



YOUNG SVP
Newsletter

East Region





welcome

Welcome to the second edition of the Young SVP East Region Newsletter. This publication is a space for young people who are engaging with the Young SVP Programme to share their work, receive recognition and see the projects their peers are undertaking around the region.

These projects highlight the hard work and dedication of young people working towards social justice in Ireland.

This newsletter is circulated to members and participating schools & centres in the East Region.

If you would like to find out more about the Young SVP Programme please don't hesitate to get in touch.

Clare Mander-Youth Development Officer (East Region)

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Greetings from Grainne Lee Chairperson SVP National youth committee

As Chair of the National Young SVP Committee for the Society of St. Vincent de Paul Ireland, I am delighted that Clare has asked me to write an article for this edition of the Young SVP East Region Newsletter.

Ghandi once said “be the change you want to see in the world” – which in effect is a paraphrasing of Blessed Frederic Ozanam’s vision for the Society he founded. At the moment, it seems like every scroll through Facebook brings us another news story about disaster and loss, or an article that makes us feel angry and frustrated at the world we live in – both on a local and a global level. This is what makes your involvement in SVP all the more important. All any of us can ever do is reach out with what we have to those who have less – be that with our time, our ideas or our experiences.

This newsletter is a celebration of all the recent times that you have done just that. Through your work with Young SVP you are indeed being the change you want to see in the world. At World Youth Day in Krakow, 2016, Pope Francis had this message for us; “Dear young people, we didn’t come into this world to “vegetate”, to take it easy, to make our lives a comfortable sofa to fall asleep on. No, we came for another reason: to leave a mark.”

Again, at a time when it seems like every form of social media brings us constant bad news, enjoy reading this newsletter full of good news stories attributable to you. Share it with your family and friends and be proud that you are leaving such a positive mark in your local community.

I am also aware that your Regional Youth Day is fast approaching. This will be another celebration of everything that you have achieved this year – enjoy it. Take time to talk to each other, to share ideas and stories about the people you have met, the projects you have been involved in and the skills you have developed.

Keep up the good work, keep leaving your mark and keep being the good news story.

God bless,
Grainne



Origins of SVP

In the beginning...

The Society was founded by Blessed Frederic Ozanam and his friends in Paris in 1833; originally it was called 'Conference of Charity.' Frederic Ozanam and his college friends often discussed the needs within society and were challenged to act upon their discussions. It was from this that they set up their group (Conference) in order to tackle inequalities in their own communities. Overall they "wanted Christianity that would influence everyday life; one that would help create a peaceful and just society for all."



St Vincent de Paul was adopted as patron of the Conference in 1834, and the group was renamed Society of Saint Vincent de Paul and has been called this ever since. St Vincent de Paul was a French Catholic Priest and dedicated his life to helping those in need. Therefore, he was chosen because of the example he set and he was the type of person that Frederic and his friends aspired to be.

Action...

Some of the actions undertaken by the Society of St Vincent de Paul at this time (1800's) included;

Charity



Political Action

Distribution of food and fuel to those impoverished in Paris. They worked closely with Sr Rosalie Rendu, a Daughter of Charity who lived among those suffering with poverty and was able to point out those who were in the greatest need of assistance.

They recognised the need to take an active part in political debate; social reform was needed and would not be achieved through revolutions and violence but rather by trying to influence the political and social systems. Their mission was to achieve social justice for all.



SVP came to Ireland in 1844 when the first Conference was set up here. 'Conference' is the name given to a SVP group / unit.

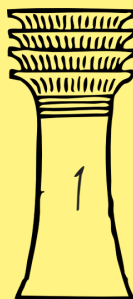


In 2017, there are approximately 1300 Conferences and over 11,000 volunteers across the country!!!

Ethos & Mission...

SVP are involved in a diverse range of activities which are characterised by 'The Three Pillars' of our Mission Statement which are as relevant today as they were 200 years ago:

1. Support & Friendship
2. Promoting Self-Sufficiency
3. Working for Social Justice



St Gerard's School, Bray September-December 2016



The St. Vincent De Paul Conference in St. Gerard's School, Bray have had a fantastic term so far. We have been very busy, kick-starting our term with a newly elected conference and sparkling new website, at www.svpstgerards.weebly.com.

