



Society of Saint Vincent de Paul Western Region North of 60 Project Annual Report 2024



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Executive Summary

Our Project continues to provide food security to those living in the Arctic. Since 2010 the Society members in Edmonton and Calgary have been providing food, household items, beds and bedding, sewing machines and fabric as well as other items requested from members of the nine communities that we serve.

There was bad news for North of 60 this year. The 2024 [river barge from Hay River to Tuktoyaktuk](#) (double click the underline for link) was canceled when historically low water levels on the Mackenzie River made the river non-navigable. An unbudgeted \$150,000 had to be spent to move the nine containers overland to the communities.



Highlighted are the Arctic Communities served by SSVP Western Region

Without more donors' support, the program's very existence was threatened. You came to the rescue with the help that we needed. Because of your support we will find the way to continue.

This project is managed by a team of SSVP volunteers. There are no paid employees. Their role is to develop knowledge and most importantly long-term rapport. This allows the Vincentian to assure that they understand the needs of the community. The team members try to make community visits every few years. Team members also meet with residents of the northern communities while they are in Edmonton or Calgary for medical, work or leisure.

In addition to the food security provided by our North of 60 Project, we have been successful in working with three of the Communities on facility projects. Father's House in Paulatuk, Men's Shed in Tuktoyaktuk and Museum Project in Ulukhaktok. These projects strengthen the community's ability to assist those in need.

We again are grateful to our corporate benefactors who made 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. Our program will continue thanks to the support of so many.

In support of our 2025 initiatives, we will be holding a SSVP fund-raising Gala on June 5. We encourage you to join us. Call 825-582-7787 for more details.

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

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The Beginning of the Project

After finishing her teaching career at Newman Theological College in Edmonton, Sister Fay Trombley of the Sisters of Charity of the Immaculate Conception “retired” to the Arctic hamlet of Tuktoyaktuk, Northwest Territories.

Appalled by the poverty of her neighbours she asked Eileen Orysiuk, a Vincentian in Calgary, and other SSVP members to help. High food prices then and still today combined with limited economic opportunities and high rates of poverty have led to Northern Canada having the highest rates of food insecurity in the country. Almost half of all Nunavut and Northwest Territories households are moderately or seriously food insecure.

A shipping container of food and other necessities was delivered to Tuktoyaktuk in 2010 – and thus began the North of 60 Project.

Since then, Society members in Edmonton and Calgary have been providing food and household items as well as support for schools and community groups, to nine communities in the Northwest Territories: Tuktoyaktuk, Inuvik, Aklavik, Fort McPherson, Tsiigehtchic, Fort Good Hope, Paulatuk, Sachs Harbour, and Ulukhaktok.

Each community is served by an SSVP Parish/Conference whose members connect with local leaders and consult on what is needed. The liaison has led to a deep understanding of each community’s needs, as well as local trust in the fair distribution of the items received. Team members try to visit their northern partners every couple of years and meet community members when they are in Edmonton on personal or medical visits.

North of 60 donations come from friends, parishioners, and a variety of religious, charitable and corporate organizations.

Containers are loaded by Vincentians in church parking lots. In the past these sea containers have been trucked to Hay River, then barged down the Mackenzie River to the communities. But in 2024, due to the low water level on the Mckenzie River, sea cans had to be trucked over 3000 km to reach their destinations. The three communities further north in the Beaufort Sea were reached by ocean barge from the Port of Tuktoyaktuk.

The North of 60 project has aided in the creation of community food banks and clothing distribution centres as well as other needs identified by the residents of these communities.



Arctic Communities and the Southern Paired Conference – 2024 Reports

Tuktoyaktuk – St Andrews Conference in Edmonton – Andrea Wan

This year, like most others, Tuktoyaktuk received their sea container with joy. It was filled with



SSVP Clothing Room in Tuk

supplies of household products, mattresses, and clothing but mainly for their Men's Shed Program which Sister Fay hopes to have up and running sometime in the new year. The Men's Shed is a program which would provide the men in Tuktoyaktuk a safe place to visit with others, learn how to use tools, teach one another, and work on various building projects for themselves or the community. This would give men the opportunity to share their knowledge and to spend time in community in hope of feeling a sense of belonging. This is a new endeavor

for Sister Fay and the Men's Shed Board. They are hopeful it will be successful and running soon.

