

Constantly Adjusting to Community Needs

Peterborough Particular Council
(Ontario)



serving in hope
servir dans l'espoir

A Journey of Hope

- As Thomas Aquinas said, hope is grounded in some desired future that is both possible to obtain yet is very difficult
- Over the past 14 years we have travelled a path filled with challenges
- This is our story of that journey



History of SSVP

- First conference aggregated in Peterborough 1886
- Particular Council instituted 1979
 - (initially *included Lakeshore Particular Council (instituted 2007)*)
- Incorporated in 1984
- Geographical region of Peterborough, Lakefield, Lindsay and Minden
- Eight conferences
- Declining membership in SSVP: volunteers are aging out
- Strong interest from Bishop; somewhat lukewarm priest support
- Operated a clothing thrift store downtown for many years
- Conferences raised money from parishioners that funded home visits and grocery gift cards



Our first challenge

Hope is a trust in God's goodness based on faith

- Parish-based model
- Around 2010 clear that gift cards were being abused
- Model of each conference having a food cupboard led to inequities across the city; where lived determined how much help you received
- A new model was required



Our first challenge

Hope is a trust in God's goodness based on faith

- Our president at the time had a vision of “all in one “ community hub
- Small, diverse Planning Committee looked at all options
- “spirited” debate
- Settled on separate locations for a pantry and thrift store



Our first challenge

Hope is a trust in God's goodness based on faith

- Decided to centralize food distribution at our downtown thrift store location and open a professional, large thrift store
- Process was long and not without friction
- Pantry and first store opened 2011



Vinnies



Location 1
Peterborough
799 Erskine Ave.
705-742-2585



Location 2
East City
52 Hunter St. E.
705-876-7506



Location 3
Lakefield
144 Queen St. Unit #1
705-652-9799

Vinnies

- St Vincent Thrift Store - operated for decades

Rebranded as Vinnies Feel Good Shopping

- First Vinnies' store - June 2011 (Erskine St)
- Second store - January 2018 (Lakefield)
- Third store
 - August 2019 (George St)
 - February 2022 (Hunter St)
- We are standing out in a crowded marketplace
- Warehouse - Processing 160 Gaylords of clothing monthly

Second Peterborough Store

- Second store on George Street (downtown) struggled
 - Old funeral home not ideally suited for retail
 - Significant risk of break-ins
 - Garbage and drug paraphernalia left at store
 - Became a site to avoid for shoppers
 - Moved to a newer close to downtown location and has thrived (54% increase in sales)



How are our stores doing?

- \$2,000,000+ in 2023 sales
- \$165,000 in bottom line profit
- 39 employees of which 21 are full-time; about \$900,000 in salaries
- Suffered significant sales hit from loss of Article clothing relationship
 - \$600,000 in 2022; \$275,000 in 2023

Vinnies

- On track to hit \$2 million+ in sales this year

2023 Category Sales		
Ladies clothing	23%	←
Men's clothing	6%	
Kid's clothing	3%	
Footwear	3%	
Purses, Jewellery, etc.	6%	
Household	5%	←
Household kitchenware etc.	15%	
Books	6%	
Music/Film	3%	
Toys	3%	
Furniture	2%	←
Furniture, Article	13%	
Other	13%	
sum	100%	

Our second challenge

Hope is relying on the Holy Spirit

- Our model of home visits and small parish-based food banks and gift cards was not optimal
 - Aging volunteer base
 - Cards being sold for cash at pennies on the dollar
- Converted our old store that we owned to a food pantry
- Each conference had to decide how to proceed; join the community food pantry or stay as conference



Outside the Pantry



Operational Model

- Clients came, registered and allocated points based on circumstances
- Shopped the Pantry for what they wanted to “purchase”
- Accompanied by a Vincentian while shopping who tallied points
- Gave dignity to shopper and opportunity for fellowship
- Open four mornings a week supported by up to 10-12 Vincentians
- Less transactional and can engage with people
- Averaged about 65 visits per day; 260 per week



Operational Model

- Food acquisition
 - Relationship with Kawartha Food Share (county hub)
 - Purchase milk, eggs, meat, vegetables and other staples (\$25,000 monthly)
 - Pickup from selected grocery stores and restaurants
 - School food drives



