



**Society of Saint Vincent de Paul  
Western Region North of 60 Project  
Annual Report 2022**



“There is no act of charity that is not accompanied by justice or that permits us to do more than we reasonably can.” .....Vincent de Paul

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## Executive Summary

The Work of Society of Saint Vincent de Paul continued last year as more of a Catholic parish outreach project led by members of our Society at their parish/conference. The reasons to



*Highlighted are the Arctic Communities served by SSVP Western Region*

shift away from SSVP ownership of this North of 60 Project and to move towards a Vincentian leadership of a parish outreach program is best demonstrated with our younger parishioners. When the youth of the church get involved in the collection of used hockey equipment, the zoom discussions with Arctic students, and the whole parish family supporting the request for food and household items, we see the true value of helping those in need. To see our parish youth painting a mural on the sea cans that will be shipped to the Arctic, is a lasting memory.

We continued to support the nine Communities shown on the map and additionally have a new initiative of supporting Vinnie's Thrift Store in Yellowknife. Our basic food security program has grown into several systemic change initiatives. The Men's Shed program in Tuktoyaktuk is new. The creating of a Warming and Distribution Centre in Paulatuk is nearing a completion date. This same concept is being explored in Ulukhaktok. There is a new initiative working with the Mosque food bank in Inuvik. In July we were privileged to assist Arctic Pilgrims on their journey to Edmonton to be with Pope Francis.

With your continued help, we will be able to develop and maintain the rapport with the elders and all members of the Arctic Communities that we support.

This project is managed by a team of SSVP volunteers. There are no paid employees. Team members are assigned a community. They work with members of their own parish to learn about the needs of those living in a specific Arctic Community. Their role is to develop knowledge and most importantly long-term rapport that allows for an accurate listing of the community needs as well as a confidence of fair distribution of the product shipped. The team members make Community visits every couple of years. Team members also meet their contacts or other Community Elders when they are in Edmonton on personal or medical visits.

We again are grateful to our corporate benefactors who make this project financially viable. The transportation logistics, food supply and household product donations continue to be strong as well as the dollar donations that many of you have made. Please continue to be generous.

Thank you for helping us to help others, and blessings to all of you.



*Sea Containers in Parish Parking Lots Raise the Interest of Parishioners*

## Contents

Executive Summary.....	2
Contents.....	3
The Beginning of the Project.....	3
Arctic Communities.....	4
Papal Visit.....	7
What Products Ship.....	7
Where does it come from.....	8
Anglican DioceseSupport.....	9
Corporate Logistics Support.....	9
Appendix 1 : Product Shipped.....	10
Appendix 2: Collaboration.....	11
Appendix 3: Thanks.....	12

## The Beginning of the Project

Sister Fay Trombley of Tuktoyaktuk, Eileen Orysiuk of Calgary and other members of the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul had no idea that the work they started almost 15 years ago would build to what it is today. Sister Fay and this SSVP Work has been recognized with the award of the [Governor General's Polar Medal](#). The North of 60 Program in Tuktoyaktuk has expanded to include several other Communities across Canada. Systemic change programs have been started and these programs are led by the Hamlet Residents for their Community. Our Society and your donations provide the materials and equipment needed to run these programs.

If you are interested in participating in this project, you can contact [Peter.Ouellette@ssvp.ca](mailto:Peter.Ouellette@ssvp.ca) or financial donations can be made at [Canada Helps](#). Please specify the North of 60 Project when you donate.



*Sister Fay Trombley*

## Arctic Communities and the Southern Paired Conference

**Tuktoyaktuk** was the first Northern Community that our Society supported. This Hamlet is paired with the Catholic Parish of St Andrew's in Edmonton as well as St Michael's in Leduc.

Sister Fay started the Emergency Food Bank fourteen years ago with donations from the south, from residents who provide fish, geese, and caribou as mandatory community service, and eventually with some support from Food Bank Canada. This year the Community of Tuk will take over this initiative, which assures a legacy of the work of Sister Fay. Our North of 60 Project will continue to support this Community run Food Bank.



The SSVP Food Distribution in Tuk

A recent request to support the [Men's Shed](#) Program in Tuk has the full support of the North of 60 Program. Tuktoyaktuk is a small community that suffers from overcrowding in small homes, homelessness and there is an 80% unemployment rate in the winter. The Men's Shed program will supply a welcoming, supportive place and provide opportunities for men to socialize, take part in activities, and learn something new. A 40 ft sea can will be converted to make this happen.

