

OCTOBER 2021 | ISSUE NO.6

# PROVINCE OF ROSALIE RENDU



## NEWSLETTER



Incorporated  
works



The Daughters of Charity  
of St Vincent de Paul Services

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# GREETINGS

## Sister Ellen Flynn

The General Assembly of the Daughters of Charity is about to begin as I write this introduction to our quarterly Newsletter! I can hardly believe that it has been possible to gather Sisters from all over the world at this time when the pandemic is still such a present reality.

This Assembly occurs every six years and sets in motion the global themes that the International Company of the Daughters of Charity are currently concerned about. The themes for this Assembly include Human Rights, Care of our common home, the promotion of Community and reaching out to young people.

We have already studied these themes at local and Provincial levels and sent our suggestions and proposals to the General Assembly, which was postponed from last May for obvious reasons.

It takes place in our Mother House in Paris. Many of our readers will know that this house is home to the Chapel of the Miraculous Medal, a great place of pilgrimage to which people flock from far flung places every day in honour of Mary who gave the design of the Miraculous Medal to St Catherine Labouré in this Chapel.

This is a significant venue for the whole Vincentian Family and as Sister Theresa Tighe, Sister Celine Quadros and I gather there as representatives of the Province of Rosalie Rendu I can promise you a special place in our prayers.

As with every edition the pages this Newsletter sparkle with the contributions from each of our incorporated works and projects: the bright red of the Nepali women celebrating Teej, the creative colour of Out There activities, the vision of community promoted by people experiencing homelessness at Hutt Street Centre, the joy of 100 years of The Marillac, the significant achievements and standards of St Mary's House of Welcome, the unique colour of St Joseph's butterflies, the birthday of Jenny's Place, Seton Villa, St Vincent's Family Project's



healthy living and lifestyle choices, the companionship at Vincentian Care Plus and the nomination and commendation of the Louise Project at the Scottish Charity Awards.

As I read and pick out just these few 'sparkles' I experience what has become a familiar 'wow' each time we come together through this Newsletter. How blessed we are to have each other and to belong to each other across the world!

I commend to you the Daughters of Charity Services contributions on the justice and advocacy work being undertaken in the name of the Vincentian Family and in partnership with many others. Thank you on behalf of us all for this and for the recent Vincentian Values week which so many of us enjoyed. If you missed it you will find the recordings at [www.bit.ly/3pbadNp](http://www.bit.ly/3pbadNp).

As we leave for Paris we carry you, all our readers, our families and those we serve with us to our spiritual home and to the country of the foundation of the Vincentian movement. You will be in our hearts and part of our Assembly as we recall our themes, many of which you are addressing daily. We look forward to sharing something of our meeting with you in due course. Meanwhile, please pray for us as we will for you.

May God bless each of you and all the readers of this Newsletter.

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# JUSTICE AND ADVOCACY

## Riana Rae Brown

Hello! I am the Group Communications Manager at Daughters of Charity Services and the editor behind this newsletter, so I thank you personally for taking the time to read it. Of course, developing newsletters is only a fraction of my role. Since joining Daughters of Charity Services back in February 2020, my focus has been on ensuring the charity is well placed to advocate on behalf of all those we serve and be an agent for social change.

Clearly, my first 18 months didn't turn out quite as expected. I had just settled nicely into my new office before lockdown kicked me - and my shiny new two-year comms strategy - out the door. Fortunately, there are many ways to advocate for justice that doesn't rely on physical intervention, and so, having come from a digital background, social media became my new best friend.

Throughout the pandemic, we used our digital channels as platforms to promote numerous campaigns and initiatives, as well as raise awareness of societal issues including food poverty, digital poverty, isolation and mental health.

Social media is still very much part of our strategy now and moving forward. This month we used our online presence to protest against the £20 cut on Universal Credits and oppose the anti-refugee bill. The difference is, now that restrictions have been lifted, we are able to physically advocate through demonstrations and protests, as we did this month at the Welcome Refugees rally.



Since being welcomed into the Vincentian Family and charged with a wider remit since the closing of Vincentians in Partnership, I have been fortunate enough to work with many of you as we all work towards justice. We are all committed to building a better society, and individually we can and *have* made significant differences, as seen throughout the pages of this newsletter. However, as modelled perfectly by our founders, St Vincent de Paul and St Louise de Marillac, it is clear that when we work together we can do so much more and shout so much louder.