On October 14th, the group held a bag-packing fundraising event in Dunnes Stores, Cornelscourt. We raised a total of €3,700 that day.

In November, we organised a Christmas Appeal letter drop. We distributed approximately 2,500 appeal letters to homes in our local parish.

Also in November, we invited Clare Mander to the school to inform her of the work we have done. She ran a workshop with us, and also with Transition Year students taking part in the Young Social Innovators programme who are starting a befriending programme in local nursing homes.

The final event of this term was the annual Christmas Hamper Packing event. 400 hampers were packed and distributed, with the help of parents, to homes in the local community and to The Women's Refuge. Our Conference Representatives in the Junior School, working with the Junior School conference, have organised a toy appeal for families in need.

We have thoroughly enjoyed our year so far. We are looking forward to organising more events in the new year to help make a difference in our community!

Jane Loughman
Head of PR

St. Gerard's St. Vincent de Paul Conference



Lusk Community College

Pensioner Pals

Before Christmas, Pensioner Pals organised a day dedicated to raising awareness for Alzheimer's as well as to raise money for our local nursing home and successfully raised over €350. One of the small rooms in our school was completely transformed into a photo booth and make-up station, for the student and staff who showed their support by dressing up as elderly men/women. They got their make-up done and photos taken to participate in this special day. We charged €1 for the non-uniform day that was held to raise money and prizes were given to the top three best dressed students.



The whole of Transition Year dressed up as elderly people to show their support for Alzheimer's day. We organised other activities such as bingo, memory games and a tea party for the Transition Year students. This all wouldn't have been possible if it wasn't for the hard work and dedication from the students and faculty.

Every Friday after school we go down to sing carols and cheer with the elderly residents of the local nursing home, Lusk Community Unit. We are a team of 15 talented and dedicated students of music, art and design, that spend our free time on a Friday having fun getting involved in the local community. We try to make a difference by involving the elderly which also gives us an opportunity to learn about these people, their personalities and about Alzheimer's in elderly people.

On Monday the 19th of December we held a personal Christmas concert for the residents in our schools music room complete with a fully decorated Christmas tree and bright festive lights and even our very own Santa Claus! We wanted to invoke memories of their own childhood and past Christmases, singing songs like 'White Christmas' and 'Amazing Grace'. Pensioner Pals could not have accomplished so much without the help of our amazing, kind and smart teachers and the nursing home staff, especially Celine the recreational therapist who puts together our visits to the nursing home every Friday.

The St. Vincent de Paul initiative taught our group the importance of supporting and trying to understand the problems of someone other than ourselves. Each Friday during our YSI class SVP come into our school to teach us about the world in a deeper understanding and really getting us to share our opinions on certain issues that are huge worldwide such as homelessness and racial discrimination.

Time To Talk (Time2TLCC)

From the beginning of the school year, a group of students in Lusk Community College have been established as a group to raise awareness for the current and topical problem that is mental health. This group works to raise awareness by creating a 'Wellbeing Wall' an artistic project used to spread tips and artistic pieces about mental health. It also shows that it is important to take the first step by talking to others about mental health. The first step to fixing a problem is to acknowledge it.

In St. Vincent de Paul, they are defined by three pillars. These pillars are support and friendship, promoting self-sufficiency and working for social justice. Time to talk works on the first pillar of St. Vincent de Paul, support and friendship. That's what Time to Talk is all about, supporting people through talking, being a friend when they may not have many. They hope they can help others through raising awareness about mental health and the negative effects that accompany a bad state of mind.

Mental health may not be a problem that can be eradicated, but it can be handled and helped. Keeping your mental health in good condition is just as important as keeping your physical health in good condition, however they do often coincide. This brings up our main goal as a group, to help prevent the negative effects that mental health can have if not kept in good condition. If they have one main goal through all of this, it's that if they can help at least one person talk about how they feel and to get a few more people talking about the important issue that is mental health then they know they have done what they set out to do. Through all of this they stay optimistic and we have hope for the future that a small group of students can make an impact.



