



St Vincent de Paul Society
good works

Opportunities for Reaching Out



Presenting some ideas to reach out as a Council or Conference in your local communities



1.6 ADAPTATION TO A CHANGING WORLD

Faithful to the spirit of its founders, the Society constantly strives for renewal, adapting to changing world conditions. It seeks to be ever aware of the changes that occur in human society and the new types of poverty that may be identified or anticipated. It gives priority to the poorest of the poor and to those who are most rejected by society.

-- The Rule, p. 16.

What's involved?

- A Conference considers new ways of reaching out to the community.
- The activity is focused specifically to meet a defined community need.
- Provides a way to attract new members who may not want to do assistance visitation.



Why start?

Opens up new opportunities for you to:

- Respond to specific community needs in your area.
- Form partnerships that deepen your connection with the community.
- Recruit new people from all ages and backgrounds into an environment that is flexible, welcoming and supportive.
- Complement the work of current Conference activities.

For more details about the options in this booklet and information on how to get started, please contact

Janice.stokes@vinnies.org.au

Telephone 0484 100 208

This brochure outlines some current and potential Conference outreach activities. More detail is available including how to contact Conference members about their experiences.

Consider an outreach activity suitable for your local area....

Vincentian Visitors



Visit or organise activities with people in aged care facilities or in their own home for social visits

Community Hubs



Work at one of the community hubs in Penrith, Harris Park, or Blacktown.

Social engagement Vinnies Social and Affordable Housing



Engage with the residents in our new housing units in a variety of ways.

Social Justice and Advocacy



Support Society Social Justice activities and/or partner with other groups advocating for reform.

AN ASTONISHING IMPACT

Socially isolated people over 60 are 49% more likely to die in the next 12 months than their socially-connected peers, and 64% more likely to develop dementia.

2018 Australian Loneliness Report <https://psychweek.org.au/2018-archive/loneliness-study/>

Vincentian Visitors

1) Visiting Hospitals– Randwick Conference

Conference members visit patients or family members of patients after receiving referrals from the hospitals.



A. How did you initiate contact with the Hospitals?

The Social Workers from the Children's Hospital and other sections of the General Hospital make written referrals to Kingsford Office with the name of the child or young person, the name and contact number of the parent, the broad circumstances of admission and type of assistance required. Eg financial, food, and/or clothing.

The majority of the referrals link to families from country NSW or Metro South West or Western Sydney. Many referrals relate to children who have arrived by emergency flights from country hospitals and admitted to intensive care, or children requiring ongoing medical treatment e.g. cystic fibrosis, cancer and whose parent/s are on Centrelink benefits.

Requests are sometimes received for adults in the other sections of hospital which include referrals for family members from country areas visiting very sick relatives, particularly Aboriginal family members of aged or very sick relatives.

B. How do you determine who to visit?

Each referral is considered and usually visited within 24 to 48 hours. Contact is made with the person to negotiate a suitable time and place to meet which is usually at the specific Hospital Social Work section or close by.

C. What do you do when you visit?

We deal with each situation sensitively. If the person is seeking assistance for the first time we explain who we are and our processes, including the Consent and the Client Information required. We also clarify the progress of the child or patient, how they are managing and what support may assist. This enables members to determine the support Vinnies can provide.

D. How frequently do you go?

Usually we receive at least one hospital call per week, but it could be up to four in a week. Occasionally there is no referral in a week. Many are new requests; others we have visited previously. If this request relates to a previous referral, we attempt, where possible, to have one of the previous members participate in the visit to minimise the times they need to tell their story.

E. What level of commitment to visit this facility is requested?

As the need is identified and a response required. Occasionally families are discharged before we make contact.

F. Do you need any other checks besides Police and WWCC?

No. In fact, the referrals to The Children's Hospital is directed to the adults and we rarely see the children.

G. How do you feel this benefits the people visited?

People are always very grateful and appreciative of whatever assistance and support we can provide.

H. Is there "down-side" to this activity?

No. This service is about providing financial and other support to vulnerable families who are experiencing trauma and unexpected financial problems related to significant unpredictable health difficulties.