Breakdown



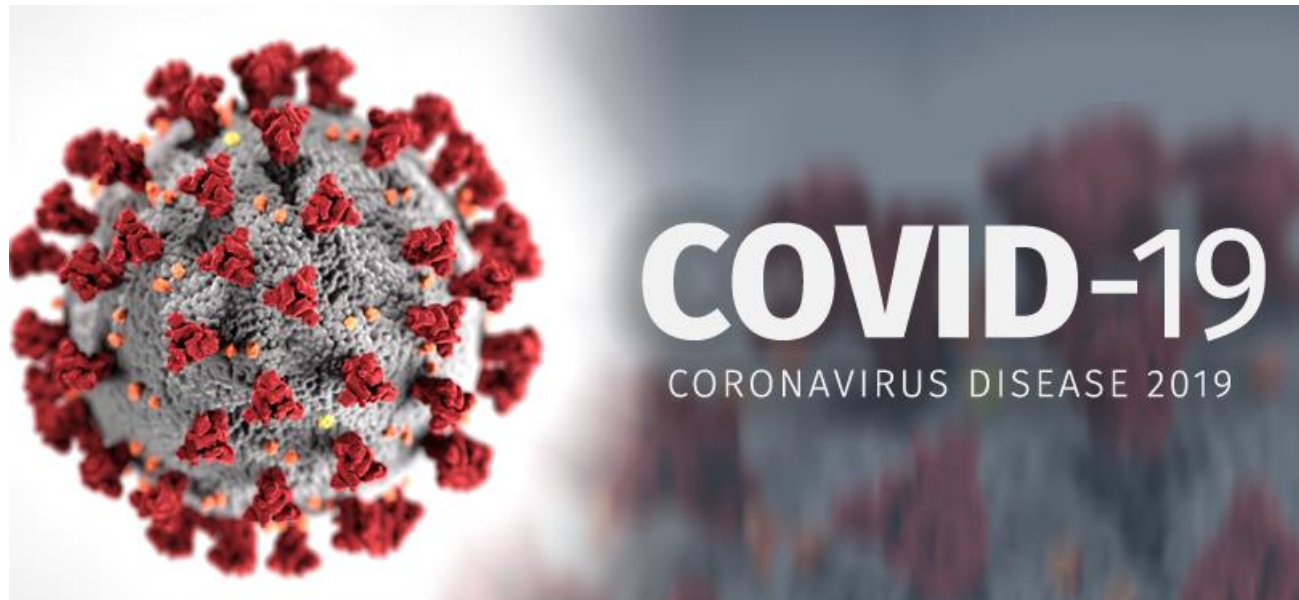
Fridges ready for next day



Our third challenge

*Hope sustains us with the truth that Jesus will always remain with us, when
all reason for hope seems absent*

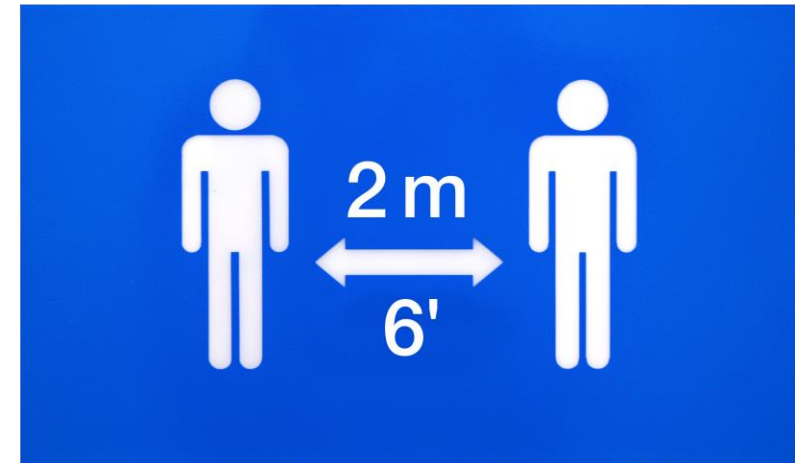
- March 2020.....
- How do you run a food pantry in a pandemic?



Our third challenge

Hope sustains us with the truth that Jesus will always remain with us, when all reason for hope seems absent

- Our space could not support realities of social distancing
 - Downstairs waiting area was too small and not well ventilated
 - Shopping area was too small to have up to 15 people
- Dropped to core group of 5-7 workers



Food Pantry



- Reluctantly pivoted to a new delivery model
 - Pre-made hamper bags are made up
 - Meat, dairy, eggs, vegetables
 - Dry goods; cereal, pasta, sauce, soup, beans, mac and cheese, etc.
 - People wait outside, register and then are met outside with bags
 - Requests are taken for anything not in hampers
 - Estimate that a family may receive up to \$80 worth of food; often well over \$100

Ready to roll for a busy day



Food Pantry

- Positives:

- Essential food to people in a safe and quick way
- Significant increase in revenues through donations, government assistance



- Negatives

- Lost the personal touch with each person; often transactional



Our intake table with three Vincentians



Our fourth challenge

Hope is placing our trust in Christ's promises and relying not on our own strength, but on the help of the grace of the Holy Spirit.

