




YOUNG SVP
Newsletter

East Region

Spring/ Summer
2017

A decorative graphic in the bottom right corner featuring three stylized pink flowers with green stems and leaves. The flowers are positioned behind the text "Spring/ Summer 2017".



Welcome to the third 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

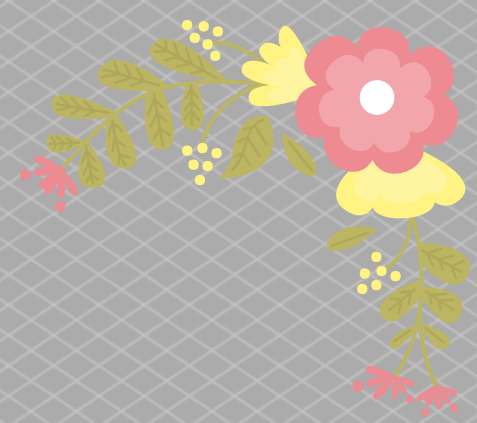
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Dear young SVP ...



I am invited to introduce myself to you! I became part of the SVP family on 20th March this year when I took up the position of East Region Coordinator. My role, working to the East Region President, Liam Casey, is to support the core work of Regional and Area Presidents, and through them our conferences and members throughout the East Region of Kildare, Dublin & Wicklow. I do this with the East Region Team, which includes Membership Support Officers and Information Support Officers and Clare Mander, your hard working and supportive Youth Development Officer.

I am delighted to be working for SVP and I have always admired the work that the Society does. SVP has never lost sight of the original vision and has been there to support individuals and families with practical direct supports at time of need, for centuries. I had the pleasure of attending the Young SVP Day for East Volunteers in the Royal Marine Hotel in Dun Laoghaire on 30th March. What a fantastic event it was! Young members from schools across Dublin, Wicklow and Kildare had opportunity to showcase their projects and to see the work of other young SVP conferences. I am sure there were a lot of fresh ideas generated by the sharing, and some future opportunities to volunteer explored at the workshops with SVP and other organisations that were taking place in the afternoon.

Congratulations and a big Thank You to all the students and teachers who worked selflessly throughout the year to make it happen.

It struck me on that day that Young SVP members are highly aware of the Social Injustices that can cause poverty. That is why it was very heartening to see that many of the projects that young SVP implemented in 2016-17, began with questions, long before action was planned. There was great consideration and exploration of the causes of disadvantage, loneliness, hunger and isolation, - and then students gave time to how best to address the issues in ways that respected the dignity of the individuals they wished to help.

I know the Young SVP Programme is part of something very special; - contributing to a more inclusive Irish Society.

I look forward to working with and supporting Young SVP in the coming years.

Best wishes for now

Nuala Crowe Taft
East Region Co-Ordinator.



Charity and Justice

Reflection

The order of society is based on two virtues; justice and charity. However, justice presupposes a lot of love already, for one needs to love mankind a great deal in order to respect his rights, which limit our rights, and his liberty, which hampers our liberty. Justice has its limits whereas charity knows none.

Charity is the Samaritan who pours oil on the wounds of the traveller who has been attacked. It is justice's role to prevent the attack.

Charity must never look to the past, but always to the future, because the number of its past works is still very small and the present and future miseries that it must alleviate are infinite

Blessed Frederic Ozanam



young SVP East Region Youth Day 2017



Over 250 young people gathered in the Royal Marine Hotel in Dun Laoghaire on the 30th of March 2017 for the Young SVP East Region Youth Day. This event was a celebration of the hard work and dedication of Young SVP volunteers in Dublin, Wicklow and Kildare.

Participants created visual displays of their work, attended social justice themed workshops, networked with other young volunteers and listened to the Key Note speaker Ruairí McKiernan who spoke about the important role young people have to play in their communities.

SVP East Region President Liam Casey noted that “almost 200 years ago the Society of St Vincent de Paul was founded by young people. It is fantastic to see the commitment you young people have to working for social justice today”.

National Youth Development Coordinator with the Society of St Vincent de Paul, Becca Gallagher explained that “the aim of the Young SVP programme is to provide opportunities for young people to engage in social action in their own communities encouraging personal and social development”. During the school year students involved in the Young SVP programme have carried out a range of actions to give back to their communities, including fundraising bake sales, putting together Christmas Hampers, raising awareness about homelessness and forming an intergenerational choir.

