

Conference President Refresher Session

Invitation

The Board of the Greater Toronto Central Council recognizes that Conferences are the backbone of the Society. We also recognize that Conference work has, like everything else, been deeply affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. As we return to normal, we want to ensure that Conference leadership has the information and support needed to carry out their vital function. Whether you are brand new to the role of President or a seasoned Vincentian, this refresher is for you.

SOCIETY OF SAINT VINCENT DE PAUL

GREATER TORONTO CENTRAL COUNCIL

OCTOBER 2023

Tonight we will review...

- How we fit into the organizational structure
- Duties of a Conference President (The Rule)
- Responsibilities of a Conference President (GTCC)
- Revised and updated Materials (Thank you Membership Development Committee)
- Stewardship
- Cautions
- Passing up Funds
- Advocacy and the Development of Special Works
- New Housing
- Questions

To all who have accepted, or are
contemplating this role...

Thank you!

You have a unique role. We are a unique entity.

- **You are a Conference President in the largest Central Council in Canada.**
- **You have a Particular Council and Central Council of which there are only a very few across Canada.**
- **You have a Head Office with Employees to assist you.**
- **Your parishes are vibrant and for the most part, very supportive. Our numbers of members continue to grow.**
- **We have an interested, supportive Archdiocese. We are able to collect funds in our “Poor Boxes”, many are permitted to hold special collections, our children’s camps are funded by Archdiocesan initiatives.**
- **We are able to offer additional help to our Neighbours in Need, we have many other local services and programs available to provide support; we are not alone.**
- **You are part of a Central Council that has answered the call to address and alleviate poverty wherever possible: GTCC has shelters, supportive housing, transitional housing, overnight camps for children, other services and opportunities that only exist at this level, here in the Greater Toronto Central Council.**

How **you** fit into the Society's Organizational Structure:

	<u>Instituted</u>	<u>Human Resources</u>	<u>Assets*</u>	<u>Programs and Services</u>
National Council	1971 Incorporated in 1982	3 Employees Board of Directors Committees	Operating Budget: \$937,383 + Head Office located in Ottawa	Committee work, resources, Twinning and emergency aid, liaison with International Council, Rule revision responsibilities, support to Regional Councils.
Regional Council	1984 Incorporated in 1985	1 Employee Board of Directors Committees	Operating Budget: \$369,094	Committee work, resources, North of 60, Ozanam Fund, coordinates insurance and support for those outside of GTCC, Support to Isolated Conferences and Particular Councils
Greater Toronto Central Council	1853 and 1897 Incorporated in 1875	Employees: 72 Full Time 148 Part Time 134 Seasonal ----- 1,400 Vincentian Members 114 Conference Presidents 11 Particular Council Presidents Board of Directors Committees	Operating Budget: \$9 million Assets: 16 million	Support to 11 Particular Councils, 114 Conferences, 1,400 Vincentians; 24 owned and 3 leased sites, serving 270 Residents, 48 permanent (lifelong) residents, 2 camps serving 1800 campers, Funding agreements with City of Toronto, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Community and Social Services, Ministry of Housing, Government of Canada, Catholic Charities; stores, resources, member screening, support and development, insurance for members and programs, committee work, risk management, policies and procedures, committee work.
			*Assets as of 2021	

Duties of a Conference President – Servant Leader

Excerpts from the list of responsibilities found in the Rule and Statutes of the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul

(April 2020 Version) Pages 48 and 49

- Always keep in mind that the president is at the service of the members;
- Encourage the recruitment of new members;
- The uninterrupted pursuit of the work to which much effort has been devoted by personally seeing to the preparation of one or more possible successors; (Elections take place every 3 years, maximum two terms)
- That support, advice and counsel are **sought from the next higher council president** on matters and issues of local, regional and national concern;
- That, as a voting member representing the conference at higher levels, he or she takes part at these meetings. If unable to attend, the president should be represented by a substitute or by a designated proxy.
- That annual reports are submitted to the next higher council on a timely basis, in accordance with the National Council of Canada Guidelines for each level;
- **That information received from the higher councils is shared.**

Responsibilities of a Conference President in the Greater Toronto Central Council

- Seek support on all matters that fall outside the typical outreach and operation of the Conference, from your PC, or GTCC or Head Office staff
- Pass on all files and documents to the incoming President
- Develop an understanding of GTCC Policies directly affecting Vincentian Outreach
- Ensure Home Visitation is undertaken in a fair, responsible manner, with proper interactions with Neighbours in Need
- Stewardship – more about this later

continued...

Responsibilities of a Conference President

... continued

- Submit completed applications for new members, inform the office of changes in Executive positions, or changes in membership
- Report statistical information (Bank Balances, Equity of Service etc.), and Annual Reports, as requested from time to time
- Encourage participation by conference members in GTCC Orientation, Learning Sessions, Workshops, Events etc.
- Attend, or submit a proxy, for the September Annual General Meeting (AGM)
- Organize Vincentians to coordinate a) Camp Registrations b) Bundle Up Collections c) Other activities

HELP

is on the way!

