

Young Vincentian News

Shrewsbury Diocese



Issue 1 • Summer 2023

“Do not be afraid of new beginnings”

We are pleased to introduce our new-look, Shrewsbury Diocese Young Vincentian News – a new beginning to bring together our Mini Vinnies and Youth SVP programmes in one publication.

We hope that you enjoy the journey as you turn the pages of the newsletter. It has been carefully chosen to illustrate our continuous journey as Vincentians from our youngest Mini Vinnies, through Youth SVP and the opportunity to continue onwards through 18-33 and into adult conferences.

We hope that our Mini Vinnies will be inspired by our Youth SVP articles as they continue their incredible work in the high schools. Good luck to all our young people who are moving on to begin the next phase of their education. When you arrive, please remember to ask where the SVP programme is to allow you to continue your good works.

From the youngest to the oldest, Vincentians share the same mission of See, Think, Do – Turning our concerns into action to address need in whatever form. We hope that by sharing news of what our young people are doing we will all be inspired by their enthusiasm and imagination.

Frédéric Ozanam was a young man and look what he achieved!

“Do not be afraid of new beginnings. Be creative. Be inventive.”

Have a wonderful Summer.

**Janet, Colette, Bernadette,
Marjorie & Mike**

Young Vincentian Development Officers

Aquinas College Stockport – Youth SVP

Launched in January of this year, the Aquinas College Youth SVP group has over 30 members, all of whom have regularly met and shared ideas on how to tackle pressing issues in society.

Over the last few months, we have focused on homelessness in our local community. We launched our group in January with a bake sale. Through two separate fundraising events, this student-led group has so far raised over £500 for Mustard Tree, a charity dedicated to eradicating homelessness throughout Greater Manchester.

We have also contributed to enhancing a sense of inclusion and community spirit in our college in the last half term with a much praised ‘cultural day’ event, which gathered many donations to Mustard Tree, and spread joy and happiness through the college. Students and staff were encouraged to dress in attire from their own culture and bring food to share. This event was a great way for our college community to live life to the full (John 10:10), and this was entirely organised and overseen by members of the SVP group.

In addition to these, our SVP group worked with Chaplaincy to support our college wide Lenten sponsored fast and Charity work organised for both students and staff and together we raised over £700 in generous donations.

We are looking forward to three more separate events planned for the coming weeks, including a Q&A session with local MPs with the support of the Youth Parliament on the issues surrounding poverty, cost of living and free school meals. We also have a scheduled interview with a Guest Speaker to raise awareness around the dangers of drug and alcohol abuse, and finally a summer fair for more fundraising!

aquinas COLLEGE

Top marks for St Luke’s Shropshire!

Congratulations to St Luke’s Shropshire who have recently received an amazing Catholic Schools Inspectorate inspection report.



Under Catholic life and mission

– How faithfully the school responds to the call to live as a Catholic community at the service of the Church’s educational mission they received grade 1. The report recognised the contribution of the Mini Vinnies in their judgement stating: “The school has a strong and enthusiastic Mini Vinnies group that provides opportunities for the pupils to develop an understanding of Catholic Social Teaching and raise funds for the most vulnerable.”



Care for Communities with St Vincent's

As usual, the Mini Vinnies at St Vincent's Altrincham wasted no time in turning their concern into action after the Christmas holidays. We were lucky enough to host a visit from the National Team when the children engaged in activities learning more about their vital role in the community and the 'What we have, We share' campaign.

Our relationship with the beneficiaries at our Parish Church was celebrated as the Mini Vinnies made colourful and heart-warming St Valentine's Day cards which put a smile on many faces.

During Lent, the Mini Vinnies wanted to help those less fortunate than themselves and decided to do some crucial fundraising for the Turkish Earthquake 'Redcross' charity. Lots of fun was had by all at the 'Pancake Flipathon' and vital money was raised. The Mini Vinnies were also very busy selling the infamous, knitted 'Easter Chicks' to raise money for our chosen charity - Francis House Children's hospice - which provides much needed respite and end of life care for children and vital support for their families. The Mini Vinnies sold over 700 chicks raising over £800.

