



**Society of Saint Vincent de Paul  
Western Region  
North of 60 Project  
Annual Report 2025**



**SSVP Western Region North of 60 Team**

Peter Ouellette

Mary Dunnigan

Andrea Wan

Mike Mravinec

Stef Michniewski

Lance Berrington

Linda Tutt

Roger Plouffe

Rita John

Colleen Braun



## Executive Summary

By Peter Ouellette, SSVP Western Region, North of 60 Project, Project Manager

Our Project continues to provide food security to those living in the Arctic Region of the Northwest Territories. Since 2010 the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul (SSVP) members in Edmonton and Calgary have been providing food, household items, beds and bedding, sewing machines and fabric, sports equipment as well as other items requested from members of the nine communities that we serve.

Additionally, we have worked with elders on major projects related to building and restoring facilities that meet the needs of the communities.

Our major source of transport has been barging down the Mackenzie River but

since 2023, low water levels closed the river to navigation. This caused a major increase in our costs of operations however funds were raised to complete the year and to prepare for continuation in 2026.

Without more donors' support, the program's very existence was threatened. You came to the rescue with the help that we needed. Because of this support we will find the way to continue.

This project is managed by a team of [SSVP](#) volunteers. There are no paid employees. The team develops knowledge and most importantly long-term rapport with their assigned community. This assures that our Vincentians understand the needs of the people they serve. Airlines assist our team members when they visit their Arctic contacts every few years. Team members also meet with residents of the northern communities when they visit Edmonton or Calgary for medical, work or leisure.

A first ever Edmonton [SSVP Building Hope and Dignity Gala](#) was held in June, 2025. We were able to spread the news of our North of 60's good work and, most importantly, gather more support for our outreach to those living in need in the Arctic.

We again are grateful to our corporate benefactors who made this project financially viable. The transportation logistics, food supply and household product donations as well as the financial support continue to be strong.

Our program will continue thanks to the generous support of so many.

Thank you for helping us to help others, and blessings to all of you.

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## The Beginning of the Project

After finishing her teaching career at Newman Theological College in Edmonton, Sister Fay Trombley of the Sisters of Charity of the Immaculate Conception “retired” to the Arctic hamlet of Tuktoyaktuk, Northwest Territories. Appalled by the poverty of her neighbours she asked the late Eileen Orysiuk, a Vincentian in Calgary, and other SSVP members to help. High food prices then and still today combined with limited economic opportunities and high rates of poverty have led to Northern Canada having the highest rates of food insecurity in the country. Almost half of all Nunavut and Northwest Territories households are moderately or seriously food insecure.

A shipping container of food and other necessities was delivered to Tuktoyaktuk in 2010 – and thus began the North of 60 Project.

Since then, Society members in Edmonton and Calgary have been providing food and household items as well as support for schools and community groups, to now nine communities in the Northwest Territories: Tuktoyaktuk, Inuvik, Aklavik, Fort McPherson, Tsuigehtchic, Fort Good Hope, Paulatuk, Sachs Harbour, and Ulukhaktok.

Each northern community is served by a SSVP Parish/Conference whose members connect with local leaders and collaborate on what is needed. The liaison has led to a deep understanding of each community’s needs, as well as local trust in the fair distribution of the items received. Team members try to visit their northern partners every couple of years and meet community members when they are in Edmonton on personal or medical visits.

North of 60 donations come from friends, parishioners, individuals, and a variety of religious, charitable, and corporate organizations.

Containers are loaded by Vincentians in church parking lots. In the past these sea containers have been trucked to Hay River, then barged down the Mackenzie River to the communities.



But in 2023, due to the low water level on the Mackenzie River, sea cans had to be trucked over 3000 km to reach their destinations. This low water condition continues and is not expected to change soon. The three coastal communities further north in the Beaufort Sea were reached by ocean barge from the Port of Tuktoyaktuk.