Lusk Community College Says "Hasta La Vista" To Litter

Over the last four months, twenty very dedicated members of Lusk Community College's Transition Year have been taking part in the Young St. Vincent de Paul initiative. One of the many projects currently being carried out is an anti-litter committee that has been dubbed "Hasta La Vista Litter". The members of the committee have worked diligently to try put an end to litter on the school grounds, a problem which has grown out of lack of awareness and apathy. The boys have grown tired of the school being unsightly so, they decided to take action.

The Young St. Vincent de Paul initiative is an attempt by the St. Vincent de Paul to get young people more involved in their community by having them tackle issues which they perceive to be a big issue in their locality.



The boys in Lusk have been putting in work inside and outside of school. Doing tasks such as creating posters for the school, raising awareness with presentations and creating rotas to ensure cleaning up is properly carried out. They have also put in effort outside of school such as helping clean up during the holidays and also cleaning up their own act as even they have slipped up.

Catholic University School

SVP Clothes-Fest 2016



We, the CUS Saint Vincent de Paul committee, had an easy decision in what to make our main fundraising event this year. Continuing on from the success of the previous two years, Socktober and Clothes-ember, we agreed this year's clothes drive would be entitled CLOTHES-FEST. The simple premise of Clothes-fest was to encourage students to bring in unwanted clothes during the month of November. A big push was put on this year due to the fact that SVP Vincent's shops only had three weeks supply of winter clothes; so emails were sent out to each parent and posters were displayed around the school to promote the fundraiser. The bagged clothes were collected weekly from the office and sent to SVP headquarters to be distributed to the less fortunate in local areas. The fundraiser was very much a success as we were able to collect over 50 black bags of clothes. This certainly wouldn't have been possible without the cooperation of the students and the parents; not to mention Mr. Conway who was always willing to work with our suggestions and who brought our dreams to reality.

Ronan Furlong and Alex Grenham

Interview with an SVP Member

This article will be the first in a series that aims to provide insight into the diverse range of activities SVP volunteers are involved in and what motivates them to give up their time to work with SVP. In this first interview we will be hearing from SVP member, **Nessan Vaughan**, about his experience of volunteering.

1) Can you describe your role within SVP?

I am a member of a local SVP Conference (Holy Trinity in Donaghmede) where I am involved in visitation to families and individuals who request assistance. We meet every week and go out on visits once or twice a week. I am also the Area President for the area of Dublin SVP refers to as North East 1. I also volunteer on the help line in SVP House two mornings per week taking phone calls from people requesting assistance. I also volunteer in other ways as needed. For example I was involved in creating a booklet on quality visitation and I have visited secondary schools as a Guest Speaker talking about SVP and volunteering.

2) Why did you decide to join SVP?

About nine years ago I had been thinking that I would like to volunteer in some capacity, particularly with people who were experiencing social exclusion or were marginalised in our society. So I started doing two things. The first was volunteering as a literacy tutor. I also looked at the SVP website and decided I would like to get involved. I came to an information evening, put my name down and went through the process of becoming an SVP volunteer.

3) What does being a member of SVP mean to you?

Being a member of SVP is hugely important to me and has become a big part of my life. My involvement with SVP helps meet my need to help others. I find the work very fulfilling. Like anything else there are also challenges.

I think about: whether we are reaching the right people and providing the best support? Could we be doing more? Are we coming with the right spirit? It feels very worthwhile to see that you have made a real difference to people. I find it helps to remind myself of the values of SVP. The reflection time at meetings helps me to feel renewed and remind me of why I am volunteering.

4) What motivates you to volunteer?

I think it is important to engage in personal reflection to stop and take stock of why I am volunteering. The spiritual reflections at meetings help me to do this, as does looking at the origins and founding vision of SVP. Meeting new members of SVP also helps me as they bring enthusiasm and a fresh perspective.