Speaking on the day a student from Pobalscoil Neasáin in Baldoyle said “Through the Young SVP Programme we feel like we’ve done some good when there’s so much bad going on in Ireland and the world. It was really rewarding to the soul.”

If you would like your school or centre to attend the 2018 Youth Day please email claremander.east@svp.ie for more information on how to get involved.



Young SVP East Region Youth Day 2017 Photo Gallery



Young SVP East Region Youth Day 2017 Photo Gallery



Young SVP East Region Youth Day 2017 Photo Gallery



Loreto College, Swords



Food Appeal:

In the run up to Christmas SVP held the annual food appeal. Students brought in food which was then distributed among the needy in our parish.

Christmas Jumper Day:

On the 16th of December SVP held Christmas Jumper Day in aid of Loreto Rumbek. Students wore Christmas jumpers and donated money for the school in Rumbek. This money went towards buying food and essential items for the girls attending the school in South Sudan, as they are facing severe famine and conflict.



Easter Giving Tree:

This year SVP decided to create an Easter giving tree. Easter eggs were donated by the students and given to the children of our community. This was a great success and we hope to hold this event again next year.

East Region SVP Day:

On March 30th all of the SVP conferences in Leinster schools met up in Dún Laoghaire for a day. We discussed our activities throughout the year with other schools and drew inspiration from things other schools had done for SVP.



The Fr John Doyle SVP conference in Castleknock college



This year has been a very enjoyable experience for all of us in our Transition Year SVP conference. I loved the team work that happened over the course of the school year. We met every Friday at lunch time to discuss ways and means to raise money and have events for good causes. It also was a time to get together and have a group conversation as friends.

Each Friday afternoon during school term, four members of our conference would visit Cherry Orchard Hospital where they interacted with the patients in the Alzheimer's Unit there and I'm sure they brought happy faces to all each week. Over the course of the year, the whole conference had the opportunity to travel to Cherry Orchard and brighten up the days of many.

In December, we ran a Christmas Tree Sale that raised over €4,000 for the Dublin 15 SVP. We also ran a food appeal for the local SVP that was very well supported.

Our largest event of the year was an egg hunt around Easter time for the students at St. Michael's School in Glenmaroon. We laid eggs all around the grounds of our school. It was a sunny day and the students were split into groups and brought around the grounds by the SVP conference.

After they collected all the eggs and treats, all the students got to enjoy a picnic, with lunch that we prepared. We sat with the students and enjoyed lunch at the front of the school alongside the cows in the neighbouring field. The students seemed to have a great experience and we were highly commended by their teachers. We also expressed the fact that we would be looking to keep this an annual occurrence between both schools.

Overall, our involvement with the SVP in school has been very positive. It has taught me the value of getting involved in planning and doing activities that bring people together in a spirit of friendship and service to others.

by David Foley (Fourth Year student and President)





During the Christmas time, every individual wants to achieve the sense of fulfilment for accomplishing something extraordinary and worthwhile to finish of the year and even though we always hope to brighten up another person's life, it sometimes seems unachievable. Or so we thought. The Transition Year class was given a great opportunity to execute a wonderful project during the holiday season to make someone's Christmas a little brighter.

4 Amber of Sion Hill were determined to put a smile on someone's face during Christmas and while discussing the idea, our teacher gave us an example of a small act that made her happy. The idea created by the simple example was to create care packages for mothers of ill children. We tend to forget the mentality and the difficulty that the parents experience with their stay in hospital looking after their sick children. We were well aware that parents could also feel the same amount of distress that their precious ones were going through and we do tend to forget about them and their state of mind. So we wanted to bring a little sunshine during the hard time.

With the help of St Vincent's De Paul, we contacted two main children's hospitals: National Maternity Hospital in Holles Street and Our Lady's Childrens Hospital in Crumlin whom adored our ideas. With the immense support of our local pharmacies, hotels, Tesco and Starbucks, we got donations for our care packages. We fundraised with a bake sale for the rest and by the end of the term, we had all our items such as chocolate, toothbrushes, hand creams, soap, tea bags, and many others. We also wrote a handwritten message on each bag.