The Mini Vinnies reconnected with the 'Cyril Flint Befriender' project and have made cards and written letters to the elderly and those who are living in isolation. This special charity is trying to combat the ever-present problem of loneliness and to show compassion to our elderly community. The children were lucky enough to have a visit from the Charity - and one of the beneficiaries - to explain the importance of connecting with the elderly in the community. The Mini Vinnies are fundraising in the summer term with a bake-off!

The Mini Vinnies at St Vincent's Primary, Altrincham never miss an opportunity to spread kindness in the community and our visit to Woodend Care Home was a wonderful way to support this magical place. The children were actively engaged in gardening, repainting the mural, designing posters for their summer fair and keeping the resident's company by playing board games, having lengthy conversations and telling jokes.



Question Time at St Winefride's Shrewsbury

A meeting with MP Daniel Kawczynski at Shrewsbury Cathedral House was attended by Mini Vinnies from St Winefride's.

Questions raised by themselves, and Mini Vinnies from the Cathedral School were answered honestly and in an entertaining way.

Mr Kawczynski, who is an impressive 6'9", the tallest MP ever and recognised in the Guinness Book of Records, spent nearly two hours with the children and invited both schools to tour the House of Commons to see where he works.

It was a very successful visit.

Going the extra mile at St Joseph's Upton



During the weeks of Lent, Mini Vinnies at St Joseph's Upton worked hard to raise money to fight against poverty both overseas and in the local area. The Mini Vinnies embraced CAFOD's fundraiser, The Big Lent Walk, which aims to raise money to fight against poverty across the planet. The Mini Vinnies made the decision to embrace this challenge to raise money for both CAFOD and the SVP.

Each Friday during Lent, the Mini Vinnies loyally gave up their lunchtime play to raise money for both charities. They asked family and friends to sponsor them to complete the challenge. Their sacrifice was worth it as they raised over £440 for CAFOD and the SVP. The Mini Vinnies walked over 2.5km each week and managed to walk over 200km in total. The children planned the routes for each walk which included walking around the village, the local park, and other places of interest in the area. We were lucky enough to have the support from parents, grandparents, and Rose (a member of the SVP) on our walk for which we were most grateful. The highlight of our walks was visiting a friend of the school to wish her a happy birthday and to bring her some joy on her special day.

With them raising over £440 for the SVP and CAFOD, let us all cheer for St Joseph's Upton Mini Vinnies.

Written by Max Tomlinson, Year 6

SMOTA – Acts of Kindness

We love how the Mini Vinnies are using Vinnie Bear to spread kindness and news of their great works.

At St Mary of the Angels Catholic Primary School, Ellesmere Port, Vinnie Bear lives in a different classroom each week. He goes home with a different family each night and returns to school the next day with his Kindness Story completed. To aid him in travelling around, the Mini Vinnies have made him a mobile home in which he travels to and from school. Each Friday, Vinnie Bear's home class present him at assembly. He 'talks' telling everyone about some of his acts of kindness during the previous week.

What we have we share

On Friday 28th April we welcomed Mini Vinnies from St Anthony's, Sacred Heart, and St John Fisher and Thomas More as well as local Young Vincentian Development Officers to Saint Aidan's to meet with Mike Kane, our local MP.

Mike Kane, who is an ex-pupil of Saint Aidan's, had agreed to meet with the Mini Vinnies and answer the children's questions on 'The Cost-of-Living Crisis.'

The children challenged Mr Kane on topics such as housing, how he is supporting our local community and what he did when he saw a homeless person. The children were very impressed by Mike Kane. His answers were very interesting. They felt that he answered the questions with 'love and kindness' and found the answers inspiring. Mr Kane shared with the children how he worked with the St Vincent de Paul Society and often refers his constituents who need support to the SVP.

