

One Voice

ISSUE 39
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A NEWSLETTER FOR SUPPORTERS OF THE ST VINCENT DE PAUL SOCIETY



St Vincent de Paul Society
NSW
good works

Paige's Story

OUR LADY OF THE WAY
NAGLE CENTRE
LILY FARDELL'S LEGACY
MESSAGES OF HOPE
CITY2SURF

VINNIES
RENEWS
REBUILDS
RESTORES

Dear Friends



Welcome to our first One Voice for 2016 and may I take this opportunity to wish you all the very best for the year ahead.

Thank you for your unwavering commitment to shaping a more inclusive society and for helping to keep social justice at the forefront of what Vinnies does.

Without your financial support we would not be able to help thousands of people every day across NSW.

This edition of One Voice highlights the extraordinary range of support we provide to people experiencing disadvantage and homelessness and reports on the largest donation the Society has ever received.

Team Vinnies will be striding to make a difference at this year's City2Surf on Sunday 14th August. By participating in this annual event, you can start raising much-needed funds to support the 400,000 people we assist in NSW every year.

We tell an empowering story about the power of mindful healing at Our Lady of the Way through two popular programs, Yoga Mindfulness and Art Therapy.

We also present Paige's personal story of triumph over teen homelessness and addiction and how with the support of a Vinnies Conference Members she is now working toward her dream of becoming a flight attendant.

Richard's story is about fighting through his own adversity and helping others find their way through. After Richard found some stability for himself, he felt empowered to help others by sharing what he had learnt.

And prepare to be amazed by the generosity of Newcastle's "Lady on the Hill" Lily Fardell who left a \$4.3 million estate to Vinnies to help children and their families in the Hunter Region.

We've also introduced a new section where we feature messages of hope from our donors and volunteers.

The stories we share are similar to the experiences of hundreds of people across NSW each day. It is only thanks to you that the Society is able to provide services, friendship and hope to Australians experiencing disadvantage. Together, we will continue to transform people's lives.

Denis Walsh
President, State Council
St Vincent de Paul Society NSW

Thank you for your support

Thanks to your support at Christmas we were able to rebuild the lives of many Australians doing it tough. We provided the basic essentials to many families who would otherwise have gone without.

Christmas signifies a time for joy, giving and inclusiveness. Unfortunately, for some, Christmas can be heartbreakingly lonely. For others, poverty means that the basics are not affordable, let alone dreaming of buying presents for their children or having a festive meal.

Your generosity has enabled us to make some Christmas wishes come true.



\$30 pays for school supplies and activities so students do not miss out on essential learning.



\$80 provides one week's worth of groceries for a struggling family.

With \$200 we provide a safe haven for a woman and child escaping domestic and family violence.



'One Voice' is produced by Fundraising and Communications, St Vincent de Paul Society NSW.

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Because we respect the privacy of the people we assist, names in this newsletter may have been changed, stories summarised and pictorial models used.

For more information about the St Vincent de Paul Society, telephone: 02 9568 0262 or visit: vinnies.org.au

Correspondence can be sent to publications@vinnies.org.au

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Mindful Healing

THE HEALING PROCESS FOR WOMEN WHO HAVE EXPERIENCED DOMESTIC AND FAMILY VIOLENCE IS A LONG AND DIFFICULT ONE.

The physical and emotional stress on women's minds and bodies has a long-term impact on their health and wellbeing.

Our Lady of the Way is the only refuge in NSW to take older, single women, most of whom are escaping domestic and family violence. The refuge helps women find emergency accommodation and permanent housing, provides health referrals and builds support networks.

Two programs which have been popular are Yoga Mindfulness and Art Therapy.

Yoga Mindfulness coordinator Jennifer has a long affiliation at Our Lady of the Way, having worked there for seven years.

"Women who have experienced domestic or family violence often feel powerless," says Jennifer.

"I have noticed some women improve their self-confidence, strength and sleeping patterns."

Jennifer was able to help a resident with her self-esteem and trust through body movements, which has enabled more control over the resident's life. The woman was from a non-English speaking background but, despite the language barrier, was able to communicate by building an "understanding on how to trust."

Andy has been providing art therapy sessions at Our Lady of the Way for about three years and has helped many women find their voice and express their stories through art.

"Most of the people we assist feel hesitant at first thinking they need to bring creative ability to the table," says Andy.

"Once they realise our aim is the process and not a perfect end result or artwork, then everyone starts to relax and feel welcome, regardless of their creativity and ability."

Andy tells many stories of how art has helped. One woman came to an understanding about her



relationship with her daughter after she painted members of her family.

This followed several hard years of silence between her and her family. Even now, she is still endeavouring to bridge her relationships.

It is through your generous support that exceptional programs like these allow older single women in outer Sydney to heal themselves and move forward.

