

SPRING 2019

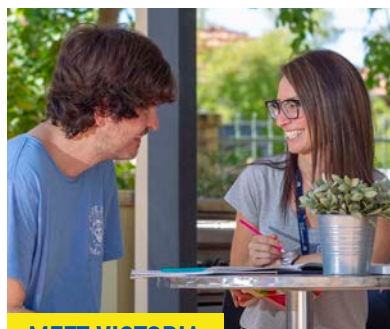
# THE SPIRIT NEWSLETTER



## NEW SHOPS



OUR VOLUNTEERS



MEET VICTORIA



THE PAIN OF POVERTY



CEO SLEEPOUT

# MESSAGE

## from the State President

### Welcome to the Spring edition of the Spirit Newsletter.

Winter is a challenging time for many vulnerable Western Australians and is also a time when Vinnies WA is called upon more than ever for support. Our Winter Appeal this year highlighted how poverty impacts older Western Australians who require emergency assistance.

After many years of doing home visitations as a Vinnies member, I have seen first-hand the support Vinnies can give to our senior people through advocacy or practical means such as clothes, food and financial assistance.

Vinnies is only able to meet this increasing demand during winter through the wonderful work of our

members, staff and volunteers, and the generosity from the Western Australian community.

We are incredibly grateful to all the participants, braving wet and cold conditions in this year's Vinnies CEO Sleepout for their fundraising and awareness initiatives. We have reached an incredible total so far which allows us to continue our work supporting people experiencing or at risk of homelessness.

I recently took a keen interest in a letter received from one of our retired volunteers who talks about how important it is for her to include a gift to Vinnies in her will. This caused me to reflect on the importance of how leaving a legacy can continue to

change the lives of many who turn to Vinnies for help each day.

Please take a moment to read our newsletter and hear stories from people who have needed assistance, those who are passionate and dedicated in the work we do, and the incredible generosity of our community, that really makes a difference to the lives of so many Western Australians.



**Gladys Demissie**  
*State President*  
*St Vincent de Paul Society (WA) Inc*

## THE PAIN OF POVERTY

### The 2019 Vinnies Winter Appeal focused on the impact of poverty on older Western Australians.



The Australian Council of Social Services 2018 report on Poverty in Australia has found that over three million people are living below the poverty line of 50% of the median income, of which 739,000 are children.

The report has also found that one in eight adults and more than one in six children are living in poverty, with many of those affected living in deep poverty, meaning they are living on \$135 per week below the poverty line.

One group of people experiencing poverty are people relying on the Age Pension. For older Western Australians, poverty often comes with the added burden of loneliness and social isolation as their mobility becomes limited and their social network decreases.

Poverty often leads to social isolation and a sense of being forgotten. No-one warns you about it and nothing can prepare you for it.

It can have health impacts and lasting emotional consequences; the pain of isolation, the fear of not being able to afford basic necessities, the unrelenting sadness of feeling forgotten or unwanted.

The Vinnies 2019 Winter Appeal highlighted the support that Vinnies provides to some of our most vulnerable members of the community during these colder months with provision of practical support such as food, clothing, household items, assistance with utility bills and rent. Through our home visits and support centres, we can also offer advocacy and referrals which helps alleviate feelings of loneliness and disconnection from friends, family and the community. The Vinnies Call Centre has taken over 15,000 calls for Emergency Assistance since January.

We greatly appreciate all food, clothes and monetary donations received for the Winter Appeal.



# WHY ONE NIGHT EACH YEAR IS POWERFUL

**Over 90 business and community leaders came together in June at the WACA Ground, giving up one night in their lives to help change the lives of many others.**

It was the 10th Anniversary of the Vinnies CEO Sleepout in Perth, and this year's message was simple; everyone has a right to a home. And it was this message that participants embraced, some for the first time and many returning for another year, raising an outstanding total in 2019 of over \$900,000.