Mr Kane shared some of his school experiences – school PE on the same playing fields as Manchester City, learning to play the flute as well as his work life. He even said that when he next is allocated a question at Prime Minister's Questions, he would ask a question on their behalf! At the end of the session when the children were having a drink and a biscuit, he entertained the children and staff with his guitar playing skills! Many thanks Mike for a fantastic informative afternoon!



All Hallows Catholic College Macclesfield



This year we have established the St Vincent De Paul youth group here at All Hallows. We are a dedicated team of students from Y7, Y8 and Y10 who promote the values of the SVP and put our faith into action.

We have been involved in great initiatives over the course of the year. When the group was newly formed, we handed over part of the huge Harvest Collection to one of our partner parishes, St Benedict's RC Church, Handforth to support St Benedict's SVP monthly food collection for a local food bank.

We also asked people to donate specific clothing items to be used within Styal Prison. We were happy to support this important initiative.

Also, we sold Chinese New Year envelopes with a chance for other students to win a pass that would allow them to jump the lunch queue. This was to raise money for future projects.

In February, members of the group created posters to promote 'International Day of Kindness.' These posters encouraged others to do random acts of kindness and gave examples of how students could spread kindness towards others. The SVP youth group at All Hallows hope to create further initiatives next year and look forward to helping others in the community.

St Alban's Wallasey - Creative and energetic!

The Mini Vinnies at St Alban's in Wallasey have been going from strength to strength in their first year.



They created individual class prayer bags for each class (14 in total). Included were an A4 laminated prayer book using selected prayers from the MV prayer book, tealight, hand decorated prayer cloth, wooden rosary beads, handmade painted clay tealight holder and an A4 book for the children to write their own personal prayers.

Mini Vinnies organised a sponsored "scoot" to support church renovations. Sponsor forms were available in school and in church. The Mini Vinnies introduced the fundraiser to parishioners in church during Sunday Mass. £603.30 has been raised.

To celebrate their Parish Priest's 40th birthday Mini Vinnies created a dance that was performed at his party. They also painted a huge banner for him to celebrate the occasion.

To support the school's fundraising fortnight. Mini Vinnies created posters to advertise their "guess the number of sweets in a jar" competition. All monies raised will go to their chosen charity.

Last, but not least, the Mini Vinnies are teaming up with the school Eco Club for the next few weeks. Their aim is to weed out the small graveyard between the church and parish centre and plant some flowers too. This is to make the area accessible and aesthetically pleasing for both the parishioners and the school. This is continuing to strengthen the link between their school and parish.

Youth SVP at Harrytown

During the past year at Youth SVP, we have done many things to raise money for other different charity groups such as CAFOD, Cancer Research and Mary's Meals. Every Friday the members of Youth SVP, come together as a group and discuss which different charities we can donate to.

Near Christmas, we decided to do a raffle and the money that we raised went to CAFOD. We raised over £140.

During the upcoming weeks of valentine's day, we did another raffle. The winners would win a tote bag designed by one of our members.

Then, we set the whole school a challenge, everyone took part in The Big Lent Walk. All participants got a sheet to record the distance of how far they walked. People could sponsor you to walk and that money would go to CAFOD.

During Easter, we came up with a game called Guess the name of the Bunny. We had a big sheet of names which people could pay 50p to guess the name of a bunny. The winner won a stuffed bunny which we took around as well as the sheet of names. We also did another fun game. You had to guess how many mini eggs were in a jar and if you won you would win the mini eggs. All of the money we raised during Easter we gave to Cancer Research and CAFOD.

During this past month, we have been focusing on a charity called Mary's Meals. In our meetings on Fridays, we have discussed how we were going to raise awareness about the people who live in poor conditions and have barely any food to come home to. So, we are currently planning to take part in our Monday school assembly and talk about how we can help donate to Mary's Meals so that they can help those in need of food and water.