Paulatuk – Our Lady of Perpetual Help Conference in Sherwood Park AB - Stef Michniewski



Sports Central deliver hockey equipment for the youth team in Paulatuk

A Parish reverse collection continues to be the primary source of donations for food and money to support our efforts in Paulatuk. Jacinta Illusiak, our SSVP contact in the community, reports regularly on the needs of the community. The sea can arrived on schedule and products have been distributed to this community of just over 300. This year there was a request to help with hockey equipment so that the community could compete in an Inuvialuit youth hockey tournament. Sports Central in Edmonton came through with 20 duffle bags of equipment for the kids. The final trip of our volunteer trades team to complete the restoration of Father's house is scheduled for fall of 2025. This will involve kitchen and bathroom sinks and cabinets, plumbing and power connection.

Fort Good Hope – Divine Mercy Conference in Edmonton – Roger Plouffe

The low water level on the Mckenzie River this year prevented us from delivering the sea can as planned. There is no road access to this community. Everything must enter by air or water. In consultation with people in Fort Good Hope, it was decided to delay the sea can and ship by ice road. This required all the contents to be pulled from the 20 ft can. A smaller 10 ft container that is suitable for shipping on the ice roads had to be purchased and loaded with food only products. This ice road shipment will be scheduled in Jan 2025.



Ulukhaktok – St Albert Conference in St Albert AB – Linda Tutt

In early spring discussions on specific needs began in collaboration with several community groups. Pulpit talks at both Holy Family and St Albert Parish followed with notes in the bulletin for non-food donations. Money raised was used to purchase food at a discount price from Freson Brothers Grocers. The sea can was loaded early May and arrived in Ulukhaktok on Sept 6. The Hamlet of Ulukhaktok Food Bank coordinator and Hamlet staff distributed the food, clothing, recreation equipment, necessities and household items to the appropriate recipients, school, and community groups. The Hamlet purchased the sea container. Darlene Nikiyok, who is the Food Bank coordinator says “on behalf of the Hamlet of Ulukhaktok, I am very thankful and grateful for those who responded with open hearts and who gave us a helping hand. The food delivered in the barge from SSVP is very much appreciated to help our community above the Arctic Circle, beat the curb on hunger. Koane/quana (thank you) from the bottom of my heart. The old Catholic Church is currently being renovated and changed into a museum with funding from the Hamlet and the Dechamps Family. We are grateful for everyone's hard work in putting projects like this together.

Ulukhaktok Museum Project



Catholic Church as it was in 1983 and as it looks today before restoration begins

All the supplies needed to renovate the Catholic Church into a museum were identified and purchased with the help of the Dechamps Family Foundation. These products were shipped in a second sea can this year.

Inuvik – St Pius X Conference in Calgary – Lance Berrington

The year 2024 marked a significant chapter for the St. Vincent de Paul Society's North of 60 Project, as it was defined by growing relationships, meaningful connections, and an outpouring of Christ's love. We were deeply honored to welcome Rev. Fr. Fredrick Ifeanyichukwu Omegoha (Pootooguk), the regional pastor of the Beaufort Delta region in the Northwest Territories, to Calgary. During his visit, Fr. Fredrick shared profound gratitude on



behalf of the communities of Tsiigehtchic, Tuktoyaktuk, Paulatuk, and Inuvik. He expressed appreciation for the generous contributions from the St. Vincent de Paul Society's North of 60 Project, underscoring how vital these acts of kindness have been to the communities.

Fr. Fredrick highlighted that the ongoing support, including the annual shipment of sea containers filled with essential items, has had a tangible impact. These efforts have alleviated hunger, provided relief from weather-related hardships, and instilled hope in remote northern communities. He further reminded us that these acts of generosity are not only practical but also embody the compassionate love of Christ, making a profound difference in people's lives. Despite facing challenges, the successful unloading of last year's sea container was a testament to the determination

and dedication of everyone involved. Thanks to the contributions of SSVP Calgary Diocese, countless families have been blessed with vital supplies and support.

Looking ahead to 2025, we are excited about continuing to strengthen our relationship with Michelle and the SSVP team in Inuvik and the Our Lady of Victory family. Plans are already in motion for a mission to Inuvik, which will involve the youth group from St. Pius X parish. Additionally, we are working towards supporting the establishment of a new prefab building, intended to become a Vinnie store, further expanding our ability to serve those in need. This mission reflects our shared commitment to faith, service, and solidarity in Christ. We remain inspired by the tireless efforts of those who laid the foundation for this work and look forward to continuing the legacy of love and service that defines the North of 60 Project.

