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PROVINCE OF ROSALIE RENDU



NEWSLETTER



Incorporated
works



The Daughters of Charity
of St Vincent de Paul Services

GREETINGS

Sister Ellen Flynn

Welcome to the seventh edition of our Newsletter! Having just celebrated Christmas and New Year it carries joyful descriptions and pictures of the relevant activities as well as news of further developments ongoing. I warmly thank everyone who has prepared a contribution.

This edition happily coincides with the Feast, on February 7th, of Blessed Rosalie Rendu after whom our Province is named. Her picture is always the front cover of this Newsletter. As our patroness, her spirit and example of Vincentian service in 19th century France can offer inspiration to us who are called to respond to our contemporary poverties in the same spirit.

Sister Rosalie lived all her adult life in one tiny dense neighbourhood of Paris, invaded to such an extent by the touch, taste and stench of destitution and misery that she famously committed herself and her Sisters to 'hunt down poverty' relentlessly and by any means.

One of the means she favoured was to set up projects or organised activities, in collaboration with others and involving the poor people themselves. She did not have access to our complex social and legal infrastructures, but, like us, she well understood the under-pinning importance of justice, order, accountability and financial security. Her overall vision, like ours, was of 'cradle to grave' support, expressed in focus on particular groups or needs – for example she established a Day Nursery to provide care for new-born babies while their mothers worked; a Day Shelter for Children who were too old for the day nursery and too



young for school - they were the 'street children' of her day; the 'Ouvroir', which was a sort of after-school gathering for young girls to prepare them for useful work; 'The Patronage' – or Social Centre, an organisation for young women like those for young men established by the St. Vincent de Paul Society; the 'Association of Our Lady of Good Counsel' precisely for the young women who had been leaders in the Patronage but were now too old, or perhaps working or married, to be eligible. She invited them to become mentors to the younger women or to serve neighbours in need. In 1852, as she herself approached old age and disability, she acquired a former orphanage in which she provided elderly couples with lodging that was clean, safe and free.

In all these endeavours, Sister Rosalie not only invited the participation and support of the Authorities responsible for the care of their citizens – Doctors and Public Health Officials, Administrators of the Bureau of Public Assistance, The Commissioner of the Poor of Paris, The Secretary of the Town Hall, The

GREETINGS CONTINUED ...

Treasurer of the Works – but she encouraged, persuaded and even cajoled them where necessary! She was unafraid to ‘walk with kings’ if it would benefit her beloved poor people, as witness the presence of the Archbishop of Paris to bless the opening of the Day Nursery and the visit in 1854 of the Emperor Napoleon and the Empress Eugenie.

Like us, she sometimes faced administrative delays, political reluctance and sheer incompetence, but doggedly she kept in relationship with them – to the extent that one of her ‘Administrative Collaborators’, Armand Melun, later wrote:

"In Sister Rosalie's eyes, nothing less than all the forces of public and private charity was necessary to fight against the invasion of poverty. The collaboration of Church and state, of organisations and individuals seemed indispensable to her in the struggle against so terrible an enemy. She did not understand rivalries, oppositions, jealousies, or the fear of seeing funding sources dry up because of the multiplication of works."

(cf. Melun: ‘Vie de la soeur Rosalie’ pp87/88)

Sister Rosalie served the people in her district for more than 50 years, through epidemics of cholera, political upheaval and revolution. She understood chaos, instability and injustice but

she never gave up and she never lost hope. What an example and inspiration she remains for us today! As I reflect on her life I realise what a great patron she is for us – so much of her story is as relevant for us today as it was in her time and she was clearly a woman of organised projects and works! I think she smiles on us today!

In the last Newsletter I wrote about the General Assembly of the Daughters of Charity which was about to take place. While we were in Paris and guided by Sr Marie Raw, Sisters Theresa, Celine and I visited the cemetery in Montparnasse where Rosalie is buried. Her headstone stands out and flowers are still laid by the people of Paris. I continue to be struck by the extraordinary commendation: ‘To our good Mother Rosalie. Her grateful friends, the poor and the rich’ and the epitaph: ‘She went about doing good.’ That says it all, in terms of what Rosalie’s contemporaries thought of her – friend to the poor and the rich... she went about doing good.