5) Is there anything else you would like to add?

When they are in school young people may be thinking a lot about their career and what they would like to do with their life. However, a great sense of fulfilment can also come from voluntary work. Volunteering is a way to give expression to your values. I would encourage young people to volunteer. Volunteering is something you can dip in and out of at different times and stages in your life. Volunteering can help you develop a lot of skills. With volunteering I find that you get back more than you put in to it. I would also say that it is important to take volunteering seriously and give the same amount of effort and commitment that you would if it were paid work.



Pobalscoil Neasain, Baldoyle

Young SVP in the East Region are delighted that three new Young SVP Conferences have been set up so far this academic year. We would like to take this opportunity to welcome the new Conference members in Donate Community College, Caritas College, Ballyfermot and Pobalscoil Neasain, Baldoyle. In this article the Conference in Pobalscoil Neasain looks back on their actions so far.

The Young Saint Vincent de Paul group in Pobalscoil Neasain is the first of its kind in the school. The 4th years were given the opportunity to run the group. There are 15 of us altogether in the conference.

The first thing we undertook was a training day set up by the SVP representative Clare. She made us think about what we would be undertaking as a group and showed us the skills we needed to make the group work as easy as possible. After that we picked our officers who would run the groups affairs. We did this through a lottery of the names of people who were interested in being an officer. After our first meeting we thought we should help with the SVP Christmas hampers in our school and went around classes ask for student support. We managed to make 29 huge hampers for our local SVP Conference to distribute to families in need for Christmas. We also decided to set up a bake sale fundraiser to raise money so we could buy essentials to give to the homeless at Christmas. This was a major success and we made over €150 to buy our essentials. People in the school really wanted to help us.

Our latest project has been the hidden homeless awareness campaign. We decided that it would be a good idea to set up an awareness campaign in our school to highlight the hidden homeless problem in our country and to show just how many people are without proper accommodation. So far this has gone well and we are in the process of gathering signatures from students in the school as part of a petition to send to the government through SVP about this issue. We have spoken in classes and at assemblies and again many students and staff really want to lend their support to this campaign. We hope it makes a difference.



Jamie Crawford,
Conference President.

Christmas Time at SVP

Thank you to all the schools & centres who supported our Annual Appeal this year!

your help can last a lifetime

The Society of St. Vincent de Paul would like to extend a sincere and heartfelt thank you to all who supported our Annual Appeal.

Because of the support that we received from individuals, business and other organisations, there are families in communities all over the country who will have food on their table and will not sleep in a cold home tonight.

The number of people approaching SVP for help remains stubbornly high even in an improving economy. But because of your support, we are able to help those who need it most with the basics like food, fuel and education costs.

Thank you for supporting the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul's Annual Appeal and for reaching out to people in need in your community. We really appreciate your kindness.



Priory Youthreach, Tallaght

Christmas SVP Giving Tree Appeal



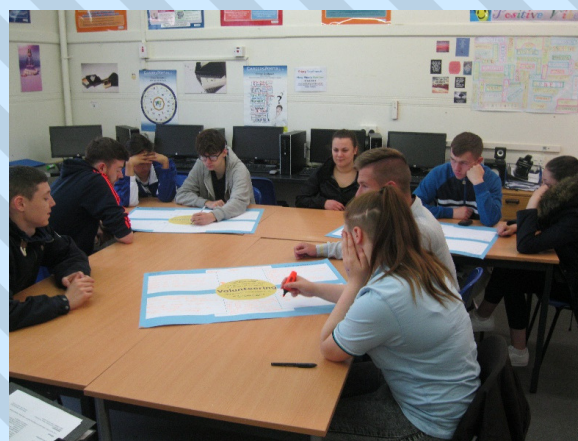
During the month of November 2016 Priory Youthreach QQI Level 4 students were delighted to get the opportunity to be St. Vincent de Paul Youth Volunteers. A lot of discussions and team working went into deciding our fundraising ideas. Clare Mander SVP Youth Development Officer came to us weekly while we researched and debated topics such as homelessness, social justice and other current social issues.