Earlier this year we gathered eight Vincentian organisations to give public advice on how to help rough sleepers during the winter months. In May, we joined over 70 faith groups and faith leaders, bought together by the St Vincent de Paul Society, in asking the Home Office to embed principles of compassion and respect in its New Plan for Immigration. Last month we held the first Vincentian Values Week, which brought together hundreds to raise awareness of the scope of injustice today and empower others to offer a true Vincentian service to people in need. And on behalf of Daughters of Charity Services, this month I was honoured to join the first CSAN Advocacy Alliance meeting, a group of organisations that share social policy and advocacy concerns and coordinate courses of action for the benefit of those who are marginalised or experiencing poverty.

I hope to meet many more of you as we continue advocating for people in need and work towards our shared mission of living in a more just society.





St Catherine's  
Aged Care Services



## ST CATHERINE'S AGED CARE SERVICES

On the 3rd of September, 2021, we celebrated Teej with the Nepalese Staff. Teej is a festival of Nepali women, which celebrates a happy marriage, prosperity and family values.

On this day, women visit temples to pray for the well-being of their husbands and children and for the purification of their own souls.

The colour red is traditionally worn by brides in Nepal, and it also symbolises power. All the women looked especially pretty in their best outfits – red saris with gold ornaments and green bead necklaces. There is a festive spirit all around the temple as the women sing, dance and celebrate.

We thank dearly the Nepalese staff who dressed in their red costumes and performed a dance for us. This event was quite significant to the Nepalese community as it was a day to come together, enjoy each other's company and get a glimpse of the special Nepalese day.

Kanchan is a resident who stated: *"This beautiful festival allows us to enjoy a very special moment with friends in a very beautiful atmosphere and I couldn't resist to join in and dance."* Another resident, Josephine, said with a big smile on her face: *"I always watched this sort of dance in Bollywood movies I can't believe I am dancing with them in person."*

The joy of dance, music and colour certainly made an impact on everyone on this very special day.

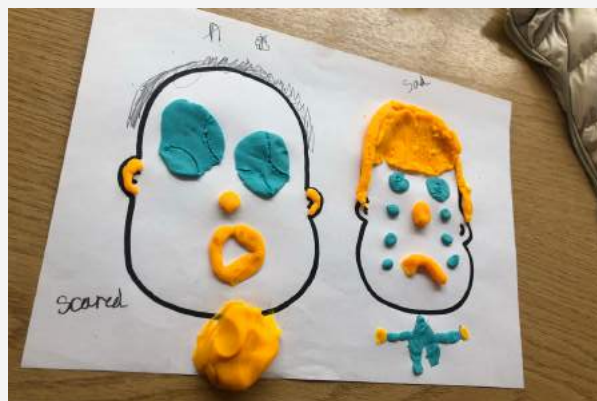
## OUT THERE

Despite social visits being resumed in most prisons, some families are still impacted by restrictions and ongoing issues. For some, visits can be extra complicated; the distance to travel to prison and difficulties using public transport can be a real source of anxiety. Earlier in the year, as visits started to recommence, Out There was contacted by a woman from outside of Greater Manchester who wanted to visit her husband in one of the prisons close to Manchester. During lockdown, the woman had suffered a stroke and the extended separation from her husband and the uncertainty of her medical condition had created significant anxiety for them both. The return of visits was welcome but the prospect of travelling over 50 miles by public transport seemed an impossible situation for the woman to face. She contacted Out There in the hope they would be able to help. With support from volunteers, they were able to support her with transportation to and from prison visits. The woman expressed what a difference this support had made to her:

“ Received email and just want to say thanks again for organising transport and the support offered by the charity. Hope in humanity was restored a little yesterday by your kindness and support. I have not been able to see my husband since March 2020 which has been really hard. Additionally the impact of my stroke has been hard on us both. My husband was moved within a few days of me having the stroke so at a time when he needed the familiar around him he had to learn a whole new structure. Thank you for the support.

”

Out There is now working with colleagues from the women's local Society of St Vincent De Paul to offer ongoing support with volunteers for as long as it is needed. In September, the project had a great time meeting and inducting new volunteers, who will help the project continue their direct work with children and young people. Thanks to the help of volunteers and generous donations, more people impacted by imprisonment are supported across Greater Manchester.





## OUT THERE CONTINUED ...

It was crucial that young people affected by parental imprisonment were still able to access support throughout the school holidays. Out There remained open and ready to help families in any way they could over the summer months, offering practical support, informative advice and a listening ear. To support young people's wellbeing, the project put on a range of physical and creative activities including clay modelling sessions, garden projects, art classes and hula hooping. Young families were also treated to cinema visits, pizza and educational treasure hunts to help keep spirits high.





