



# Society of Saint Vincent de Paul Greater Toronto Central Council

## In the Loop

April 2025

From the Chair:

### A message for Volunteer Week

“Everywhere is in walking distance if you have the time.” Steven Wright

Comedian Steven Wright’s idiosyncratic takes on ordinary things in life are usually humorous and often perceptive. In the case of the opening quote, it reminds us of the importance of perspective. Our own perspective is almost always limited by how much we know so that expanding our knowledge can transform our mind. Nowhere have I found this to be truer than with the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul and in particular in my time with the Greater Toronto Central Council.

Probably like most Vincentians, I came to know the organization from the perspective of a member of a small Conference; in my case a Conference whose downtown location meant it served a great many neighbours in need. We always struggled to find someone to take on the role of President and our treasurer stayed on for years because no one wanted to do the work. If we needed help, we could perhaps get some guidance from the Particular Council and some of us learned that there was a Central Council with some staff who could sometimes offer guidance. Special Works, for most of us, was something akin to all-dressed potato chips. The Rule was a little booklet some of us has seen but few had read, and no one ever dreamed that there were some Canadian laws that might apply to the way we conducted our business. Yes, we knew we could issue tax receipts, but no one seemed to connect that privilege with the notion that there were legal responsibilities that came with it. We were all just good folks, trying to do the Lord’s work, blissfully ignorant of the actual scaffolding of laws and regulations and policies that someone had to put in place and monitor and enforce to enable the whole enterprise to exist.

Of course, all that changed when I was elected to the Board of GTCC. And what an eye opener! A whole new perspective opened up when I began to understand the weight of the responsibility to protect our organization; to protect the good work that was being done not only in the Conferences but in that amazing thing called “Special Works”. It wasn’t a bag of chips at all but a complex mix of residential properties and rehab programs, of government contracts, and majestic camps, of hundreds of paid staff and scores of individuals who relied on us for their daily lives, of millions of dollars in annual budgets and tens of millions in real estate value. And yes, all subject to the Canada Not for Profit Corporations Act and other Canadian legislation to say nothing of the need for proper accounting, annual audits and government oversight: and not one of those entities either knew about or cared a fig for The Rule.

I developed a whole new appreciation for a concept that is littered throughout Christian literature. It is stated simply in Matthew 22:21, “Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesars” but you can find it in Romans 13 or in

St. Augustine's magisterial work, *The City of God* where he makes it clear that meaningful citizenship is a Christian duty.

So, what's all that got to do with the price of tea in China, you ask. Well, it's Volunteer Week and I wanted to write a bit about the challenges we all face as "volunteers" in our Vincentian vocation. Our challenges exist at all levels of the organization but sometimes we have to change our perspective to see that clearly. We all know that recruitment and retention are major problems; finding motivated and skilled volunteers is hard enough but given the rate of burnout and the press of life's other commitments, retaining good people can be tough. Training and support are two more challenges; providing adequate training and supervision to say nothing of ongoing support for volunteers is a huge issue. And here are a couple most Conferences don't think of, but which GTCC is always concerned with, namely legal and regulatory compliance. Without understanding and ensuring compliance with all the applicable laws and regulations including those related to things like liability, insurance, contracts, bequests and many more, we would never be able to function. Funding, burnout, community engagement, cultural differences, and geography are but a few more challenges we all face. As I have learned, these challenges exist in some way or other in every Conference in the GTA. Now take those issues and multiply it first by 114 (the number of Conference for which GTCC is responsible) and add on the massive challenges of a multi-million-dollar budget, complex property issues, staffing issues, providing a roof, food and emotional and other support for hundreds of neighbours and you begin to have the perspective of the GTCC Board and senior management.

I lay out these things, not to garner any sympathy, or pat any backs, but rather to provide some facts that may not be considered when we feel weighted down with the challenges of our parish Conference. And we, who serve on the Board, must never lose sight of the fact that individual Vincentians and Conferences have their own perspective too. We are all called to be good stewards and we're all in this together; only by working to understand, appreciate and accept the various perspectives that make up this wonderful Society will we flourish going forward. As St. Vincent de Paul wrote, "With God's help, you will continue to succeed in your leadership and in your duties, because Our Lord's work is accomplished not so much by the multitude of workers as by the fidelity of the small number whom he calls." On behalf of the Board and senior management, I salute you for answering the call.

## Equity of Service

- The goal broadly speaking is to ensure, as far as possible, that Neighbours in Need in similar circumstances and with similar needs receive similar levels of service across the GTA.
- This goal is challenging to achieve. We are volunteers in a volunteer organization relying on the generosity of donors. We have a heavy responsibility to do the right thing with the funds entrusted to us by donors as we compare "**similar circumstances**" and "**similar needs**" across the GTA, two key elements of the goal of Equity of Service. – *excerpt power point 2025*

Together we worked on an updated Equity of Service document to re-engage and re-focus our commitment to Home Visits. This material has been sent to every Conference. Particular Council Presidents also received a supporting power point presentation to help lead discussion. There is an expectation that every Conference review and discuss ways of implementing the action items, we look forward to hearing about your deliberations.