Next time I will share something of the results of our Assembly but today let us all rejoice in the great woman who, as a follower of Vincent and Louise, provides such strong and relevant inspiration for us today. May God bless us all with her strength, vision and tenacity.





Vincientian Care Plus

We make your HOME CARE difference



VINCENTIAN CARE PLUS

The exceptional level of care at Vincientian Care Plus (VCP) continued over the festive season to ensure all service users could spend Christmas safely and happily in their own homes. Christmas can be a difficult time for some elderly people as feelings of loneliness, loss and isolation may increase, but carers worked diligently to meet their clients' needs physically and emotionally, offering support and companionship whilst striving to maintain their clients' independence.

As we welcomed in the new year, VCP opened its doors to new head office, which is situated on Buckingham Palace Road in South West London. Staff are settling into the new premises well, which has been described as 'modern' and 'welcoming'.



HUTT ST CENTRE

Celebrating Christmas at Hutt St Centre

The festive season is especially tough for people at risk of or experiencing homelessness. Many people who walk through our doors have lost everything they hold dear – their home, their job, even their loved ones. But the offer of a warm welcome and a fresh start is a life-changing gift.

Our wonderful Hutt St Centre community is always there to remind people they are not alone. With their support, we were able to come together and share the sense of belonging we all deserve with people experiencing homelessness over the Christmas period.

In the lead up to Christmas, prior to increased COVID-19 restrictions, we celebrated with clients participating in our Pathways and Aged City Living programs.

Our fortnightly Book Club met to discuss their favourite Christmas stories and festive traditions from across the world. Long-time volunteer, Sue, also led a craft workshop, teaching participants how to transform

Christmas cards into stylish gift boxes.

On Christmas Day, our staff and volunteers hosted a breakfast of croissants and coffee followed by a traditional lunch service in our dining room, accompanied by live music. The Centre was decorated with Christmas cheer, and tables were set with crackers and gifts for each person, kindly donated by our community of supporters.

A significant highlight of this special day was witnessing the delight of people who received one of these gifts. In particular, a 13-year-old boy who was thrilled to unwrap a brand new cricket set reminded us what the spirit of giving is all about – bringing much-needed joy to others.

Everyone who joined our Christmas celebration also received a gift voucher for a local cinema, so people experiencing homelessness have a chance to escape the heat and enjoy a movie of their choice this summer, complete with snacks.

We are so thankful for our wonderful supporters, whose kindness ensured no one in our community went hungry or lonely on Christmas Day.



Our Book Club members enjoyed Christmas activities in our festively decorated Centre.



We hosted a special lunch for people at risk of or experiencing homeless on Christmas.



ST VINCENT'S FAMILY PROJECT

There was no shortage of Christmas magic at St Vincent's Family Project (SVFP) this year. The festivities started in November when 15 young families were treated to an exciting trip to Winter Wonderland at London's Hyde Park. The children and their parents had a wonderful time experiencing the rides and festive markets whilst spending time with other young families.



On 14th December, SVFP transformed into a Santa's grotto for the day where over 60 gifts were distributed to the children they support, some of whom may have otherwise gone without a present this year. It was many of the children's first time visiting Father Christmas - you should have seen the sparkle in their eyes!



On 21st December, the project took some of the young families on an exciting outing to watch Dick Whittington and His Cat at the Chelsea Theatre. The interactive performance gave both the children and parents plenty of joy and laughter, as well as an opportunity to bond with other families.



Staff and volunteers also distributed 24 hampers that included essential food and household items to families most in need over Christmas.

ST VINCENT'S FAMILY PROJECT CONTINUED ...

