



Vinnies

Welcome to our Centres



Vinnies

For more information please contact (02) 9560 8666 www.vinnies.org.au

Welcome to our Centre and the St Vincent de Paul Society NSW

Amended September 2009

WELCOME TO THE ST VINCENT DE PAUL SOCIETY AND THIS CENTRE

The St Vincent de Paul Society welcomes you. We are most appreciative of you giving your valuable time to assist us to help those seeking our assistance and we look forward to a happy association over many years.

As you will be representing the Society in the work you will be performing, it is essential that you become familiar with the contents of this booklet. You will find it contains useful information about your work and this Centre.

This booklet gives a general background to the Society and its founder, Frederic Ozanam, what we aim to achieve, how we operate and what it means to be part of the St Vincent de Paul Society.

Teamwork is an essential element in our Centres work. We welcome you to our team.

THE ST VINCENT DE PAUL SOCIETY

The St Vincent de Paul Society is a world wide charitable organization founded and conducted by lay Catholics with the help of people from many faiths and backgrounds.

The origin of the Society...its founder and its patron, from whom the organisation derives its name....is outlined on pages 12 and 13 of this booklet.

THE LOGO OF THE SOCIETY

The Society's logo, which reflects its mission and spirit, was the thought of the Australian sculptor Tom Bass in 1965. It was adopted by the National Council in 1976 and is the Symbol of the Society in Australia and in many other countries.

The logo depicts:



- 1 The cup of cold water – this reflects all that we do as members whether it be to actually feed the poor or visit the lonely, the sick, those in prison.
- 2 The hand of Christ blesses the cup – the “Rule” and the work of the Society are based on the Gospels, i.e. the teachings of Christ.
- 3 The hand of love offers the cup – in serving the poor, we serve Christ himself who is present in each person. This visible, practical expression of our faith helps us to grow both personally and spiritually. In time, as Vincent and Frederic did, we may come to “see Christ in the faces of those we serve”.
- 4 The hand of suffering receives the cup – when we offer help, it is not always received graciously. We know why we are there, but the people cannot always understand why they are in this position/situation.

Respect for the human dignity of every person is an essential element of the spirit of the Society. By showing tact and understanding, members, staff and volunteers seek to encourage and enable clients to be more self-reliant and to gradually assume responsibility for their own lives.

CONFERENCES, CENTRES AND THEIR RELATIONSHIP

Conferences: Conferences are the basic unit of the Society. The main work of a conference is visiting people in their homes, in hospitals, institutions and wherever else people seeking assistance can be found. Conferences discern the needs of those seeking assistance through conversation and interview and respond in a variety of ways to meet those discerned needs.

To further this work, conferences need access to material goods.

Centres: The Centre is the venue where goods are collected, sorted and either given to people requiring assistance or sold at reasonable prices to our customers. Centres are shops and outlets where people can purchase quality donated goods at reasonable prices.

The relationship: Because of its high visibility in the community, people seeking assistance from the Society may approach the Centre.

It will then be the Centre's responsibility to direct people to a referral Centre, record the name, address and telephone contact number of the persons seeking assistance for a conference home visit to be made, or provide operating details (days and times when open) for the conference interview. Where need is immediate and urgent, Centre volunteers attempt to meet these needs within the resources of the Centre or attempt to contact Conference members who may be able to respond in a timely manner.

Conference members have the obligation and responsibility of deciding what material assistance is required. The items on a family assistance voucher will be specific and be supplied where possible by a Centre. Conferences will be informed if goods are unavailable. On occasion, conference members sometimes accompany a family to the Centre where Centre Volunteers and Staff will assist in the selection of goods.

CENTRE VOLUNTEERS

Centre volunteers play a very important role in our Centres, they are often the public face of the Society, dealing with customers, donors and people seeking assistance.

Centre Volunteers are partners with Conference Members. Their contribution to the work of the Society is essential if the Vincentian goal of meeting material support for people in their time of need with dignity, compassion and respect is to be met. Centre Volunteers enable Conference Members to assist the poor materially.