After finishing our research, we decided to get involved with the Giving Tree initiative and based this as our Christmas team activity. During November and December, we put our plan into action. Firstly, we designed a poster to inform all the students in Priory Youthreach centre about what the Giving Tree meant. The student's reaction was very enthusiastic and they donated generously. It was a great opportunity to raise awareness of SVP and get the chance to give back to the community.

Priory Youthreach was privileged to be involved and pleased to have collected over 25 gifts for homeless young people.

Overall, it has been a very rewarding experience and we will hopefully be participating in further SVP Youth Volunteer events in the future.

We would like to thank Clare Mander for all her guidance and help. We also appreciate the work and help from our teacher Celia Jones who contributed too.



Mount Anville SVP Hampers



The Madeleine Sophie Barat Conference, Mount Anville
Secondary School, Dublin 14



Every year in Mount Anville during the time of Christmas we do the annual Saint Vincent de Paul Christmas hampers. We do this to raise awareness for people who are in need and may not have a lot of food or receive many presents for Christmas. The idea of this is to get as many hampers as possible filled with food. A lot of preparation was needed ahead of time.

First we made a list of the food that was needed and which year would bring in which items. We then went around to assemblies to notify them on what to bring in and where the food would be going. It was important for us to ensure there was a real awareness of how

Christmas can be hard for many in our own areas. Nearer the time of assembling the hampers we reminded each year to bring in their given items of food and we also emailed teachers in the school to follow-up in their classes so no one would forget.

On the actual day, all of Transition year helped with this amazing cause. We gathered the food from the given location which was the front of the school and as the minutes went by the pile of food for the hampers got bigger and bigger, until we had to get two very big trolleys and the help of our entire year to carry it all to the atrium. The atrium is where we assembled the hampers into cardboard boxes. We had a station for each of the food items such as chocolates, beans, cereal, etc. We distributed one of each item into a hamper and then piled the completed hampers by the doors for collection. The atmosphere gave us all an incredible Christmas joy; we had Christmas songs playing in the background and we were all wearing Christmas jumpers and Santa hats while assembling the hampers. Everyone had a great time doing this amazing campaign and it brought us all together, giving us the true feeling of "Christmas Spirit!"

This also reminded us of what a santas workshop would be like. Because it felt as if we were all Santa's elves working hard to make all the Christmas gifts ready for that special day. In total we assembled 59 full hampers and the rest of the food items that were left over were taken to SVP head office for use at a later time in the new year. This was a great experience for all of us and we are all very proud of to have taken part in it. We would strongly encourage any school to make this a part of their Christmas giving in the years to come.

Spotlight on Social Justice

SVP creates unique 'Hidden Homeless' estate agency

On the 17th & 18th October 2016 the window of the St Vincent de Paul (SVP) Vincents shop in 73-83 South Great Georges Street, Dublin 2 was transformed into a unique 'Hidden Homeless' estate agency window.

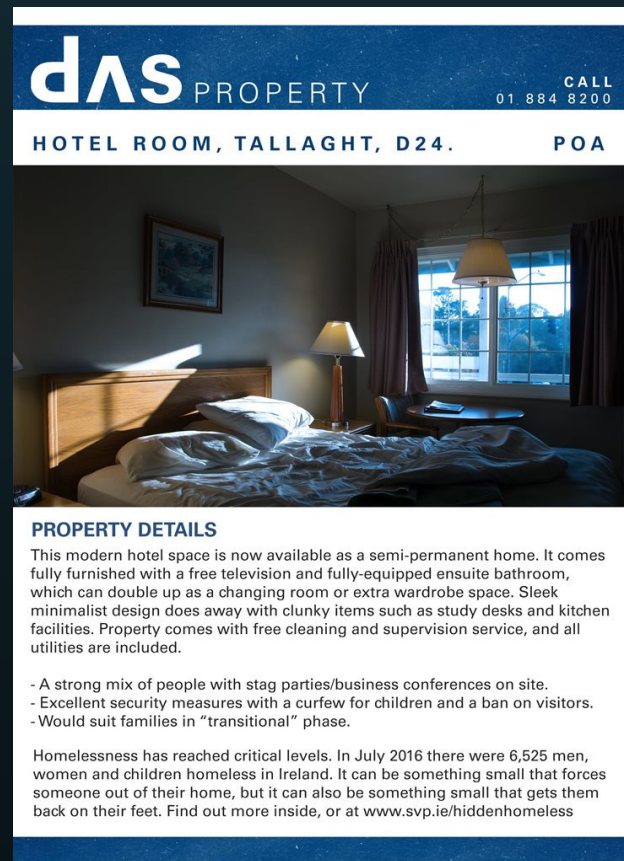
This initiative is to draw attention to the SVP's concern at the housing and homeless crisis and the lack of social housing in Ireland. SVP insists on seeing real progress on the targets for 2016 set out in 'Rebuilding Ireland', the Government Action Plan for Housing.