Alongside the extra Christmas initiatives, SVFP continued to provide a range of support programmes and classes. Eight parents completed a Healthy Living Course in December, which consisted of an hour of dynamic exercise, getting a better understanding of balanced diets and lifestyles and learning how to cook healthy recipes. One participant said: *"Understanding the amount of salt content has made me cautious in how much I put in my food."*

Another said: *"I pretty much liked everything – the atmosphere, talking about each other's cuisines in our different cultures, and having a lovely group of ladies to do the sessions with."*



Mothers also had the opportunity to take part in a Mellow Parenting course, which provides high-quality support to help parents cope in difficult or stressful scenarios, and a Positive Parenting Course, which teaches parents different techniques to strengthen the bond with their children. All of these courses and more will continue into 2022.

SVFP recently carried out its first Oral Hygiene sessions at local schools. The classes educate nursery and first-year children on how different foods affect their teeth and the importance of teeth cleaning. The project will also be offering creative arts therapy to 11 primary schools this year.





ST MARY'S HOUSE OF WELCOME

Advent – a season of hope for our community

This very happy season St Mary's House of Welcome's (SMHOW) wonderful donors provided many items of festive food and pantry staples for the people we support. Each donor also wrote a Christmas card to share with our community. Hundreds of messages of support and care were sent out in loving hampers. One message read: *"Wishing you a very merry Christmas. I hope this hamper makes you smile. Please remember you are not alone, and I will keep you in my thoughts. Amelie"*

Our volunteers came in many days to pack these hampers and share them with our service users, which made the lead up to Christmas bright and merry.

During the Christmas week, SMHOW's cook prepared a variety of special festive meals each day along with a Christmas treat for our services users to enjoy, including a well-loved Aussie BBQ. Minister Richard Wynne, a loyal supporter of SMHOW, continued his 17-year history of coming down to share the hampers and meals and meet with the community.

SMHOW continues to adapt and respond to needs in the face of the new COVID variant. Both staff and service users are being impacted by infections, despite staff being fully vaccinated. We are grateful to have been able to stay open for as long as we have (except for one forced closure of two days in early January) and grateful for prayerful support as we work to provide support and connection in a very isolating time.



Jodie - Manager, and Tasmin - Mental health support worker, sharing hampers in COVID safe ways

SMHOW CONTINUED ...

Level 1 Training Kitchen - a gift from the Daughters. Thank you!

We are so grateful for the gift from the Daughters that has enabled us to finally complete our new training kitchen (between lockdowns). The kitchen will provide a very happy place for learning new skills, being together and sharing meals.

We are now working with training providers and working to set up programs for skills development. All this will come to play this year as we can begin to open access on site.

Stories from our community

Our NDIS program (National Disability Insurance Scheme) now has 63 participants actively engaged with our team. Our focus is to identify and transition as many people from our community as we can. "Paul" has been coming to SMHOW for over 15 years. The NDIS transition team has been successful in obtaining an NDIS funding package for Paul and he now has over four hours per week of 1:1 skills development and community access support, including assistance with shopping, transport and planning meals. Paul is now joining in cooking classes, attending the library and other requested support services.



22 donated 8kg legs of ham, 25 pork roasts, and 50 chickens all prepared on site.



Delicious plum puddings, fruit salad and gingerbread snaps donated

www.smhow.org.au



THE LOUISE PROJECT

December is The Louise Project's busiest month of the year as the team endeavours to ensure families in Govanhill are supported, safe and well during winter. Families were able to celebrate the festive season in abundance thanks to the project's generous supporters and Christmas initiatives, including:

Project Present: 192 children were provided with a Santa sack that included clothing, toys and treats donated by people across Glasgow;

Basket Brigade: 60 bags were provided to mothers and babies made up of essential items for a baby's first Christmas;

Individual Conferences of Society of St Vincent De Paul: who together donated a generous £2650 and who are always alongside the project to support all we do to enable those families living with great hardship;

Allander Evangelical Church Christmas

Appeal: An initiative that provided a total of £1300 for families in need plus toiletries, bedding, clothing and gift sets.