Goods given on a family assistance voucher should be of Vinnies shop quality.

THE ROLE OF THE CENTRE

A Centre is a Special Work of the Society and its functions can be described as:

- 1 Providing visual evidence of the Society's Christian presence in the community. Displaying a crucifix, images of St Vincent de Paul and or Blessed Frederic Ozanam in each Centre/retail outlet emphasizes our Christian ethics, our patron and our founder.
- 2 Often being the first point of contact for people seeking assistance.
- 3 Receiving and distributing goods donated by the community.
- 4 The principal income source is the sale of goods, in excess of family assistance needs, these items are sold at very reasonable prices through our Centres.
- 5 Surplus clothing is recycled by selling it as cleaning cloth or export clothing generating further funds to assist those seeking assistance.
- 6 Providing an opportunity for members of the community to give of their talents and time in assisting others.
- 7 Help meet the needs of the community by providing friendship, companionship, support and job training.
- 8 Money earned from the sale of surplus goods is managed by the Diocesan Council on behalf of Centres, Conferences and Special Works and provides help to people seeking assistance.
- 9 Centres are used to display, promote and sell Christian literature and pious goods.
- 10 Centres may store goods for our response to disaster events (mattresses and blankets) and may supply urgently required clothing during disasters.

Even though the responsibility of a Centre is to raise funds to enable conferences to help people seeking assistance, the Christian nature of the Centre should be obvious by your attitude to all those who enter, to those with whom you work, and the feeling of Christian spirit that you project.

CENTRE MISSION

It is our mission to make our Centres a working model of a Vincentian family; bringing together those in need, those who assist them and those who donate goods and ensuring that through the love and friendship offered, our Centres reflect the spirit and image of the St Vincent de Paul Society.

CENTRE PRAYER

In February 2000, Sr Gwen Tamlyn Spiritual Advisor to State Council was asked to write a prayer especially for Centre volunteers/employees. This prayer is available as a prayer card/bookmark. Many Centre volunteers use this prayer to begin their day at the Centre.

St Vincent de Paul Centre Prayer

We ask you Lord to journey with us this day in Love,

We thank you for the many joys and blessings in our lives especially our families and friends,

Help us to be kind and considerate to all we meet.

May we be helpful and kind to all who enter this Centre,

And we pray especially for those most in need of your love today.

Amen

CODE OF CONDUCT

As a representative of the Society, you have a very important role to play. In our Centres you will come in contact with many people all of whom will need warmth, friendship, understanding and caring in varying degrees. Some will also need material help such as clothing and household goods. You must never judge or comment on the circumstance of others.

The Centres Code of Conduct establishes the way we ask all volunteers/employees to behave from day one. The Society has developed this code so we operate in a culture that allows everyone to give their best.

ST VINCENT DE PAUL SOCIETY NSW CENTRES CODE OF CONDUCT

I understand that as a volunteer/employee with the St Vincent de Paul Society NSW/ACT, I will be asked to support its ethos, aims and objectives and at all times represent the Society in a positive manner. Therefore,

I will,

- Present a warm Christian welcome to all who come into the Centre – Volunteers, Employees, Customers, Donors, Clients
- Act with courtesy, consideration and good judgement in all interpersonal relationships preserving the dignity of others
- Treat all people equally and will refrain from innuendos and remarks that deal with race, age, gender, religion or background
- Be trustworthy in maintaining confidentiality especially regarding people seeking assistance, during and after my service as a Volunteer/Employee
- Observe all policies and procedures set down in the Society's Policy and Operations Manuals
- Attend Centre training courses and meetings as requested, to enhance my skills required to be a Centre Volunteer/Employee
- Accept the direction of the Day Co-ordinator/Manager
- Be punctual on my rostered days, adhere to my job description and carry out allocated tasks conscientiously
- Acknowledge that bullying, physical and verbal abuse, neglect or any other type of abuse, is unacceptable by anyone in the Society
- Follow Society grievance procedures to resolve any conflicts
- Observe the requirements of the Occupational Health and Safety Act and Regulations taking reasonable care to protect my own health and safety and the health and safety of others

CENTRES AND DIOCESAN SPECIAL WORKS

The Society's broad range of services and programs are called "Special Works". Our Special Works are developed to satisfy the particular needs of local communities which cannot be satisfied within the normal scope of conference activity.