- Late summer 2023 saw a huge increase in numbers as a result of influx of foreign students
 - Fleming College; 4,000 of 7,200 students are foreign; city of 85,000
 - Lack of housing leads to high cost of renting;
 - Lack of part-time jobs
 - Misinformation



Our fourth challenge

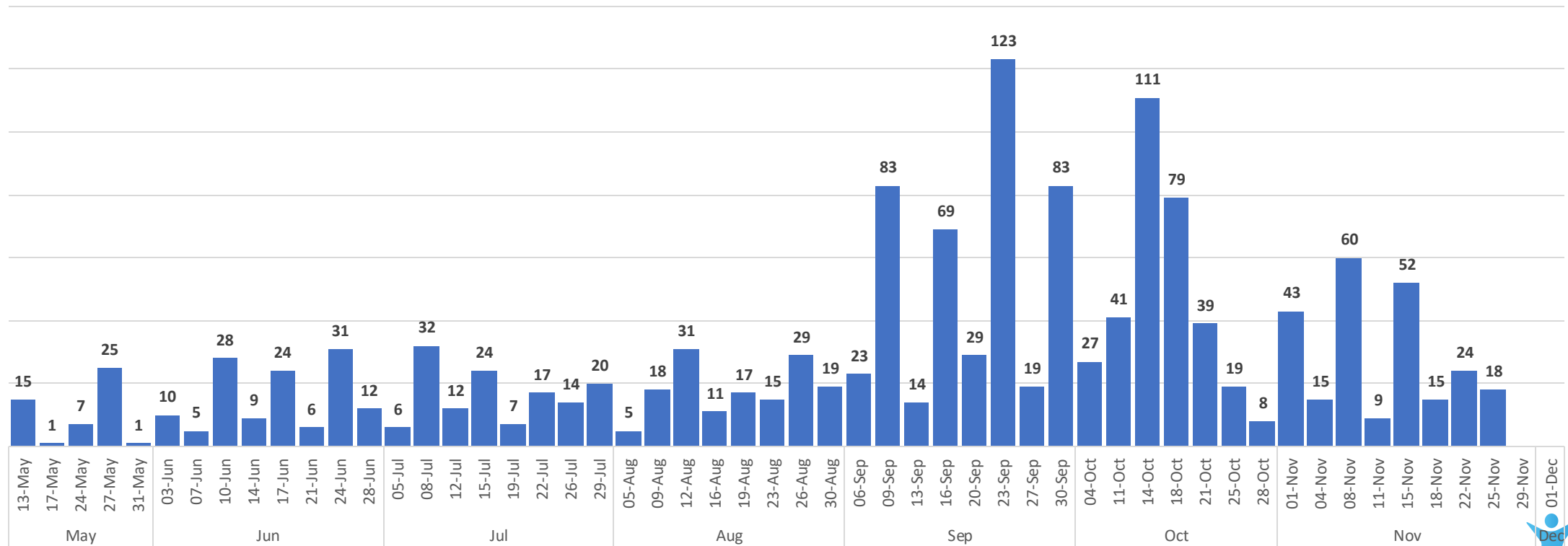
Hope is placing our trust in Christ's promises and relying not on our own strength, but on the help of the grace of the Holy Spirit.

- All food banks in city overwhelmed
- Change to monthly visits to help with numbers
- Part of a working group with Fleming College to determine how to deal with issues



International Students

Fleming Students



Our fifth challenge

Hope is the sweetness of our life

- Going forward....
- How do we manage the revenue loss of Article furniture?
- How do we manage diversity?
- How do we manage rising costs?
- Will our building fall down?






Revenue Sources

2023 revenues		
store sales	2,125,336	89%
individual donations	141,314	6%
corporate donations	7,500	0%
fundraising	21,561	1%
lottery	23,628	1%
government	81,850	3%
sum	2,401,189	100%

Where do we currently stand?