## Coming Soon

Annual General Meeting: Saturday, September 27, 2025 – details to come

Policy 22: Management of Finances for Particular Councils and Conferences Policy – the updated version is posted on the website under member resources, it will be sent to every Conference for review and sign off, together with other policies in support of Vincentian compliance for insurance purposes.

## Learning Sessions

### Spirituality Sessions:

#### **Book Study: 'Fratelli Tutti' by Pope Francis (2020) - continuing**

Join us as we work through, reflect and discuss Fratelli Tutti on the last Monday of the month, January through April, from 6:30 pm to 7:30 pm. **Monday, April 28<sup>th</sup>, 2025 6:30 pm - 7:30 pm**  
Fratelli Tutti available for sale or free on the Vatican Website:

[https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco\\_20201003\\_enciclica-fratelli-tutti.pdf](https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20201003_enciclica-fratelli-tutti.pdf)

[Click here to join](#) Meeting ID: 232 445 962 026 Passcode: z2rb7xH3

To join by phone, dial 437-703-4669 Phone Meeting ID: 933 461 485#

### Planned Giving Session:

Join our virtual session on **Wednesday, April 30, 2025, 7:00pm – 8:00 pm**, and please extend an invitation to a friend, acquaintance or donor who has expressed interest in supporting the Society. An overview of ways to support the Society now, and into the future will be introduced during this one-hour presentation.

[Click here to join](#)

## Marygrove needs your help!

The camp got hit hard by the recent ice storm, thank goodness our Rake A Thon is May 3<sup>rd</sup>. Please join us for a pleasant day up north – yes there is some physical work involved, but the environment and the company couldn't be better! See the details on the last page. Camp Ozanam escaped the storm, but Marygrove needs your help. Thank you !

## Toronto Central Council is seeking Board candidates

The Society of Saint Vincent de Paul Greater Toronto Central Council invites interested persons to apply to the corporation's Board of Directors. The Society serves persons in need through two streams: a coordinated 1,400-member volunteer outreach responding to immediate needs of persons in the community experiencing food insecurity and other challenges, and through longer term staffed programs including emergency, transitional, supportive housing, subsidized summer camps for children and additional support services.

To learn more about the Society, we invite you to visit our website: [www.ssvptoronto.ca](http://www.ssvptoronto.ca)

The Boards of Directors is comprised of volunteers from the community who are elected to a 3-year term of office. The Board is seeking candidates with expertise in one or more of the following areas:

- Business Management
- Public Affairs & Communications
- Finance & Accounting
- Legal Expertise
- Diversity Issues
- Labour Relations
- Construction & Project Management

Please consider sharing your talents, and sharing this information with persons you think may be asset to the Society. To initiate the application process please [click here to download the application/nomination form](#)



CALLING ALL WILLING WORKERS, AND THOSE NEEDING A DAY UP NORTH

# Marygrove Camp

**33RD ANNUAL RAKE-A-THON**  
**SATURDAY, MAY 3, 2025**



THE SOCIETY OF SAINT VINCENT DE PAUL'S MARYGROVE CAMP PROVIDES GIRLS FROM LESS FORTUNATE HOMES WITH THE OPPORTUNITY TO ENJOY AN OVERNIGHT CAMPING EXPERIENCE ON THE SHORES OF GEORGIAN BAY.

## **We need your help!**

**The Rake-A-Thon involves:**

A few hours of raking, a picnic lunch and plenty of coffee. We could really use your help preparing the grounds for the children! Our target this year: minimum 5 rakers per Particular Council, plus helpers and guests ~ we will be done lickety-split.

Families and friends are most welcome. Bring a rake if you have the space, gloves too! Coffee is on for 9:30 am; lunch is 12:30 pm; most folks leave before 3:00pm. Don't be the only people who have never had the pleasure!

**Marygrove is located at 1301 Champlain Road, Tiny, ON L9M 0E7**

**Directions: Hwy 400 north to highway 93 to Penetang. Turn left at Robert Street (4th light), turn right at Champlain Road and follow for 10 kilometers to the Marygrove Camp gates, on the right hand side of Champlain, #1301.**

**Email us at : [campinfo@ssvptoronto.ca](mailto:campinfo@ssvptoronto.ca) and let us know:  
Who you are and how many in your group**

**THANK YOU FOR INCLUDING US IN YOUR SPRING CLEAN-UP PLANS!**



Society of Saint Vincent de Paul Greater Toronto Central Council  
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