## Arctic Communities and their Alberta Paired Conference – 2025 Reports

### Tuktoyaktuk –

St Andrews Conference in Edmonton – Andrea Wan

This summer Tuktoyaktuk received their container of items for the community. Some of these items included clothing, bedding, household items, many mattresses and pillows along with tools and



building materials for the Men's Shed Project. The community graciously received the shipment with great joy. Word spread around town quickly that there were mattresses and bedding available for families, as this is something that is always needed as families continue to grow. One empty container was sold in the summer, which helped to offset some of our costs. Team member, Andrea, was able to spend much of the summer in Tuktoyaktuk with children, youth and families learning from the wisdom of elders and Sister Fay. The Men's Shed project is building support from Community and from charitable donations. This has been made possible by the financial support of the Sisters of Charity of the Immaculate Conception and Mr. Jim Rogers, who has long supported Sr Fay's work. A corporation of elders is formed, property and trailers have been identified, and all is ready for the purchase. Men in Tuktoyaktuk will have a safe space to work with others, learn tool use, and participate in building projects.



### Paulatuk – Our Lady of Perpetual Help Conference in Sherwood Park AB - Stef Michniewski

The sea can was delivered later than usual, however the food, clothing (49 bags of winter ware), beds and bedding were well received. Work on restoring [Father's House](#) continues. A team was on site this last summer, but the delayed barge arrival caused a delay in some of the work. This team will be again on site in 2026 completing the job. The team will lay new

subflooring and laminate boards. Walls in the kitchen and dining room will be paneled. All electrical connections and plugs as well as plumbing will be installed and government inspected.



## **Fort Good Hope – Divine Mercy Conference in Edmonton – Roger Plouffe**

With the Mackenzie River being too low the alternative for getting things to Good Hope is via air (very expensive) or wait for the winter road. We waited, and like last year, a local Good Hope company trucked the sea can on the winter road, however the contents of the sea container cannot include anything that could freeze. The community gave us a list of items they could use. Not on the list, this year, was clothing - there is enough already in Fort Good Hope, and the people are using the clothing bank as a swap area, making it self-sustaining at this time. Divine Mercy SSVP Conference and St. Thomas More Parish stepped up in the last three weeks of October and donated toiletries, dry goods, flour, and other food items that can safely freeze. We also received over 8 sewing/serge machines by parishioners and a local sewing center store. Added to the above, we received tools, some lumber and items for kitchen, bathroom and bedrooms.

In Fort Good Hope, Heather and her team manage the food and clothing banks, which are located at the rectory. They had great help from Nadine who stepped up and are doing a wonderful job of managing the two banks, including delivering hampers. Because of drugs now in the community, it is wiser to deliver to those in need rather than open the food bank for anyone to use.

## **Ulukhaktok – St Albert Conference in St Albert AB – Linda Tutt**

In the spring of 2025, Holy Family Parish & St Albert Parish's, SSVP, North of 60 Project volunteers filled a sea container with donated food and goods for Ulukhaktok. Community members and supporters participated generously. The 3400 km shipment was trucked to the Tuktoyaktuk port, then loaded onto a marine ocean barge. Two unprecedented storms hit the Arctic coastal communities of



Tuktoyaktuk, Ulukhaktok, Paulatuk, and Sachs Harbour in the late summer, delaying the barge's arrival to Ulukhaktok to September 10. The barge arrives once a year. For the rest of the year, supplies and fresh produce are flown in. Ulukhaktok, population 450, is situated on Victoria Island and is on the Beauford Sea coast. Food bank support is the North of 60 Project's highest priority and about 30 families access the food bank twice a month. Food prices can be 4-5 times higher than in central Alberta. Most Ulukhaktok residents find it difficult to make ends meet.

Besides the pallets of food, the SSVP sea container included other community support as follows:

- Ulukhaktok Community Corporation, part of the Inuvialuit Regional Corporation invited residents to come shop (for free) for fabric and sewing items.
- The Brighter Futures received furs and fabrics to use in their upcoming classes.
- The Health Centre was appreciative of the activity and craft items sent to the Elder's group.
- Sewing machines, musical instruments, household items, quilts, and Brooklyn Bundles (baby and children's clothing), were to be distributed to those in need, from the Hamlet Office.
- Hockey and sports equipment were sent to Hamlet's ice and fitness arena.



Catholic Church as it was in 1983 and as it looks today before restoration begins



Renovation plans are underway for the old Catholic Church to be renovated and converted into a museum with funding from the Hamlet of Ulukhaktok, SSVP donations and the Dechamps Family Foundation. We are grateful for everyone's hard work in putting projects like this together.

