



What's New?

- New Activity Groups!
 - *'Reading Between The Lines'*
Wednesday 21st October,
2pm to 3pm
 - *'The Game Changers'*
Thursday 22nd October,
11am to 12pm
- We would like to thank Kathy and Rose from Wallasey DC for the generous donation of school clothes and children's essentials. We know that it will make a massive difference for the families we help in the centre.
- **Wirral Camp 2023– Snowdon Hike Challenge.** Every year 45 children from disadvantaged backgrounds are given a fantastic holiday in the middle of Snowdonia. A team of 10 volunteers are hiking to the top of Snowdon in late October to raise money for the camp. To donate, please visit www.justgiving.com/fundraising/wirralcampsnowdon2022

Welcome to September's newsletter for St Vincent's Wirral Support Centre. I must say I love September, as we head into Autumn and the change in season. I hope you are all enjoying the lovely sunny days we are having now. A big 'welcome' to our new Centre volunteers, who have joined us since the last newsletter, Michael, Margaret and Freda.

It has been a busy month at the Centre, seeing an increase in beneficiaries of **165 people** and increase in referrals of **119 people**, with the Centre being attended by many beneficiaries who have previously visited, as well as lots of new beneficiaries, who have heard about the range of support that is available from friends and family.

Our Community Café drop-in has seen a steady increase in visitors, with many people knowing now that they can pop in for a cuppa, biscuits and a chat and we have received lots of lovely comments from people about how welcoming the Centre is, some of which we have shared below, along with a Case Study.

Many of our beneficiaries present with complex situations and we take time to listen to them, to give them a safe place to talk and can refer them internally to our partners organisations or look to sign post them to external support.

We are already thinking ahead to the colder months, when we know that many people will be hit further by the cost-of-living crises, and people will be unable to stay warm in their homes.

We are planning for how the Centre can be a 'Place of Warmth' and are in contact with colleagues at Wirral Borough Council, as well as other vital partners organisations including Citizens Advice Wirral, Wirral Foodbank, Energy Project Plus, Involve Northwest Community Connectors. We will share more about this in the October newsletter.

September sees the start of two new Centre activities too, our 'Reading between the Lines' and 'Game Changer' groups. These groups are open to all, so please pop along yourself and get involved, or share details with friends, colleagues, Conference members and beneficiaries.

A quick reminder too that we have our coffee morning on Thursday 13th October 10am – 12pm, for all Centre staff and volunteers, Conference, and parish members and our colleagues from Wirral Foodbank. It will be great to see lots of you and we hope that this will provide a chance for us all to meet and learn about all the magnificent work that we are doing at the Centre and in the parish community. Please do let us know if you are able to join us, for planning purposes, by contacting the Centre.

We will be focussing on our Christmas activities and celebrations over the coming weeks and will share more next month.

Best wishes,
Jeannette

‘Help then becomes honourable because it may become mutual, since every man who gives a word, an opinion, a comfort today, may have need of that same tomorrow.’

One of the reasons why Frederic Ozanam’s quotes still seem fresh and relevant to our current circumstances is because they are rooted in the truths of the gospel.

Frederic’s biography shows how his understanding of the gospel had a particularly Franciscan flavour. St Francis saw that the mystery of the Incarnation was still being played out in the course of history through the poor. This spirituality of the poor asserted that they were not merely symbolic or representational of the historical figure of Jesus Christ. Instead in some mysterious manner the poor really *are* Christ in a quite palpable and bodily way.

The above quotation illustrates well Ozanam’s suspicion of charity which is only a kind of philanthropy delivered from on high. If help is only delivered from a vantage-point of power and wealth the dimension of mutuality is lost. Instead true charity is a context by which each person becomes fully present to each other through the acts of giving and receiving. We can recall how Ozanam wrote during a quite turbulent and unstable period of French history. The description of how the helper may soon need to be the recipient was both morally insightful while also being grounded in the social realities of his time. As we too come up against our own era of uncertainty and crisis we can perhaps recall that other quote from Ozanam about, ‘charity needing to be inventive to infinity’.

By John Ellison
SVP Member/Volunteer



Who is Frederic Ozanam?

Born: 23rd April 1813

Died: 8th September 1853

Frederic Ozanam was a French scholar, journalist and equal rights advocate. In 1833, with fellow students, Ozanam founded the Conference of Charity, which later became the Society of Vincent de Paul (SVP). They wanted to help the impoverished people of Paris. Today, SVP have around 800,000 members in 153 countries, helping those in need.

Tel: 0151 673 1313 **Email:** svpwirral@svp.org.uk **Address:** 15-19 Grange Road West, Birkenhead, CH41 4BY

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Case Studies

Case Study One

A client attended the Centre with his young child. They appeared to be very anxious and in a distressed state. We sat with them and after a chat with the team, they opened up and stated they had just moved to the area after being placed in emergency accommodation. They had no food and only had the clothes they were wearing. The young child had been offered a place in a local primary school, but had no school uniform or basic items, such as a school bag, lunch box, shoes etc.

They were assisted by the Foodbank and we were able to provide them with clothes. Through donations, we were able to buy the child new school shoes, new underwear and socks, a backpack and lunch bag.

When we gave the client the bag of new items, they were overwhelmed by the kindness that had been shown to them. Both were so appreciative of our help and all the staff and volunteers who supported the family all felt better after realising that our support and kindness had such a positive impact on the family.

Client Quotes

“Without this place I would be lost”

“I think SVP is amazing, it’s like a royal service”

“A rare type of kindness these days, exceeded expectations.”

“Welcomed and accepted and everyone is lovely”

Case Study Two

A male attended the Centre for support stating that he had been sleeping rough for 10 days after a relationship breakdown. He complained that his feet were very sore, that he was hungry and very tired. He was provided with food and drink and given a private room so he could have a sleep, as he was struggling to stay awake.