I. Is there anything you would like to do differently if you had the chance?

No. We just need to feel confident that the Society will continue to support this important strategy.

Western Sydney and Blue Mountains Hospitals' Contacts

Blacktown Mt Druiitt Hospital:

<https://www.wslhd.health.nsw.gov.au/Blacktown-Mount-Druitt-Hospital/Support-Ur/Volunteer-at-BMDH/Volunteer-Opportunities/Volunteer-opportunities>

Contact: Janice.Low@health.nsw.gov.au 0439 920 337

- Drivers for patient transport.
- Providing company to patients when family can't be there
- Supporting patients with activities
- Assisting aged care patients during mealtimes



Blue Mountains Hospital:

(02) 4784 6500

Nepean Hospital:

Volunteer Office on 4734 3683 Monday to Friday, 8am-2pm

nbmlhd-volunteers@health.nsw.gov.au

Springwood Hospital: (02) 4784 6500

Westmead Children's Hospital: (02) 9845 0000

<https://www.schn.health.nsw.gov.au/supporters-and-volunteers/become-a-volunteer/volunteer-at-the-childrens-hospital-at-westmead>

- Ward Grandparent Program. wardgrandparents@awch.com.au
- Paediatric Palliative Care Family Support Volunteers. sarah.potter@health.nsw.gov.au
- The Carer Support Program. Kelly.bowler@health.nsw.gov.au

2) Visiting Aged Care Facility - Oyster Bay Conference

A. What activity do you do?

We celebrate Mass once a month with residents at the aged care facility with morning tea afterwards.

B. How did you initiate contact with the Aged care facility? (Garrawarra)

As the connection started over 30 years ago, we are uncertain but the aged care facility may have approached Vinnies. The Conference assists with the Mass and general visitation.



C. How do you determine who to visit?

The residents who want to come along to Mass, just come. It's about sharing of the faith and connecting with people.

D. What do you do when you visit?

Some of the residents request assistance from their rooms to the chapel. We then stay for a cup of coffee/tea after Mass and assist them back to their rooms.

E. How frequently do you go?

Every month 6 or 7 Conference members share Mass on a roster basis with the residents.

F. What level of commitment to visit this facility is requested?

Vinnies are asked to commit to a regular weekend each month. Conference members are assigned a particular date on the roster.

G. Do you need any other checks besides Police and WWCC?

If we need to access residents' rooms, we need accreditation from the facility. We fill in their documentation, and they do their own police checks. We are then provided with accredited ID. The facility is run by NSW Health. If we are only attending Mass no additional checks are required.

H. How do you feel this benefits the people visited?

The joy of sharing their faith. Company and friendship – feeling of camaraderie with someone wanting to spend their time with them.

I. Is there "down-side" to this activity?

No. Very rewarding for the Vinnie's members and residents.

Additional information: Many Conferences in Sydney Central Council visit aged care facilities and hospitals on a roster system. These include: Gymea Bay Nursing Home every Sunday (taking the Sunday paper and Catholic weekly), Pacific Nights Nursing Home, and Caringbah Hospital.

3) Visiting Hospitals and Local Aged Care facilities -- Davidson Conference

In addition to these visits, the Conference organises Christmas parties for clients and volunteer at the Matthew Talbot Hostel.



A. How did you initiate contact with the facility?

Part of home visitation includes visiting the local aged care when required as well as the new Northern Beaches Hospital to visit sick parishioners. Visits to Aged care come from our Parish Special Ministers who distribute Holy Communion to some of the residents. Fellow parishioners advise us if someone in hospital may need a visit. So many lonely people.

B. How do you determine who to visit?

Visits in pairs by members are allocated at our fortnightly Conference meeting.

C. What do you do when you visit?

Simply chat as a friend and always respect where the people are coming from.

D. How frequently do you go?

We go as needed and often may follow up to see if they'd like another visit.

E. Do you need any other checks besides Police and WWCC?

No.

F. How do you feel this benefits the people visited?

Social visits are so important, as Mother Teresa said, 'Loneliness is a disease.' People love a visit particularly if they have no family or no one to talk to.

G. Is there "down-side" to this activity?

Perhaps some members may try 'to fix' the problem but we can only supply options.

