

AUTUMN 2020

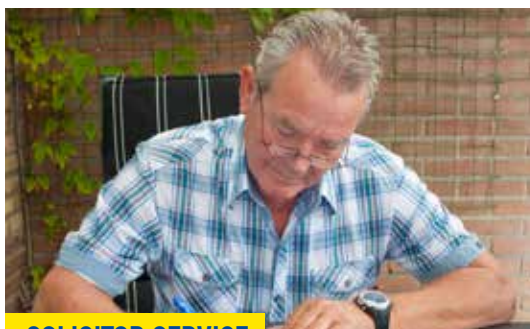
THE SPIRIT NEWSLETTER



COMMUNITY SPIRIT



BACK TO SCHOOL



SOLICITOR SERVICE



VINNIES VISIONAIRES

MESSAGE

from the State President

Welcome to the Autumn edition of the Spirit Newsletter.

Over the past few months our thoughts have been with people affected by the devastating bushfires across the country. The bushfire crisis has seen much hardship for communities, but also resilience and spirit of our Vinnies volunteers who have been on the ground helping people as they deal with the immediate aftermath of fires. Our Vinnies volunteers in the Australian Capital Territory, New South Wales, Queensland, South Australia and Victoria live and work in the impacted communities and will stay alongside people affected for the long months of recovery ahead.

In Western Australia we have received an outpouring of love and support from the community towards the national Vinnies Bushfire Appeal.

Every single dollar Vinnies raised will go towards helping people affected by the fires.

Closer to home, in December, over 2000 Christmas hampers were packed and delivered by our volunteers for people experiencing poverty. Christmas often exacerbates stress on families who are already struggling to make ends meet. We are incredibly grateful for all the food items donated for the hampers from schools, companies and community groups that brought joy to people and families at Christmas.

Our Back to School Appeal was run in January, with the focus to try and support parents with the costs associated with kids starting or returning to school. Donated

backpacks filled with stationery supplies were also delivered to families struggling before the start of the school year.

Our latest newsletter captures only a small sample of what we do all of which and is only possible through the dedication and passion of our members, volunteers, staff and generosity of our WA community. Thank you to everyone of you as together we really do have the ability to change lives.



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

A NEW WEBSITE FOR VINNIES WA

We are very excited to announce that Vinnies WA has launched a new website.

vinnieswa.org.au

The goal is to provide visitors to our website better access to information, news and announcements such as our appeals. There will be further changes and enhancements to come as we expand and develop the site so we can better reflect the needs of people seeking assistance, volunteers and staff.

Some of the new features you will find on the site include:

- A feature section on the home page to promote our latest appeals and events.
- An expanded news section.
- Refined volunteer application process.

- Simplified navigation so it's easier to find information on our appeals or locations of any of our 54 Vinnies shops.
- Ability to view the website clearly on your mobile.

We encourage you to take the time to look at our new site and familiarise yourself with the current information and features available. If you have any feedback about your experience on our website, please email us on media@sudpwa.org.au



BACK TO SCHOOL APPEAL

The start of the school year has just passed, but the struggle for families on low incomes continues when faced with sending their children back to school for another year.

As the cost of uniforms, stationery and supplies increases, parents are often faced with what to prioritise when they can't afford to buy items that children need for school.

Vinnies WA financial counsellors reported an increase in calls from stressed parents in late January, concerned they could not afford school costs. These calls peak at this time of year as parents experiencing hardship are often faced with the difficult decision of either buying school supplies or putting food on the table.

The Vinnies Back to School Appeal runs each year, raising money to support people in hardship as well as directly donating school supplies. Money received through the appeal goes to being able to provide food assistance, paying bills and rent, and financial aid so parents are able to meet back to school expenses, and be able to provide a positive start to the school year. This type of practical support delivered to people in hardship, means a stable foundation can be provided for children which is vital for their development and education.

At the start of the appeal, Vinnies stocks and delivers backpacks filled with essential school supplies. The backpacks are donated from corporate groups and distributed to families in particular areas of Western Australia by Vinnies volunteers.

More than 220 donated backpacks were filled with supplies such as stationery items and pencil cases, with some of those making their way to Roebourne over 1500km from Perth. Val Walker (*below left*) and Kathy Brooker volunteer for Vinnies in the town and find indigenous families are often the ones who need practical support the most.

"We presented one local grandmother with four school backpacks. She is a fulltime carer to her four grandchildren and only receives a pension. You could not wipe away the smile and happiness from her face, and excitement from the kids being able to start school with their new backpacks," Val said.

In Mandurah, Jill Mather (*below right*) volunteers in the Vinnies Support Centre, which at the start of the

year, was able to provide school supplies and uniforms to children in and around Mandurah. As part of her volunteer work, Jill personally delivered 25 backpacks, which she says was so important for families that were really struggling to meet their daily living expenses.

"Christmas is such a difficult time for many of our Vinnies clients, and then they are faced with kids going back to school. Being able to give those families some relief with providing school items such as pens and pencils, and a new backpack really makes a difference to parents. But it also has such an impact on the kids because they can be prepared for the school year and can participate in their lessons."