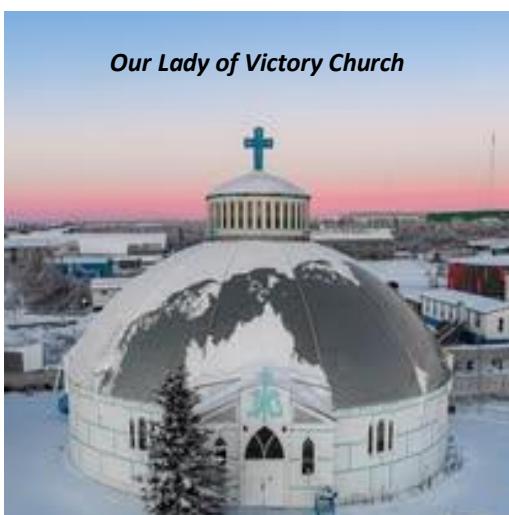
### Inuvik – St Pius X Conference in Calgary – Lance Berrington

Over the past year, the partnership between St. Pius X Parish in Calgary, Our Lady of Victory Parish in Inuvik, and the SSVP North of 60 Project has grown into a strong and vibrant

relationship rooted in faith, solidarity, and shared service. Regular communication between the parish communities, increased awareness of northern realities, and ongoing collaboration with Fr. Fred, Michelle, and volunteers at Our Lady of Victory have deepened the spiritual and personal ties between our regions.

Parishioners at St. Pius X continue to learn about the unique challenges faced by northern families, building a genuine “south-to-north” bond of prayer, support, and accompaniment.

A major milestone in 2025 was the successful North of 60 spring container shipment, coordinated through the dedicated efforts of St. Pius X parishioners, SSVP volunteers, and generous community partners. A full



container of food, essential supplies, and winter clothing was shipped to Inuvik, where local volunteers quickly sorted and distributed items to children, families, and elders—ensuring warmth, dignity, and hope during the harshest months. This coordinated effort strengthened the supply chain between Calgary and Inuvik, fostered trust with parish leaders, and inspired broader parish engagement throughout St. Pius X school and parish. The partnership also extended to direct pastoral support for individuals from the North who found themselves vulnerable while in Calgary. With guidance from Our Lady of Victory, SSVP members provided compassionate assistance, essential clothing, and connections to local resources, demonstrating a shared commitment to dignified, person-centered care. The Coffee and Bannock Gathering, launched in early 2025, has also been a great success; supplies from St. Pius X have helped Fr. Fred create a warm and welcoming Sunday space for parishioners, visitors, and those struggling in the cold. Together, these initiatives embody a living Vincentian spirituality - marked by respect, simplicity, compassion, and service - and continue to unite both parish communities in their mission to care for “the least of these” across the North.

## **Tsiigehtchic and Fort McPherson – St Theresa Conference in Edmonton - Mike Mravinec**



As in past years, we have sent a single sea container to serve both the Tsiigehtchic and Fort McPherson communities. This year, thanks to the generosity of our donors, we were able to purchase food staples, including flour, oil, rice, sugar, and more. There were also many parishioner donations of food, warm clothing, sewing machines and material, knitted items and supplies as well as blankets, sheets, tools and footwear.

Once again, the barge from Hay River was not an option due to low water levels on the Mackenzie

River. The sea can was transported by land from Edmonton and delivered directly to Fort McPherson - St Matthew Anglican Church. Then the Tsiigehtchic portion of the sea can was transported from Ft. McPherson to the Church of the Holy Mary in Tsiigehtchic.

The high cost of land transport to Ft. McPherson remains unsustainable in future years without continued financial support.



The communities express their sincere gratitude for the supplies which will help many people in need over the coming months and during the winter. Sincere thanks as well to the wonderful, generous parishioners of St. Theresa's Parish in Edmonton for their donations as well as Society of Saint Vincent de Paul (St. Theresa's Conference) and the Knights of Columbus (St. Peter Council) for their continued support.



## **Sachs Harbour – Good Shepherd Conference in Edmonton – Rita John**

This year brought a change in the way of providing food to Sachs Harbour. In the past, everything had to be trucked to Tuktoyaktuk and then ocean barged to Sachs. Ground transportation to Tuk was very

expensive.

