

Summary of National AGA held June 21 – 23, 2018
Theme for the meeting was “Together as Family”

Thursday, June 21st

- There was a great selection of workshops to choose from both in English and French.
- Below is a summary of 4 workshops attended:
 - **Community Gardens – Helping Families Grow** presented by Lynn-Marie Gallant-Whipp, Social Justice Representative, St. Alphonsus SSVP, Peterborough
 - Starting a community garden creates a sense of ownership and pride.
 - SSVP in Peterborough provides a family with a 10’ x 10’ plot at a cost of \$5.00 per summer.
 - Check out www.nourishproject.ca for tips on starting a community garden; <https://drive.google.com/file/d/0BxF-AZKusSwpcVB3cmpNc29wbGc/view> for tips on starting a community garden on city owned property; <https://drive.google.com/file/d/0BxF-AZKusSwpTGUX3hmSDU5b1k/view> for tips on selecting a community garden site.
 - **Adoptive Cycle – Resilience of an Organization** presented by Denise Ouellette, Executive Director of the Montreal Central Council
 - Presentation attached - “life cycle” flowchart shared for Conferences/Councils:
 1. Conservation – comfortable & easy as projects are working well;
 2. Creative destruction - need to recognize signs that things are getting harder such as recruiting volunteers, donors & leaders; need to re-think things to be more efficient;
 3. Reorganization - getting to the essence and asking the tough questions; take risk in letting go to grow new projects – this is necessary to be efficient; and
 4. Exploitation - need to make & implement decision to make new idea into reality.
 - Conferences/Councils should always be going through all 4 cycles to remain healthy and active.
 - There are 4 traps that Conferences/Councils can fall into:
 1. Rigidity trap - not asking questions where see needs of the community but not willing to change;
 2. Chronic disaster trap - always dealing with emergency situations rather than being proactive;
 3. Charisma trap – having a leader who is an obstacle – does not make needed decisions or micro-manages not allowing members to do their work; and
 4. Poverty trap – potential for change is not realized; ideas are abundant but nothing gets done.
 - The longer a leader stays in leadership position, the harder it is for Conference to re-build.
 - Structure should help and not hinder Conferences/Councils – how do we address changing times, adopt with less people in Church, less volunteers & people not interested in taking leadership positions.
 - Always should be asking questions – how are we doing and adapting/changing based on responses to these questions.

- ***Special Works, Corporation and Governance*** presented by Richard Pommerville, Executive Director, National Council of Canada
 - Presentation attached
 - Looked at laws governing non-for-profit organizations.
 - Board is legally responsible for governance of organization.
- ***Social Justice Workshop from Charity to Social Justice*** presented by Lil Mulder & London Youth, Shelby Mulder and Victoria Goldsack
 - Interactive workshop - broke into 5 working groups with each group receiving a real life scenario and had to come up with actions on how to help – had to differentiate whether action was charity or social justice.
 - Each group reported back to the larger group – great discussion.

Friday, June 22nd

- ***Keynote speaker, Sister Elizabeth Davis*** – very inspirational and motivational speaker on Family – A Light in the Darkness of the World
 - Presentation attached.
 - Slide 43 states “Spirituality is the name we give to that which provides us with the strength to go on, for it is the assurance that God is in the struggle.
 - Spirituality spells out our connectedness
 - To God
 - To our human roots
 - To the rest of nature
 - To one another
 - To ourselves”
- ***President’s Roundtable Questions & Discussion***, Jean-Noël Cormier, President, National Council of Canada
 - Operations Manual found on the National website at <https://www.ssvp.ca/operations-manual> includes terms of reference, policies & procedures guidelines in addition to the Rule and Statutes.
 - Trademark is in process of being registered to protect our name and logo and should be finalized in one year.
 - Will there be training provided for new members – money is needed to allocate to this project.
 - Status of communications consultant hired – need to first look at our governance and rule/statutes revision to best understand how to move forward with communications.
 - Membership recruitment is a challenge – suggest engaging volunteers with projects initially & then recruiting these volunteers to become full members; Toronto Central Council President shared there is booklet on recruitment on the TCC website.
 - A Call to Prayer for Vocations to the Vincentian Family <http://ssvp.on.ca/en/thoughts/APrayerforVocationstotheVincentianFamily.pdf> has been created at Ontario Regional Council & shared asking all members to pray this prayer at all meetings – this prayer will be translated and posted on National website & will be shared with all regional presidents to share with their members.