H. Is there anything you would like to do differently if you had the chance?

More time

Did you know?

Up to 40% of aged care residents receive no visitors

--Minister Ken Wyatt 2017

Social engagement

4) Reaching out to residents in Vinnies Housing managed sites

Helping to create an engaged community at Vinnies Social and Affordable Housing (SAFH) residential properties



The Society is building 502 social and affordable housing units in NSW with 200 of them located in these [Parramatta Central Council locations](#):

- Residents are in the 48 units at Penrith,
- People will start moving into the 78 units at Merrylands in early March,
- Katoomba and Jordan Springs units will be completed in mid-2020.

To enable a hand up, each resident will have a tailored support plan developed with them by the Vinnies Services team. The opportunity for members is to help residents create an engaged community at each property through social visits and activities. This is different to providing emergency assistance. All properties have an outdoor area with a BBQ, seating and some properties have play equipment for children.

While we know social isolation is a growing problem in our community, engaging with the residents to build community would start with an invitation to be part of a gathering and formation build up in a way that residents want. There's no recipe for success here but there is an opportunity.

Some current Conference activity in this new area of involvement

The Ermington Social Engagement Project

Rydalmere Conference members visit Ermington Social Housing flats monthly for a BBQ and social activities with the residents. This initiative is an example of being present for whoever comes – 1 person or 20 - to build trust and empathy. Emergency or financial assistance is generally not part of these events.

St Faith's Dubbo

The Dubbo Conference has regular interaction with residents of St Faith's Housing units who generally organise their own social activities using the on-site community centre. Conference members assist as needed. One project they supported was to request the management company provide new soil to replace the poor soil in garden plots, enabling residents to grow veggies, plants and flowers.



Chamberlain Street, Campbelltown

Campbelltown Conference has some contact with residents in the units that opened in December and hope to do more in 2020 in collaboration with the Vinnies Tailored Support Worker.

Opportunities for Consideration

Think about outreach and social engagement possibilities for your Conference ...



Vinnies Social Housing units in Penrith

A. In your parish community

- Are there people that require assistance to and from Mass?
- Are there people socially isolated that would like some company?
 - o Individual visits
 - o Groups of Conference members and socially isolated parishioners have regular outings for tea/coffee or attend a sporting match or movie?

Referrals might be from your Parish office, members or other parishioners

B. Who else might we offer the 'hand of friendship' to in our community?

Does your Conference have people that previously received material assistance that would benefit from a social visit and/or outing?

"LONELINESS KILLS"

It's found loneliness increases the risk of death more than such things as poor diet, obesity, alcohol consumption, and lack of exercise, and that it is as harmful as heavy smoking.

Loneliness Kills <https://theconversation.com/loneliness-is-a-social-cancer-every-bit-as-alarming-as-cancer-itself-126741>

5) Direct involvement with Aged Care Facility

Opportunities for small groups and individuals to engage with people living in aged care facilities. The minimum commitment requested is usually 1 hour per week over 12 months and can be done on a roster system.

- **Pet Therapy** – Volunteer along with your dog, cat or bird. Pets are required to be vaccinated, wormed, and clean, with short blunt nails and a good temperament. Roam the wards or rooms, offering your pet to be patted and have a conversation with the residents/patients.
- **Gardening** – Share your knowledge and skills to enhance and assist in the upkeep of facilities yards
- **Cooking** – Run cooking demonstrations allowing residents to experience the smell and taste of new foods.

- **Quilting** – Produce quilts with the help of residents for personal use or to be given as gifts.
- **Knitting** – With the help of residents, volunteers are able to provide much-needed clothing or blankets for those less fortunate
- **Sport** – Share a passion for your favourite sports with residents
- **Music** – perform or teach music to residents, whether it be singing or instrumental.
- **Arts and crafts** – use your skills to assist residents to create a wide range of masterpieces

EG. Hammond Care / BUPA

<https://www.hammond.com.au/volunteer/residential>

Ph: 1800 79 33 99

<https://www.bupaagedcare.com.au/careers/volunteer-opportunities>



Making it happen

Using the information in this booklet and your own local knowledge and interests, discuss as a Conference or Regional Council.....