*Our monthly Town Hall meetings create an important sense of community for people at risk of or experiencing homelessness in South Australia.*

## HUTT ST CENTRE

### **Creating a community for people experiencing homelessness**

At Hutt St Centre, we're committed to supporting people with a lived experience of homelessness in a way that includes and empowers them. We walk alongside people on their journey to homefulness.

As part of this mission, we have implemented a monthly Town Hall meeting for clients of Hutt St Centre.

These meetings give people at risk of or experiencing homelessness the chance to find out what's happening in our community

and influence the decisions that affect them.

We've heard from guest speakers representing the Australian Bureau of Statistics, the Australian Electoral Commission, SYC's Lived Experience and Engagement Service, The Big Issue and more.

Ahead of next year's State and Federal elections, we will host local candidates who wish to speak directly with our client community and outline their plans for addressing the issues that impact their lives.

Through feedback, people have told us these meetings are a great way to get to know our team, learn about different programs and activities, support one another and share helpful resources.

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## HUTT ST CENTRE CONTINUED ...

Casey\*, who attends regularly, told us: *"It's good to have the opportunity to ask questions and speak directly with people."*

And Jasmine\* shared: *"It's a good chance to say thank you – the speakers are very informative I feel looked after and very appreciated."*

Best of all, the meetings create a strong sense of community and ensure the voices of people experiencing homelessness are heard.

It's a small but important step towards our vision of an end to homelessness.



*Staff from the Australian Electoral Commission and the Electoral Commission of South Australia are helping people register to vote for upcoming State and Federal elections.*

*\*At Hutt St Centre we respect everyone who comes to us for help – and many are working toward a fresh start in life. So while this is a true story, names have been changed to protect their privacy. Thank you for understanding.*





**the marillac**  
neurological  
care centre

## THE MARILLAC NEUROLOGICAL CARE CENTRE

The Marillac Neurological Care Centre reached an exciting milestone this September as the charity celebrated its 100 year anniversary. The centre was opened initially by the Daughters of Charity as a tuberculosis sanatorium in 1921. Today the Marillac operates as a 24-hour care and rehabilitation centre for adults with complex neurological conditions and injuries.

To mark the centenary on Wednesday the 8th of September, current and former staff, residents and their families were treated throughout the day to a range of activities including live music, a free raffle with 10 star prizes and an awards ceremony. Celebrations commenced in the morning with a live-streamed mass at the centre's chapel, in keeping with the Marillac's Christian heritage. A narrative of the Marillac's 100-year history was also displayed through pictures around the main hall.

Chief Executive Officer of the Marillac, Paul Dixon, reflects on the Charity's centenary: *"It is a remarkable achievement for the Charity to be able to celebrate 100 years of service to the community. The Charity holds a special place in the hearts of people who pass through the doors for treatment, visit their loved ones, come to celebrate with the*

*community or, as in my case, come as a place of work. The Marillac Neurological Care Centre has morphed into what it has become today on the back of all the wonderful and diligent staff who have worked here. The care and commitment shown by them is nothing short of amazing and the success and longevity of the service is down to the Founding Sisters and those that have followed in their footsteps. Anybody who works here accepts that there is a legacy to fulfil and it is our duty to match the excellence and caring nature of those that have gone before."*

Patricia McCarthy, wife of former resident Gerry McCarthy, says being at the Marillac Centre was like being in a beautiful sanctuary: *"We are so grateful for all the aspects of our shared experience at the Marillac - physical, emotional, spiritual, medical - and also the loving care we saw so often."*



Gerry and Patricia McCarthy



# ST MARY'S HOUSE OF WELCOME

## Quality accreditation awarded for 3 years

St Mary's House of Welcome (SMHOW) was thrilled to be advised that it met all quality standards in its recent accreditation assessment. The organisation was assessed against the following sets of standards:

- National Standards for Mental Health Services
- Human Services Standards
- QIC Health and Community Services Standards 7th Ed

The audit team noted in its closing report:

*"The values and mission of the organisation underpinned by the Daughters of Charity are understood and demonstrated at all levels. The organisation and its values and mission are very highly regarded both internally by staff but also by stakeholders and other external stakeholders. The needs, rights and dignity of the service users come first using an approach that welcomes them at any time in a non-judgemental fashion and tries to support them to make their own decisions and choices. The organisation has managed well through the current pandemic in ensuring essential services remain for service users. Some services have been put on hold due to the government directions and infection control requirements.*

*The Strategic Plan has been updated to reflect the changing patterns of need and direction the organisation is taking. Business and operational plans are closely aligned to the strategic directives, and managers and staff understand and continually report against the strategic directives.*