**Paulatuk** was first visited in 2014. A sea container of food and other items was shipped the following spring. Our Lady of Perpetual Help Catholic Parish in Sherwood Park is paired with Paulatuk. Food and winter clothing has been much appreciated as well as mattresses and bedding. About a quarter of Paulatuk households receive SSVP food support. Vincentians also provided building materials, siding, roofing, windows, furnace and utilities for continuing the restoration of [Father's House](#). Generous financial help from a family foundation over the last few years has supported restoration of this building by Vincentian volunteers.



*Father's House (1935) in Paulatuk, abandoned for 20 years, now being restored for SSVP food and clothing distribution*

The upstairs will become a food and clothing distribution centre. There will be a weekly schedule for opening. Donations of Country Food (fish, goose, whale meat, berries, caribou) from local hunters is expected.

The renovations in 2023 will include installing siding, insulation, windows, heater, plywood on the inside walls, stairs installation, connecting power and defrosting the sewage tank. A celebration of reopening is planned for July.

This last year the work crew were warmly welcomed to a community BBQ. Several community members brought fish, home-made bread, cookies, and fruit. Our Vincentian team witnessed the catch of the first whale of the year, and they enjoyed great support from the Hamlet and community contractors with the loan of whatever equipment that was needed to support the Work. Thanks as well to both Canadian North Airlines and Aklak Air for supporting this project.

**Inuvik** is in the northern part of the Northwest Territories and the hub of activity for North of 60. This community has maintained a long-standing connection with Eileen Orysiuk, one of the founders of the North of 60 program and a parishioner of the St. Pius X Catholic Church in Calgary. 2022 brought continued complications and restrictions with Covid to our friends with SSVP Inuvik. It was decided to support the people in Inuvik by raising money to ship a skid full of groceries directly to the Interfaith Food Bank operated by the local Mosque in Inuvik.

In addition, assistance was provided to St Patrick's Parish in Yellowknife. A sea container was re-routed to Yellowknife full of used goods to stock the [Vinnie's Store](#). The container was then painted by the local school children and will be used for future storage at the store.

The 2023 plan is to raise funds for another sea container to be loaded with goods needed for Our Lady of Victory kitchen and the Mosque food bank in Inuvik.



*The Vinnie's Thrift Store in Yellowknife*

North of 60 Calgary with the help of SSVP Inuvik, the Mosque Food Bank, North of 60 in Edmonton, SSVP Yellowknife, and SSVP Calgary made this happen. Calgary Vincentians will continue to be involved in support of those in need living in the Arctic.

**Tsiigehtchic and Fort McPherson** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cWVI-Ujs0bU> are south of Inuvik and are on opposite sides of the Peel River. St Theresa Parish/SSVP Conference works with these Communities. The sea can was [painted](#) last year and permanently placed next to the church in Tsiigehtchic. It is available for storage and distribution of goods provided by the North of 60 Project in the future. Unfortunately, the



*The Sea Can at Tsiigehtchic*

weather last year was not cooperating as the Mackenzie River flooded in the spring and the barge terminal in Hay River (where the barges leave from) was under water. This pushed back the barge schedule by a month or more. This in turn pushed the delivery window back, which was impacted by the freezing of the Mackenzie River. All this caused the ferry across the river to stop running. The plan is

currently to get a truck to pick up the contents from the sea can in Inuvik and take them to the river by Tsiigehtchic. From there they will be taken by snowmobile across the frozen river to be stored in the empty sea can from last year and then distributed as needed.

**Aklavik** received their sea can late in the season but were grateful for the goods, especially the extra flour and sugar that was provided by members of the Good Shepherd Parish/SSVP Conference. Some of the items shipped were sold with profit going to support the Community. The food was distributed to those families in need as they were individually boxed as hampers making distribution much easier. The food will continue to be distributed as needed over the winter months.

**Sachs Harbour** had [problems](#). They were the last community on the barge's route but due to late shipping and the cold weather the barge was frozen in at Paulatuk for the winter. The food, also provided by Good Shepherd members, was on pallets and individually boxed for family hampers. These had to be airlifted into Paulatuk. Luckily, one of our Vincentian team members was in Paulatuk serving his community at the time. He was able to help identify what was important to load into the cargo plane and all the food was shipped. Other items were then redistributed in Paulatuk for their use. The people of Sachs Harbour were grateful to finally receive the pre-packaged hampers along with extra flour and sugar.

**Fort Good Hope ( Kasho Gotine)** has a population of 500 and about 10% unemployment.



*The Sea Can at Fort Good Hope*

The historic Catholic Church, Our Lady of Good Hope, was built in 1883 and is one of the most incredible sites in NWT. St Thomas More Parish/SSVP Conference is partnered with Fort Good Hope. The sea container has been emptied and the food and clothing moved to the storage container at the church. Elders of the Community are distributing the goods.