All Special Works are the responsibility of State and Diocesan Councils.

Special Works and as such are required to operate in accordance with the 'Rule of the Society'.

There are many Special Works that the Society operates, these may include:

- Aboriginal Partnership and Development
- Centres – Retail Outlets
- Christian Literature (promotion and distribution)
- Community Support
 - Animation Project
 - Rosalie's Garden
 - Louise House
- Disability Services
 - Ozanam Industries
- Disaster Recovery and Crisis Relief
 - Rural Task Force
 - Emergency Relief Program
- Drug and Alcohol Support Centres
- Family Services
 - Care and Support Centres
 - Budget Counselling
 - NILS
- Food Distribution
- Gambling Help
- Home Visitation
 - Prison Visitation
- Housing and Homeless Services
 - Single Men's Services
 - Women and Childrens' Services
 - Drug and Alcohol Services
- Learning Services
- Mental Health
 - Compeer Program
 - Mate Helping Mate
- Migrant, Asylum and Refugee Services
 - SPARK
 - Refugee Support
- Night Patrol and Vinnies Van
- Overseas
 - Assist a Student
 - Twinning
- Youth Services and Activities
- Youth Reach
 - Family Group Conferencing
 - Anger Management Program
 - Adolescent Girls Group
 - Sport and Recreation Program
 - Hip-Hop Program
 - Up-Skilling Courses
 - Living Skills Program

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

CENTRES POLICY AND OPERATION MANUAL

The Centres Policy and Operations Manual establishes the policies and procedures for the conduct of Centres and Retail Outlets in NSW. All information needed for setting up and operating a Centre is consolidated into this manual. The Centres Manual is readily available to all persons involved in the Centre.

OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY

The Society is committed to providing a safe and health work environment for each of its volunteers/employees. Occupational Health and Safety is both an individual and shared responsibility of all volunteers/employees. The relevant NSW State Occupational Health and Safety Act details the responsibilities of all parties, including the duty to consult. Information regarding occupational health and safety can be found in the current Insurance and OHS Manual.

MANUAL HANDLING

Centre volunteers/employees must complete the manual handling course before they start work in the Centre. This training is incorporated into the pre start or first day induction training.

WORK-PLACE POLICIES

The Society is committed to best-practice policies and procedures in its Centres. The Society reflects its Christian values and its caring ethos by ensuring Centre volunteers and employees are valued and treated with respect by all who work in, and manage, our Centres. This goal is supported by the Society's policies on workplace discrimination, harassment, sexual harassment and bullying. These policies are contained in the Policy and Operations Manual for Centres.

If you are aware of, or are subjected to, any form of harassment or bullying in the workplace, you should report the matter to your day coordinator, manager or Centre President.

Note: If, at any time you are not sure of what action to take, you may contact your Diocesan Centres President or Diocesan President directly.

GOOD CHARACTER DECLARATION

The St Vincent de Paul Society has a duty of care to the children in its care and to the general public who interact with its employees, volunteers, conference members.

As part of this duty of care and as a requirement of the Society's Child Protection Policy it must conduct probity checks and enquire into the background of those applying for, undertaking or remaining in any work (paid or voluntary) that involves working with children.

Centres are not directly involved in the management of children. To ensure, however, that Centre volunteers and employees meet the expectations of the Society in regard to personal probity, Centre personnel are required to complete a Good Character Declaration Form.

PRIVACY POLICY

The Privacy Amendment (Private Sector) Act 2000 regulates the way the Society can collect, use, keep secure and disclose personal information. Individuals have the right to know what information an organization holds about them and the right to correct that information if it is wrong. Your day co-ordinator/manager will explain the privacy policy guidelines. The Centres Policy and Operations Manual includes an extended statement on the Privacy Policy.