**VINNIES
RENEWS**

Taking flight

PAIGE'S STORY COULD HAVE ENDED DIFFERENTLY. AS A YOUNG GIRL SHE HAD NO FAMILY OR COMMUNITY TO SUPPORT OR LOOK OUT FOR HER, RESULTING IN MANY YEARS OF ABANDONMENT AND DESPAIR.

All on her own, she had no idea that organisations like Vinnies were there to help young people just like her. Paige connected with Vinnies last year, in her thirties, and her story is now one of hope, where the aspirations she had as a young child may finally be fulfilled.

Paige as a little girl dreamt of being a flight attendant but, instead, years of abuse and abandonment led to decades struggling with addiction and despair.

Thinking back on her childhood Paige sees it as a traumatic time. With the support of Vinnies she is finally able to deal with it.

When Paige was six and her sister was 10 their parents divorced. A few years later her father remarried but her new stepmother was abusive and lashed out at young Paige whenever she stayed for weekends, leaving her traumatised. Unfortunately, her father turned a blind eye to the abuse.

“Being let down by my father was a great disappointment to me,” she recalls.

She also didn't feel safe at her mother's home.

“My mother had quite a party lifestyle. My mum's sister moved in, and had a lot of odd men coming into the house; I woke up one night when I was about nine to find a guy sleeping on my floor. The insecurity was really tough.”

When Paige turned 15 her mother died of leukaemia and this affected her deeply.

“I wasn't a troubled child. I would never act out. I was a creative person and quite good at school. When this happened I started acting out at school and getting into trouble with the teachers and hanging out with a rough crowd.

“By 15, I felt abandoned. I had nobody. No-one in the family stepped up and said ‘there's a girl who needs taking care of’. After my mum passed away I didn't know how to deal with things. I just had to survive and get by every day the best way I knew how.”

She spent the subsequent years couch-surfing, sleeping rough and relying on the kindness of friends. By her mid-20s, she found herself overwhelmed by all the unresolved issues of her childhood.

“I started taking drugs to deal with my demons. I moved to the far north coast with a guy who said he was going to help me, but he ended up being a drug dealer. He was very selfish and abusive. I just had a really bad time.”

Paige was addicted to codeine for 10 years but after her thirtieth birthday she decided to enter a treatment program. After receiving help Paige felt her life was back on track, but it all collapsed once more, when the man she fell in love with let her down and she lost her job. She ended up being hospitalised, diagnosed with depression, anxiety and post-traumatic stress disorder.

She had “an absolute mental breakdown – I felt like I was a kid again. I had no control and felt very unsafe.”

In May last year her sister stepped in and gave her a place to stay for four months. A visit to a counsellor turned her life around. It led to a referral to the St Vincent de Paul Society, and a meeting with Deirdre, a Member of the Society.

“I was feeling suicidal when I met Deirdre and other Vinnies Conference Members. They really listened to me and I felt like they saved my life. They discussed temporary housing for me, which I thought wasn't possible.”

Paige now lives in temporary Society accommodation and attends counselling to deal with her childhood trauma.



“I’m so grateful to Vinnies, and especially to Deirdre. Without the organisation I would probably be dead now. I’m very happy because I feel I’ve turned a real corner.

“Deirdre and I have a close bond, and she’s given me a lot of support and confidence. We talk on the phone and she and other Conference Members come over for a cup of tea and to drop off food parcels.

“I’m not used to accepting help, so it was very hard for me – I was always the one who gave and helped other people. Deirdre made me realise I have to look after myself before I can look after others.

“On a plane you put your own oxygen mask on before you help somebody else with theirs. That analogy really hit me and woke me up.”

Paige is now planning to undertake First Aid and Responsible Service of Alcohol courses as the first steps toward her childhood dream of becoming a flight attendant.

“I’m a bright person, and I know I’ve got the potential to really make something of my life. I just needed that support which I’d never had before.

“Without the support of the St Vincent de Paul Society, I honestly don’t know where I’d be today.”

Thanks to your generosity, young people like Paige can build a brighter future.





Helping others to find their way through

RICHARD HAD A GOOD JOB AND A TOWNHOUSE. THEN HE SUFFERED A STROKE AND WAS DIAGNOSED WITH DIABETES. THAT CHANGED EVERYTHING.

He was forced to leave his job and, being 55, found it impossible to get another one. On a disability pension, unable to make ends meet, Richard became homeless.

He eventually sorted himself out and now, living in Campbelltown and a regular at the Nagle Family Care and Support Centre, he helps others find their way.

For four years Richard has used the support services that the Nagle Centre offers those in the Macarthur Region experiencing crisis and disadvantage - he comes three or four times each week, for breakfast and lunch.

"It's a good spot and it's not just the meals. It's nice to be able to come down and talk and socialise. You meet people, you learn to be tolerant. You keep eyes open for each other."

After crisis struck, Richard struggled with the myriad of social service providers. He sought help through Centrelink and other services but had many setbacks and doors closed in his face. But now that he has connected with the Nagle Centre and found some stability, he is happy to help others there.

