thanks to the significant financial contribution of Bingo des Chutes' support fund and of the Corporation du Noël des enfants, scholarships worth almost \$13,000, in addition to giving away five laptops donated by the Université du Québec.

On Monday, May 29, 2017, the Québec City Society of Saint-Vincent de Paul held its academic perseverance award ceremony, during which more than 200 guests gathered at les Etchemins secondary school (Commission scolaire des Navigateurs). It was with great pride and some emotion that teachers and school professionals from the greater Québec City and Chaudière-Appalaches regions went on stage to reward the exceptional tenacity and determination of 38 recipients. Highlighted with wonderful musical interludes from students, the evening was a true success and will no doubt be remembered fondly by the scholarship recipients, 25 elementary and 13 secondary students.

The scholarships are part of the Québec City SSVP Opération Bonne Mine program which, for the 2016-2017 school year, distributed more than \$130,000 to 2,000 children from some 400 schools.



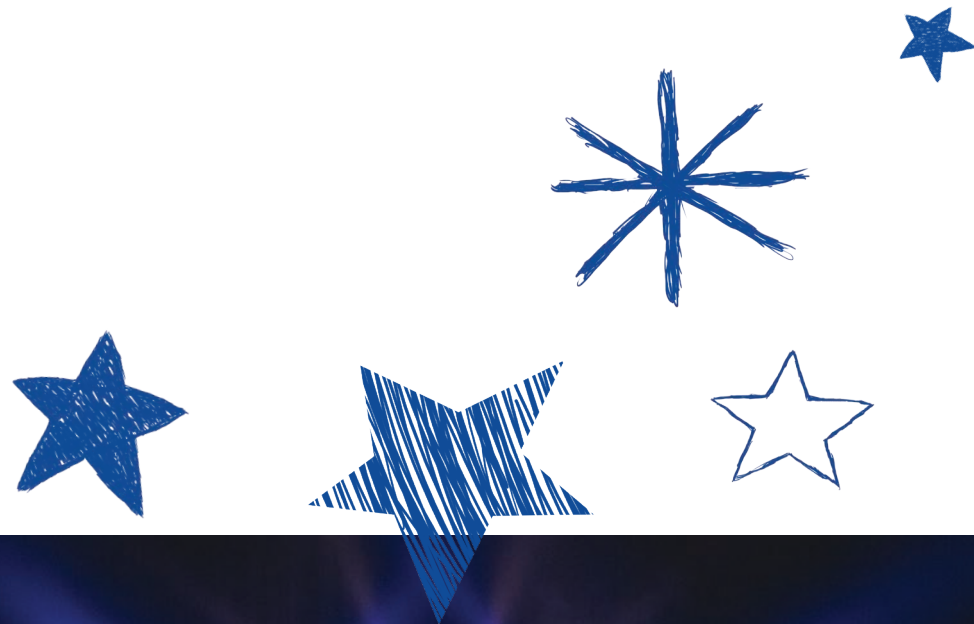
OPÉRATION BONNE MINE... continued

Montréal

Each year, at the academic perseverance gala, where 45 Montréal, Laval and MRC de L'Assomption students are recognized for their efforts, young artists are invited to perform. In June 2017, circus acrobats, hip hop dancers, singers and classical musicians, from elementary and secondary schools, put on a show for 200 guests, gathered at the prestigious Rialto Theatre.

Since 2012, the Opération Bonne Mine program in Montréal focuses some of its actions on the arts as a means of intervention and communication. Every creative workshop is supervised by an arts therapy professional who helps youth express some of their life experiences and works with them on elements such as motivation, belonging to a group, self-esteem, stress reduction, self-actualization, etc.

*Lise Blais, Project Manager
Quebec Regional Council*



COUP DE POUCE PROJECT



On January 15, 2107, the SSVP Particular Council of Saint-Jean launched the Coup de Pouce project.