Tsiigehtchic and Fort McPherson – St Theresa Conference in Edmonton - Mike Mravinec

We sent one sea container to serve both communities of Tsiigehtchic and Fort McPherson. It was loaded with staples, such as flour, oil, rice, sugar, etc. as well as mattresses, tools, sewing machines and material, warm clothes and blankets.

Using the barge from Hay River was not an option because the water on the Mackenzie River was too low for the barge to get through. The upside for Ft McPherson was that the sea can was transported by land from Edmonton and dropped off directly in Ft. McPherson, without them having to go to Inuvik to



transport the goods. The downside was that the cost was very high and may not be sustainable without more external resources.

The sea can did arrive safe and sound in Ft. McPherson, where the contents will be split between that town and Tsiigehtchic. Grace Blake and Paul Hanthorn would like to express their sincere gratitude for the supplies which will help many people in need over the coming months and during the winter. Sincere thanks as well to the wonderful, generous parishioners of St. Theresa's Parish in Edmonton for their donations as well as the Saint Vincent de Paul Society (St. Theresa's Conference) and the Knights of Columbus (St. Peter Council) for their continued support.

Sachs Harbour – Good Shepherd Conference in Edmonton – Rita John

Due to the low water levels of the MacKenzie River, the sea can was not able to be shipped from Hay River as in previous years and had to be trucked to Tuktoyaktuk where it then sailed across to Sachs Harbour located on Banks Island. Only food items were shipped this year. Once the sea can arrived, the goods were taken to the school to be distributed. Hampers were sent so that each family would receive the same amount of goods plus extra staples to be shared amongst them. My greatest thanks to Joey Carpenter who has been organizing and distributing the goods for the past 10 years. He has been invaluable and without him we would not easily be able to continue sending food to this small community of 140 people.



Aklavik – Good Shepherd Conference in Edmonton – Rita John

This year the sea can was trucked to Inuvik and then transported by local barge over to Aklavik (approximately 58 km). Luckily the channel had high enough water levels to come across this small distance, enabling this community of 670 people to receive food and other requested items (clothing, hockey equipment and Christmas decorations).

The Aklavik Indian Band Council has started a community food bank. Our food shipments will now be received and distributed by them. Fredrick Arey with the community wellness department will operate this new facility.

Many thanks go to Elizabeth Semple and others from the Anglican Church, who worked tirelessly for the past years, distributing food as needed to the local families - bundling up hampers as per their need.

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.

We do enjoy the opportunity to talk to young people in the south and to discuss with them the differences of living in the Arctic. Kids are extremely helpful with donations and with spreading the word about the good Work of the North of 60 Project.

Many of the donations come from parishioners and friends. When we have a truck or a sea container in the Church parking lot, our team



members have the opportunity for discussion and understanding of the needs of those living in the far north.

A lot of bulk food and nonfood items are collected this way. We are grateful that so many see the value of our Work and want to help.

Used sewing machines and fabric have now become standard items for our shipments to the



Arctic. Technicians refurbish the sewing machines 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 numerous requests to ship sleeping pads to the North. There is often many living under one roof in these Arctic communities. Once again, Alberta Health Services came through with used mattresses that are lightweight yet strong, easy to clean and offer great



support for the children. These pads can be easily moved to the side to provide room for family time.

Cooking oil is in great demand. We are very thankful for the continued support from the Alberta Canola Producers Commission.



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

Transportation Logistics Support

The unexpected and late notice that the Mckenzie River low water levels made the river not navigable for the barges and that the Hay River barge terminal was to be moved to Tuktoyaktuk was a shock to our programming. This started a scramble to change the delivery plans for all North of 60 Project communities.

A second financial appeal was needed to cover unexpected and unbudgeted trucking costs of sea cans to Tuktoyaktuk (instead of Hay River). The estimated extra costs for the 8 sea cans to reach their destination was \$150,000.

The river may not return to higher levels and the ability to barge on the Mckenzie River may be limited again in 2025. The following is a quick description of how the sea cans were moved in 2024.