"All you want is someone to point you in the right direction," says Richard.

"You want to be able to get information. But when you go to some services, you sit up there for an hour before you finally see somebody."

And they may not be the right person. And, as Richard explains, they just add you to a computer database, and you lose human contact.

Just from conversations he has with others in the Nagle Centre dining room, he is able to direct them towards where they might get the right help.

"If you're prepared to open up and people are prepared to look and listen, you can point them in the right direction. Sometimes people come here and they are frustrated because they don't know which way to turn, and I was the same way.

"Sometimes somebody gives you a shoulder to lean on, and quite often that's all I give. There's nothing more disheartening than getting clobbered by bureaucracy.

"All of us who come here have problems. We all need help. Sometimes it's not physical help. Sometimes the big thing is pointing people in the right direction and helping them to find a way through."

Your generous support enables us to run the Nagle Centre, where people like Richard can be supported to overcome their own issues and help others.



Lily Fardell leaves \$4.3m fortune to Vinnies NSW



Newcastle's 'Fair Lady of The Hill' Lily Fardell has left an extraordinary bequest of \$4.3 million to the Hunter's homeless children and their families.

Lily's charity and generosity was well-known throughout her life and her final gift is the largest single donation ever made to St Vincent de Paul Society NSW.

"Lily Fardell's legacy will be remembered by people living in the Hunter area for generations to come," says State President Denis Walsh. "As one of the largest providers of homeless services in New South Wales, we can't even begin to express our gratitude to Lily Fardell and her family. Every child and family that we house, feed and help in the future will be Lily's legacy."

Please contact Brian Emms on 02 9568 0252 or email brian.emms@vinnies.org.au for more information on bequests.

TELL YOUR STORIES

We would love to hear why you love Vinnies.

Please email publications@vinnies.org.au to share your stories.

Messages of hope

THANKS FOR SENDING US YOUR INSPIRING MESSAGES OF HOPE. YOUR WORDS CONTINUE TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE TO PEOPLE EXPERIENCING DISADVANTAGE.

○ We know and feel your pain in these difficult times. When the going gets tough, the tough get going. So we encourage you to hang in there and know that people care for you. Cheers and keep smiling.

○ Never give up on hope. Everyday can be a new start, because the world has a lot of love to share if you look for it.

○ To all the amazing people who have opened their hearts and arms to so many. Your love, efforts and compassion continue to bring hope to so many disadvantaged families. May your work continue with grace and love and may more beautiful people be so blessed with a chance of happiness because of you.

○ It's people like you that make a difference in this world.

City2Surf runners celebrate post-race.



Warming up for this year's City2Surf

Run to rebuild lives

Team Vinnies will be striding to make a difference at this year's City2Surf on Sunday 14 August.

By participating in this annual event, runners and walkers will be helping one in 18 Australians who are experiencing disadvantage. Anyone who is up for the challenge can register as a Gold Charity or general participant. Then you can start raising much-needed funds to support the 400,000 people we assist in NSW every year.

Gold Charity entry is perfect for our champion fundraisers who want to make a significant community

impact. As a Gold Charity competitor you can enjoy special perks, including free registration, Vinnies branded race day kit, a personalised gold race bib, line-jump privileges at the pre-event expo and the exclusive gold zone start ahead of the pack.

How do I join Team Vinnies?

To register as a Gold Charity or general entrant visit our website and join the team.

vinnies.org.au/teamvinnies

SHARE YOUR PICTURES #TEAMVINNIES

WITH YOUR HELP WE CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Supporter No. _____

Title _____ First Name _____ Surname _____

Address _____

Suburb/Town _____ State _____ Postcode _____

Tel _____ M _____ Email _____

I would like to make a regular donation of \$ _____ per month

OR I would like to increase my regular donation by \$ _____ per month

OR I would like to make a single gift of \$ _____ (donations over \$2 are tax deductible)

Please debit the amount indicated to my credit card: MasterCard Visa Amex Diners

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Signature _____ Date _____

OR I would prefer to donate by **Direct Debit**, please send me the Direct Debit Form.

If you wish to pay by **cheque** (marked 'non-negotiable') or **money order**, please make payable to 'St Vincent de Paul Society'

All communications are treated in the strictest confidence. The St Vincent de Paul Society NSW follows the Australian Privacy Principles and keeps donor information private. If you do not wish your details to be used for future fundraising activities please tick this box.



To make a regular or single donation, simply complete your details and post to:

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PO Box 19,
Petersham NSW 2049

Tel: (02) 9568 0262

Fax: (02) 9564 6044

Email: vinnies@vinnies.org.au

Internet: vinnies.org.au

Donation hotline: 13 18 12

ABN: 91 161 127 340

ON BEHALF OF OVER 400,000 PEOPLE WHO WERE ASSISTED BY VINNIES LAST YEAR... THANK YOU.



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