Over the past decade this event has raised over \$7 million dollars with \$1 million of those funds being solely contributed by one CEO, Barry Felstead from Crown Australian Resorts. He has attended every Perth Vinnies CEO Sleepout since it started in 2010 and says that the event inspires him every year to keep coming back.

"The experience for me has been a really interesting one because you actually learn a lot about what goes on. Every year we have people who come and talk to us and tell us their stories to how Vinnies have taken them from nowhere and actually gotten them back on their feet. That to me has been incredibly inspiring, and is what keeps me going," Barry said.

The evening was introduced by Channel 10 Presenter Lachy Reid, who greeted participants with a weather update; facing the prospect of wind, rain and low temperatures overnight. The group learnt how homelessness can inhibit someone's ability to have access to medical care, employment and education. And as the CEO's and executives camped out in their makeshift bedding and minimal shelter for the night, they reflected on the stories they had heard earlier from people who experience homelessness on a daily basis, and how not having stable accommodation can have an impact mentally and physically on someone's life.

Not knowing what to expect was the reaction of first time participant Stuart Tonkin, CEO at Northern Star Resources. He said that although he was fully aware about the work of Vinnies and their specialist community services for homelessness, he wanted to experience this event to develop a further understanding of the issue.

"Hopefully I can take the experience and share it out in the wider community and I think it's a little sacrifice on the night for a great cause. I really don't know what I'm in for the first one but it's about reflection and really understanding that and sharing that to raise awareness."

On any given night in Western Australia there are 9000 people experiencing homelessness. The Vinnies CEO Sleepout aims to provide a greater sense of empathy and awareness of what it's like for people at the risk of, or experiencing homelessness and poverty. It highlights the complexity of the causes for a growing number of Western Australians that experience events in their lives that can mean they have no safe place to sleep.

The Vinnies CEO Sleepout this year was a powerful indication from Western Australian business leaders, committing to make a difference and help end homelessness.

[ceosleepout.org.au](http://ceosleepout.org.au)



# LEAVING A LEGACY

When Eve finally had to retire after 33 years of helping people in her community, she decided to find another way she could continue her support for people experiencing hardship. Leaving a bequest was the one way Eve felt could continue her legacy into the future.

## How did you become involved with Vinnies?

Many years ago I had been involved with my parish in Armadale in various voluntary roles. I saw that St Vincent de Paul Society was asking for volunteers so I applied.

## What is your most memorable Vinnies moment?

A colleague and I were visiting a client. We came across a lady that was caring for two small children from the North West. She needed warm clothing for them and extra blankets which we gave her, along with a generous parcel of food.

## Why did you decide to support Vinnies in your will?

There are so many worthy causes who need financial help so it can be difficult to make a decision. I have had a personal experience with St Vincent de Paul Society so my choice was definitely biased. I am fully aware of the real need of so many people and choose to leave a portion of my estate to this very worthy charity so that I can continue to help people in the future.

**Leaving a bequest is one way you can leave a lasting and positive change and is a powerful reflection of the values and principles you treasure.**



**For a caring and confidential discussion about how you can leave a lasting legacy by remembering Vinnies in your will please contact our Planned Giving Coordinator on (08) 6323 7500 or email [bequests@svdpwa.org.au](mailto:bequests@svdpwa.org.au)**

## A NEW BEGINNING: Isir's Story



Isir moved to Perth from Morocco when she married but after the arrival of their baby girl she separated from her husband. Being new to the country she had nowhere else to go and found herself in a women's refuge. While in the refuge, she found she had limited options due to her temporary resident status so hoping things would change, she returned to her husband.

When Isir entered the women's refuge for a third time, she decided to seek further help. She could not return to

Morocco because her daughter was an Australian citizen and organising papers for her to leave due to her husband being a different nationality, was very difficult. She learnt that finding permanent housing took time to apply for, and it was going to be difficult to support herself and her daughter when she had no job or income.