1. Sea Containers truck along the Dempster Highway to:
 - Tuktoyaktuk
 - Tsiigehtchic/Ft McPherson (share one sea can)
 - Aklavik – was trucked to Inuvik, then barged across the Mckenzie
 - Fort Good Hope –This can will be trucked from Edmonton when the winter road is ready (January).
2. Sea containers delivered to the “fly in” communities along the Beaufort Sea (Arctic Ocean) coast were trucked to Tuktoyaktuk Terminal and barged through the Beaufort Sea to the communities to:
 - Paulatuk
 - Sachs Harbour
 - Ulukhaktok (two cans - one for the food bank/community support and one for Construction materials for the museum project.)

In addition to the transport of goods is the transport of our Vincentian team who make visits to the Arctic communities regularly to assure the development of rapport with the Elders. We are grateful for the support of both Canadian North Airlines and Aklak Air.



Appendix 1: Typical Product Shipped in the Sea Container

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

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 SSVF team members here in Alberta and their Community contacts in the Arctic. Take a tour of some of the Arctic Communities that we assist by [clicking on the North of 60 video](#) .

Using the example of Ulukhaktok which has a population of about 400, the following contents were shipped in the sea container this past year.

to: Hamlet of Ulukhaktok Food Bank c/o Darlene Nigiyok		4	Kleenex
		3	large Q tips
72	Lard-tender flakes	1	box reusable shopping bags
48	soup knorr base beef bouillon	5	coffee
48	soup knorr base chicken bouillon	6	tea
72	Dried chicken noodle soup	7	shampoo and conditioners
7	soup Great value sodium reduced	7	lotion
17	great value soup , Dried chicken noodle	1	dish soap
30	Sugar, white - 2 kg	9	liquid soap
24	Tuna canned solid cloverleaf	2	deodorant
40	Yeast traditional 3 pack	24	Soap - bar
48	stove top stuffing-turkey and chicken	2+	skim milk powder
54	gravy turkey gf pkg	to: Helen Kalvak School- c/o Nick Kopot, Principal	
53	gravy brown gf pkg	5	bins assorted art, craft and school supplies
60	classico spaghetti sauce	5	boxes assorted art, craft and supplies
40	sugar	1	xl pkg of heavy poster paper
48	tuna	to: Hamlet Food Bank c/o Darlene Nigiyok-miscellaneous to distribute to those in need	
2	spaghetti	4	bins/boxes Halloween costumes
36	macaroni	48	teddy bears - to distribute in Dec by Santa
12	baggies	3	bedding -queen sets of sheets
136	toothpaste travel size	1	bedding -twin sets of sheets
432	Floss small	1	bedding queen quilts/blankets
25	toothbrushes	3	bedding double quilts/blankets
69	absorbent underwear	2	bedding twin quilts/blankets
4	absorbent bed liners.	9	lap/toddler size quilts/blankets
24	noodles	1	kit mix master
16	brown beans - canned	2	1 kit rice cooker
1	laundry detergent	9	towels T towel
36	kraft dinner	36	towels bath a
100	toilet paper	12+	towels hand
6	paper towels	19	facecloths
187	baby diapers	3	bathmats
3	baby wipes	2	bin/box kitchen cups, containers,
2	baby cream/lotion		napkins, parchment, graters, strainers
8	tuna		
7	feminine pads/tampax		

1 kitchen - electric drip coffee maker
 3 housecoats
 11 boots, shoes, slippers
 1 box stuffies
 1 box ball hats
 22 curtain panels
 1 kitchen - electric wok with lid
 6 jacket ski/winter coat
 17 sweaters - adult
 1 winter vest
 1 mittens ski
 1 work gloves
 24 socks
 16 panties
 12 briefs
 2 long johns
 1 kitchen -toaster oven
 1 kitchen - electric kettle
 1 kitchen - rice cooker
 1 kitchen - small slow cooker
 1 kitchen - food chopper
 1 adult onesie PJ
 1 box parka
 2 faux fur coat and 1 leather coat
 1 box baby items:
 5 crib and baby blankets,
 2 crib sheets, 5 bibs, hand knit baby
 sweater and hat set
 10 receiving double thickness flannel baby
 blankets, baby sleep sack
 to: UCC-Ulukhaktok Community Corporation c/o
 Susie Memogana
 -sewing and yarn items to distribute to those in
 need and to sewing groups"
 1 box sewing notions and yarn
 1 box faux fur fabrics
 1 box zippers, notions, thread, embroidery
 1 box fur collar, fleece, fabric
 1 f fabric sewing tote
 1 sewing machine and fabrics in sewing
 machine travel case
 1 box sewing ruler travel bag for rulers and
 cutting boards
 1 tote sewing machine and fabric in tote