*The organisation works in an agile fashion to respond to needs in the community and adapt processes to be more efficient. Recent investment in data management and technology-enabled reporting processes are helping the organisation to streamline processes and understand more about the outcomes for clients and its overall performance. A positive culture of working together across multi-disciplinary teams, sharing information and best practice was demonstrated at the program and management level. SMHOW has processes in place to deter occupational violence and aggression, provide a safe inclusive environment for staff and clients, and empower them to raise any suggestions or concerns without fear of reprisal.*

*Service user feedback, stakeholders and observations reflected a client-centred approach aimed at empowering clients to overcome challenges and become more resilient. SHMOW has been recommended as meeting the requirements of all standards."*

This builds on our recent successful NDIS audit and re-registration for three years in July 2021 and our strategic intent to ensure efficient, sustainable and dynamic operations. Staff have celebrated with team lunches hosted by the management group to thank them.

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## SMHOW CONTINUED ...



### **Taste for Change**

On 29 October 2021, SMHOW will host a wonderful online fundraiser “Taste for Change”. The event provides a night filled with donated produce, including Victorian drinks and food, a wine masterclass hosted by wine expert Max Allen who'll be speaking to some of Victoria's leading people in the industry, access to an online silent auction and more - delivered to your home anywhere in Australia!

This event allows us to share our mission, work and raise much needed funds for our Welcome Relief meals program. The night will begin with a welcome from our Chair and CEO, followed by grace and Welcome to Country - an Australian ceremony acknowledging traditional owners of the land - before a delicious meal. So many wonderful donations have been made. The event will be showcased in Australian Gourmet magazine, which provides a great opportunity to promote our work, the people we serve and to share a happy night at home in a COVID safe way.

### **Research activity**

SHMOW has partnered with the Australian Catholic University (ACU) to undertake two collaborative research projects:

**1)** Participatory action to overcome the barriers to psychosocial care and capacity building. When a person has a mental health condition that presents significant obstacles to their everyday functioning – through this work we aim to understand these barriers and contribute to a very small evidence base to ensure our programs meet our community's needs. This project was co-presented by ACU and SHMOW at the 2021 ACU and DePaul University Online CE/SL Conference: Pandemic, Pivots and Potentials.

**2)** Responding to the needs of those most disadvantaged and vulnerable during a lockdown – a collaborative project with Catholic Social Services Victoria, Jesuit refugee Service Australia, Lord Somers Camp and PowerHouse, St Vincent de Paul Society NSW, ACU and SHMOW. In the wake of the recent COVID-19 outbreak in Victoria, our community development sector is grappling more than ever with two important questions: What was it like to access community services during the pandemic? And how will COVID affect the demand for social services into the future? The sector is keen to learn from the COVID-19 lockdowns so we as a nation are able to respond to the needs of those most disadvantaged or vulnerable. At the peak of Australia's COVID-19 crisis, some agencies were forced to shut their doors and turn clients away, unable to operate under strict government restrictions. Others experienced unprecedented spikes in demand for support from clients locked out of employment and ineligible for government support. And yet some agencies experienced less demand for their services while their regular cohorts benefited from the government's Job Seeker scheme. Now wound back, the impact of the government's withdrawal of temporary welfare remains to be fully seen through the contribution of this research.

### **Stories from our community**

This week we have received some wonderful client stories who share the warmth and value our team provide:

*“Thank you for making me feel welcomed when I was so down. Now I have a house in the country, a job, and true satisfaction. Things are working out for me now and with your help I've been able to do some self-development courses and training to keep me safe. Thank you!”*

*“Thank you for writing a support letter and having my parking fine waived. My girlfriend has cancer and I have no money and we are homeless. This helped a lot”.*





## ST JOSEPH'S

This year, the people at St Joseph's certainly made the most of the summer months by enjoying plenty of outdoor activities. Staff and the people they support enjoyed beach days, country park walks, music in the garden and much more.

After all that fun in the sun and being with nature, the charity was inspired to hold a butterfly design competition. Everyone enjoyed colouring, painting and crafting unique butterfly designs, and many of the houses also decorated their walls with their colourful designs.

As Autumn made its appearance, the people at St Joseph's continued their creative streak and embraced the cold weather by making windchimes out of recycled materials as well as autumn wreaths. The designs were imaginative and brilliant - well done to everyone who took part.

With Halloween on the horizon, St Joseph's is preparing for a 'spooktacular' season by dressing each house in terrifically terrifying decorations. We look forward to seeing the final results!

## SETON VILLA

Despite ongoing COVID challenges, including a two-week construction industry shutdown, our Homes for Life project continues apace. Our third new home – Leia's Place – is close to completion. Landscaping makes such a difference!