The project's goal is to encourage young people, aged 16 to 35, to pursue back-to-school or job search initiatives by offering them micro-credit. These no-interest loans must be reimbursed within 5 years.

The ultimate goal, here, is to help youth break out of the poverty cycle and become financially independent.

The project is implemented in partnership with Carrefour Jeunesse-emploi.

Eight months in, seven loans have been approved. All the young people involved are participating in Carrefour programs and are being supported by professional service workers.

There are follow-ups every four months to track progress.

Loans are approved by Carrefour workers and the SSVP invested \$10,000 in the project.

The loans have started to be repaid, with one already paid off.

We feel this is a great project to support our youth in the hopes they will not need our services in the future.

*Lise Boyer, President
Saint-Jean-sur-Richelieu Particular Council, Quebec*



**“ENCOURAGE YOUNG PEOPLE,
AGED 16 TO 35, TO PURSUE
BACK-TO-SCHOOL OR
JOB SEARCH INITIATIVES BY
OFFERING THEM MICRO-CREDIT.”**



SOLIDARITY TRANSPORT AT THE SOCIETY OF SAINT VINCENT DE PAUL IN SHAWINIGAN

Since last May, in partnership with the Centre de développement de la Mauricie (Mauricie Development Centre) and the Régie de transport en commun de la ville de Shawinigan (Shawinigan Public Transport Operator), the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul in Shawinigan participates in an experience aiming to increase accessibility to essential services for Shawinigan area families, children and people living in poverty and suffering from social exclusion, by lending them a bus pass.

**“ PUBLIC TRANSPORT
MEANS ADDITIONAL
EXPENSES THAT AFFECT
THEIR MONTHLY BUDGET. ”**

“Clearly, people living in poverty cannot afford the costs related to the purchase and maintenance of a car. For those people, public transport means additional expenses that affect their monthly budget and reduce what normally goes for food, health and education”.

The objective is to encourage access to resources such as grocery stores, where food is less expensive and of better quality than what is found at the corner store. As well, “Solidarity Transport” allows beneficiaries to be more empowered by going to their medical appointments, and encourages them to start looking for a job and/or socialize by participating in training activities, sport or cultural sessions, etc.

People interested in using our service must visit our store and fill in a form. They then receive a pass for a limited period of up to 48 hours.

Since the beginning of that venture, we have registered a monthly average of 15 bus pass loans, for a duration of 24 to 48 hours. The programme is due to end on December 31, 2017, but already, steps have been taken with the Centre de développement de la Mauricie and the Régie de transport en commun de la ville de Shawinigan, to continue the experience during 2018.

*Yves Carboneau, President
Shawinigan Particular Council, Quebec*



GATINEAU SSVP AND ASSISTANCE TO SPRING 2017 FLOOD VICTIMS

During a meeting with Gatineau officials, representatives from community organizations and people from health services, the SSVP (represented by Alain Talbot and Marcel Tremblay) accepted to organize the reception and distribution of clothing for Gatineau citizens.

Management at Promenades Gatineau assisted the project by offering free storage space and participating in the reception of donations. The task of sorting the clothing collected was assumed by SSVP store volunteers, who divided the garments (seasons, sizes) and put them into boxes... The sorting work alone (close to 15 tons of clothing) mobilized more than 900 volunteer hours, over 8 days of work.

Thanks to the work of our volunteers, 13 community organizations (among which 6 counters) received clothing and bedding articles. The various counters all had the same instructions: "Any flood victim who visits a counter and is in need of clothing may obtain what is needed, free of charge."

In addition, the SSVP received 3 important donations, for a total of \$13,125. Our gratitude goes to the Coopérative funéraire de l'Outaouais, to the Archdiocese of Gatineau, and to a generous benefactor for their donations.

Where are the flood victims today? Very few of them came to our outlets (counters or conferences). What can we do now?

