

# Society of St. Vincent de Paul

Toronto Central Council

## What We Do

### ◆ At the Parish Level

Home visitations are conducted by over 1,200 volunteer members of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul, assisting 16,000 families and individuals each year with emergency food, clothing and beds. Parish-based conferences of volunteer members - or "Vincentians" - also conduct annual Christmas programs and assist in financing the Special Works of the Society.

### ◆ Marygrove Camp

A fully subsidized residential camping program for 1,200 girls, aged 5-13, located on Georgian Bay near Penetang.

### ◆ Stores & Distribution Centre

Items are provided free of charge to those in need through a voucher system in our stores and through a partnership with Goodwill. Goods are also available to walk-in customers at low cost.

Donations are collected through the parish "Bundle Weekend" program.

### ◆ Prison Apostolate & Court Services

Provides support and clothing for persons in prison or awaiting trial, and assists them in maintaining contact with their families.

### ◆ Twinning

A partnership offering aid to needy Conferences and Councils in Canada and overseas.

### ◆ Gower Park Place

Operated by the VincentPaul Family Homes Corporation, Gower Park Place is a non-profit 164 unit affordable apartment building in East York, working with families to move them off social assistance.

### ◆ Residential Housing Programs

#### • Women's Emergency and Transitional Housing Programs

Providing housing and support to women in crisis through a network of emergency beds and longer-term housing at Mary's Home, Amelie House, St. Clare's Residence and Elisa House. 128 women receive secure housing and support each night with ongoing assistance provided to women fleeing domestic abuse.

#### • St. Francis Residence

A home for 24 men and women who have experienced mental illness and are dependant on others for support. Our aim is to help increase the quality of their lives and hasten a return to self-sufficiency.

#### • Ozanam House

Provides transitional accommodation and support for men recently discharged from a detoxification unit and waiting entry into an addiction treatment program. This home provides a caring and supportive residence for 12 men.

#### • VincenPaul Community Homes

Providing men and women recovering from addiction with the support and encouragement needed to build a new life. There are 13 homes, including one for persons undergoing Methadone treatment. These homes provide supportive housing for 81 men and women.

#### • DePaul House, Martineau House & Vincent House

Offers residential care and support to 18 men and women who are developmentally disabled. The residents live in a loving community, learn basic life skills, and share in decision making processes.

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For more information please visit our website at [www.ssvptoronto.ca](http://www.ssvptoronto.ca)

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Toronto Central Council**

**WHY WE DO WHAT WE DO**

As members of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul ("Vincentians), we reach out to our neighbours in need through direct, person-to-person contact, because of:

1. Our faith;
2. The need

**Faith:**

1. Our faith and commitment to the Gospel message calls us to bring compassion and love to those in need, to "feed the hungry..." Matthew 25 (*And the King will answer, "In truth I tell you, in so far as you did this to one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did it to me."*)
2. Vincentians commit in a special way (our Vincentian vocation) to live the message of the Gospel in serving the needs of the poor and the marginalized, through home visits, our emergency shelters, homes for the disabled, those in transition to more independent living, and others in need of support.

**Need:**

- \* Despite recent improvements in the minimum wage and some increased payments to those in low income situations, statistics and experience tell us that their future is bleak without our help and without a significant plan to reduce poverty among children and adults, particularly the most vulnerable in our society.
- \* Social Assistance (Ontario Works or Ontario Disability Support Program) has declined by more than 35 per cent over the past 11 years, if one factors in inflation (which we all do when looking for our salary increases).
- \* Minimum wage or social assistance does not allow people to adequately meet their most basic need for adequate shelter, regular nutritious meals, health care, and suitable clothing for our weather conditions. They must constantly make choices between putting food on the table and paying the rent, or, between filling prescriptions for serious health issues, or buying other necessities.
- \* Low-income families in Toronto: 1990 - 1 in 6 2005 - 1 in 4 (up by 50%)
- \* Lone-parent low-income families in Toronto: 1990 - 33% 2005 - 50% (up by 17%)
- \* In the Toronto region, applications for evictions due to non-payment of rent rose 26% between 1999 and 2006.
- \* Parents often work two jobs at minimum wage and still cannot provide for their family due to the rising cost of rent, food, fuel, transportation, and clothing. Children cannot learn when they lack adequate food and suffer anxiety about their future. Their parent's lack of hope is the inheritance and despair of a child in poverty.

**You are their hope**

We act on behalf of the parish community. We are supported always through the prayers of our many friends, our benefactors, and our members. The weekly donations through the poor box in our parish churches, the special collection for Marygrove Camp, bequests and memorials, all make possible the continued support of those in need of our assistance, compassion and encouragement.

Please seriously consider joining your parish Conference. To join or for more information about the Society of St. Vincent de Paul and our service to those in need, please speak to a member, call our Central office: **416-364-5577** or visit our website, **[www.ssvptoronto.ca](http://www.ssvptoronto.ca)**.