Other supporters included Queens Park Baptist Church who provided soap powder, toiletries and gift sets to the project, and monetary gifts, selection boxes, clothes and toys from private and individual donors. Foodbanks also provided 50 goody bags and 50 Farmfoods vouchers.

In addition to the extra Christmas initiatives that took place, the project's usual weekly support programmes remained open to the people in the community. The project's community drop-in centre provides a safe space for families to access crisis support, well-being sessions, academic classes - such as literacy, numeracy, financial and digital lessons - and the project's shop which enables families to buy essential items at prices they can afford.

THE LOUISE PROJECT CONTINUED ...

The Louise Project evaluated its two-year aim to support 240 Roma families in their journey towards a better life. The team were delighted to announce they exceeded this target by reaching 388 families and addressing 5300 issues, including complex crises involving food, clothing, finance, debt, housing and health. Findings show the project has helped:

- 388 families meet their essential needs for food, clothing, bedding and furnishings;
- Reduced isolation and increased integration for 346 families as they developed connections and relationships;
- Enhanced employability skills for 106 individuals as they become literate and master transferable skills;
- Increase financial independence for 88 families and their capability to manage money;
- Increase sense of well-being, self-efficacy, and aspirations among 68 individuals.



Sr Marie and Sr Anne Marie practising Christmas Carols which they showcased at the project's Christmas lunch.





ST JOSEPH'S

From Halloween trees to Christmas trees, the atmosphere at St Joseph's has been anything but dull this last quarter. In October, the people at St Joseph's had a spooktacular week celebrating the scary season as they dressed up their houses in terrifically terrifying decorations and took part in crafts competitions where they produced a range of scary designs.

The Christmas festivities quickly followed as the project announced a packed activities calendar. The season started with St Joseph's annual 'Light up a life' service where staff, the

people they support and their families gathered on Zoom for a reflective service to remember loved ones and switch on the lights to their Christmas trees as a symbol of the light the people they remember brought into their lives. The people at St Joseph's then enjoyed a range of events throughout December including a 'Gingerbread Fest Competition', a 'Let it Snow' themed Christmas party, carol singing, advent reflections, Christmas bingo and the opportunity to write a wish or prayer on a star to hang on their Christmas tree.

ST JOSEPH'S CONTINUED ...

Sadly, the presence of the Daughters of Charity in Rosewell and the Diocese of St Andrew's, Edinburgh, came to an end in December. St Joseph's celebrated the Daughter's legacy at the project with a formal farewell mass on the 5th of December. The beautiful event was attended by many who have shared their journey over the years.

Despite the Daughter's leaving the Diocese, recently the project was delighted to welcome Sister Kathleen Fox as their new Chair of the Board of Trustees. Rob Jahoda, CEO of St Joseph's, said *"Sister Kathleen brings great experience, knowledge, compassion and genuine care for the people we support and I'm sure that during her tenure as chair we will continue to live our values, grow, develop and thrive."*

St Joseph's also welcomed a new Pastoral Worker, Angela, who will continue the nurturing of friendships and community within the project as practised by the Daughters since the project's beginning. St Joseph's has always been known for its strong sense of community and celebration, which has been challenged in recent times due to the pandemic. But over the last few months, pastoral care has supported the people at St Joseph's to create opportunities to connect, including joining a walking group, coffee mornings, a Sunday worship group and other Zoom events that help them get to know each other better and appreciate one another's unique experiences and qualities.





ST CATHERINE'S AGED CARE SERVICES

Christmas at St Catherine's Aged Care Services

During the month of December 2021, it was very evident with the old expression - 'Christmas is the time for giving'.

One of the teachers, Rachelle from Saint Anthony's Catholic primary school in Marsfield, had organised for her students and their families to make individual Christmas baskets for our residents for Christmas.

The gift baskets were very elaborate catering both for our female and male residents, with so much thought going into each basket.