Conference Handbook

Resource Materials,

updated to serve you and your members.

Available electronically October 25th

Printed copies available at nominal costs from GTCC office

Newly Revised Conference President and Executive Handbook

Table of Contents:

- ✓ Introduction and Welcome
- ✓ The Rule and Five Guiding Principles
- ✓ What Do You Do First?
- ✓ What Type of Leader Will You Be?
- ✓ Your Conference Executive
- ✓ Conference Activities
 - ✓ Home visitations
 - ✓ Other ways of serving
 - ✓ Conference meetings
 - ✓ Member development
 - ✓ Recruitment
- ✓ Your Conference and its connections to the Parish, the Community and the Society
- ✓ Year at a Glance
- ✓ Record Keeping
- ✓ Looking Ahead
- ✓ In Closing
- ✓ Description of a Well-Functioning Conference
- ✓ Resources

Excerpt from the Conference Executive Handbook...

What Do You Do First When You Become President?

Summary of Duties when you first become President:

- Read through this booklet, and always, *always* reach out to the Central Council office or fellow Vincentians for support.
- Work with your Conference to choose a new executive. The President appoints the positions of Treasurer, Secretary and Vice President(s);
- Inform the GTCC office that you are the new President, and identify your Executive as they become known (info@ssvptoronto.ca);
- Introduce yourself to your parish priest and office staff as the new President;
- Ensure you are registered on the Conference bank account with a minimum of two other members;
- Receive files, records and important documentation from the past executive, and ensure all is kept securely;
- Check out the Society's website (www.ssvptoronto.ca). All the material you need to support you in your role is there;
- Attend your Particular Council meetings. They are your source of support and information;
- Review the policies listed at the end of this document, and be sure your Conference members are aware of their responsibilities with regard to these policies;
- Don't forget...Read through this booklet, and always, *always* reach out to the Central Council office or fellow Vincentians for support.

HELP

is on the way!

Recruitment Handbook

Resource Materials,

updated to serve you and your
members.

Available electronically October 25th

Printed copies available at nominal
costs from GTCC office

Newly Revised Recruitment Handbook

Table of Contents

- Introduction
- Three Methods of Recruitment: An Overview
- New Member Recruitment Process
 - Form a Conference Recruitment Team
 - Consider Your Membership Needs
 - Analyzing the Status Quo
 - Make the Appeal
 - Bulletin Announcements
 - After Mass Announcement or Pulpit Talk
 - After Mass Follow-up Part I: Immediate Personal Contact
 - After Mass Follow-up Part II: The Telephone Contact
 - First Conference or First Information Meeting
 - Second Information Meeting
 - Home Visitation
 - New Member Orientation
- Sample Bulletin Announcements
- Sample Pulpit Talks

Stewardship

Vincentians have an incredible privilege – we accept donations from individuals and groups who trust us – you and I, to use the funds carefully, purposely and effectively to support our Neighbours in Need. For all of us who are registered charities with the privilege of issuing charitable tax receipts, the responsibility of Stewardship increases.

Stewardship means **Yes** to:

- ✓ Conferences deciding together how to support individuals and families
- ✓ Careful reviews of requests for assistance, always remembering the donors intention
- ✓ Ensuring our Neighbours in Need are not led astray – we do not provide monthly income stipends, we address immediate needs, we ask the question, “what changed from last month that finds yourself having to call”.
- ✓ Being honest about our ability to assist, recognizing that we will always encounter new Neighbours in Need who may find themselves in immediate need.
- ✓ Participation by Conference members in activities, opportunities, reporting, that is set forth by the Central Council.
- ✓ Recognizing that longer term initiatives to support persons in need through our Special Works, are your Special Works too.

Stewardship Means **NO** To:

- ✓ Hoarding funds
- ✓ Looking for ways to spend funds to avoid passing them on or up
- ✓ Providing indiscriminate levels of assistance just because the funds are there
- ✓ Thinking that donations provided to the Society are for your use only
- ✓ Providing funds to other entities without thorough discussion and documentation in the minutes, and seeking guidance from your Particular Council or Central Council (North of 60, Seeds of Hope, Special Ask's)
- ✓ Jeopardizing your charitable status by not properly conducting the affairs of the Conference – visiting in pairs, proper meeting documentation, proper reporting
- ✓ Avoiding the hard work of Home Visitation by avoiding interaction with Neighbours in Need

Is this your conference?

This is an excerpt of an email that arrived October 2nd, including this description of our services, wondering how individuals “sign-up” for the monthly grocery voucher.

“...several types of assistance to individuals and families living in certain areas of the city. This includes but is not limited to a \$40 grocery voucher mailed to you each month, foodbanks and access to beds.”

We managed through the pandemic, however, mailing out grocery vouchers causes confusion to Neighbours in Need, and to fellow Conferences who live their Vincentian vocation of Home Visitation.

