

Summary of National AGA 2017

Theme – The Joy of Serving

Thursday was filled with excellent workshops about Spirituality, Social Justice, Succession Planning, Conference Operations and Water Rights.

Highlights from workshops

The Joy of our Vincentian Spirituality

- Presented by Deacon Gord Jenkinson, Deacon John Girolami, and Denise Bondy.
- Sources included “Evangelii Gaudium – The Joy of the Gospel” and the Essential Virtues (Rule 2.5.1) of Simplicity, Humility, Gentleness, Selflessness, Zeal.
- Differences between ‘happiness’ and ‘joy’: Joy is not dependent on circumstances and can increase when trouble comes.
- Journey from the first expression of the joy of encounter with Christ as John the Baptist leapt with joy in his mother’s womb, to the joy we share with those we serve.
- Contact denise@ssvp.on.ca for more information or to arrange for presentation in your area.

Cadotte Lake Project, Northern Alberta

- Project developed by St. Theresa Conference in 2016 to help their native friends in the North with essentials of life.
- Started by meeting with the Archbishop and priests to identify a community in need.
- After community identified, they visited the community and met with the elders to see what was needed and to hear what type of support could be offered.
- They helped 66 families the first year.
- Key element was building a trusting relationship.
- When they visited the community after providing help, they were asked “Teach us how to fish”; ideas were shared such as “opening a food bank, planting a garden for fresh food, opening a community clothing bank or community laundromat”.
- Phase 2 in 2017 will now involve helping 15 additional families and having fundraising dinner at the donor parish, St. Theresa, inviting folks from Cadotte Lake to cook the meal and sell their crafts.

How to Deal with a Presidents’ End of Term

- Presented by Phil Bondy and Linda Dollard.
- Process shared on how to identify and invite potential candidates for the President’s role.
- Need to eliminate the negative stigma associated with the role.
- Involves interactive discussion with members by attending a Conference or Council meeting addressing 5 questions. Meeting to be facilitated by someone other than current President of that Conference/Council.
- Mentoring is provided to the new President for the time required/requested by new President.

- Pilot started in Ontario and successful in identifying 3 new Presidents in 3 month period.
- Contact Phil Bondy at phil@ssvp.on.ca for more information or to arrange for presentation at your Council or Conference meeting.

Stresses of Living in Poverty

- Presented by Corry Wink.
- Interactive workshop where small groups formed and participants took on identity of someone with their family living on an inadequate income.
- Each group was given a real life situation, and their challenge was to identify how they would manage on the income provided, the stresses faced, and how can we respond.
- Contact corry@ssvp.on.ca for more information or to make presentation in your area.

Water Rights – Thinking Globally, Acting Locally – Youth in Action

- Presented by Youth Conference from London, Ontario.
- Raising awareness of clean water shortage globally.
- Sign petition for clean water for First Nations across Canada at https://www.change.org/p/justin-trudeau-provide-clean-water-for-first-nations-across-canada?source_location=minibar
- Raising awareness of negative effects of buying bottled water.
- Contact Calvin at cmcdonnell54@gmail.com for more information.

The Nitty Gritty of Conference Operations

- Presented by Mary Grad and Judy Peddle.
- Required screening and abuse prevention process was reviewed to ensure all Conferences and Councils have adopted these processes which are required for insurance purposes.
- Screening of new members involves completion of the following forms that can be found on National website:
 - http://192.241.195.118/sites/default/files/9.9_eng-screening-membership_application.pdf
 - http://192.241.195.118/sites/default/files/9.10_eng-screening-interview-check-list-check-report-.pdf
 - http://www.ssvp.ca/sites/default/files/9.11_eng-screening-2017_service-covenant-and-confidentiality-agree-form_2017.pdf
 - http://192.241.195.118/sites/default/files/9.13_eng-annual_declaration_related_to_criminal_offencesp.pdf - Annual declaration to be signed confirming no change in criminal record.
- Below are links to the screening guidelines and the member role description:
 - http://www.ssvp.ca/sites/default/files/6.2.4_adm_004_member_screening_2017.pdf
 - http://www.ssvp.ca/sites/default/files/8.3_screening_and_duty_of_care_guidelines_2017.pdf
 - http://www.ssvp.ca/sites/default/files/9.12_eng-screening-member_role_description_2017.pdf

- Please note insurance requirements with HUB International is to have police record check done when new member comes on board and every 5 years thereafter (not 3 years as outlined in National's documents above); if you are insured with a different insurer, check with that insurance company how frequently police record check is required as some insurers require this every 3 years.
- The abuse prevention and discrimination/harassment guidelines are outlined below, along with the Checklist and Acknowledgement Form to be signed by members once they have received the abuse prevention training. This form only needs to be signed once by members and kept on file.
 - http://192.241.195.118/sites/default/files/6.2.7_adm_007_abuse-harassment-discr.pdf
 - http://www.ssvp.ca/sites/default/files/8.7_abuse_prevention_guidelines_2017.pdf
 - http://192.241.195.118/sites/default/files/8.8_discriminaiton_and_harassment_guidelines.pdf
 - http://192.241.195.118/sites/default/files/9.23_abuse_prevention_program_checklistpublish.pdf
- ONRC will send out a communication providing more information on these requirements.
- Contact Linda Dollard at linda@ssvp.on.ca or Mary Grad at mary@ssvp.on.ca for more information.

The Role of the Spiritual Advisor

- Presented by Claude Bedard, BC.
- Encourage lay people to be spiritual advisors.
- National is looking into offering a training program through Newman College for lay Spiritual Advisors.