We had a mini workshop at the end to create our gift and that time was one of the most enjoyable time within our classes and by the end of the day, we created 100 care packages, 20 for NMH and 80 for Crumlin Hospital.

Our student representatives went to drop off the care packages and we were welcomed with warm hands. Holles Street thanked us for our efforts with the Director of Midwifery and Nursing, Mary Brosnan and other staff joining us. With their kind and encouraging words, we were truly proud to do what we did.

At Crumlin, a different atmosphere awaited us. We were able to directly give the packages to the parents and their smile and gratitude will be an expression that will always resound with us. A few weeks later, we received a letter from one of the parent, telling how much it was appreciated during their hard time. This kind letter made everything we did worth it and taught us the meaning of giving. Reading the letter along with the class made us aware of the impact one small act can be to others.

An idea that sprung from a simple comment turned out to be life changing and an extraordinary part of our school year. There may be many events we might forget within our life but the smiles of the people who received the gift through their most difficult time was a symbol of hope and the better part of Christmas, happiness. We are ever grateful towards St Vincent's De Paul for helping us brighten up someone's life.

by Anupa Paulose

Interview with an SVP Member - Louise Scully

1) Can you describe your role within SVP?

I am the Secretary of the Clontarf Society of St. Vincent de Paul. I take the minutes of each weekly meeting and ensure that we have followed up on everything from previous meetings. I also visit clients to deliver vouchers for food, and to help with education, and bills, etc.

2) Why did you decide to join SVP?

I was first introduced to SVP when I was in 4th year of school in Holy Faith Clontarf. Each year, Holy Faith makes hampers that are then delivered by SVP to people in the community. It was the first time that I realised that people who need help are right on our doorstep, and not as far away as some may think. I joined the society for the first time when I was in college in University College Dublin (UCD). SVP in UCD holds many different fundraisers including a sleep out week. I joined the Clontarf society towards the end of college, as I wanted to have a more hands-on approach to volunteering. I wanted to meet the people that SVP helps and hear their stories and share their experiences – three years on, and I have never looked back.

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

It means making sure that nobody gets left behind. It means we, as a community, are in this together. Together we will ensure that if you fall on hard times, you know that people want to help.

4) What motivates you to volunteer?

What motivates me is hoping and sometimes knowing that we have made a small difference in the life of someone who needs it. It may just be sitting and having a cup of tea with someone, or tripping as I walk in the door and making them laugh (it has happened more times than I would like to admit). However small the little bit of joy or relief; I'm motivated by knowing that perhaps they might not have got that if we hadn't of visited. Volunteering for SVP isn't always easy, you can sometimes walk into very tough and upsetting situations, but I have learned to always look for the positive, and that because of SVP, that situation has now become a little better.

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

I would like to thank all of the volunteers in SVP for everything they do. My fellow volunteers have not only put a smile back on my face when I have walked out of tough situations but they also put a smile on the faces of our clients every day



SVP members Louise Scully and Kate Courtney at the Young SVP East Region Youth Day 2017



Interview with some young SVP volunteers

This interview has been lightly edited for length and readability

OK, so we'll start with, if you can tell me your names, please?

My name is Reece, I'm Sara and my name is Jamie.

And what school are you from?

Pobailscoil Neasain in Baldoyle.

Very good. And how long have you been volunteers?

Seven months,

Perfect. And why did you decide to get involved with St. Vincent De Paul?

To help poor people – to finish poverty. We were given a talk about St. Vincent De Paul and they gave us a great idea of starting a conference in our school. So we just thought, like, there's no reason why we shouldn't.

And what sort of activities do you do?

Well, the main activity we've done this year I'd say would be the petitions. We did a petition; basically we had a petition written up for the hidden homeless, So we had a petition signed up by every student in the school, once that was done we had it sent off to the government. We're still waiting for a reply but it's just to bring the awareness of the homeless crisis in Dublin first of all.

We got to educate people about it as well but also gave them an opportunity to make a difference when they thought maybe they couldn't have.

We did bake sales and Pancake day sales as well. We got money from fundraisers to make care packages for the homeless as well in town.

So you made the packages yourself?

