

Society of Saint Vincent de Paul

Greater Toronto Central Council

In the Loop

January 2023

From the Chair

Plato said that the beginning is the most important part of the work. As we look forward to the promise and challenges of 2023, I thought this little mnemonic might be a good way to express Plato's admonition:

Journey of a thousand miles
Always starts somewhere.
Nothing will be achieved
Unless you take
Action. Momentum plus
Repeated efforts will take
You further than expected.

As we emerge from the pleasant euphoria of Christmas celebrations to face the realities of New Year's resolutions, we are reminded of the daily work of helping our neighbours in need. The good work each of you is doing in your own Conference and Particular Council can sometimes feel overwhelming; perhaps because of the endless and growing need or perhaps because the harvest is plentiful, but the labourers are few.

We are constantly faced with a host of practical challenges in living our mission and our ability to meet those challenges in creative ways has been a hallmark of the Society for nearly 200 years. One of our greatest ongoing challenges is finding strong leadership at all levels of our Society. It's not easy to stick your hand up and volunteer to take on a leadership role, especially when we have all experienced the second-guessing and back-seat driving that too often follows. Thankfully, many still take the leap of faith.

Perhaps this year will be the year you decide to step up and let your name stand for election or maybe you'll volunteer to sit on a committee or Chair one. I hope you do because we need good leaders. Remember Winston Churchill's wise words, "Success is not final, failure is not fatal: it is the courage to continue that counts."

Have you heard about ...

➤ Home Visitation Round Tables?

The next session will take place virtually on Thursday, February 16, 2023, from 6:30 pm until 7:30 pm, the link will be provided. The inaugural evening was well attended with lots of questions and guidance provided on our favourite Vincentian topic – Home Visitation. After each session, [Frequently Asked Questions](#) will be released by chapter, Chapter One is available by clicking [this link](#); Chapter Two will follow after the February session.

A reminder that each Conference should be discussing ways to re-engage with our Neighbours by visiting in person, if they have yet to do so. The pandemic caused us to rethink how we serve, and now it is time to return to our core service, person to person Home Visitation.

➤ Spiritual Facilitator Session?

Please join us on Monday, January 30th at 7:00 pm for a virtual session on improving the experience of Spiritual Readings at your meetings. You do not need to be a Spiritual Facilitator to join, all are welcome to gather information, and to learn more about the Spiritual Facilitator role. [Click here to join the meeting](#). The next session will be Monday, February 27, 2023.

Annual Reports

Each Conference, Particular and Central Council are required to complete internal reports on their activities. Report forms have been issued, please complete and submit by February 3rd. In addition to these internal reports, each Conference that has a CRA number must complete and submit a T3010 report to the Canada Revenue Agency by June 30th.

Need supplies, support or do you have ideas to share?

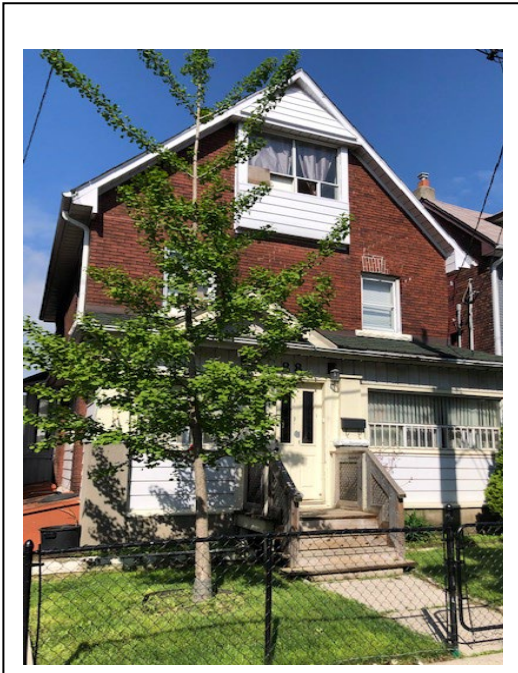
As you are part of the Greater Toronto Central Council, please check in with our office if you require any support. We know you better than other levels of the Society and we have done and seen it all, or mostly all; reports, supplies, special programs, materials etc. If we cannot help, we will certainly point you in the right direction.

Let us introduce you to:

The Society's Supportive Housing Program: Ozanam House

Ozanam House is an 11 bed facility for men living with addictions, who are waiting for admission to a recognized treatment program for addictions. The Greater Toronto Central Council has operated this program for over 30 years.

Ozanam House, located in the west end of Toronto, provides safe housing to men who are in the very early stages of recovery. Residents, who are from all parts of the GT are typically referred to this program from withdrawal management centers. It is a safe, supervised program for the residents as they wait to access an intensive residential recovery program. Many have experienced homelessness, and most require assistance with life skills and basic needs including medical and dental assistance, shoes, clothing, obtaining ID etc. The average length of stay is 6 weeks to 3 months. Staff are on site 24 hours per day to assist residents and to provide counselling, advocacy and assistance in obtaining appropriate program placements. Coming from all walks of life, residents commit to full participation in sober living, participate in group and recovery work, share in the grocery shopping, preparing meals, cleaning and maintaining the home. This program is critical, without it, persons could be waiting in unfavourable locations until they get into treatment programs. As this is a very vulnerable population, providing support and safe housing at this early stage of recovery is a critical step in the recovery process.



- Ozanam House receives operational block funding through the Ministry of Health. In addition to funding Ozanam House, a portion of the grant is transferred to our SSVP VincenPaul Community Homes program, to contribute to the funding of the 1.5 staff positions at that program. Ozanam House has two floors of housing with a kitchen/dining room/living room on the main floor and a gym located in the detached garage.
- The building is owned by the Society. Residents, aside from their own recovery work, support other programs in the Society by helping out with yard work, maintenance and other general assistance as requested.
- A valued part of the recovery experience, Ozanam House is required to participate in the LIHN's reporting and accountability process.

Interested in how you can support Ozanam House? Connect us to companies or donors who may want to support this critical program, or who will help us to stock the house with everything from food, to bedding, towels and new furnishings. Tell people about Ozanam House. The people we serve are just like you and me, our friends and relatives, all sorts of people, from all walks of life who have experienced challenges with addictions. Another way that the Greater Toronto Central Council serves; people in their homes, and people in our homes.