- What kind of outreach activities appeal to you?
- What needs to do you see in your local area and how would we like to offer Vincentian outreach?
- How and when do we take the first step? And who is involved in that?
- What support would help you to take action?

Social Justice and Advocacy

6) Advocacy and Partnership

"Advocate for reform of the structural causes of poverty and disadvantage. Partner with the public, not-for-profit and private sectors in relation to ... advocacy. Influence the actions of decision-makers through targeted advocacy."

--Vinnies Strategic Plan 2020 - 2022



Sydney Alliance and Postcode 2020 table talks

Vinnies NSW is currently a member of Sydney Alliance, a coalition of diverse organisations who come together to make Sydney a better place to live.

The Alliance currently focuses on four key areas – housing, energy, refugees and work/life balance. In 2019 we collaborated with the Alliance on a campaign to mandate compulsory affordable housing targets across Sydney. Many of our members worked with other Alliance members to hold local housing forums, meet with MPs and facilitate local campaign actions.

In 2020, Sydney Alliance will undertake a major project called **Postcode 2020**, a 'listening' exercise with table talks being conducted in 80 postcodes across Sydney.

The format brings members of Alliance organisations together for localised discussions about our city – what people love and what they'd like changed. It will be an opportunity to build relationships, capture stories, and identify where there is energy for further action.

Additional benefits of our participation in this project would include opportunities to:

- Get to know our members and volunteers and identify and recruit new leaders interested in advocacy action.
- Strengthen local relationships with other organisations
- Capture stories that we can use to support our advocacy work, particularly on housing and energy issues.

At this stage, we envisage Vinnies involvement would include:

- Identifying leaders within our membership to host/co-host table talks. We envisage Vinnies would take a lead in approximately 15 events in Greater Sydney, and staff would provide a support and coordinating role.
- Attending and participating in table talks.
- Proposed suburbs in PCC area: Mt Drutt; St Clair; Penrith; Parramatta; North Parramatta; Northmead; Baulkham Hills

Timeline:

- February – April: Training of table talk hosts.
- April – June: Hold table talks
- July-August: Discernment and convention, then from September - action.

Vinnies 'Build Homes, Build Hope' campaign.

The Society with the support of the Social Justice team is campaigning for the NSW Government to increase the supply of social housing by at least 5,000 homes every year for the next ten years.

Consider taking any of the following actions to engage with the campaign:

1. Collect petition signatures.

Vinnies seeks to gather more than 15,000 signatures on the *Build Homes, Build Hope* petition and have this tabled in the NSW Parliament, possibly in May 2020. Copies of the petition are available today or email Janice.stokes@vinnies.org.au

2. Build an on-going relationships with your NSW Member of Parliament.

This coordinated action invites members to commit to various engagements with their local MP such as:

- Hold an initial meeting to brief your MP about social housing;
- Request the MP send a letter to the Minister for Housing;
- Encourage MP's, to visit with you a local Vinnies Service or Centre;
- Endeavour to secure their participation in the CEO or Community Sleepout and the local *Build Homes, Build Hope* forum.
- Attend the tabling of the petition in NSW Parliament.

Mark Ludbrooke from the Social Justice team is coordinating this relationship building to achieve maximum engagement. For more details about getting involved in the above actions, contact Janice Stokes or Mark.Ludbrooke@vinnies.org.au.

3. Host a local community forum.

In forums, local community members come together to learn more about social housing and ask their MP to make a commitment to deliver more social housing.

4. Help gather personal stories. (Goal is for 50 stories.)

Identify and gather personal stories from people sharing their positive experience of social housing or difficulties experienced while waiting for social housing.



Reconciliation

A) Homework help

Baabayn Aboriginal Corporation, Luxford Rd, Emerton, needs volunteer tutors and mentors to join their Homework Club on Tuesday afternoons during school term. Volunteers assist children with their homework, reading and interact with the children through play. Most of the children are primary school age.

Contact: Tel: 8608 6054 or email: admin@baabayn.org.au

B) Involvement in other Reconciliation activities.

Information about Cultural Awareness Training and implementing Vinnies Reconciliation activities will be provided throughout the year.