

Safe, Secure And Affordable Housing Is A Human Right

The October *Changing Times* <https://www.ssvp.ca/newsletter/social-justice> provided background information on the national 3 -year national housing campaign which included the anticipated outcomes of the campaign which align with the four pillars of the 2015-2020 National Strategic Plan:

- a. Engage in broader and more meaningful Vincentian works,
- b. Deepen our Vincentian spirituality,
- c. Promote Vincentian activity, and
- d. Develop the Society and its members.

The October *Changing Times* expanded on item **a.** Engage in broader and more meaningful Vincentian works by listening, connecting, navigating and advocating on various housing issues. I'd like to discuss the other outcomes in this edition.

b. Deepen our Vincentian spirituality.

Vincentians can organize or take part in prayer efforts, both within the Society and with other faith denominations, with respect to housing and homelessness. Prayer can be a powerful tool in uniting people of all faith traditions for the common goal of addressing housing needs and homelessness. In addition, Vincentians can reflect upon ways that Catholic social teachings, especially about the dignity of the human person, our rights and responsibilities toward one another, and the preferential option for the poor to inform and inspire this campaign.

c. Promote Vincentian activity.

Vincentians can provide regular updates to their parish congregations orally, in writing in the church bulletin and/or displays at the church about the work they are doing regarding housing. If we can raise the awareness of this campaign and its importance to every parishioner, we can have a positive effect on housing in every community.

d. Develop the Society and its members.

The campaign will be successful if Vincentians encourage partnerships with outside organizations and engage in work that attracts a variety of skill sets. When campaign updates are made to the parish, we can also ask for new volunteers to meet a specific campaign need. Vincentians can also work to build strong relationships with other community organizations regarding housing. This campaign can provide every conference with an opportunity to raise the profile of the Society in their parish while educating others about the importance of social action on housing and homelessness topics.

The campaign is currently in its preparatory phase which included a survey that was distributed to regional leadership and social justice contacts across Canada. The campaign committee will use the survey replies and other relevant information to now develop an Action

Plan draft which will be shared with all regions for their comments and revisions, with a final Action Plan being ready for all members by the spring of 2020.

The success of this campaign will be assessed by various measurements but there is no doubt it will depend on how many member councils and conferences become actively involved at their levels. I cannot emphasize enough how important it is to our campaign committee that our grass roots conference membership gets involved. Our commitment is to provide guidance and supportive resources on housing and homelessness.

There will be an on-going focus on the campaign in future editions of Changing Times throughout 2020 as the campaign is rolled out. All Vincentians are encouraged to share their comments on the campaign issues and how they plan to address them in their conference and community.

We are also encouraged by the recent statement of the CCCB. Please click here:

https://www.cccb.ca/site/images/stories/pdf/Poverty_and_Affordable_Housing_EN.pdf

Social Justice Committees And Representatives

While we continue to grow our social justice network across Canada, there is still much to be done. Social justice should be an agenda item at all council and conference meetings. It is recommended that all conferences appoint a social justice rep who can then inform and lead discussions at conference meetings. We realize that it can be difficult to find someone to take on the role of a social justice rep, but we can also provide support and resources to anyone interested in joining our network.

The council level social justice committee has been proven to be an excellent way to gather conference reps for regular meetings at which they can share, discuss and develop common goals for their conferences. A conference meeting can be very busy and the time for social justice can be limited to a few minutes. Therefore, a council level committee can be very important to the conference reps. We can provide resources on how to form a council level (cross conference) social justice committee and how it can function in a way that may lead to some very successful social actions.

Sincerely,

Jim Paddon, Chair

National Social Justice Committee