*Leia's Place*



*New house in Ryde*



*Leia's Place*



*New house in Ryde*



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## SETON VILLA CONTINUED ...

COVID lockdown has certainly been tough on everyone, with many residents choosing to remain at home during the week. Here at Jenny's Place, a birthday celebration has put a smile on everyone's face!

We are very hopeful that family visits will be able to resume shortly as part of the easing of gathering restrictions in NSW. With all residents and staff now fully vaccinated, we are well placed to take on the challenge of living with COVID in the months ahead.







## ST VINCENT'S FAMILY PROJECT

St Vincent's Family Project (SVFP) was delighted to welcome back young families in Westminster after the summer holidays. With the addition of a new Therapy Programme Manager, the project has a packed schedule planned for the year ahead to support the parents and children. Programmes include a new 'Mellow Parenting for mums' course, an oral health programme, creative arts therapy and a focus on healthy living.

During the pandemic, SVFP offered parents 1-1 therapy to help them manage family life, issues at home and past traumas. Thanks to generous donations from funders, the project is able to continue this work, offering parents a safe space to express any issues they are facing and get the support they need. SVFP is also working with parents

who have been supported by the project for many years to increase their independence and boost their confidence so they feel empowered to move on from the project when they are ready.

As part of SVFP's commitment to healthy living, the project has formed an ongoing relationship with Change for life, an initiative that encourages and supports children, young people and families across Westminster to make healthy lifestyle choices. The project is continuing to offer free physical activity classes and well-being sessions, making it easier for children and young people to eat well and be active.

Research has shown children's oral health in London is poor and many are young people are facing tooth decay. To help tackle the issue, SVFP is holding dental workshops for young families to teach parents and children the importance of dental hygiene and how to take care of their teeth.



# Vincentian Care Plus

We make your HOME CARE difference



## VINCENTIAN CARE PLUS

Vincentian Care Plus (VCP) continues to support vulnerable elderly people in Westminster with the highest quality care possible to ensure they are living safely and happily in the comfort of their own homes.

The lifting of restrictions in the UK meant service users were able to enjoy more time outside with the assistance of VCP's carer workers. The continuation of VCP's befriending services has also meant clients have benefitted from spending more quality time with their carers, whether that be for a walk in the park, to visit the local shops or simply having an enjoyable catch-up over lunch.

Despite ongoing challenges faced by the sector due to the pandemic and Brexit, VCP has demonstrated consistent good practices in its day-to-day operation, through both care delivery and financial sustainability. To ensure the delivery of safe care for all clients and staff, VCP continues to be vigilant with PPE control and has provided stand-alone training recommended by CQC on Infection Prevention and Control for all staff.

Moving forward, VCP is focusing on growing existing contract hours whilst ensuring the continuity of a quality service to all clients. The charity is also currently working on its long-term strategy, which involves assessing and re-aligning the challenges faced by the sector and ensuring they are well prepared for the future.

## THE LOUISE PROJECT

It's been a busy few months at The Louise Project as the charity welcomed back women in Govanhill to face-to-face support and educational classes. Students returned with enhanced digital skills all thanks to the project's Digital Coordinator, Julie, who continued the classes on Zoom throughout the lockdown.

Separately to the project's own education classes, staff have teamed up with Shawlands Academy to help plan its Developing the Young Workforce programme (DYW), a Scottish government employment initiative that aims to reduce youth unemployment. The DYW team will be providing career guidance at Shawlands Academy to young people living in the surrounding area, and volunteers from The Louise Project will be onsite to offer literacy and numeracy support. Sessions are set to commence later this month and will take place on Thursday afternoons.

The Louise Project has also been working with the National Records of Scotland to identify barriers that could prevent people from completing the Scottish online census in 2022 and to find solutions that could avoid a potentially bigger systemic issue. This comes after staff recognised a number of issues within the community of Govanhill that could affect census participation, including digital poverty, poor literacy skills and privacy concerns amongst ethnic minority groups.



In partnership with Glasgow City Health and Social Care Partnership and MultiMedia, The Louise Project helped develop breast cancer and cervical cancer screening videos for circulation by NHS and local teams. Two members of staff, Ellie and Pamela, translated and recorded information for the animated videos with the aim to raise awareness and increase attendance to preventative services amongst the Roma community, who currently have a very low uptake.

Last month, The Louise Project starred in the Scottish Charity Awards, an annual ceremony that celebrates the best of Scotland's voluntary sector. The project was recognised as a finalist in both the Pioneering Project and the Digital Citizen Awards for their work and determination to continue to help families in crisis during the pandemic. Well done!