In the refuge, Isir began working with a support worker who put her in contact with the Vinnies Housing Service which provides transitional and crisis accommodation to people who experience homelessness due to domestic violence, mental illness and many other issues.

Vinnies was able to find Isir a transitional housing unit which was fully furnished so she could move straight in and feel settled, as well as regularly supporting her with food vouchers and financial assistance.

The stable accommodation allowed Isir to enrol in study so she could achieve a qualification which would gain her employment and a regular income, helping her work towards her goal for independence.

Although Isir is still yet to complete her studies, she is saving in the hope that she will be granted permanent housing soon. She speaks of her gratitude towards the help she has received so far from Vinnies, at a time when she was alone with no family or support. "It does really make a difference. It doesn't matter what it is, the type of help, it is the action of help which is even greater, especially for someone who is alone or has no family or support."

Receiving help from Vinnies has given her the confidence to now work towards her future plans, making a new home in Western Australia for her and her daughter.





## NEW SHOPS

**The opening of three new shops so far this year builds on Vinnies support of people in need.**

In February, a new Vinnies Shop opened in Mead Street, Kalamunda. Since then, the new premises has received huge support from the local community who had long wanted more retail options in the town.

Sarah Needs, Kalamunda Shop Manager said that Kalamunda was a strong community focused town and she wasn't surprised at how welcoming everyone had been even before the shop opened.

"The wonderful thing about the location of this shop is that it will actually service so many areas beyond the heart of the town of Kalamunda which I think is one of the reasons so many people were keen for it to open here," Sarah says.

Located right opposite the Railway Station on Stirling Highway, the Mosman Park Shop houses a more specialised range of clothes and items, which are specially selected for sale giving the shop a boutique look and feel.

"This shop is quite unique as we are concentrating on stocking high end brands so we can offer an exciting new op-shopping experience for people." Vinnies Retail Area Manager, Terri Johnson said.

The most recent shop to open in June has been Osborne Park,

marking the return of Vinnies to the area after moving our Distribution Centre to Canning Vale three years ago. Our new location means that once again the Vinnies blue sign and now our eye catching floral window decals are a familiar sight on Scarborough Beach Road.

Operating 54 shops around the State would not be possible without the incredible and committed support from our retail volunteers who devote their time and skills each week, helping to change lives from the work they do. Each shop requires many volunteers to run it, and if you can commit to as little as four hours a week, even with no experience, you have a chance to give back to your local community by becoming a Vinnies Shop volunteer.

There are several shops that have greater need for more volunteers right now, but there are many others to choose from throughout the metropolitan area and around the State if you would like to put your skills to good use and meet some fantastic people.

**You can visit your local store to inquire about volunteering opportunities or visit us online [vinnies.org.au](http://vinnies.org.au)**

## NATIONAL VOLUNTEER WEEK

National Volunteer Week in May was a chance for us here at Vinnies WA to celebrate our 3,500 extraordinary volunteers, and the hard work and support they provide which enables Vinnies to assist over 40,000 people in need every year.

The theme for National Volunteer Week 2019 was "Making a world of difference" and throughout the week we acknowledged the commitment and huge impact our volunteers make in changing people's lives.

Rockingham Vinnies Outlet Shop volunteers Meryl Bosner and Maureen Birchenall shared their experiences, both agreeing that volunteering for Vinnies is such a significant and important part of their lives.

"The good thing about it is that it gets you out of the house, you get to meet other people and you get to feel like you are giving and not just taking," said Maureen.

National Volunteer Week highlighted the generous support of our Vinnies volunteers who strongly believe in the work we do which enables us to change the lives of individuals and families.



