

Oxford University St Vincent de Paul Society



How you can get involved with OU SVP

Greetings prospective Vincentians! The St Vincent de Paul Society (SVP) is an international Christian voluntary organisation dedicated to tackling poverty and disadvantage by providing direct practical assistance to anyone in need. Our own group or 'Conference' at the Catholic Chaplaincy is part of SVP 1833, a branch of SVP which aims to encourage young adults aged 18-30+ to volunteer in a Christian context in their local community.

Listed below you will find a small sample of volunteering opportunities in Oxford. Please do not feel limited to these options alone – any person-to-person response to any form of need can be SVP work. If you decide to pursue any of these opportunities, please get in touch with me first either by email (iarla.manny@balliol.ox.ac.uk) or by phone call/text (07794 509292) so that I can keep track of who's doing what and better help you with your service.

NB: All members of SVP must have a specific SVP CRB (Criminal Records Bureau) check. To obtain one please get in touch with the Chaplaincy Safeguarding Officer, Sr Silvana Dallanegra (silvanarscj@hotmail.co.uk). Please don't be put off by this (CRBs are free for all volunteers) and do get involved.

As well as volunteering in the local community, SVP members meet on Thursday evenings in the Chaplaincy before Pasta Plus to share their experiences, to reflect on their work, with the help of our spiritual adviser (also Sr Silvana), to socialise, and to plan group activities, such as formal dinners, weekend trips, retreats, and pilgrimages.

Pray for us!

Even if you are unable to volunteer, we would be very grateful if you could remember the work of the Society in your prayers.

Volunteering Opportunities in Oxford

Helping the Homeless

Chaplaincy Soup Run

A group of two or three members meets at the Chaplaincy in the morning (around 7am) and goes out around the area with a bag containing coffee, tea, hot chocolate, sugar, two thermos flasks of water, milk, biscuits, and soup. We try to offer our company and talk to those on the streets, who are often very lonely, realising our limited capacity to provide solutions to their many problems.

Co-ordinator: Iarla Manny (Balliol)

Email: iarla.manny@balliol.ox.ac.uk

Phone: 07794 509292

The Gatehouse

This renowned establishment on St Michael's Street provides food, drink, clothing, shelter, and company to the city's homeless and poorly housed population. Our members find working there to be a very flexible and worthwhile option. Most offer their services for a single session once a week or once a fortnight. The Gatehouse is open Tuesdays to Saturdays from 5pm to 7pm and Sundays from 3 pm to 5pm. They prefer most volunteers to arrive 30 minutes before a session starts and to stay on until the clearing-up has been completed (around 15 minutes).

Website: www.oxfordgatehouse.org

Email: volunteer@oxfordgatehouse.org

Phone: 01865 792999 (Leave your name, contact details, and which day(s) suit you.)

If you would like to become a member and be added to our mailing list, or if you require any assistance or have any questions, please feel free to email iarla.manny@balliol.ox.ac.uk or ring/send a text to 07794 509292.

Oxford University St Vincent de Paul Society

St Francis House

This residence on the Cowley Road is one of the many Catholic Worker houses of hospitality in Europe, North America, and Australasia. A small community of workers lives with and supports three asylum seekers, who receive no state support. On Monday evenings workers deliver hot drinks, sandwiches, and cakes to homeless people living on the streets.

Webpage: www.londoncatholicworker.org/OxfordCW.html

Co-ordinator: Sr Susan Clarkson

Contact: srsusanclarkson@gmail.com

Working with Asylum Seekers

Asylum Welcome

This organisation on the Cowley Road provides volunteer placements for people from a variety of backgrounds, and with a range of skills and experience. Volunteers supply an extensive selection of services, including an advice centre, a detention support programme, an educational advice centre, an advocacy team, an admin team, and a youth service. Asylum Welcome is committed to offering full induction training and support for new and existing volunteers, and usually asks for a twelve-month minimum commitment.

Website: www.asylum-welcome.org

Contact: maira@asylum-welcome.org

Visiting the Housebound and the Sick

House Visits

This mainly involves having a nice chat and a cup of tea with people who are unable to leave their home much anymore. There is also the opportunity to become an Extraordinary Minister of the Eucharist so that Holy Communion can be taken to those who want it. You can pretty much choose the day and time that suits you, and our members usually commit to an hour a week. Most of the locations are accessible by walking or cycling.

Co-ordinator: Iarla Manny (Balliol)

Email: iarla.manny@balliol.ox.ac.uk

Phone: 07794 509292

Hospital Visits

This involves visiting and taking Holy Communion to patients in the John Radcliffe Hospital in Headington. The Chaplaincy Team there will train you to serve as an Extraordinary Minister of the Eucharist but requires a reference from Fr Simon first. The hospital usually expects a volunteer to commit to visiting once a week for one or two hours over a twelve-month period (during term time).

Co-ordinator: Deacon Chris Blackman (Roman Catholic Chaplain, JR Hospital)

Email: chris.blackman@orh.nhs.uk

Phone: 01865 220191 (JR Chaplaincy) / 07836 754276 (mobile) / 01865 881718 (home)

Teaching Opportunities

The Christ Church Home Learning Scheme

This scheme offers student volunteers the chance to visit a local child or young person and help them with their schoolwork, offering them support and encouragement. Mentors are expected to spend one hour a week in term time with their mentee in the family home.

Co-ordinator: Abhishek Bhattacharyya (Christ Church)

Email: abhishek.bhattacharyya@chch.ox.ac.uk

Phone: 07789 560969

If you would like to become a member and be added to our mailing list, or if you require any assistance or have any questions, please feel free to email iarla.manny@balliol.ox.ac.uk or ring/send a text to 07794 509292.