MEDIA POLICY

The Society has a media policy which specifies those people who have authority to communicate with the media about issues which affect the Society.

YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH THE SOCIETY

Volunteering in a Society Centre is an activity open to anyone without discrimination. We welcome your decision to volunteer to perform specific tasks with certain responsibilities and in return you are entitled to certain rights. Both you and the Society have obligations towards each other.

As volunteer you will not receive money reward for service. For procedures relating to out of pocket expenses, refer to the "Volunteer Expenses Policy".

YOUR RIGHTS

- With the help of the Centre's day co-ordinator/manager, you have the right:
- To be given suitable work within the Centre to ensure that your individual needs are met wherever possible and to be given a clear job description.
- To work in safe, healthy conditions in accordance with the standards of Occupational Health and Safety Act.
- To be appropriately inducted, trained and supervised on the job.
- To be reimbursed for appropriately authorized expenses in accordance with the Society's Volunteer Expenses Policy.
- To air grievances in accordance with the Society's Grievance and Resolution Policy.
- To be informed about the aims and activities of the St Vincent de Paul Society and to have open communication with others.
- To participate in an appropriate consultative process in the event of dismissal.
- If you believe that the Society, the Centre committee or President is not fulfilling these obligations; you should discuss the particular issue with your day co-ordinator/manager or Centre President.

YOUR OBLIGATIONS

- To perform your chosen or allocated tasks conscientiously, reliably and punctually.
- To respect the aims and philosophy of the Society.
- To uphold the standards of the Society and respect its rules.
- To be trustworthy in maintaining the confidentiality of the Society and especially its clients, during and after your volunteer service.
- To be willing to learn and to undertake training when advised to do so.
- To observe the practices in relation to safety, health, management and work procedures. In particular, if you have an accident or injury, no matter how slight, please tell your day coordinator, supervisor or manager and record the injury or incident in the Centre's accident report book. For your protection it is essential you sign the attendance book at the time you start and finish each working day.
- To maintain open communication with work colleagues and to be supportive of the Centre's management (day coordinators, supervisor, manager or Centres committee).
- When unable to attend on your rostered day; to promptly notify your day coordinator, supervisor or manager, so that substitute arrangements can be made.
- To help us to keep our Centre neat, clean and orderly at all times.

Reference: The Centres' Code of Conduct

DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURES

The Society is committed to ensuring that fair and equitable procedures are implemented and followed when disciplinary measures are to be taken against any volunteer/employee. The procedures must ensure that your rights to fair and just treatment are safeguarded at all times. The Society reserves the right to dismiss any unsatisfactory volunteer/employee.

You should be given information on what your duties are, what standards are expected, what is unsatisfactory with your work performance and what is required to improve your performance. You should be given a reasonable time to improve. If you are found to be involved in serious and willful misconduct or any criminal activity you may be dismissed without going through a warning procedure. If the Society requires more information to confirm your misconduct, you will be suspended until a decision is made.

INFORMATION ABOUT OUR CENTRE

SALES

We do not negotiate prices, the price displayed is the only price charged. Each item is to be recorded on the cash register and a cash register receipt given to the customer.

PURCHASE OF GOODS BY VOLUNTEERS/EMPLOYEES

All the goods in this Centre have been given to the Society by our donors to use or raise funds for people seeking assistance. The Society is obliged to observe the donor's wishes. To be scrupulously fair to donors, the volunteers/employees are permitted to purchase certain goods, but only under the following conditions:

Approved items may only be bought from the retail area. Items cannot be purchased from the sorting area, family room, food pantry or other special areas.

The items are to be purchased at the displayed retail price.

All volunteer/employee sales must be recorded in the volunteer/employee purchase book and the number of purchases shall be restricted to reasonable limits.

RECYCLING/CLEANING CLOTH

Clothing not suitable for families or retail is not sold or given away to the public. This clothing is recycled by processing it through the Society's authorized recycling operations.