It was so wonderful to see our residents opening their Christmas hampers, enjoying some beautiful toiletries and chocolates, enjoying the crossword puzzles and many more delightful age-appropriate gifts.

St Catherine's Aged Care Services is very proud to have such an affiliation with the general community and, in particular, Saint Anthony's Catholic primary school.

It is wonderful moving forward that we can continue to forge relationships within the community, again, we thank Saint Anthony's Catholic primary school from the bottom of our hearts.



the marillac
neurological
care centre



THE MARILLAC NEUROLOGICAL CARE CENTRE

It's been a joyous season at The Marillac, thanks to a team of Christmas elves (a.k.a. the Activities Team) who put on a range of events for residents. The centre remained open for as long as it possibly could to ensure they were able to celebrate the festive period with their families. Everyone enjoyed a Christmas party where they were treated to a live singer, a special Christmas raffle with over 30 prizes kindly donated by staff and families, and a fun sing-along with the centre's music therapist, Davy. Staff also enjoyed a Christmas jumper day which raised £106 for the centre's local food bank, and each received Christmas beanie hats with The Marillac's logo, as modelled by some of the senior management team above.

To make the residents' home feel extra special over Christmas, staff did a magnificent job at decorating the centre. The Marillac's central corridor 'The Street' was decked out with Christmas trees (yes, multiple) and had beautiful snowflake garlands draping from the ceiling. Participating in arts and crafts has been shown to have a positive impact on the residents' wellbeing, so they were encouraged to join in the fun too. They enjoyed decorating baubles and wreaths and created an impressive festive wall display that featured a Christmas tree for everyone to enjoy.

Residents then brought in the new year with another party where they enjoyed a live musical entertainer on the patio. Luckily, the weather was great and the artist was a huge success with everyone.

SETON VILLA

Despite ongoing COVID challenges, residents have now moved into their new 'Leia's Place' home. They all had such fun unpacking their belongings in their new bedrooms and enjoying the spaciousness of the property. Interestingly, we have seen a significant reduction in behavioural incidents between the women, who now don't physically bump into each other when moving between rooms.

Construction of our fourth new home in Ryde is almost complete, with internal painting underway in accordance with resident preferences. Named 'Lavender Cottage' by incoming residents, a moving date of early March 2022 is anticipated.



SETON VILLA CONTINUED ...

Just prior to the major Omicron outbreak in NSW, Seton Villa residents enjoyed Christmas lunches with families and friends in their homes during December. Everybody had such fun – in contrast to January 2022 when many residents and staff contracted COVID and have largely been isolating in their bedrooms. Thankfully, symptoms to date have been mild for everyone. We pray that this difficult season will soon pass.



2022 will continue to be a big year for Seton Villa, with construction on a further two SDA Improved Liveability houses to commence around March and due for completion by end October 2022. This will leave us with just one new home to build to complete our ambitious Asset Redevelopment Project. We will also actively pursue our strategic intent to grow as an organisation and facilitate many more people with disability to live their best life.





OUT THERE

It is a time of year that is supposed to bring families together, but for young people with a parent or loved one in prison, Christmas can be an extremely difficult period. Throughout November and December, staff and volunteers at Out There went above and beyond to help relieve some of the emotional burdens put on families who are impacted by imprisonment. To help lift their spirits, around 25 families were treated to a trip to the pantomime to see *Sleeping Beauty*. The project was also delighted to receive a generous donation of Christmas toys from *Cash for Kids Greater Manchester*, as well as advent calendars and chocolate selection boxes donated by *Fieldings Porter*, which were distributed to families over the holidays.



In addition to spreading Christmas cheer, Out There delivered vital food hampers to people who were struggling to meet their basic needs, and assisted with prison visits. The project's work was featured in a BBC radio segment, where one lady they support said: "It's been a massive help just having somebody there to speak to when you've got people that are in prison and having that support network that you don't really get from anywhere else."

You can listen to the interview at:
www.bbc.co.uk/sounds/play/p0b708sf
(forward to 2:53:26)