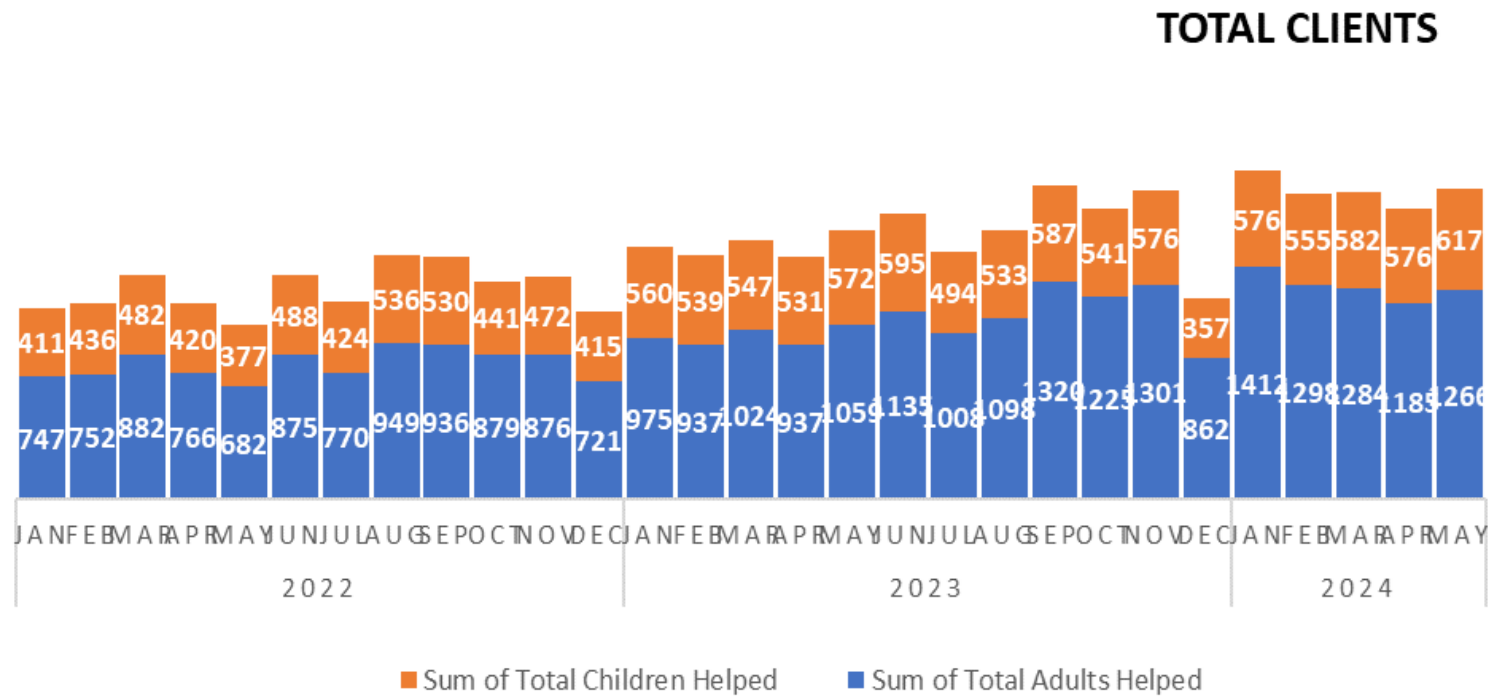
- Volunteer base has come back very nicely; beginning to be younger and diversified
- Arabic and French volunteers a big help to our neighbours in need
- Loss of Article furniture sales has dramatic impact (\$275,000 sales) on viability going forward
- What will our demographics look like? Do we need to offer more variety of food ?

Where do we currently stand?

	2024-May 	2024-Apr	Var	2023-May	Var
Food Hamper Requests	1071	967	104	1146	-75
New Clients - Children	35	34	1	31	4
New Clients - Adults	187	69	118	98	89
New Clients - Total	222	103 	119	129	93
Total Children Helped	617	576	41	572	45
Total Adults Helped	1266	1185	81	1059	207
Total Clients Helped	1883	1761 	122	1631	252
				VAR 23/22	
Family Hamper ~ Value	\$36,810	\$32,940	\$3,870	\$60,390	-\$23,580
Single Hamper ~ Value	\$53,600	\$48,800	\$4,800	\$39,040	\$14,560
Total Hamper ~ Value	\$90,410	\$81,740	\$8,670	\$99,430	-\$9,020



Where do we currently stand?



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