**Ulukhaktok** is supported by the Vincentians in St Albert, Alberta. Distribution of sewing machines, fabrics, clothing, and mattresses were previously distributed by various groups in the Community but this year the Ulukhaktok Food Bank has accepted this responsibility. A committee has been formed with the approval of the Diocese, to investigate using the closed Catholic Church for a thrift store or additional food bank facility. The Community is covering the costs to assess the structure and asbestos content. Majority of the food items sent are what clients will consume regularly and are very beneficial to the people. The bed mattresses were very popular, and people were still asking if there were any left after distribution. Warm coats are always in need. The sewing machines were distributed by lottery. Food distribution is every two weeks and serves about 30 families.

## Papal Visit

We were blessed this year with a visit by Pope Francis. Edmonton SSVP members hosted 45 Pilgrims from NWT and Nunavut with food and lodging at Kings College. This provided our Arctic friends access to this beautiful event. This is what was reported.



*On day one, we attended the Pope's apology at the Cree pow-wow grounds at Maskwacis, Alberta. It was very moving and many wept to hear the Holy Father's words of heartfelt remorse for the RC church's role in the colonization of Canada's FN's, Metis and Inuit.*

*On the second day we attended Mass with the Pope at the Commonwealth Stadium home of the Edmonton Elks (formerly, Eskimos). This was a huge event attended by*

*around 50,000 people. Later in the afternoon we bussed to Lac Ste Anne which is a pilgrimage site for many First Nations peoples in Western Canada. The Pope addressed the exuberant crowd and blessed the waters of the Lake. It was amazing to see so many different nations of Native peoples as well as many others all celebrating this wonderful event in honor of our ancestors.*

## What Products Ship

A list of the items typically in the sea containers is shown in Appendix 1.

Over the last few years, we have developed two basic rules of operations:

1. We ship only what the Community asks for.
2. We continue to support the Community for as long as they want us.

This approach requires the development of rapport between the SSVP team member here in Alberta and the Community contact member in the Arctic. Take a tour of some of the Arctic Communities that we assist by [clicking on the North of 60 video](#) .

## Where does it all come from?

Normally our preference in this project is to get small food donations from church parishioners and to involve as many supporters as possible to enhance their awareness of Arctic needs.



Youth from OLPH loading Sea Can to  
Paulatuk

We do enjoy the opportunity to talk to young people in the south and to discuss with them the differences in living in the Arctic. Kids are very helpful with donations and spreading the word about the good Work of the North of 60 Project. Donations come from parishioners when we have a truck or a sea container in the Church parking lot.

Much of the bulk food and nonfood items are collected and distributed to the sea containers. We are grateful that so many see the value of our Work and want to help.

Larger volume food donations were made by:



- Dehydrated potatoes were provided by [Gleaners in Oliver, BC](#).
- Cooking oil was donated by the [Alberta Canola Producers Commission](#).
- [OneMeal](#) again provided high quality meal packs from the Emmanuel Foundation.

Sewing machines and fabric have now become a standard item for our shipments to the Arctic. We pick up used sewing machines from many private donors as well as both Johnson



*Fabric Supplied by the Grannies*

Sewing and Central Sewing, two large Edmonton retail shops. These machines are then refurbished by technicians so that they are ready to use. The fabric comes from many donors but the [Grannies](#) of Edmonton also continue to support our Work.

We have had many requests to ship sleeping pads to the North. There are often many living under one roof in these Arctic Communities. Again, Alberta

Health Services came through with mattresses that are light weight yet strong, offering great support for the children and they are easily moved to the side to provide room for family time.

Appendix 2 is a complete list of organizations with which our North of 60 project has established collaboration.



*Sleeping Pads from Alberta Health Services*

## Corporate Logistics Assistance

Transport is the most expensive and complicated aspect of reaching those in need in Arctic Canada. Loaded sea cans must be picked up from various locations around Edmonton, marshalled at the Manitoulin Trucking Terminal, trucked to Hay River, loaded on the barge to travel north on the Mackenzie River, unloaded at the destination and then spotted or positioned in the Arctic Community for contents to be distributed. We thank the Corporations



*Manitoulin Transport and GNWT Marine Transportation Service*

which help. We hope that they will continue supporting the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul in the future. These companies, like so many others, value the future opportunities that will result from working with the Peoples of the Arctic.