Catholic Social Teaching in Action

- Presented by Gord Stuart, BC
- Major themes from Catholic Social Teaching are:
 1. Human dignity
 2. Community and the Common Good
 3. Rights and duties
 4. Option for the poor
 5. Participation
 6. Dignity of Work and Rights of Workers
 7. Stewardship of Creation
 8. Solidarity
 9. Subsidiarity & Role of Government
 10. Promotion of Peace
- Organize for action by forming a Catholic Social Teaching Group, such as Social Justice or Systemic Change Group.

Commitment, Coordination, Community, Collaboration, Connections

- Presented by Kerry Abbott, Newfoundland.
- Inspiring volunteers to collaborate and connect to benefit our friends in need.

Highlights from Guest Speakers

International President General Renato Lima de Oliveira

- Refer to <http://en.ssvpglobal.org/The-General-Council/Renato-Lima-de-Oliveira-President-General> to read the 20 points identified in his program.
- Conference President is the most important position as their influence helps develop Vincentians to fulfill our Mission to serve.
- Home visits are the primary work of our Society; the President General dedicates one weekend a month to doing home visits at his home Conference.
- In summary, his recommendations include:
 - Full spiritual life
 - Active participation by members
 - More space for young people
 - Being faithful to the Rule
 - Avoid conflicts and vanity
 - Promote values of family and Gospel especially at home visits
 - Focus energies on what matters – promotion of the most needy
- His 3 wishes he shared are:
 - Prayer for canonization of Blessed Frederic Ozanam
 - Unity of the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul and members
 - Generous donations

Cardinal Cyprien Lacroix

- Gave inspirational talk on the “Joy of Serving”.

Monsignor Peter Schonenbach

- He is Spiritual Advisor for the National Board.
- He also provided inspirational talk on the “Joy of Serving”.

Our Lady of Guadalupe Circle – Grayden Nicholas

- Our Lady of Guadalupe Circle is a Catholic coalition of Indigenous people, bishops, clergy, lay movements and institutes of consecrated life, engaged in renewing and fostering relationships between the Catholic Church and Indigenous people in Canada.
- Their purpose is:
 - To provide a forum for members to dialogue and encourage deeper understanding of the relationships between the Church and Indigenous people and Indigenous spirituality in Canada.
 - To serve as a united Catholic public voice on relations and dialogue between the Church and Indigenous people and Indigenous spirituality in Canada.

- To assist Catholics in engagement with the Truth and Reconciliation process and its Calls to Action.
- To carry out agreed upon initiatives and concrete actions.
- Shared some of the history of relationship between the Catholic Church and First Nations.

North of 60 Presentation

- Shelley and Jack attended from Ranklin Inlet and shared information on how support received from the North of 60 program has benefited them.
- Solange Fortin from Ottawa shared the practicalities of collecting donations and stuffing 2 sea containers being sent to Ranklin Inlet this year; they did not believe 1 sea container was large enough for the donations requested and collected and, therefore, requested 2 sea containers to stuff.
- Ib Fynbo from Windsor shared information on how they collected donations and stuffed the sea container being sent to Gjoa Haven this year.
- Contact Pegg Leroux at pegg@ssvp.on.ca for more information on supporting North of 60 or taking on a community to help in 2018.

Sister Aurea Cormier, Sisters of Charity Federation, Moncton, New Brunswick

- Shared information on the Sisters of Charity work serving the poor.

Opération Bonne Mine (OBM) Program in Quebec

- Lise spoke about this program which provides assistance to elementary and high school students to provide concrete help to the young student, increase self-esteem, and prevent school drop-out.
- Involves 3 phases:
 - Achievement Phase: I get required back to school support.
 - Development Phase: I am involved in my success.
 - Recognition Phase: I am recognized for my success.
- In 2016, 8,269 children were helped.
- Go to <http://www.ssvp.qc.ca/obm> for more information.

Caravan Program in Quebec

- Chantal spoke about this program where an SSVP caravan drives around and parks providing meals to the homeless.
- The caravan was onsite allowing us the chance to walk through, and it is equipped with several tables and seats inside.

National President Report from Jean Noel Cormier

- Reviewed the National website found at <http://www.ssvp.ca>.
- Communications consultant is working on a communications plan, and was hoping to have presentation from consultant at National AGA; however, more work is needed where we need to identify specific roles/tasks of each level – Conference, Particular Council, Central Council, Regional and National. National is forming a National

Communications Committee with representation from each region who will work on this and come up with plan to provide to consultant.

- Will be making amendments to the Canadian Rule – Statutes Review Committee formed and communication will be sent to Regional Presidents in the fall of 2017 who will forward to all Presidents outlining process should anyone have suggested amendments to the Canadian Rule.
- Vincenpaul is now digital and will be distributed 9 times / year.
- The book “The Mission” has now been printed and was available for pick up at the AGA. Those pre-ordered and not picked up at the AGA will be shipped.
- Twinning – Jean Noel encourages everyone to consider twinning if you do not currently have a twinning relationship. There is a great need here.
- Strategic Plan survey will be sent out in the fall and everyone is encouraged to complete and submit to track the progress made on goals/objectives outlined in the Strategic Plan you have adopted. (ONRC has adopted a Strategic Plan following National’s Strategic Plan, and some Central and/or Particular Councils have adopted a Strategic plan following the National and ONRC Strategic Plan).

Financial Information

- Financials were presented, along with the budget for April 1, 2017 to March 31, 2018 which was approved.
- Discussion took place as a result of National not having sufficient funds, and the Finance Committee will review the situation and come up with an action plan to ensure sufficient funds for the future.
- Financials will be posted on the National site in July.