After he was given a health check by the ambulance service, he was given clean water to bathe and wash his feet and hands. He was also provided with new socks, shoes and clothing. Calls were made to relevant local homeless and housing providers, however, as he originated out of area and could not provide an explanation as to why he could not return home to Liverpool, he was refused support. He agreed that he needed to return to where his mum lives as knew that his health was being affected. Therefore, it was agreed to order and pay for a taxi for him to the local train station. We provided him with details of the train journey home and we gave him the train fare home. He was also provided with food from Wirral Foodbank and clothing from the Centre’s clothes bank. The money to support him was offered from the local Conference.

He commented that he was overcome with our kindness.

During August, we introduced a new way of collecting beneficiary data and how we record their stories, comments, ideas, suggestions. From next month we will include some additional data.

Data for the period 4 week period **1st August 2022 to 28th August 2022 inclusive.**

New referrals	Total Beneficiaries	Donations in; Goods, Milk, Tea, Biscuits	Cash in via donations, sales of books, clothes etc	Total items given out; clothes, crockery, bedding
462	862	376 items	£16.00	582 items

Service Spotlight

'Are you unemployed and seeking employment? Then let the ReachOut Team from Involve Northwest help you achieve your goals.'



Brian, a ReachOut Job Coach, attends the centre **every second Tuesday of the month, between 2pm and 3pm**. He is here to offer free pre-employment advice and support, as well as general information regarding ReachOut and the other services that Involve Northwest offers.

ReachOut offer *free, confidential pre-employment advice* and with over 22 years experience, their friendly Job Coaches are fully qualified and experienced in helping people into employment.

Within their welcoming offices or at the many local "drop in" work clubs that they deliver across the Wirral area, The ReachOut Team are also out and about in their Community Campervan 'ACE' with their colleagues from the HelpOut team.

Attending community events and engaging with Wirral residents seeking support or general advice from ReachOut and Involve Northwest's other services, Brian suggests you look out for 'ACE' and feel free to say hi to him or one of the team.



Job Coaches can offer help with the following:

- ◇ One-to-One employment of Self-Employment Advice
- ◇ Financial Support (eligibility applies), vouchers, travel, DBS, training (prior to starting work)
- ◇ Job searching support, application form assistance, interview advice
- ◇ CV matching to live vacancies with our Employer Engagement Officer
- ◇ Sourcing training opportunities
- ◇ Creating, updating and reviewing your CV
- ◇ Health and Wellbeing Support



If you are unable to meet Brian when he is here, you are more than welcome to meet him or his colleagues at The ReachOut office based nearby The Laurie's Centre (opposite Asda Birkenhead), which is open Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm or call them for advice on 0151 652 4349.

There is another ReachOut office based at the Community Village (opposite the KFC) which is open Monday to Friday, 9am and 5pm or call them for advice on 0151 644 5459.

From SVP Wirral team: We are always so happy to see Brian join us in the centre! We love and support the work he does, as well as the rest of the Involve Northwest team. We are thankful for the time he takes out to provide exceptional support and advice to centre clients. Brian and his team really makes a difference in the community.

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Top 4 Energy Tips from Energy Projects Plus

1. Avoiding the most expensive tariffs

Unfortunately, there are no fixed deals now cheaper than the Price Cap, with some literally double the cost. Some people will have unwittingly signed up to their supplier's "best" fix when their last good one ended, but they should really be encouraged to switch to the Price Cap to save money.

2. Adopting more energy-efficient behaviour

Most of us are guilty of things like leaving lights on when we leave the room, and overfilling kettles. Some people still have their heating on all day and night. Many people have their thermostats set too high. This is all wasting money. It is a good idea for us all to get a smart meter, so we can watch how our behaviour affects our energy use.



3. Installing energy-efficient products and appliances

If your home has an Energy Performance Certificate, there is a list of recommendations on there, specifically for your property.

4. Maximising household income

Approximately £10,000,000,000 goes unclaimed each year in welfare benefits and pension-age benefits. Not only do these benefits add to household income, but they can be the gateway to further support. For example, Pension Credit makes you eligible for the £150 Warm Home Discount.

Back to School Tips

With children going back to school this month, we want to share how families can cope with the general costs of sending their children to school.

The centre has a small supply of school uniform essentials, such as school shirts, trousers and dresses, due to a recent generous donation from Kathy and Rose (Wallasey DC).

Wirral F.U.S.S. and F.U.P.S. also provide free help with Secondary and Primary school uniforms. You can check out their website for details of which hub carries your school's clothes, opening times and where you can donate.



Families may also be entitled to free school meals if they are receiving any of the following: Income Support, Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance, Income-related Employment and Support Allowance, support under part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999, the guaranteed element of Pension Credit, Child Tax Credit, Working Tax Credit, Universal Credit.

Some children (age 5 to 16), may also qualify for a free travel pass to help them get to school. This depends on the age of the child, distance to travel to school, evidence of low income, availability of a safe walking route and/or the child's special needs and disabilities. For more information, please go to www.wirral.gov.uk

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St Vincent's Wirral

'A Place of Warmth for Everyone'

Befriending

A warm, safe place to talk, share and connect

Clothing

Adult and children clothing, as well as basic household items

Refreshments

Join us for a cuppa, cake and a chat

Volunteering

Join our team of volunteers, gain new skills, experience and make friends

Wirral Foodbank

Contact 0151 666 5050 or 0808 278 7848 to discuss your emergency food needs

Advice ?

A wide range of partners, such as Citizen's Advice

Activities

From reading groups to game groups, share ideas and passions over a cuppa

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Open Monday to Friday, 1pm to 3pm



St Vincent
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Turning Concern into Action



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