

Annual Report St Joseph's New Plymouth SVdP Conference 2022- 2023

Membership:

Our Conference has eight members. Our team of Associate Members /Volunteers continues to expand. Between the Community Meals, the Whare Kai and the furniture team, we now have 80 active in those teams.

Membership is an issue for us. Our eight members who attend the monthly meetings, and take responsibility for activities. We have 80 generous volunteers who came and help to implement the activities. We need more people, who will come to meetings, help with devising charitable initiatives and with the considerable administration of them.

Romellia Rosal has now completed two years of her term as President of St Joseph's Conference. Her leadership, wisdom and generous support of Conference activities is very much appreciated by our members.

Spirituality

In 2022 Father Alan Roberts was appointed spiritual Director for the Society. His monthly circulation of material for Spiritual Reflections is welcome. The material has direct relevance for our activities, often challenges the way we see and do things, and calls us to action,

Our members and volunteers were blessed by Fr Simon at a celebratory Mass in 2020. COVID got in the way of this gathering in 2021. We have yet to arrange this for 2022.

Community Meals

We are now into our eighth year of providing a free weekly Community Meal to New Plymouth citizens. The team of volunteer cooks and helpers has hardly changed over that time. Every month we field enquiries from people wanting to come and help or cook. There is a great camaraderie among the team, who swap duties and stand in for each other if ever they cannot make their date. One of our members compiles monthly rosters and one of our volunteers does a great job of following up the team each week and confirming their ability to contribute.

We are fortunate to be supported by Young Vinnies from St Pius X School and from Sacred Heart Girls College. The St Pius Young Vinnies make and deliver hot soup which is used as a starter at the winter meals.

The Sacred Heart girls act as helpers at the meals, serving and delivering food to diners. We could not have done without them when COVID was rampant and our more vulnerable community members (older people) were too much a risk, to do the work.

The Parish youth recently did a brilliant job catering for the fifth week of the month, by cooking up a BBQ and supplying dessert for last meal in August. (we have enough volunteer cooks to cook for a four week month, but look outside of this group when there is a five week month.) Our hope is that the relationship between St Vincent de Paul and the Parish youth will grow – to the benefit of both groups and to the community we serve.

After each Community Meal, boxed meals are taken out into the community to individuals and families who we meet in our work who cannot get down to the hall. Up to twenty meals are delivered weekly, including 6 meals to the New Plymouth Emergency Shelter, which has six beds,

Whare Kai

The Whare Kai has now been going for three years. This initiative sees St Vincent de Paul volunteers guiding the mothers of young families in the cooking of a family meal, which they take home to eat. Currently we are using the kitchen and hall at St James church in Motorua for this work. St James is close to Marfell – where the families live.

Currently there are 6 families involved. Between them they have 28 children.

For the last three month's we have been providing a preschool child- minding service which runs in the hall attached to the kitchen,. A stack of books, toys and play dough keeps the children occupied while their mothers cook. This makes it easier for mums to attend – and gives them some respite from child care duties..

We can see that we have built trust with these women and believe that their families benefit by their attendance. We have been able to help them in ways that go far beyond supporting them to feed their families. And similarly we have learned a lot from the participants.

When the Whare Kai and Community meal numbers are combined we have provided 2,906 meals to people in New Plymouth in the last year.906

We will again be applying to the Toi Foundation and the Catholic Charities Foundation for funds to run both the Community Meals and the Whare Kai

Finance:

We rely on donations for all our work. We have had the confidence to instigate and persist with activities which require significant finance.

In 2022, after a gap of a year, we were fortunate to be invited to take part in The Warehouse Stocktake, when the sub contracted company could not find enough staff for this exercise. Young men and women from Francis Douglas College and Sacred Heart Girls College generously assisted us in this exercise.