- Reason for hiring Executive Director – to have consistency when a new President comes on board in 2019 & Jean-Noël was doing 60 hours / week which is too much to ask of a volunteer.
 - National website – hard to navigate and there is information overlap – in the process of cleaning up website to be more efficient in finding things & there was a presentation at the AGA navigating/finding information on the website.
 - Do members need to be Catholic – only the President, Vice President & Spiritual Advisor of Conferences/Councils need to be Catholic & the other members do not have to be Catholic.
 - How are stores being recognized – Store Committee has been formed at National level to review how best to leverage our stores which are a vital part of our Society, and review how best to include our stores and welcome store staff to the Vincentian family.
 - Twinning – number of twinning relationships has increased in last 5 years - currently there are 40 Conferences internationally waiting to be twinned with Conferences / Councils in Canada – contact guido@ssvp.on.ca or twinning-chair@ssvp.ca if you are interested in having a twinning relationship – a lot can be done with the twinning amount you are able to contribute.
 - What is difference between twinning and North of 60 – twinning is sending funds to international Conferences / Councils whereas North of 60 is a project sending food and items to help our indigenous friends in the north; even with the government assistance provided to indigenous children growing up, our assistance with North of 60 is very much needed.
 - With election next year, how will National advocate for the poor – National cannot meet with the Minister with the current statistics provided in the annual report as the numbers are not reliable changing considerably each year – it is critical that all Conferences / Councils properly report their financials and statistics in the annual report as this is the information relied upon to speak to government officials and to approach Foundations for funding. Jim Paddon and his Social Justice Committee are working hard to advocate for the poor and in Ontario, an Advocacy brochure is created twice a year to address issues.
- **Seeds of Hope** presented by Linda Alexander & Judith Nunn, Halton Particular Council Vice President and President
 - Presentation attached.
 - Great program giving hope to children to get an education – our role as SSVP members is to make our families aware that when an RESP is set up for their child at the bank, they will receive up to \$2,000 in free government money through the Canada Learning Bond – no money is required to set up the RESP. Money is available to be used by the person for education up to the age of 36.
 - Birth Certificate and SIN is required – SIN is free and there is a cost to obtain Birth Certificate.
 - Looking for CLB Champions at Conferences to help with program to raise awareness with our families and walk with our families to ensure RESP is set up for their child – a retired teacher would be an ideal CLB Champion.
 - Contact lmja@bell.net for more information or to become a CLB Champion to receive additional information.

- **Rule Revision** presented by Penny Craig, Past President, National Council of Canada
 - The Rule itself cannot be amended as this is prepared by International – we received 6 basic requirements from International in 2017 to include in our Statutes.
 - The Statutes is what we can amend on how we govern ourselves in Canada – the last revision to our Statutes was in 2001.
 - The Rule Revision Committee reviewed approximately 70 statute revision recommendations received.
 - Penny is currently in the process of re-working the Rule and Statutes for Canada eliminating a lot of repetitive language to reduce the size a bit.
 - Once completed, the revised copy will be shared with the Regional representatives who were on the Committee. Jean-Noël will attend Regional meetings to present the revised Statutes & educate membership on the changes made, and answer questions regarding the changes.
 - The final Rule and Statutes will be brought to the membership for approval at the June 2019 National AGA taking place in Windsor, ON.