The 'Hidden Homeless' are people and families in Hotels and B&Bs, made homeless by hikes in private rented sector rents and also people making do with cold, damp and poor quality rental units or 'sofa surfing' in the homes of friends or extended family.

These families and people are a key concern for SVP as its members visit them, every week of the year, across Ireland but particularly in and around Dublin, Cork and other cities. SVP directly assists in preventing homelessness, in an informal way, for low income families in private rented housing who face significant rent increases. "SVP volunteers assist with practical support including financial assistance and referral to relevant agencies. SVP also provides social housing and emergency accommodation and is therefore at the heart of the housing and homelessness issue," said John-Mark McCafferty, SVP Head of Social Justice and Policy.

There are 90,000 households waiting for social housing across Ireland and over 2,000 children living in homeless accommodation in Dublin. "We need swift action on social housing to meet the needs of these families," said John-Mark McCafferty. The situation for many families is critical, he said. "Since August 2015 in Dublin alone the number of families living in homeless accommodation has jumped from 607 to 998 and the number of children in those families has gone from 1,275 to 2,012. In addition average rents nationwide have risen by 40% since 2012.

"Tackling the housing and homelessness crisis is a key way to address poverty," he added.



dsvs PROPERTY CALL 01 884 8200

HOTEL ROOM, TALLAGHT, D24. POA

PROPERTY DETAILS

This modern hotel space is now available as a semi-permanent home. It comes fully furnished with a free television and fully-equipped ensuite bathroom, which can double up as a changing room or extra wardrobe space. Sleek minimalist design does away with clunky items such as study desks and kitchen facilities. Property comes with free cleaning and supervision service, and all utilities are included.

- A strong mix of people with stag parties/business conferences on site.
- Excellent security measures with a curfew for children and a ban on visitors.
- Would suit families in "transitional" phase.

Homelessness has reached critical levels. In July 2016 there were 6,525 men, women and children homeless in Ireland. It can be something small that forces someone out of their home, but it can also be something small that gets them back on their feet. Find out more inside, or at www.svp.ie/hiddenhomeless



SVP Bag Packing Weekend 2016

Bag Packing in Dublin North County, East
Region

By Mary Ita Niall



The work of SVP is entirely dependent on the financial support afforded to us by our communities. One of the most effective ways to fundraise is bag packing in a local shop or supermarket. This is a project that both school conferences and other conferences can undertake jointly. Also, it is a highly visible activity that raises awareness of the Society in the community.

To arrange an event is straight forward enough. The first step is to meet and arrange a suitable date with a local shop or supermarket. On the day of the event, SVP volunteers stand at checkouts, engaging with the customers, packing their bags, raising awareness for SVP and hopefully collecting donations in our marked SVP buckets. For many shoppers, it's a happy exchange. They are most grateful to have their shopping bags packed for them and many will gladly drop a donation into the bucket.

However, as the manager of the Dunnes Stores located at the Pavilion Shopping centre in Swords highlighted, in fact that there is a little more to consider to the event. This was explained to the Young SVP members from Lusk Community College on their visit to the store in October. It is vitally important to leave a positive impression on shop customers irrespective of whether they donate or not. One must be helpful, courteous and polite at all times.

