



Society of Saint Vincent de Paul

Greater Toronto Central Council

In the Loop

January 2024

From the Chair:

Happy New Year! I hope each of you had a peaceful and blessed Christmas which has left you invigorated for our mission in the coming year. The new year can be a time of hope and promise but it is also based in some of the realities we may have brushed aside in the euphoria of Christmas. Ours is an organization grounded in the real world, and no matter how lofty our ambitions we can never lose sight of the practicalities that constrain us. As a “grass roots” organization we try to operate as much as possible on the principle of subsidiarity. As laudable as that idea is, it can often lead to confusion and misunderstandings especially when it comes to matters which have a legal component. As I have written and spoken about often, where The Rule and Canadian law are in conflict, we have no choice but to follow the law. Indeed, The Rule itself makes it clear that some things must be done through incorporation which carries with it the legal responsibility to adhere to the law of the land.

So, what does this mean for Conferences and Particular Councils on a day-to-day basis? If we always begin with the fundamental principles of stewardship, we are less likely to go wrong or run afoul of either the Rule or the law. None of the Conferences or Particular Councils under the GTCC umbrella are themselves incorporated entities. That means that the individuals running those entities may be held personally liable for breaches of the law. Those breaches could include entering into contracts or agreements in the name of the Society when they have no legal right to do so. It could mean failing to make proper use of donated funds as when Conferences pay for trips or support non-Vincentian activities.

The Greater Toronto Central Council, of which you are members, is incorporated for these very reasons. Our corporate status can give protection to those acting in accordance with the policies and directives we have put in place, and which are known to our insurers. Following the protocols we have established for communications, signing contracts and agreements, dealing with estates and bequests, handling donor funds and ensuring proper vetting of prospective and current Vincentians will help to ensure not only good governance at all levels of the organization but also insurance protections for individual Vincentians.

Vincentians are dedicated and imaginative when it comes to finding ways to serve our Neighbours in Need. We never want to lose that enthusiasm, but we cannot let it override the need to prudently protect all we have built over the years. If each of us simply takes a moment to ask a few simple questions like, “Is what I am about to do something that I have the legal authority to do or should I seek guidance and or permission first?” “Does GTCC have a policy that speaks to what we want to do and if so, are we following that policy?”

Always remember that none of us is alone in this endeavour. Our Conference or Particular Council is not a stand-alone entity. We are all part of the GTCC. That too is our strength, and it can be our protection if we don’t overstep. If you are ever in any doubt (or even when you think you’re right) as to whether a project, a communication document, an expense, a contract, or a procedure is within the scope of your authority, please contact us before acting. The money and grief you save may be your own.

Conference President Refresher

For those who missed the fall sessions we will be holding an additional virtual session on **Tuesday, January 16, 2024, 6:30 pm until 8:00 pm**. The Society is a vast organization, understanding the positioning of GTCC as the largest entity in Canada is so important as we rely on stewardship and accountability to our donors, and to our Neighbours in Need. If you are contemplating the role, or are simply interested in learning more about how the Society functions, please join us!

[Click here to join the meeting](#)

To join by phone (audio only)

Meeting ID: 254 631 118 270

Dial [437-703-4669](tel:437-703-4669)

Passcode: kyiTZz

Phone Conference ID: 208 347 602#

Learning Sessions

Spiritual Facilitators Sessions

Please join us for the return of these informative sessions, the first one taking place Monday, January 29th, 6:30 pm until 7:30 pm. These sessions offer spiritual development, practical tips and opportunities for sharing. Please join us, all are welcome, and if you are interested in exploring this role, please attend!

[Click here to join the meeting](#)

To join by phone (audio only)

Meeting ID: 274 268 148 994

Dial [437-703-4669](tel:437-703-4669)

Passcode: PhU6xY

Phone Conference ID: 816 593 614#

Home Visitation Forum

Our monthly Home Visitation Forum sessions are returning due to popular demand. Please join us for the second Thursday of each month, February through April to ask questions, seek advice, hear how your Vincentian peers manage the challenges of ensuring quality Home Visits.

The link will be sent in advance of the meeting.

Screening and Membership

A reminder that all Vincentians must follow the Greater Toronto Central Council screening protocols and Vulnerable Sector Police Checks (VSC's) must be obtained in order to confirm membership. GTCC has a standing agreement with the Archdiocese that we will manage all aspects of screening, including police checks. For persons living in Toronto, there is a new process for obtaining VSC's using the Toronto Police Services online portal, as sent to you in an earlier email, an agency code must be used. If you require a re-issue, please let us know.