Your donations through the Vinnies Back to School Appeal has helped alleviate some of the financial pressure families face at the start of the school year. It also gives children an exciting start to the school year by having vital supplies for their studies, helping to give them the best opportunity for their education.



A SMALL TOWN WITH A BIG HEART



In the middle of the WA wheatbelt region, 132km drive north east of Perth, sits the small town of Goomalling. It has a rich history and rural charm, but it is the local people that makes this town truly special.

Being a small country town, Goomalling faces many challenges, with limited job prospects and expensive food prices. There are a number of families and individuals, living in poverty with little access to local emergency relief and assistance.

The extent of Goomalling's emergency assistance used to come in the form of Father Patrick Toohey and local Indigenous elder Betty Walley, always being available to people who would knock on their front doors with requests for help. Keeping up with demand was difficult, so when Father Patrick received an email from Vinnies Membership Executive Manager Andrew York more than a year ago discussing the idea of starting up a community pantry, that all changed.

Vinnies conferences are grassroots groups that are made up from people who are passionate about helping people in their local area, and in Goomalling, establishing a new conference seemed the ideal fit so Vinnies could respond to community need by practically and financially supporting the pantry.

Once the conference was established, Vinnies was then able to start funding the project which began with Father Patrick recruiting local help. Goomalling Shire Development Officer Tahnee Bird was one of the first to join as she and Father Patrick regularly attended the local elder yarning group. It was there that Father Patrick presented the opportunity of a community pantry for the town.

At that meeting Betty Walley identified that it was the Aboriginal community that could most benefit by this venture. It was an ongoing concern for many not having access to affordable food in the town and driving to places such as Northam where prices were cheaper wasn't an option as many couldn't drive. For Tahnee, it was about what she could do to help.

"I just jumped straight on board and took it to council so that we could start collecting food and give immediate relief," she said.

Father Patrick, Tahnee and Betty were only the start, recruiting many other local residents including Louise Barker and Regina Bauer along the way, and Tahnee calling in support from a couple of her co-workers, Christine Schorer and Tina Perrin at the shire.

They initially set themselves up in a building in the centre of the main street, but it soon became evident the building didn't quite suit their needs. An offer then came from the Uniting Church which had a disused building a few streets away, and suggested the pantry could be housed there. Prisoners from the low security Dowerin Wheatbelt Work Camp helped shift the entire operation to its new location, and the pantry was up and running once again.

Goomalling's community pantry opened for business in July 2019 and has been operating every fortnight since then for local people to come, have a cup of tea, chat and receive bags of basic food items such as tea and coffee, rice and baked beans.

"THE PANTRY SIMPLY EXISTS OUT OF THE GOODWILL AND GOOD HEARTS OF MANY PEOPLE."



Food is purchased for the pantry and funded through Vinnies Emergency Assistance program and is run by Vinnies volunteers, giving their time to stock shelves, pack food bags and be there when the Pantry doors are open. Food bags given out are complimented by a regular supply of fresh produce, kindly donated from the Dowerin Wheatbelt Work Camp. Adrian Zouch, Senior Work Camp Officer at the prison said the work camp was keen to be involved when Father Patrick mentioned the project.

"Father Patrick was telling us about it. So we basically said if you want some veggies we've got plenty and we're happy to contribute. It gives the prisoners a sense of achievement to know they're doing something positive for the community."

The pantry also has the space to expand its outreach service and will soon be accommodating regular visits each fortnight from the Wheatbelt Aboriginal Health Service that will further support people who want to attend the service.

The community pantry has quickly become an important asset for the town, helping to bring both people in need of help, and people wanting to help, together in the one place. Betty Walley says, "It eases the mind of people and if they got nothing they know they can come and talk. It's just helping one another and not turning one another away. With Vinnies there, you know what I mean, that gives them confidence that somebody is there to help me."

Father Patrick adds, "Well I am proud of the fact that the pantry simply exists out of the goodwill and good hearts of many people. They really care and want people to be happy and safe and well fed and nurtured and cared for." He goes on to further say, "This is transformational for the community. It's like being yeast in the dough to raise up Goomalling to what it could be and can be."

And that is one small town with a big heart.



HONORARY SOLICITOR SERVICE



Having a will that clearly states your wishes brings peace of mind, security and certainty for the future. It enables you to name an executor, arrange for guardianship of young children and advise how you would like your estate to be divided.

Once family and friends are looked after, many people like to include a charitable gift in their will. Vinnies WA relies on the generosity of the community who choose to leave a gift to Vinnies to continue to provide services to over 50,000 Western Australians who turn to us each year for assistance.

We have recently partnered with several reputable solicitors throughout Western Australia who are pleased to provide simple wills free of charge to anyone considering leaving a gift to Vinnies WA in their will.