## Appendix 1: Typical Product Shipped in the Sea Container

### **Dehydrated and Prepackaged Foods**

Soup Mix 9 boxes  
Potatoes 20 boxes  
Apple chips 8 boxes  
One Meal (rice casserole) 7x 36 bags  
Canola Oil 20 boxes  
Powdered Milk whole 7 boxes  
Powdered Milk skim 7 boxes

### **Food Purchased from Wholesale**

Salt 2 x 24 - 1kg  
Paper Towels 3 x 30 rolls  
Crisco Shortening 3 x 36 – 454g  
Quaker Oats 4 x 10 – 2.25 kg  
Pasta 10 x 16 – 454 gr  
Sugar 10 x 6 – 4kg  
Baking Soda 40 x 1 - 500g  
Flour 60 x 1 – 10kg  
Coffee 2 x 20 1 lb.  
Red Rose Tea 3 x 4 250 bags  
Baking Powder 24

### **Foods dropped off by Parishioners**

Flour 65 kg  
Rice 65 KG  
Pancake Mix 4 kg  
Veg Oil 3 litre  
Pasta 34 KG  
Tetley Tea 2 kg  
Oats 10 kg  
Sugar 12 kg

### **Other Items**

Box of soap and cards  
School supplies  
Bag of mattress covers  
Ziplock bags and plastic bags  
9 sewing machines and 1 serger  
3 cu ft sewing supplies  
15 cu ft fabric  
4 cu ft knitting and crochet supplies  
9 sleeping pads  
27 cu ft bedding and pillows  
9 comforters and 2 blankets  
Bath Towels  
12 ski suits and coats assorted  
25 cu ft assorted clothing

## Appendix 2: Corporate and Private Collaboration

Many of you have asked who has been involved in this project. Below is a list of those organizations which have collaborated with our team and made donations of product or services to help us do an amazing amount of good work. Click on the organization name below and see what they are about. All Vincentians are proud that our name and our mission are being shared by so many.

[Canadian North Airlines](#)

[Aklak Air](#)

[Gleaners Oliver BC](#)

[Gleaners Medicine Hat AB](#)

[Emanuel Foundation](#)

[Cobs Bread](#)

[Alberta Canola Oil Association](#)

[Gov AB, Alberta Health Services](#)

[Anglican Church Woman Diocese of Ottawa](#)

[GNWT, Marine Services](#)

[Gordon Food Services](#)

[Second Harvest Canada](#)

[Freson Brothers Fresh Market](#)

[Sisters of Charity of the Immaculate Conception](#)

[Manitoulin Transport](#)

[Grannies Fabric Frenzy, Stephen Lewis Foundation](#)

[Knights of Columbus Foundation](#)

[St Theresa Knitting Group](#)

[Southgate Dental Centre](#)

[Anonymous Family Foundation](#)

[Edmonton Catholic Schools](#)

[Banff Sunshine, Lake Louise and Norquay](#)

[Tip Off Constructing, Edmonton](#)

### Appendix 3: Thanks to so many who have had direct involvement in the North of 60 Project this last year

We thank God for the North of 60 Project, as another example of God's demonstrated abundance for all our neighbours, near and far, wherever there is need.

**The North of 60 Arctic Contacts:** Sr. Fay Trombley, Dorothy Loreen, Sheila Okane, Ruth Anne Blake, Michelle Lennie, Abdallah from the Inuvik Mosque Food Bank, Lisa Alikamik, Emily Kudlak, Mary Kudlak, Nick Kopot, Joyce Banksland and the Ulukhaktok Health Centre Nurse in charge, Derek Squirrel, Helen Kitekudlak, Grace Blake, Therese Steiner, Jacinta Illasiak, Joey Carpenter, Elizabeth Semple, Heather Bourassa, Roger Plouffe, Bishop Jon Hansen, Darrell Taylor

**The Western Region SSVP North of 60 Team:** Stef Michniewski, Daryl Dittrich, Linda Tutt, Linda Wan, Rita John, Mike Mravinec, Lou Normand, Mary Dunnigan, Colleen Braun, Lance Berrington, Peter Ouellette

#### **Society of Saint Vincent de Paul :**

Western Region Council

Edmonton Central Council and their Conferences specifically:

Our Lady of Perpetual Help in Sherwood Park AB,  
St Albert/Holy Family Conferences in St Albert,  
St Michaels Conference in Leduc,  
St Joseph Basilica,  
Good Shepherd,  
St Theresa Conference,  
St John /Holy Spirit,  
Divine Mercy( St Thomas More, St Agnes, and St Anthony Parishes),  
Mother Teresa,  
All Saints,  
St Andrew Conferences.

Central Council in Calgary

St Pius X Conference in Calgary

St Timothy Conference in Winnipeg MN

St Mary/St Jude Conference in Brooks AB

St Mathews Conference in Surrey BC

And so many more volunteers that have lifted, sorted, packaged, and helped in many ways.