It is important to make a point of asking every shop customer if they would like to have their bags packed. Many customers have their own way of packing their groceries, so one must be mindful of that fact. Others like to have the option of who they donate to. Therefore it is important to have some checkouts with no volunteers present. Volunteers need to be recognisable by wearing T-shirts with the SVP logo clearly visible to shoppers and have collection buckets marked SVP, closed and secure.

Bag packing is a practical way that schools can get involved and help contribute to the work of SVP. The bag packing event in Dunnes Stores, Swords gave Transition Year students in Lusk Community College an opportunity to participate in a fundraising event for their local community. These students got credit towards their Gaisce awards.

SVP in Dublin North County wish to thank the transition year students and teachers from Lusk Community College for getting involved in the event.

A big thank you to all the schools & young people who supported the SVP Bag Packing Weekend!



Young SVP Programme

About young SVP

The Young SVP Programme is a youth development programme designed for use in school/ youth groups. The programme focuses on social action within the ethos and mission of SVP. Young people are offered opportunities to learn about SVP, social justice and how to engage in social action in a positive, meaningful way.

We have a team of youth development officers (YDO) across the country to help and support you in your involvement with Young SVP. There are a number of models of engagement and your YDO will visit your group to provide ongoing support. Our team will encourage young people to explore issues of social justice and act upon these, where youth led participation is key.

Resources are also available from the team and on our website including: Education Resource Pack, RE Resource, Conference Reflections and FAQs for school projects.

The young SVP Programme aims to "provide opportunities for young people to engage in social action in their own communities, encouraging personal and social development"



Benefits of the Programme

- Flexibility within the programme means that it can fit into your group/ school community in a way that suits you
- The programme is free and non-competitive
- Young people are at the centre of their own learning, promoting personal development
- Supports from the Young SVP Team are available throughout the year
- Links to curriculum within a number of subject areas e.g. Religious Education, CSPE, TY programmes
- Programme can be used to complement extra curricula activities e.g. Gaisce or Pope John Paul II Award
- Participants gain positive, meaningful experiences of volunteering and social action
- Participants will learn to understand and take action on social justice issues
- Participants will have the option of attending Young SVP events



The Starfish Story



Adapted from *The Star Thrower* by Loren Eiseley

Reflection

Once upon a time, there was a wise man that used to go to the ocean to do his writing. He had a habit of walking on the beach before he began his work.

One day, as he was walking along the shore, he looked down the beach and saw a human figure moving like a dancer. He smiled to himself at the thought of someone who would dance to the day, and so, he walked faster to catch up.

As he got closer, he noticed that the figure was that of a young man and that what he was doing was not dancing at all. The young man was reaching down to the shore, picking up small objects and throwing them into the ocean.

He came closer and called out, "Good morning! May I ask what it is that you are doing?"

The young man paused, looked up and replied "Throwing starfish into the ocean". "I must ask, then, why are you throwing starfish into the ocean?" asked the somewhat startled wise man.

To this the young man replied, "The sun is up and the tide is going out. If I don't throw them in, they'll die".

Upon hearing this, the wise man commented, "But, young man, do you not realise that there are miles and miles of beach and there are starfish all along every mile? You can't possibly make a difference!"

At this, the young man bent down, picked up yet another starfish, and threw it into the ocean. As it met the water, he said, "It made a difference for that one."

Reflect on the following questions...

- Does it sometimes feel like issues are too big for us to make a difference?
- What do you think the message of this story is?
- Can you think of any examples of small actions that can make a big difference to people?
- "We can't do everything but we can all do something" - Do you agree with this statement? Why/why not?

Adapted from 'Peace Out' developed by St Vincent de Paul Society, Australia



A big thank you to everyone who has contributed to this publication. If you would like an article included in the next newsletter, please send in descriptions of your projects & activities and photos (with parent/guardian consent).

If you would like more information, resources or to take part in the programme please contact:

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