Due to the small community and the amount of goods sent, we needed a more efficient and affordable method to provide food for Sachs Harbour. Therefore, we worked with the Arctic Co-Op, whose head office is in Winnipeg. Sach's has a Co-Op store and therefore food is already being shipped there.

Working with the Manager of Business Development they put together the two pallets of food requested. Co-Op took care of the crating, trucking and barging, doing essentially all the work which we did in the past. It was a wonderful cooperative venture and much easier and more affordable for us. The food was delivered directly to those in need in the Community. All expenses were paid by SSVP Good Shepherd Conference.

## **Aklavik – Good Shepherd Conference in Edmonton – Rita John**

The Aklavik sea can was trucked to Inuvik and then barged over to Aklavik. The Aklavik Indian Band picked up the cost of transporting it over to Aklavik which was most appreciated as our costs to truck up the sea cans this year were enormous.

The band distributes the food as needed, running a food bank for those in need. The wellness support worker for the band is our contact. Food was sent on pallets. In addition, wool blankets, sleeping mats, bicycles, pillows, pillowcases, and sheets were sent up for those who needed them in the community.

We were told that all the items were very well received by the Community of Aklavik, and the Aklavik Indian Band Wellness Department. They said that the grocery items were great, a variety of groceries that are not available here in Aklavik. There is a huge demand for Food Security in this rural community.

Next year the plan is to work with the Northern Store and the Inuvialuit Regional Corp to see if they can assist with transporting the food.





## Where does it all come from?

Normally our preference in this project is to get small food donations from church parishioners and to involve as many supporters as possible to enhance their awareness of Arctic needs.

We do enjoy the opportunity to talk to young people in the south and to discuss with them



the differences in living in the Arctic. Kids are extremely helpful with donations and with spreading the word about the good Work of the North of 60 Project. Many of the donations come from parishioners and friends. When we have a truck or a sea container in the Church parking lot, our team members have the opportunity for discussion with parishioners and develop an understanding of the needs of those living in the far north.

A lot of bulk food and nonfood items are collected this way. We are grateful that so many see the value of our Work and want to help.

Used sewing machines and fabric have now become standard items for our shipments to the Arctic. A special thanks to Central Sewing in Edmonton for the supply of so many used machines. Technicians refurbish the sewing machines so that they are ready to use.

We have had numerous requests to ship sleeping pads to the North. There are often many living under one roof in these Arctic communities. Once again, Alberta Health Services came through with used mattresses that are lightweight yet strong, easy to clean and offer great support for the children. These pads can be easily moved to the side to provide room for family time.

Cooking oil is in great demand. We are very thankful for the continued support from the Alberta Canola Producers Commission.



Appendix 2 is a complete list of organizations with which our North of 60 project has established collaboration.

## Transportation Logistics Support

To ensure our team members are comfortable with the people in the communities that they serve we visit with the elders, develop a rapport and understand their needs. This could not be affordable without the help of Canadian North and Aklak Airlines. They continue to provide us support.



The cost of shipping sea containers this year has been a major factor in our continued support of those in need in the Arctic. A list of carriers is shown. We appreciate their support, but rising fuel costs and changes in the donation policy from the Government of Northwest Territories Marine Services are very costly and threaten our continued service to these Arctic Communities. We are asking our governments to recognize the value of our support and to assist us by reinstating marine barge transport as a donation to our efforts to help others.

### Logistics Support

**Manitoulin Transport  
Continental Cartage  
GNWT Marine Services  
Yellowhead Storage  
Gruben's Transport**

## Appendix 1: Typical Product Shipped in the Sea Container

Over the last few years, we have developed two basic rules of operation:

1. We ship only what the Community asks for, and
2. We continue to support the Community for as long as they want us.

This approach requires the development of rapport between the SSVP team members here in Alberta and their Community contacts in the Arctic. Take a tour of some of the Arctic Communities that we assist by [clicking on the North of 60 video](#).