Stewardship – Caring for your fellow Conferences and their Neighbours in Need

From April 1, 2023:

Conference A: \$3,422 (funds and gift cards) Conference B: \$84,942 (funds and gift cards)

Same number of Vincentians, same level of calls for assistance

- Funds provided to the Society are given to the Society to serve persons in need, not to hold in bank accounts.
- Conferences are not to hold more than 3 to 6 months worth of funds; we have seen over and over again, the funds are replenished.
- Holding funds in excess of distribution will run Conferences into difficulties with CRA and is contrary to the Rule of the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul.

Cautions in your daily work:

Reputation:

Our reputation is everything, what we say and do as Vincentians has the potential to affect our longer term ability to serve. We exist at the pleasure of the Archdiocese, we rely on our healthy relationship, without their support, we will lose the opportunity to collect the 2.5 million dollars in our poor boxes and collections and our Neighbours in Need will not be served. Like all relationships, there is give and take, learning, understanding, negotiating and sometimes, waiting for change. We will assist where we can, please reach out if you are experiencing difficulties in your parish community.

Speaking of relationships, The National Council:

With employees, assets, and support from GTCC, not every suggestion made by National – who must look out for the interests of isolated and less organized regions throughout Canada – should be implemented by your Conference or Council. Please seek direction before embarking on initiatives, as you belong to Toronto Central Council first and foremost, and you are covered by the insurance of GTCC, which permits approved activities.

Cautions Continued...

Communications:

Conferences, Councils, Vincentians must submit all correspondence and correspondence that is not associated with the regular day to day operations of the Conference to the Executive Director for review.

Our message must remain consistent, our name and programs must be represented properly, and our relationships with each other, with our Neighbours in Need, and our stake holders must be respected.

Special Events/New Initiatives

Please check in with the Executive Director before developing special programs, fund raising initiatives, signing contracts etc.; before embarking on your plans. Conference Executives are signing officers for their Conference banking activities and CRA reporting only, they cannot commit the Society, only GTCC can undertake to execute documents for entities in the GTCC, and all activities outside of typical Conference outreach must be reviewed for insurance requirements.

and more Cautions Continued...

Christmas Assistance, and Supporting Programs in other areas of the Society:

We are not a Christmas agency, we should only be acting in the capacity of liaison between donors and Neighbours in Need for Christmas programs. The Society must be able to respond to Neighbours in Need as they face challenges in their everyday life, and not shut down due to the human resource and financial pressure of serving at Christmas.

Special programs (North of 60, Seeds of Hope, Twinning etc.) should not be supported without due consideration for sustainability, impact, and implications for funds not being available to support your work or the work of your neighbouring Conferences and your Central Council.

Seeking Support:

Please remember, you are a member first of Greater Toronto Central Council first, seek support from the Central Council, or from the Executive Director.

Passing up Funds

We have entire Particular Councils who have not passed on any funds, meaning:

- They are causing other Conferences who readily share, to have to pay for expenses for you and your members - primarily insurance and office support;
- They are not supporting the Central Council - office, staff, development of new programs and outreach;
- They are not assisting in the support to Conferences in need. We have Conferences who offer \$30.00 gift cards, and others offering \$90.00 – we have continued work to do on Equity!

We understand there are small pockets throughout the GTA where funds are quite scarce, even at the Particular Council level, which is the very reason pass-ups are required. You are the Particular Council, participate, support, learn and lead.

Remember...

If your Conference requires funds, ask your Particular Council, and ask your Particular Council if they have contributed to your Central Council on your behalf.

Why Do We Advocate? To Bring About Change = Special Works

Vincentians past and present wish to advocate for our Neighbours. They understand more closely than others, the ravishes of poverty on individuals and families. This is how our Special Works came to be. From the Society founding the Catholic Children's Aid in the 1800's, to our present day emergency and supportive housing, these all came to be through Vincentian outreach, presence and commitment to addressing the root causes of poverty. While other levels of the Society are doing what they can to make some headway into program development, we have done much, and continue to do more.

These programs, while generally funded by government and other sources, require seed money to start up, and to add additional programming.

We aren't just talking about it, we are continuing to do what we pray for at every meeting **"For those who have no homes, that they may quickly find a place in which they can live a decent and happy life..."**

Announcing...

The Society's brand new **Elisa House** !

- Brand New Purpose Built Transitional and Long Term Housing for Women
- From a 30 bed Shelter to a 30 Bed Shelter and **100 plus** units of housing
- Work is underway, occupancy (hopefully) 2026!



Existing Elisa House building



Proposed new transitional housing building (view looking east on Portland St)

Important

Dates

- ✓ Conference Executive Handbook
- ✓ Recruitment Handbook
- ✓ This presentation

Available ...

October 25th!

What Is Next?

- Continue to participate
- Seek out a mentor, you are not in this alone
- Start seeking your successor – today is not too soon
- Consider serving the Society in other ways
- A heartfelt thank you for your time and presence

Questions?

Will we be replacing our dear coworker Anar?

And....