After being informed that the victims taken care of by the Red Cross, on behalf of Public Safety, should be moved rapidly, we at the Central Council have put in place, with the Red Cross, a special collaboration to facilitate the return of the displaced persons to appropriate housing.

Yves Olivier, secretary

Saint-François de Sales Conference, Gatineau, Quebec



PENTECOST, FEAST OF THE GIFT FROM THE SPIRIT

For the second year in a row, on Sunday June 4, 2017, we organized, a community meal for beneficiaries of the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul, Sainte-Louise-de-Marillac Conference, to celebrate the feast of the Pentecost as the “feast of the gift from the Spirit”. The meal took place at the church.

As we did last year, we sent a personalized invitation letters to our 37 beneficiaries, and those letters were delivered to each one of them, most of the time hand to hand, by one of our beneficiaries, Linda B. Only one letter could not be delivered. However, two other beneficiaries received a verbal invitation, bringing the number of invitations transmitted to approximately 40.

Meal preparation took place from the Wednesday to the Saturday prior to the event. The day before the meal, the conference members (Édith, Félix-Étienne, Lucie and Jean-Marie), helped by a beneficiary and one of the parish churchwardens, met in the hall kitchen to prepare sandwiches and small rolls: 6 dozen small rolls stuffed with turkey salad and egg salad, and 28 ham and egg sandwiches. On the menu as well: rice salad, chick pea and couscous salad, potato and salmon salad, and homemade vegetable hummus. All those delicacies were accompanied by cheese, fresh vegetables (celery, carrots, cucumber and peppers) with dip (sour cream and dehydrated vegetable soup). For dessert, two fruit platters and two carrot cakes.

In addition to the four conference members present on site, two of our beneficiaries helped set up the table, seeming to get from it a high degree of satisfaction. As well, two parish churchwardens participated in the set up, and their presence was much appreciated. Twelve tables and twenty

chairs were brought to the secretariat, ready to be installed. This year, rather than setting up four individual tables, we put the tables in an oval “donut” shape, to make sure that all the guests felt included. Félix-Étienne, a Vincentian, was a great help in setting everything up. We were 17 in all: 9 beneficiaries, a guest invited by our Pastor, 4 conference members, 2 parish churchwardens and François Baril, our Pastor.

François arrived before most of our guests, bringing 30 beautiful red carnations. The guests filled their plate and sat at the table, and François blessed the meal and the guests before we started eating. In spite of the fact that there were few of us, the atmosphere was quite warm and conversation was animated, and I think that the table arrangement played a part in that, because it felt like there was only one table.

During the meal, Jean-Marie stood up to say a word on the meaning of this celebration of the Pentecost. Here is a summary of his intervention:

“Pentecost is a feast whose origins go far back in time, during the Antiquity, to celebrate the first harvest of the year. Among the Jewish people, at the time of Jesus, people celebrated on that day the gift of Law. Later on, Christians gave the feast a new meaning, that of the gift of the Spirit. It is the Spirit who gave Jesus’ disciples the strength to assemble and proclaim the Good News, and thanks to the Spirit the Good News was transmitted, to reach us today. Jesus was close to the people, especially the poorest among them. As well, the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul tries to be close to those who are in need, and you help them continually. That is why the Church is you, first and foremost. The community meal you are enjoying today is our own way of thanking you for making Jesus present all around you, during the entire year.”

François and a few guests left around 1:15 pm and a few others minutes later, but several of us stayed at the table and continued chatting for quite a while. Then, all of us worked together to clean up everything. All guests eventually left (with their carnation), very happy to have spent that time together. The two beneficiaries who helped us particularly appreciated having the opportunity to contribute to the event. One of them even left a phone message to thank the conference members. That is to say that beyond the material food, those people were fed also by a feeling of value.

*Jean-Marie Roy, Secretary
Sainte-Louise-de-Marillac Conference, Montréal, Quebec*



THE GUIGNOLÉE IN QUEBEC: BEING GENEROUS, A TRADITION FOR MORE THAN 150 YEARS!