*Flour Sugar Baking Soda Coffee Tea Lard Oats Pasta Canned Veg&Fruit Canned Meats*

*Pancake Mix Crackers*

*Pampers Baby Formula Feminine Products Toothbrushes and Paste Soap Shampoo*

*Beds Blankets Sheets Pillows Diapers Pillows*

*Boots Socks Winter Coats Jeans Sweaters Hoodies*

*Pots&Pans Toasters Folding Tables Kitchen Ware*

*Lumber Building Materials Handy Man Tools Sports Equip Sewing Machines Fabric*

## Appendix 2: Corporate and Private Collaboration

Many of you have asked who has been involved in this project. Below is a list of those organizations and friends who have collaborated with our team and made donations of products or services to help us do an amazing amount of good work. Click on the organization name below and see what they are about. All Vincentians are proud that our name and our mission are being shared by so many.

[Canadian North Airlines](#)

[Aklak Air](#)

[Gleaners Oliver BC](#)

[Gleaners Medicine Hat AB](#)

[Emanuel Foundation](#)

[Cobs Bread](#)

[Alberta Canola Producers](#)

[Gov AB, Alberta Health Services](#)

[GNWT, Marine Services](#)

[Second Harvest Canada](#)

[Freson Brothers Fresh Market](#)

[Brooklyn Bundles](#)

[Central Sewing Machines Inc](#)

[Sports Central](#)

[Knights of Columbus Foundation](#)

[St Theresa Knitting Group](#)

[Southgate Dental Centre](#)

[Fondation Traçons Un Chemin](#)

[Edmonton Catholic Schools](#)

[Banff Sunshine, Lake Louise and Norquay](#)

[Tip Off Constructing, Edmonton](#)

[Edmonton Quilt Guild](#)

[Sisters of Charity of the Immaculate Conception](#)

[Mr. Jim Rogers](#)

[Manitoulin Transport](#)

[Stephen Lewis Foudation](#)



## **Appendix 3: Thank-you to so many who have had direct involvement in the North of 60 Project this last year**

We thank God for the North of 60 Project, as another example of God's demonstrated abundance for all our neighbours, near and far, wherever there is need.

### **Communities Served by North of 60 Project, SSVP Western Region**

Peter Ouellette, Western Region, North of 60 Project Manager

<b><u>N of 60 Location</u></b>	<b><u>Community contact</u></b>	<b><u>SSVP Contact</u></b>
Inuvik	Michelle Lennie	Lance Berrington, Calgary
Tuktoyaktuk	Sr. Fay Trombley	Andrea Wan, Edmonton
Tsiigehtchic	Grace Blake	Mike Mravinec, Edmonton
Ft McPherson	Paul Hanthorn	Mike Mravinec, Edmonton
Paulatuk	Jacinta Illasiak	Stef Michniewski, Sherwood Park
Aklavik	Fredrick Arey	Rita John, Edmonton
Sachs Harbour	Joey Carpenter	Rita John, Edmonton
Fort Good Hope	Heather Bourassa	Roger Plouffe, Edmonton
Ulukhaktok	Darlene Nigiyok	Linda Tutt, St Albert

Sr. Fay Trombley, Sheila Okane, Ruth Anne Blake, Michelle Lennie, Abdallah from the Inuvik Midnight Sun Mosque Food Bank, Darlene Nigiyok, Emily Kudlak, Nick Kopot, Helen Kitekudlak, Darlene Nigiyok, Karen Kitekudlak, Atul Deshmukh. Gail Elias, Susie Memogama, Laura Inuktalik, Grace Blake, Paul Hanthorn, Jacinta Illasiak, Joey Carpenter, Elizabeth Semple, Heather Bourassa, Nadine Tatchinron, Bishop Jon Hansen

### **Society of Saint Vincent de Paul :**

Western Region Council  
Edmonton Central Council and their Conferences specifically:  
Our Lady of Perpetual Help in Sherwood Park AB,  
Holy Family St Albert Conferences in St Albert,  
St Michaels Conference in Leduc,  
St Joseph Basilica,  
Good Shepherd,  
St Theresa Conference,  
St John /Holy Spirit,

Divine Mercy( St Thomas More, St Agnes, and St Anthony Parishes),  
Mother Teresa,  
All Saints,  
St Andrew Conference.  
Central Council in Calgary  
South Particular Council in Calgary  
St Pius X Conference in Calgary  
St Timothy Conference in Winnipeg MN  
St Mathews Conference in Surrey BC