1 2 sewing machines and fleece -heavy box
 1 box sewing notions, embroidery thread,
 beads
 3 faux fur with wool like lining blankets
 1 box fabrics
 1 tote fabrics
 1 box 3 blankets and 1 cape both in faux fur
 2 1 sheep skin for sewing projects
 1 box 2 fur coats (mink) fur hat
 1 box Fabric
 1 L plastic package used for bedding
 to: Ulukhaktok Community Corporation c/o
 Susie Memogana-
 toddler & baby clothing to distribute to families
 in need
 3 super-size boxes of "toddler and baby clothing
 to: Ulukhaktok Recreation Department, c/o
 April Joss
 1 hockey bag- glove, elbow pads, shoulder pads,
 pants, 1 goalie helmet
 1 box: 2hockey practice nets,2 chin guards, 1
 glove, 4 helmet shields, 1 helmet, 2 skates,
 pucks fabric case hockey - coach's clip board
 wrapped together
 8 sticks wrapped and 1 goalie stick
 1 box hockey - 4 skates - youth and adult
 To: Teen Centre c/o April Joss, Recreational
 Director
 1 box music -electric guitar, accordion, ukelele
 1 box games board, dart set, 2 dozen games
 and puzzles
 to: Stephen Conway -SAO Ulukhaktok -sound
 systems donated from Holy Family Parish (St
 Albert)
 8 individually wrapped Sound System speakers -
 to be mounted
 1 box sound system amplifier,
 microphone and cords
 to: Greenhouse c/o Emily Kudlak
 1 xl garbage bin with lid 6 pkg of 9 L soil
 Tent Project c/o Emily Kudlak or Lily
 Alanak, Ulukhaktok Health Centre
 1 boxes crafts

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 products 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](#)

[GNWT, Marine Services](#)

[Gordon Food Services](#)

[Second Harvest Canada](#)

[Freson Brothers Fresh Market](#)

[Brooklyn Bundles](#)

[Sports Central](#)

[Edmonton Quilt Guild](#)

[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](#)

[Fondation Traçons Un Chemin](#)

[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.

Communities Served by North of 60 Project, SSVP Western Region

Peter Ouellette, Western Region, North of 60 Project Manager

<u>N of 60 Location</u>	<u>Community contact</u>	<u>SSVP Contact</u>
Inuvik	Michelle Lennie	Lance Berrington, Calgary
Tuktoyaktuk	Sr. Fay Trombley	Andrea Wan, Edmonton
Tsiigehtchic	Grace Blake	Mike Mravinec, Edmonton
Ft McPherson	Paul Hanthorn	Mike Mravinec, Edmonton
Paulatuk	Jacinta Illasiak	Stef Michniewski, Sherwood Park
Aklavik	Fredrick Arey	Rita John, Edmonton
Sachs Harbour	Joey Carpenter	Rita John, Edmonton
Fort Good Hope	Heather Bourassa	Roger Plouffe, Edmonton
Ulukhaktok	Darlene Nigiyok	Linda Tutt, St Albert

Sr. Fay Trombley, Sheila Okane, Ruth Anne Blake, Michelle Lennie, Abdallah from the Inuvik Midnight Sun Mosque Food Bank, Darlene Nigiyok, Emily Kudlak, Mary Kudlak, Nick Kopot, Joyce Banksland, Helen Kitekudlak, Darlene Nigiyok, Stephen Conway, Karen Kitekudlak, Gail Elias, Susie Memogama, Laura Inuktalik, Grace Blake, Therese Steiner, Paul Hanthorn, Jacinta Illasiak, Joey Carpenter, Elizabeth Semple, Heather Bourassa, Richard and Patti Durocher, Bishop Jon Hansen

The Western Region SSVP North of 60 Team: Stef Michniewski, Daryl Dittrich, Linda Tutt, Andrea Wan, Rita John, Mike Mravinec, Roger Plouffe, 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 Conference.
Central Council in Calgary
South Particular Council in Calgary
St Pius X Conference in Calgary
St Timothy Conference in Winnipeg MN
St Mathews Conference in Surrey BC