If you are interested in connecting with a solicitor in your area or would like more information about the Honorary Solicitor Program or leaving a gift to Vinnies WA in your will please contact our **Planned Giving Coordinator, Natasha Prins** on (08) 6323 7535 or email bequests@svdnpwa.org.au



VINNIES VISIONARIES

Receiving a letter in the mail from Vinnies more than 20 years ago has led to Rodney Laycock becoming one of our Vinnies Visionaries.

Rodney Laycock hadn't donated to a charity before when he received a letter from Vinnies asking for his support. He recalls how fortunate the timing was as he had been thinking of how he could make a difference by giving back to his community but wasn't quite sure how to go about it. That mail from Vinnies happened over twenty years ago and Rodney has been regularly donating ever since.

Today Rodney is a Vinnies Visionary, one of our regular givers who donate on a monthly basis. As a proactive donor, he shares the vision of seeing the power in how his donation helps people experiencing crisis or hardship in Western Australia.

Over the years, Rodney's reasons for helping people have multiplied but he finds it incredibly rewarding knowing that his regular contributions are helping Vinnies respond to people's circumstances and crisis. "I don't like to see people suffering and I think we all have a responsibility in helping people when they are doing it tough, materially and financially," he says.

Regular giving is a convenient way to donate and makes it possible for Vinnies to plan ahead and address and support community needs. It is simple to set up and you can make changes to your donation at any stage.

Rodney has experienced just how easy it has been for him to donate regularly for many years but stresses that the most important aspect for him is what you get in return. "I find it rewarding that helping others helps me in giving purpose and meaning in life knowing that I am contributing to the welfare and wellness of mankind."

To become a Vinnies Visionary contact donations@svdnpwa.org.au or call our Fundraising Coordinator Yoke Lim on (08) 6323 7579.

"I FIND IT REWARDING THAT HELPING OTHERS HELPS ME IN GIVING PURPOSE AND MEANING IN LIFE ..."

COMMUNITY FUNDRAISING

Did you know that you can support Western Australians but also have some fun while you are doing it?

Community fundraising for Vinnies WA is about bringing communities together to help change the lives of Western Australians in need. Fundraising should be fun and easy and there are many ways you can do this in your local community.

To help you decide upon a fundraising initiative try and consider what you enjoy doing, and the amount of time it may take to contribute. By putting the "fun" into fundraising for Vinnies WA, you will enjoy the experience and also inspire others to do as well.

Don't know where to begin? Our Fundraising Coordinator can help you with ideas and support you with your fundraising efforts. All community fundraising activities will need to be registered before going ahead.

Why not start your community fundraising campaign today by giving us a call for more information so you can make a real difference to the lives of over 50,000 Western Australians. Please contact our **Fundraising Coordinator Yoke Lim** on (08) 6323 7579 or email fundraising@sudpwa.org.au



A NEW HOME: John & Penny's Story

It was not the first time John had been referred to Vinnies Tom Fisher House, an intensive intervention service for people experiencing long term homelessness. He and his partner had accessed the service on one occasion before but this time around it was different.

He revealed to staff during his intake process that he was on his own due to his partner having just given birth in hospital to their baby. She was about to be discharged, and her immediate future was going to be back on the streets, which meant that the baby was going to be placed into care.

John's partner Penny was discharged from hospital the next day and staff advised John that she could join him at Vinnies Tom Fisher House. The couple expressed to staff that they had wanted their parenting journey to be successful and address their issues of substance dependency and relationship issues. Staff were able to build a rapport with the couple during their stay, by not excluding or judging

them because of their past challenging behaviours or drug use. They noticed John and Penny were working on their personal situation and issues and visited their baby in hospital each day.

Staff were able to help John and Penny by providing letters of support and find suitable community groups that could help with their case management and accommodation.

They also assisted the couple with developing plans to communicate with the Department of Communities so they could identify the requirements and goals they needed to meet to be able to bring their baby back into their care.

By continuing to build trust in a safe environment, Tom Fisher House staff were able to support John and Penny navigate complex systems. The couple engaged positively with the Department who advised them that if they could obtain stable and supported accommodation they could bring their baby home.



Staff were then able to extend their stay at Tom Fisher House so that the couple had time to connect with a local community group who could offer them suitable accommodation. After approval from the Department, the couple successfully transitioned into their new home with their baby and continue to make a difference to their lives by addressing their issues.

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

SPA20

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. If you do not wish your details to be used for future fundraising activities please tick this box. ☐



UPCOMING DATES

RAMELIUS RESOURCES

PASSAGES RACE DAY

2 May 2020

Join us for this annual event to raise funds for our specialist Youth Engagement Hubs.

For further information contact us on 08 6323 7543 or events@svdpwa.org.au



18 June 2020

Business and community leaders will sleep without shelter to change the lives of Western Australians experiencing or at risk of homelessness.

ceosleepout.org.au

NEW SHOPS

Look out for our new shop location:

Mirraboopa
Mirraboopa Shopping Centre



vinnieswa.org.au

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P: (08) 6323 7500
info@svdpwa.org.au

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