



Media Release

21 February 2018

Vinnies Fred's Van food service to expand in Adelaide's north

The St Vincent de Paul Society in SA (Vinnies) is adding an extra meal service to its Elizabeth Fred's Van.

Requests for financial, clothing and food assistance from Vinnies have all increased in the northern Adelaide area in recent years, with Vinnies Elizabeth Centre reporting a 50% increase in appointments for its assistance service from 2016 to 2017 and increasing requests for help. The Vinnies Elizabeth Centre at Langford Drive includes a shop, Fred's Van meal service and delivers Vinnies home visitation program through onsite interview rooms.

The Fred's Van service provides dinner on Wednesday nights inside a café style diner with its newly renovated alfresco area. Sunday lunches will be added when additional volunteers have been recruited.

David Wark, CEO Vinnies SA, said "We have amazing volunteers who deliver the 40,000 meals we provide South Australians who are homeless or disadvantaged each year through our Fred's Van services, however we need additional help with this extra lunch service."

Ann Anderson has volunteered for Vinnies Fred's Van at Elizabeth for several years, donating her time once a month. She is delighted that Vinnies is commencing the additional service.

"There is great need in this area," she says. "It's more than the food, it's the community getting together and they really value that social opportunity. They support each other and they enjoy the social interaction with us too. The guests are so polite and appreciative. It's a lovely thing to be a part of."

Ms Anderson said they serve many families on a Wednesday night. "It's lovely to see the kid's faces light up when you serve them their meal. I like to give them an extra scoop of ice-cream when we have it!"

She says the menu is regularly varied, often serving hot soup and a main meal in winter, with dessert or fruit replacing the soup in summer. Vinnies is fortunate to receive food donations from several businesses, but most food is purchased then prepared on site.

"We usually buy ingredients and cook on site, something like spaghetti bolognese, before the guests arrive," she says. "We sometimes have items like fruit or baked goods for guests to take away with them."

Ms Anderson also values her volunteer community. "The volunteers are fantastic, most of us are busy but it's a once a month commitment and we know we're doing something together that's really important for the people who need us.

"In winter we give out blankets or other items to keep people warm and they are so grateful. The people tell us their problems and confide in us, I wasn't able to work one shift and they remembered a month later and asked me about it, they do miss me when I'm not here!"

Mr Wark said Sunday lunch was chosen for the new service to maximize the opportunity for families to enjoy a nutritious meal.

“We want to encourage more families to bring their children in for a warm and healthy meal. Adelaide’s northern suburbs are one of our highest need areas and there are many families who struggle to put regular nutritious meals on the table.”

“Our Fred’s Van meal services are an important part of our mix of support for people who are homeless or disadvantaged,” Mr Wark said.

This mix includes Vinnies home visitation service (also delivered through interview rooms), which is unique in SA and helps over 60,000 people each year through individualised support. Volunteers provide Vinnies shop gift cards for clothing and household items; grocery hampers and vouchers; furniture; and emergency funds - together with a compassionate ear and a kind heart.

Vinnies has ten Fred’s Van services across South Australia, with the Elizabeth and Salisbury sites recording the highest numbers of customers. Both of these services have seen an enormous increase in meals served over the last twelve months, with both services also brought indoors to offer comfortable, dignified dining.

Ends

For interviews with David Wark, CEO St Vincent de Paul Society SA please phone Megan Andrews, Marketing Manager on (08) 8112 8712 or 0419 940 721.

Notes for editors:

Vinnies in SA:

South Australians in need can contact Vinnies through its assistance line, between 9am and 1pm weekdays on 1300 729 202.

Vinnies assistance for South Australians experiencing hardship includes:

- A home visit program assisting around 60,000 people each year with food, clothing, furniture & emergency funds
 - 10 Fred’s Vans providing over 40,000 meals across the State
 - A Migrant and Refugee Centre assisting new arrivals to SA
 - Financial and specialist counselling services
 - Vinnies youth programming supporting disadvantaged children through “Buddy Days” outings
 - A 47 bed Vinnies Men’s Crisis Centre at Whitmore Square
 - A 20 room Vinnies Women’s Crisis Centre located in suburban Adelaide
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