IDENTIFICATION

You are required to wear a St Vincent de Paul badge with your first name and wear either an apron/blouse/polo shirt as a form of Society identification. This helps you to be identified by customers/donors requiring assistance. Wearing a Society uniform also deters shoplifting, as it makes you clearly visible and gives an air of belonging and authority.



BLESSED FREDERIC OZANAM AND THE SOCIETY OF ST VINCENT DE PAUL

Paris of the early 19th century was in the grip of great upheavals. During and following the French revolution 1788-1799, Paris was profoundly affected by social unrest. A new type of society was being formed - a republic based on liberty, equality and fraternity.

The 1830s brought the collapse of the old Bourbon monarchy which had dreams of strengthening the throne with the support from the Church. Large numbers of the country people were moving to the cities to find work in the factories. Many arrived to discover that there was no work, little pay or that the factories were closed due to revolution.

In 1832 an epidemic of cholera swept through Paris killing up to 1200 people each day. Large slums areas were forming in Paris; thousands of people lived without work, some without clothes, and many alcoholic. Homelessness, disease, and starvation were common.

A young student, Frederic Ozanam had to walk through the poorer suburbs on his way to university lectures each day and he soon became deeply moved at the hopeless state of families who had been left without the support of their breadwinners after the epidemic. It was the taunt of an anti-religious opponent in a debating society founded by the students that stung him to action:

“You are right Ozanam when you speak of the past! In former times Christianity worked wonders, but what is it doing for mankind now? And you, who pride yourself on your Catholicity, what are you doing now for the poor? Show us your works.”

Frederic Ozanam gathered a few friends around him and on 23 April 1833, they met to decide what they could do to assist the poor. After the meeting Frederic and his flat mate took the remainder of their winter wood supply and gave it to a widow. These young men attracted the comment “What can seven young men hope to achieve in alleviating the suffering of Paris?” Fortunately Ozanam paid little heed to their comments, determined to satisfy his own conscience that he was doing what he could to bear witness to his Christian upbringing by assisting those less fortunate in the community.

The small group formed themselves into a Conference of Charity and decided to adopt the name The Society of St Vincent de Paul after the Patron Saint of

Christian charity. The group was guided by a well-known Catholic journalist and newspaper editor, Emmanuel Bailly, who provided the group with a place to meet.

They sought the advice of Sister Rosalie Rendu, a Daughter of Charity who was visiting poor families in one of the poorer districts. She gave them some of her clients. They agreed to meet weekly to strengthen their friendship and to respond to the needs of those they served.



ST VINCENT DE PAUL PATRON OF THE SOCIETY

St Vincent de Paul was born in the village of Pouy, southern France in 1581 and ordained a priest in 1600. On a sea journey to Toulouse in 1605 he was taken prisoner by pirates and sold as a slave but eventually escaped. He became Parish Priest of Clichy and then tutor to the children of the wealthy De Gondi family. He soon devoted himself to the relief of the needy and sick, establishing from 1617 onwards what he called “Confraternities of Charity” in various towns in France. These were divided into separate branches for men and women, the women’s branch being more successful, even spreading outside France.

About this time Vincent was appointed Royal Chaplain General of the Galleys and set about improving conditions for slaves and those in prisons and hospitals. In 1625 he founded the Congregation of the Mission (Vincentians) to bring the gospel to the rural poor and to convicts.

With St Louise de Marillac he founded in 1633 the Daughters of Charity to care for the sick poor. This was the first religious community of women to work in public outside a convent.

Among his most important works, which also became models for government institutions, were his efforts on behalf of abandoned children and the people of districts devastated by war. For the benefit of foundlings he provided shelters, orphanages, education, apprenticeships and employment.

He died on 27th September 1660, was canonized in 1737 and named universal patron of Catholic charities by Pope Leo XIII in 1885. Vincent’s feastday is 27th September. The writings and practices of St Vincent de Paul were well known to the founders of our Society; many of the basic principles under which he worked were incorporated in the first Rule of 1835. He was named as Patron from the beginning as “a model on earth, a protector in Heaven”, in the words of Frederic Ozanam.



Vinnies

For more information please contact:
(02) 9560 8666
www.vinnies.org.au