For the year ending June 30th we spent in excess of \$ 35,000 The key items were

- The cost of the Community Meals \$6091.79
- The cost of the Whare Kai \$10,195.86
- The cost of education assistance \$2,250
- Van costs \$1593
- Emergency food (in addition to Community Meals) \$506.52

Sources of funding

- The annual parish collection: \$ 4061.00
- The TSB Community Trust: \$ 10,000
- Catholic Charities Foundation: \$ 5,000
- The Warehouse Stock take \$ 4,000
- Other ad hoc donations: \$7, 678.33

In 2022 we will submit requests for further funding to the:

- TSB Community Trust
 - The Catholic Charities' Foundation

Furniture Pick-up and delivery

In January 2022 Hiran Fernando took over the management of furniture pick up and delivery, the management of the storage shed and the team. This is no small task. We are indebted to Hiran and his team. We have 17 volunteers in our furniture pickup and delivery team. This includes two people who vet furniture prior to pick up.

In the last 12 months this team has made 104 furniture pickups and 97 furniture deliveries, helping 266 people in the process.

We are very well supported by the Our Lady Help of Christians Conference in Fitzroy, which supplies bedding (sheets pillows, duvets/ blankets) to go with the beds we deliver. They also supply kitchen utensils, pots and pans and crockery. They have also helped with the purchase of re conditioned white ware for clients who have exceeded the limits of loan money available from MSD for the purchase of these items.

We are grateful to Mason Appliances.in New Plymouth - who test and tag donated whiteware before it is given to people in need.

Agencies who call on this service are:

- Taranaki Womens Refuge
- Prisoner's Aid Rehabilitation Society (PARs),
- Department of Social Welfare
- New Plymouth Women's Centre
- New Plymouth Police Family Harm team
- Tu Tama Wahine
- New Plymouth Budgeting Advice.

Our van has a manual gear box and is aging. We will need to replace it in the short / medium term future.

Gardening and Lawn mowing:

One of our members manages our motor mower, delivering it to clients who need to mow their lawns, but cannot afford to pay another person to do the job. This service is much needed and appreciated by those who use it. The mower is picked up after each use and delivered to the next client.

Visitation and the Drop In Ministry

This ministry has been badly affected by COVID restrictions and influenza resulting the intermittent closure of rest homes to visitors, and necessitating testing prior to entry. Telephone communication was satisfactory for some. With winter ailments in decline, and loosening of restrictions we need to revive these regular visits.

Tertiary Study Grant

The St Joseph's Conference, together with the OLHC Conference continues to offer tertiary grants to students from parish families, who need an extra boost to assist them with fees or other tertiary study expenses..

Social Justice:

Individuals have received help with:

- Delivery of food parcels (obtained through Foodbank)
- Advocacy services for people dealing with Government Departments and other services– including MSD, Budget Advice, Education, Housing,
- Assistance with doctors bills , prescription costs.
- Transport,

Homelessness

In 2021 St Vincent de Paul took a leading role in forming "The Homelessness Group". This was the outcome of meetings during Social Justice Week in October 2020. Progress on this front has been slow and difficult. Most cities in New Zealand are struggling to provide housing for people in need. We have continued to lobby our City Council and Governments representatives for more action on this front. There are some initiatives which are currently active – but nowhere near enough to meet the need.

Community Organisation Refugee Sponsorship. (CORS)

Our Conference has been CORS accredited as an agency capable of supporting a refugee family. It is expected that we will receive a refugee family in 2023. The support will include finding suitable accommodation, making connections for them with Government departments, so they can receive entitlements, helping them to become self-supporting within a two year time frame.

A sub- group has been set up to take responsibility for this.

Health and Safety

We are blessed to have been accident free in the past year. We have paid careful attention to lockdown rules as they apply to our activities.

In Summary:

2022 / 2023 has been a busy and productive year for our Conference.

As in 2022, COVID 19 has had an impact on us, limiting or changing our activity for weeks at a time.

The generosity of our members and associate members keeps all our activities rolling over – and even expanding.

There are many good people who want to help us.

A very big thank you to everyone who supports us:

To continue and expand our work we need more members. who will attend meetings and help with the administration of our activities..

All of our activity is dependent on volunteers, the support of the Parish and wider New Plymouth community.

God's blessings to you all!

Romellia Rosal

President.