This great event, and its famous traditional red mittens, was launched in the province of Quebec more than 150 years ago by volunteers from the SSVP in Québec City.

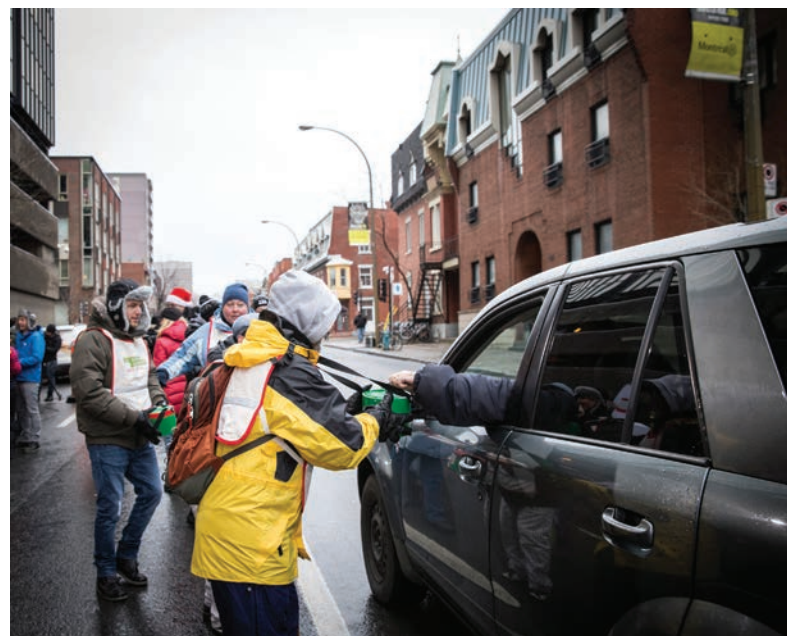
It is said that the name “guignolée” originates from the expression “O gui l’an neuf” (“Oh, mistletoe, a new year”), that was said by the “guignoleux” of the time, who would knock on doors of their parish members. This ancient expression refers to mistletoe, a plant that was then considered a bringer of health and prosperity, as it never loses its leaves and is resistant to winter’s harsh weather. It is with the same determination that our members and volunteers continue every year, even in snow and rain, to gather funds and food to support and comfort the poorest of their fellows. That tradition is very much alive: the Society of Saint-Vincent de Paul is more active than ever in Quebec!

THERE ARE TWO TYPES OF GUIGNOLÉE: THE PARISH GUIGNOLÉE AND THE GUIGNOLÉE DES MÉDIAS

The Grande guignolée des médias has existed in its current form for 16 years. Each year, around the holidays, this great display of solidarity unites media outlets from across Quebec around a month-long solicitation that culminates in a day of collecting on the streets. Thousands of media professionals and volunteers gather non-perishable items and money. The *Grande guignolée des médias* helps the most disadvantaged among us, in collaboration with dozens of local charities.

In Montréal, for over 16 years, our organization has benefitted, with Jeunesse au Soleil and Moisson Montréal, from the *Grande guignolée des médias*. Around one hundred media outlets and thousands of volunteers come together to gather non-perishable food items and cash donations.

The parish guignolée is as described in the next page: it is done door-to-door, by volunteers who gather food and money. It is held between mid-November and mid-December.



THE GUIGNOLÉE IN QUEBEC: BEING GENEROUS, A TRADITION FOR MORE THAN 150 YEARS!

FINDING VOLUNTEERS: THE MAIN CHALLENGE

From one year to the next, the main challenge for the *guignolée* remains recruiting volunteers to canvas neighbourhoods or solicit stores, restaurants or other businesses. This is done using various means: website, social media, papers, etc.