# VICTORIA'S ACTIVE *Passion*



**Seeing the impact of mental health on communities in her native Canada led to Victoria's passion for working in the sector. Now in her role at the Village, one of Vinnies Mental Health Services, Victoria is still passionate about making a difference.**

Victoria moved to Perth only six years ago after an extensive background working in mental health in Winnipeg, Canada. Soon after arriving she took up her position as Activities Coordinator at the Village which she has been in for the last four years. It is a role that she loves because of the ability to connect with the residents who have a mental health diagnosis as they continue to build their capacity, confidence and skills as part of their recovery.

“It’s truly awesome to be able to be a part of each of our residents’ lives and support them in their recovery journey. I have been fortunate to work with so many different people in our service and have an impact in many different capacities.”

The Village is part of Vinnies Mental Health Services, and is a 28 unit accommodation facility that provides intensive 24 hour supportive care for people with a severe mental illness who have also been homeless

or at risk of being homeless. It uses a recovery focused model by providing an environment that enables people to live their own lives and meet their identified goals and needs. As Activities Coordinator, Victoria is able to help support residents daily through some of the activities she facilitates such as group work and outings, but she also supervises the Daily Skills program which provides one on one support for basic life skills so residents can aim to live more independently. She has also been instrumental in creating an evidence based meal plan for residents that focuses on food that has a positive impact on mental health.

“As I oversee a few different areas, each of them has their own aims. But if we are providing the residents with a clean home, a safe environment during the evenings and overnight, healthy and tasty meals, support and growth with living skills and a fun, social place to be then I’m doing my job.”

The person centred relationships and personalised support that staff deliver is what makes the Village a special place for the residents as they feel valued, encouraged and safe. Victoria echoes this and recalls a time when one of the resident’s goals was learning how to cook but had difficulty leaving their unit to join the regular cooking group class.

“After a few months of conversations and inviting them to the cooking group each week they decided to come. For the first few weeks they sat and observed but eventually they decided to participate, with first learning to cut vegetables. Since then they have been an active participant in the group and their cutting and measuring skills have greatly improved to where they no longer require close support. It was so rewarding to see how far this resident had come in reaching their goal to cook. A lot of the time we know these skills can be learnt and it’s just about providing the support, and a safe and encouraging space for them to learn and keep trying.”

Victoria adds that this is only one example of how her role gives her a sense of pride and privilege, and how important it is to her to support and experience first hand the residents journey as they work towards achieving their recovery outcomes.

**For more information on Vinnies Mental Health Services visit [vinnies.org.au](http://vinnies.org.au)**

**“IT’S TRULY AWESOME TO BE ABLE TO BE A PART OF EACH OF OUR RESIDENTS’ LIVES AND SUPPORT THEM IN THEIR RECOVERY JOURNEY.”**



# ASKING FOR HELP: *Natalie's Story*

**A series of events led to Natalie and her two children facing eviction.**



Natalie moved into a rental when she separated from her partner after 18 years. The rental was rundown with moss growing on the ceiling, causing her girls to get sick and Natalie contracting Pneumonia. After her six month tenancy was up Natalie and her girls moved out, finding temporary accommodation for her children with her family. However Natalie didn't have anywhere for

herself to stay, so found herself living in her car while travelling to see her girls and looking for another rental.

During this time due to the stress that the situation was causing, Natalie left her job as a hairdresser to concentrate on securing a new place to live. Soon after moving into a new unit, Natalie suffered a major health scare that resulted in ongoing medical tests and more delays in her returning to work. Being unable to find another job she fell behind in her rent. When she received a termination notice for being two payments behind, Natalie had no money in her bank account and couldn't afford much food, budgeting out small amounts of pasta and bread for her and her girls to eat.

Natalie felt that she was at full capacity and began feeling depressed from the stress and anxiety of her health issues and now was facing eviction.

Friends recommended to Natalie to call Vinnies for emergency assistance, and although hesitant about asking for help, she placed a call to the Vinnies Call Centre.

When two Vinnies volunteers visited Natalie, she explained she was facing eviction, was struggling financially with bills from her previous rental, and couldn't afford food for her and her girls. Natalie talks about how she felt like she "had won a million dollars" when Vinnies said they could help with her situation by giving rent assistance and food vouchers.