Yeah, we went out and got stuff we thought a homeless person living on the street might need. Like nappies for babies.

Women's hygiene products. Deodorants and stuff like that. We put warm clothes in it as well, like hats and scarves.

It's great to be able to do something that's very tangible. It makes you think about what it must be like to live on the streets.

Yeah, it made you live in the moment. That's what we want to do. We have to think about if we were living rough what would we want. It became quite difficult sometimes with younger people in the school because we had to take them and kind of put them in their shoes.

Because, we can't really experience what it's like to be homeless without being homeless. Imagine, that's all of you, no Wi-Fi, no phone, no X-Box, no TV, no warmth. None of the things that we take for granted. Beds, roof, water.

We've taken necessities and we've made them the basics. And now... so we've said 'Imagine all them taken away and then taking away everything else and then no home. How would you feel?' You'd feel alone, you'd feel horrible, so we tried to really... even though we kind of bring the air in the class down to 'Oh, this got serious', it did kind of bring them to the level of 'OK, this actually is something good' and what we're going to do has a knock on effect on health as well.



Interview with some young SVP volunteers



How do you think the people that received the packages would have felt?

I'd say delighted. I wouldn't have said ecstatic but I would have said definitely very pleased and happy.

Brilliant. So how did you feel after that activity? Were you proud of what you had done?

Yeah, a sense of pride. We felt like we did some good when there's so much bad going on in Ireland and the world. It's really rewarding. Yeah, it's rewarding to the soul. Yeah, if you like something, if I give you something and you read it, so with a smile on your face of happiness and there are tears in your eyes of happiness, it's completely everything for us.

It's just good to have that little sense of feeling of the fact that you're helping somebody. No matter how much it would change our society, our country or the world, just that little bit of happiness with a little bit of at a time where, to be honest, everything is so dark.

So if you could say one thing to the donors who fund St. Vincent De Paul on a national level, what would you say to those donors?

Keep on donating. Because without your money we don't have any. Which we don't, like it's their support. We can fundraise all we want but it's not going to make as much of a difference as they do.

Just they're doing a really good job and they should keep on donating because it's making a difference to so many people's lives. Please keep donating. Like you're literally keeping people above water every day. You, the people, are the foundation of St. Vincent De Paul.

Donabate Community College

Young SVP in the East Region are delighted that three new Young SVP Conferences have been set up during this academic year. We would like to take this opportunity to welcome the new Conference members in Donabate Community College, Caritas College, Ballyfermot and Pobalscoil Neasain, Baldoye. In this article the Conference in Donabate Community College describe their first action with Young SVP.



Throughout our time in TY 2016/2017, our class, McCafferty have been meeting with Clare from SVP. She has taught us how to do ice breaker activities, the importance of waiting for one person to speak at a time, and just how much goes in to planning an activity.

We started off by voting for a President for our conference, and took turns to select an opening message, and closing thought, and to take the minutes. Our first plan was to run a series of workshops with our neighbouring primary school, with activities including sports, languages and science. We planned who would do each activity, but then realised that we were running out of time, and our dates clashed with activities such as Confirmation.

We then changed our plan to a Food Drive. We asked permission from the Principal, Deputy Principal, and TY co-ordinator to run a food drive. We printed a drop off poster, sourced large boxes that we recycled from the Science department, and asked the Journalism teacher to put up a post on our school Facebook page. We also asked our TY co-ordinator to send a text home to parents to tell them about our Food Drive.

Overall, we have learned about team work, how much work goes on behind the scenes of events, and that we can give back to our community.

Spotlight on Social Justice

Growing up unequal: What can be done to bridge the gap?

Despite numerous action plans and strategies, child poverty in Ireland remains unacceptably high. In 2015, approximately 130,000 children were growing up in impoverished circumstances. SVP members know the stark reality behind this statistic; children who regularly go without basic necessities such as nutritious food, clothing and heating. Poverty also prevents children from participating fully in school and social activities and ultimately limits their true potential. The Growing up in Ireland study - a national survey of over 19,000 families - shows that differences in educational between advantaged and disadvantaged children emerge early and persist throughout childhood. SVP argues that without a concerted investment in educational services throughout the trajectory of childhood, the cycle of poverty and disadvantage will persist.