Youth SVP at Harrytown have been doing all of this so that we can spread the word of St Vincent de Paul and encourage others to do the same.

Blessed Thomas Holford Catholic College Altrincham

The Youth SVP group at BTH are an enthusiastic group under the guide of Miss Dickinson.

When they had a visit from the National Young Vincentian Team, and Shrewsbury YVDOs it became obvious that some members had already been Mini Vinnies in their primary schools. They had been delighted to find the Youth SVP at BTH to be able to carry on their incredible works. The BTH Youth SVP conference is open to all year groups.

They have been praised by National Office for the work they have completed: leading charity appeals, being a presence in Friday Mass, visiting the lonely in care homes, delivering flowers to neighbours of the school, helping the adult conference at the SVP Christmas parties, organising Ash Wednesday ash distribution, and organising Reconciliation for pupils twice a year.



Cardinal Newman Catholic High Warrington



These young people are clear about why they have volunteered to be part of the YSVP group at Cardinal Newman. They want to make a difference to their local community.

Mrs James and her SVP team organise fundraising events, planning activities, and helping to support those in need. The team meet in the school Chapel every Thursday lunchtime to plan how to turn concern into action. The group enjoyed a presentation by Julia Fitzgerald, National YSVP Manager about the Society and their role.



St Paul's Catholic High Wythenshawe

National YSVP Manager, Julia Fitzgerald visited the wonderfully enthusiastic group of students at St Paul's Catholic High School in Wythenshawe Manchester in May.

In the photograph the group is playing Jenga to illustrate how we are all dependant on each other for support and strength. They are also planning to make a video of their activities to share with other groups.

Meetings are held every Thursday to plan and prepare charity events throughout the academic year. The purpose is to draw together the community of St Paul's students to make a difference.

The Youth SVP group has worked hard to better the community they live in.

Vincentian Coordinator, Mr Kilburn stated, "St Paul's understand the true value of having 'fought the good fight.' In the Wythenshawe community alone, 1,323 children are being fed through the help of the Wythenshawe Foodbank (Trussell Trust). We recognise the need to support those in our community that are helping those who need it most. We believe the fight against poverty is a battle that all have a duty to participate in, and through our work we know that families in our school community, but also our local community; have a lifeline that they can rely on in times of need."

Mini Vinnies at Holy Family Sale Moor happy to help!

Hello, we are the Holy Family, Sale Moor Mini Vinnies and we want to tell you all about our exciting year that we have had. We meet regularly to share our fundraising ideas and then vote on which charities we should support.

This year we held a cake sale for Mary's Meals making sure children were fed for a year. We really enjoyed having a Zoom chat with Fran from the charity. Our other fundraising appeals include: toy sale (Ukraine charity); cake sale (Mary's Meals and CAFOD); organised the Poppy Appeal; designed and made Christmas cards for older members of Holy Family Parish; collected Christmas chocolate such as advent calendars and treats for the local foodbank; break the rules day (Water Aid)

From these activities, we are proud to have raised money for the families of Ukraine, Water Aid, CAFOD, Mary's Meals. We love finding ways to help people in need such as our collection for the foodbank. Our next ideas before the summer holidays are a book sale, another toy sale, and our favourite... a cake sale!

We love being Mini Vinnies because we really enjoy organising the events. Doing this work as a Mini Vinnie makes us realise that young children can help just as much as older people can. We love the events because it makes everyone happy. We especially loved our 'Break the rules' day because there was an energy in the school, and it was a fun day for everyone to show off their personalities. We have also enjoyed meeting other Mini Vinnies from other local schools when we joined together for a mass in the Autumn term.



Mini Vinnies Christmas Card Winner

Congratulations to our Mini Vinnie, Lorraine, who won first prize in last year's Mini Vinnies Christmas Card Competition.