- **Together as Family – In the Home and in the Kitchen** presented by Jerry Rex, Peter Noseworthy & Leo Fagan, Members of Holy Redeemer Conference in Cornerbrook Newfoundland
 - Presentation made on how they grew from a dying Conference of 2 members to a vibrant Conference of 25 members.
 - Priest was enlisted for support & Knights of Columbus were approached with 6 men stepping forward to help with their wives also following and being recruited.
 - Started Mary's Kitchen in January 2016 serving one meal a month & home visits again re-introduced to Conference.
 - Raised awareness in parish with weekly bulletin notices & standing at back of church once / month for poor box collection.

- **New National President acclaimed, Claude Bedard** from Comox, British Columbia
 - Claude Bedard shared information so members could get to know him.
 - His term will start July 1, 2019.
 - He was a servant leader at the AGA in that he was clearing dishes following meals to meet members from across the province.

Saturday, June 22nd

- **Spiritual Reflection on theme** presented by Msgr. Peter Schonenbach, Spiritual Advisor, National Council of Canada
 - This was Msgr. Schonenbach's last AGA as Spiritual Advisor for National & was presented with a Certificate and pin for his service.

- **Supportive Housing Project** developed by St. Teresa's Conference, St. John's Newfoundland
 - Idea that started in 2010 & 6 unit building was built and ready for residence August 2015 – went through the steps involved in locating land & building unit.
 - Conference went from food bank to small business now managing a housing unit for single, unemployed, physically able individuals some of whom have mental health issues.

- **World Day of the Poor on November 18, 2018** presented by Richard Pommainville, Executive Director, National Council of Canada
 - Richard advised that National is in process of registering our trademark to protect our name and logo; it is important to ensure our correct SSVP name and Logo is branded. All promotional material, literature, SSVP advertisements, etc. by all Conferences / Councils must be reviewed to ensure correct name and logo are used. Branding document will be shared to help ensure correct name and logo are being used & it is up to all of us to correct if used incorrectly. Presentation attached
 - Richard's presentation on World Day of the Poor https://www.ssvp.ca/sites/default/files/aga_2018-world_day_of_the_poor-journee_mondiale_des_pauvres_-_20180623.pdf focused on the opportunity to establish fundraising events locally. Whatever funds are raised locally will remain local. Whatever donations are received at National level will first pay off expenses incurred for developing marketing materials which Conferences / Councils will be able to print from the website. There were some objections raised to fundraising as this day should be about the poor and our mission.
 - World Day of the Poor is an annual event, and SSVP hopes to have an annual event attached to this Day of the Poor to raise awareness.
 - This is our first year doing something in conjunction with World Day of the Poor and we hope that all Conferences / Councils will participate locally to raise awareness.
 - Marketing materials are in the process of being developed and September is when Conferences should start planning what they will be doing locally & seeking the support of their Parish priest.
 - Included in the presentation is a Sample Conference Campaign on page 9, Sample Store Campaign on page 10 & next steps on page 12.
 - National Council met with the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops (CCCB) to gain their support & National will share the outcome after the CCCB holds their meeting.

- **North of 60 – Presentation by Father Daniel**, Nuujaat, Nunavut
 - Presentation was similar to what was presented at the ONRC meeting held in St. Catharines in 2017 where Father Daniel shared information about his community in Nunavut and how our North of 60 project is helping the families living in Nuujaat.
 - In 2018, 15 communities were helped in the North between Western and Ontario regions.

- **National AGA**
 - Financials for the year ending March 31, 2018 and budget for 2018/2019 were presented –financials attached.
 - National pass up amount was approved to be increased to \$280 / Conference – it has been 6 years since pass up was increased.
 - Location of future AGA's will be:
 - June 2019 – Windsor, ON
 - June 2020 – Calgary, AB
 - June 2021 - ?? Somewhere in Central Canada
 - June 2022 – Charlottetown, PEI