Natalie is managing week to week financially, is still addressing her health issues and working on a plan to return to hairdressing. She remains positive about her situation and was incredibly grateful for the help and support she and her girls received from Vinnies when times were hard.

## MINI VINNIES *Visit*

**Thank you to St Dominic's Catholic Primary School for their visit to the Vinnies Administration and Distribution Centre in Canning Vale, and hard work collecting donations for the Vinnies Winter Appeal.**

We were excited to welcome a group of Mini Vinnies students from St Dominic's Catholic Primary School, Innaloo in June. Youth Services Coordinator Colin Krause and our new Youth Services Support Officer Ayla Bridger-Morgan hosted the excursion at Canning Vale to show the students what happens to their Winter Appeal donations when they are given to Vinnies and how their support helps so many people in the community.

Students were amazed on their tour of the Vinnies Distribution Centre at the size of the depot, and the amount of items donated which all go towards helping 40,000 Western Australians each year. The Mini Vinnies students then lent a helping hand by packing 80 toiletry bags in record time that included such items

as toothpaste, soap, deodorant and tissues that were to be sent to Geraldton for people experiencing hardship and homelessness. The morning ended with a special presentation to our staff of a collection of letters written by the students especially for people who are less fortunate and receive help and support from Vinnies.

Teacher Mag James said that the Mini Vinnies group volunteer their time to meet during lunchtimes and this particular excursion helped students put into context the work they do.

"A visit here opens their eyes a little and takes the focus off them to thinking of others and how they can help others, even at a young age," Mrs James said.



**For more information on the Mini Vinnies program contact [schools@sudpwa.org.au](mailto:schools@sudpwa.org.au)**

# HOW YOU CAN CHANGE LIVES

Title: Dr, Mr, Mrs, Ms, Miss, Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Suburb: \_\_\_\_\_

State: \_\_\_\_\_ Postcode: \_\_\_\_\_

Mobile Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Home Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

- I would like to make a **regular** donation of \$ \_\_\_\_\_ per month
- OR  I would like to **increase** my regular donation by \$ \_\_\_\_\_
- OR  I would like to make a **single gift** of \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**DONATIONS  
OVER \$2  
ARE TAX  
DEDUCTIBLE**

Please debit this card:  Visa  MasterCard  American Express

Card Number:                      Expiry Date:   /

Name on Card: \_\_\_\_\_ Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

OR  Please find enclosed my Cheque/Money Order made payable to St Vincent de Paul Society (WA) Inc

- I would like information about remembering the St Vincent de Paul Society in my Will
- I have already left a gift to the St Vincent de Paul Society in my Will
- I would like to receive information about Vinnies regular giving program: Vinnies Visionaries

All communications are treated in the strictest confidence. The St Vincent de Paul Society (WA) Inc follows the Australian Privacy Principles. To view our privacy policy visit [vinnies.org.au](http://vinnies.org.au). If you do not wish your details to be used for future fundraising activities please tick this box.



## UPCOMING DATES

## NEW SHOPS

Look out for our new shop location:

**Halls Head**  
10 Rutland Drive



**18 October 2019**

We are inviting families, friends, community and business organisations to break out of their comfort zone for one night and experience what it's like to sleep in your car to support and raise awareness for people experiencing or at risk of homelessness.

[driveinsleepin.org.au](http://driveinsleepin.org.au)

## DRESSED BY Vinnies DAY

**1 November 2019**

Visit a local Vinnies shop and purchase any item to wear so you can be Dressed by Vinnies!

**Repurpose with a purpose** and see the many ways you recycle when you purchase something from a Vinnies shop.

[dressedby.vinnies.org.au](http://dressedby.vinnies.org.au)



[vinnies.org.au](http://vinnies.org.au)

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To respect the privacy of the people we assist, some of the names and images may have been changed.