Her beautiful design, which captured the love of the Holy Family at Christmas, will be made into cards to be sold in this year's SVP 2023 Christmas catalogue. Thank you to the staff and children at All Saints' Catholic Primary School, Sale who warmly welcomed National MV Manager, Katy Ramsey to the school to present the prize and certificates. Details of this year's competition will be released in the Autumn term, so we can't wait to see the Mini Vinnies designs this year.

Our Lady & St Edward's Wirral "hit the floor running"

Mini Vinnies at Our Lady & St Edward's Birkenhead have been very busy since introducing the programme.

They have helped tidy the school grounds and gardens, made prayer crosses and written get well cards for patients in Arrowe Park Hospital.



Welcome to the family!

- ✦ St Bernadette's Primary Brinnington Stockport
- ✦ Our Lady and St Edward's Primary Birkenhead
- ✦ St Peter's Primary Noctorum Birkenhead
- ✦ St Clement's Primary Runcorn

Shropshire Mini Vinnies

An example of strong school/parish links when St Mary's Madeley received jumpers and cardigans in school colours, knitted by a parishioner.

M.P. Mark Pritchard is to visit St Patrick's Wellington as part of the SVP Young Vincentian Lenten campaign

Lucy Allen M.P. to visit St Luke's Trench as part of the SVP Young Vincentian Lenten campaign

Mini Vinnies at St Peter & Paul's, Newport are busy raising funds for the Indian Student Scheme.

Lenten Big Walk for St Alban's Macclesfield

St Alban's Mini Vinnies in Macclesfield completed the Lenten Big Walk for CAFOD. They walked ten times around their school field on three separate occasions and raised £180.

The money collected will go to CAFOD's Lenten Big Walk Appeal, supporting families in extreme poverty around the world.

A great effort from St John's Wirral

The Mini Vinnies at St John's Catholic Junior School raised £161.00 by running/walking for one hour after school. They decided to share the monies raised between two charities - Caritas and Mary's Meals.



St Clement's Runcorn are off and running!

For their first mission, the Mini Vinnies at St Clement's Runcorn have decided to collect and donate food parcels for children and local families to support them over the 6-week summer holidays.

Who are the Mini Vinnies at St Mary's Congleton?

Everyone knows who the Mini Vinnies are at St Mary's Congleton. They created posters for each class so the children could seek them out if they needed help. Also, a beautiful noticeboard includes work from year 5 children and their work on who the SVP are and what they do. The children also made crosses and cards at Easter for parishioners.





Easter Blessings from St Edward's Runcorn

Mini Vinnies at St Edward's Runcorn have made beautiful Easter crosses and cards. These were presented to the Parish Priest to be distributed to parishioners at the Easter Masses.

When we give, we gain much more

We have kindly been given permission to share this story with you.

"We have a child with complex needs who has an EHCP. He struggles with social interaction and was often excluded from friendship groups and was having a hard time being recognised within his peer group. We gave him a role within the Mini Vinnie group, and he has really gone from strength to strength. He has grown in confidence, he will now speak in front of groups of children to explain a task or mission the Mini Vinnies are leading, he will engage with parishioners, he will stand in front of the assembly, and he shares his ideas readily and enthusiastically in the group. He even went along to help us pack hampers with the local foodbank, and he showed how thoughtful he was when choosing what to pack for families. Above all, he has found a friendship group that he is now a solid part of, and it has all come about from being chosen to be part of the Mini Vinnies."



Cardinal Vincent Nichols meets a larger than life Vinnie Bear!

What could Cardinal Vincent Nichols and Vinnie Bear be saying to each other? We would love to receive your ideas.

Send your ideas to Janet Lawrence at jaguarjel@virginmedia.com and we'll choose the best ones to show in our next edition! Look out for Vinnie Bear in September. He will be out and about with his brand new passport!

Send us your ideas!



Young Vincentian News

Find out more about the Mini Vinnies and Youth SVP:
svp.org.uk/mini-vinnies | svp.org.uk/youth-svp



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