All members must be screened. In the rare occasion that persons volunteer for only one activity such as Bundle Ups, or annual packing of Christmas hampers, screening may not be required, however, anyone who has **any contact** with neighbours or their financial or personal information or is regularly involved with the Conference must be registered as a member through screening, otherwise they are not covered by our insurance. No one should be participating in Conference meetings or financial activities, unless they are in the process of joining the Society or are fully screened members.

We have a clear duty to protect the persons we serve, consequently discussions about service to Neighbours in Need at Conference meetings should be considered private and should be undertaken with as much sensitivity as possible. Policies that support membership, all found on the website at [Policies | SSVP - Toronto Central Council \(svdptoronto.org\)](#):

Vulnerable Sector Check – Nov 2023

Member Screening and Risk Management Policy Nov 2023

Complaints Resolution Process Policy – Nov 2023

Membership and under the age of 18 Policy – April 2023

Annual Reports

Perhaps not everyone's favourite pastime, but required nonetheless. The reporting forms were emailed to each Conference and Particular Council prior to the year end. The **reports are not optional**, and are due February 2nd, 2024. All Conference and PC reports are collated with the GTCC report, and together form the consolidated report submitted to both the Regional and National Councils. Please do your part to help us meet our deadlines, reporting is all part and parcel of good stewardship. A shout out - the first three Conferences to report were all from Durham, *love that get it done* attitude!

CRA has just released the [newest version of the T3010 – version 24](#); T3010's are due June 30, 2024 for those who have a registered charitable number. Do not use an older version, it will not be accepted.

Homeless Crisis

The Society operates four emergency and longer term shelters for women, and 14 homes for men in recovery, many of whom would find their only other option for housing to be shelters. In our women's shelters, we are still down 20 beds from the start of the pandemic. We are forced to turn women away from our doors by order of City officials who have created unreasonable standards for physical distancing. Almost all other distancing protocols have been lifted in the city, except for those affecting our most vulnerable citizens. When you hear about the housing crisis and our brothers and sisters facing life on the streets as shelters are full, know we are doing what we can to shift the city into action. The Society has space to serve more persons. Please feel free to mention this to your MP or city councillor as part of the solution is right under their watch.

The call for Committee and Board of Directors Candidates

All Board Committees welcome new members. We are seeking individuals with experience to assist the Society in a variety of ways. If you have a particular interest or skill set and would like to explore options, please reach out and we can direct you to the committee of interest. Once you have filled out our application form, the Committee Chair will meet with you to discuss whether you will be a good fit. The committees, with summary points are listed below. Please contact info@ssvptoronto.ca if you would like further information, the Terms of Reference or to speak with the Committee Chair.

Engagement: Outreach to current donors, potential donors and members to best position the Society

Finance: Stewardship, accountability and reporting

Spirituality: Support, networking and development for Spiritual Facilitators

Communications: Support to Committees and outreach for Conferences and Councils

Governance and Board Resource: Compliance, legislation and best practice

Membership Development Committee: Recruitment, Succession Planning and Learning Sessions

We are always seeking qualified candidates for the Board of Directors, serving 3-year terms. If you have previous experience serving on a Board, please consider putting your name forward for next year, or encouraging someone you know who would be suitable. Please visit [our website](#) for information and an application.

The Board has undergone an assessment process to review strengths and challenges, and to identify needed skills. We are well prepared with this board model to welcome new members into an efficient and collegial atmosphere.

Your Special Works – Life Long Housing – Developmental Services

Our three homes, DePaul, Vincent and Martineau House have been operating since the first one opened in 1984. The program costs are funded by the Ministry of Children Community and Social Services. The Society owns the homes through a partnership with the funders and every aspect of their lives are the responsibility of the Society. Residents participate in community based activities, day programs and life adventures. The homes are staffed 24 hours a day.

We recently lost a beloved resident, Duncan whom many of you may have encountered at various SSVP events, including his favourite – the Marygrove Camp Rake-A-Thon. Duncan lived in this program for over 20 years, his only family is the Society. Duncan was our true ambassador, a beautiful grin and a warm welcome to all. He was treasured and will be missed, please remember him, his peers and the staff in your prayers.

SSVP GTCC Developmental Services

Three homes providing permanent accommodation to 20 residents in the Scarborough area: Vincent House, DePaul House and Martineau House