Good quality early years care and education, ensures children, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds, get the best possible start in life. As well as the developmental and educational benefits, affordable childcare is an important measure to make work pay for low income families, and therefore secures a better standard of living for children. Over the past number of years, SVP have pressed the Government to increase investment in early years services and significant progress has been achieved with the introduction of the Affordable Childcare Scheme in Budget 2017.

Ongoing work with the Department of Children and Youth Affairs will continue to make sure the scheme supports the most vulnerable through investment in affordability and quality.

Although increased spending in the early years sector is welcome, it must not be at the expense of services for older children. Indeed, middle childhood is a time where school experiences shape long term expectations and outcomes. An ongoing concern for SVP members on the ground is that school costs prohibit children from participating in school fully. SVP has continually advocated the need to reduce the financial burden of school related costs, such as books, uniforms, school tours and 'voluntary' contribution, on low income families. For example, in 2011, SVP ran a public campaign to highlight unnecessary school book edition changes. It resulted in a code of conduct from publishers which they promised less edition changes. Despite this success, the issue of school costs still prevails. Successive cuts to the school capital grants over the past six years means that schools are struggling to cover day-to-day expenses. One possible implication is that parents will be asked by schools to make up the difference. Over the coming year, the Social Justice team will be advocating that these cuts are reversed.

Spotlight on Social Justice

The main way disadvantage is addressed in schools is via DEIS (Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools). SVP acknowledge the good work carried out under this programme but believe that tackling educational inequality solely through DEIS is limited; many disadvantaged children do not attend DEIS schools. The new DEIS plan, announced in February, proposes tapered funding based on differing grades of disadvantage. While this is welcome, we still need a system where all disadvantaged children, regardless of the status of their school, have access to key supports, such as educational psychologists and additional teaching resources.

One important aim of DEIS is to combat early school leaving and since 2008 rates have declined significantly. However, transition to third level education for disadvantaged groups remains low. While post-primary measures to support transitions to third level are relevant, costs associated with further education are a significant barrier. Increases in fees, changes to the adjacent rate grant, limited supports for part time students and the rising cost of living means that for many young people, college is not an option. It is expected that a new funding model for third level education will be introduced in 2018. It is not yet clear what this model will look like but SVP will advocate that equity, accessibility and affordability are central to the proposed changes.

In February the Action Plan for Education 2017 was published. Although the plan recognises the transformational potential of education, it falls short on a number of areas including measures to address school costs, early disadvantaged and third level access. If the Government are truly committed to addressing childhood inequality it needs to be more ambitious and this ambition needs to be backed up with significant investment across the life course.

by Tricia Keilthy
Social Policy Development Officer



young SVP Transition year 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.



Programme Outline



contact clare at claremander.east@svp.ie to book a free social justice module for your Transition year group. Early booking is advised as places are limited.



Spring Planting



Plant 3 rows of peas:

1. Peace of Mind
2. Peace of Heart
3. Peace of Soul

Plant 4 rows of squash:

1. Squash gossip
2. Squash indifference
3. Squash grumbling
4. Squash selfishness

Plant 4 rows of lettuce:

1. Lettuce be faithful
2. Lettuce be kind
3. Lettuce be patient
4. Lettuce really love one another

No garden is complete without turnips:

1. Turnip for meetings
2. Turnip for service
3. Turnip to help one another

A garden must also have thyme:

1. Thyme for each other
2. Thyme for family
3. Thyme for friends



Thank you to the schools and centres who have registered with the Young SVP programme in the East Region this year.

If you would like to register your group please contact Clare at claremander.east@svp.ie

Ballinteer Community School
Caritas College
Catholic University School
Colaiste Chill Mhantain
Dominican College Sion Hill
Donabate Community College
Dun Laoghaire Community Training Centre
Gonzaga College SJ
Loreto College, Foxrock
Loreto College, Swords
Loreto High School Beaufort
Lusk Community College
Mount Anville Secondary School
Pobalscoil Neasain
Priory Youthreach
St Gerard's School, Bray
St Joseph of Cluny, Killiney
St Joseph's Secondary CBS, Fairview
St Joseph's Secondary School, Stanhope Street
Yes Centre



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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