The money and food collected during *the Grande guignolée des médias* and the parish *guignolée* are used to prepare Christmas hampers that are given to disadvantaged families and to organize conferences, all through the year, designed to bring support and comfort to the poorest among us.

The *guignolée* is still an important source of funding for the help we offer. In Québec City, in 2016, it was the second most important source of revenue, representing donations of about \$500,000.

In Montreal, the money raised reaches some \$980,000, while other Quebec conferences raise \$878,000.

The parish *guignolée* is held throughout the province of Quebec; only certain regions get funds from the *Grande guignolée des médias*.

In 2016, in the province of Quebec, more than 19,500 hampers worth more than \$2,009,000 were donated.

*Lise Blais, Project Manager
Quebec Regional Council*



IN MONTRÉAL

For over 16 years now, our organization has been one of the three beneficiaries of *La grande guignolée des médias*, with *Jeunesse au Soleil* and *Moisson Montréal*.

Every year, about 100 media and thousands of volunteers combine their efforts to collect non-perishables and cash donations. In December 2016, the three organizations received \$199,000 each, following the traditional *Guignolée*.

The money and the food collected by *La grande guignolée des médias*, combined with our traditional *Society of Saint Vincent de Paul* collection, enabled us to prepare 5,843 Christmas hampers. Those hampers, offered to individuals and families, allow them to get a bit of a break during the Christmas season.

IN MEMORIAM

It is with deep regret that we announce the following deaths:

Jeanette Roy

Blessed Sacrament Conference, Windsor ON, January 21, 2017

Rose Dorner

Good Shepherd Conference, Lakeshore ON, February 5, 2017

Robert Anderson

St. John the Baptist Conference, Amherstburg ON, February 21, 2017

Robert LeVesque

Most Precious Blood Conference, Windsor ON, March 22, 2017

John MacDonald

St. John Vianney Conference, Windsor ON, April 12, 2017

Earl LaFramboise

Sacred Heart Conference, LaSalle ON, April 22, 2017

Joseph Murtaugh

St. Theresa Conference, Windsor ON, May 28, 2017

Margaret Harrison

St. Theresa Conference, Sault Ste. Marie ON, June 29, 2017

Ted Herbert

Our Lady of Atonement Conference, Winsor ON, June 8, 2017

Murray Essery

Our Lady of Mount Carmel Conference, Windsor ON, July 5, 2017

Douglas Blint

St. Anthony Conference, Harrow ON, July 6, 2017

Isabel Moroun

St. John Vianney Conference, Windsor ON, July 22, 2017

Linda Jean Midgley

St. Nicholas Conference, Langley BC, September 10, 2017

Denise Bondy

St. John The Baptist Conference, Amherstburg ON, September 14, 2017

Beverley Staley

St. Anne Conference, Tecumseh ON, October 1, 2017

Florence Homeniuk,

St. Mary Conference, Brant ON, October 14, 2017

Joan Huskisson,

St. Anne Conference, Peterborough ON, October 17, 2017

Barbara Langpeter

St. Anthony Conference, Harrow ON, October 19, 2017

Murielle Richer McDermott

St-Rosaire Conference, Gatineau QC, November 14, 2017

Sheran MacLaren

Our Lady of Guadalupe Conference, Campbell River BC, November 27, 2017

Denise LeBlanc

Mère Teresa Conference, Moncton NB, December 10, 2017

*They were our brothers and sisters serving the poor.
Lord, we pray that all the good they did bear fruit and be
continued. Help us keep their memory alive in our hearts.
Let us keep them in our prayers.*

Please send your death notices to editor@ssvp.ca





MISSION

The Society of Saint Vincent de Paul is a lay Catholic organization whose mission is:

To live the Gospel message by serving Christ in the poor with love, respect, justice and joy.

VALUES

The Mission of the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul implies that as Vincentians we:

- see Christ in anyone who suffers
- come together as a family
- have personal contact with the poor
- help in all possible ways.

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