



2025 VINNIES WINTER APPEAL



SCHOOLS KIT

NO ONE CHOOSES TO BE HOMELESS

This Winter Appeal, how will your school help provide food and essential items to vulnerable people within our local community experiencing the lasting impacts of homelessness?



SHARE YOUR EFFORTS BY TAGGING US!

 @VinniesYouthNSW
 @NSWVinniesYouth

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2025 VINNIES WINTER APPEAL: NO ONE CHOOSES TO BE HOMELESS



Dear Vinnies Supporters in our School Communities,

Thank you for your ongoing commitment to helping people experiencing disadvantage and supporting the St Vincent de Paul Society's annual Winter Appeal.

This year, we are focusing on addressing homelessness, highlighting the factors that lead to homelessness, the support needed to recover and rebuild over the long-term from experiencing homelessness.

More than 122,000 people are currently experiencing homelessness in Australia, including 35,000 people in NSW – the most of any state or territory. There's no one face of homelessness with people of all ages and backgrounds susceptible to going from stability to precarity in a short span of time. Homelessness could affect a neighbour, a colleague, a relative – it's never a choice, but sometimes it's the only option. The Society works with people experiencing and at risk of homelessness every day, providing individual assistance with food, clothing, household bills, counselling, housing and early intervention support to prevent hardship from becoming chronic. We're able to make this impact because of the generosity and goodwill shown by supporters of the Vinnies Winter Appeal.

The Winter Appeal is one of the Society's most impactful fundraising activities. Your support plays a crucial role to its success, by allowing our members and services to meet people's needs with a hand up of support. Thank you for your continued help and for spreading the word to encourage others to take part.



There are many ways you can involve your school community in this year's Vinnies Winter Appeal:

- See our **Digital Schools Resource Kit** at youthnsw.vinnies.org.au/winterappeal for classroom activities, an overview of different fundraising activities you may like to do and other great resources to support your Appeal
- **Material donations of food and winter woollies** are another wonderful way to support those in need; our How to Give guide in this kit suggests some ways your school can provide material assistance this Winter.
- **Financial donations** greatly assist our services and local Conferences to deliver much needed support to those struggling this winter. To donate go to vinnies.org.au/nswwinterappeal

The Vinnies Youth Team



CASE STUDY: ABIGAIL AND ISABELLA'S STORY

Growing up, sisters Abigail and Isabella faced many challenges within their family unit – family breakdown, severe financial stress and major health issues. They never knew a stable, loving and safe home.

As they were so young, Abigail and Isabella had no choice in their situation. Like so many families, they looked to their mother for care and security, but her declining mental health meant she struggled to provide this. For the girls, this meant a childhood of neglect and instability, with them also struggling with their own mental health and anxiety.

At a very young age, their mother moved out, forcing them to live in a caravan. This was followed by a move to Queensland, where the sisters experienced a fragile living environment without any support, stability or education. Their mother's illness and mental health led to her being hospitalised, leaving the sisters to fend for themselves.

“Living in the car – it wasn't a good option, but it was our only option.”

One of the sisters returned to live with their father, leaving the remaining sister and her mother living in their car and unsafe environments. After several years of this, they too returned to live with the father in an overcrowded unit where they faced further neglect.

When their mother once again moved out into social housing, Abigail and Isabella decided to work together to find themselves stable accommodation. As young adults, they are now beginning to rebuild their lives.

“Stable, affordable accommodation is the catalyst for everything else to start falling into place”

Throughout their time living with their parents, the sisters remember receiving food vouchers from Vinnies. Thankfully, Christine, a team leader at one of Vinnies' Support Centres has been able to help Abigail and Isabella with food vouchers, hampers and

essential items like a fridge, mattresses and a washing machine. When you are starting from nothing, these things can help a house become a home and each is a small stepping stone to a more stable life.

“We all need that safe place to feel whatever we’re feeling whether it’s good or bad. We need a safe place to have those feelings. It’s the only way to come out the other side.”

The circumstances faced by both Abigail and Isabella are tough for anyone to go through, but especially for someone so young. Forced into homelessness by their situation, the sisters had no choice in how their circumstances played out. The St Vincent de Paul Society will continue to support people like Abigail and Isabella, to help them find a safe, stable home and empower them to make plans for a brighter future.

“Every day I see the impact kindness can make to people’s lives”

SEE, THINK, DO

See:

How was Vinnies able to help Abigail and Isabella?

Think:

When might choosing homelessness be your only option?

What are the biggest misconceptions you think people might have about homelessness and the people who experience it?

Do:

Beyond the practical assistance, how does Vinnies’ ongoing support help people in the longer term?

What role do you think Vinnies plays in empowering people to rebuild their lives and thrive?



STATISTICS

WHO ARE OUR HOMELESS?

- Homelessness in Australia has grown significantly, with **122,949 people recorded as homeless** on census night in 2021.
- Nearly a quarter of all people experiencing homelessness are **from 12-24 years of age** (28,204 people)
- **People over the age of 55** represented 1 in 7 of people experiencing homelessness.
- **56%** of the homeless population are males and **44%** are females.
- **25%** are First Nations and **30%** were born overseas.

Source: www.abs.gov.au/statistics/people/housing/estimating-homelessness-census/2021

WHY ARE THEY HOMELESS?

- Rental housing is becoming more expensive – 52% of all people experiencing homelessness stated **rental affordability as the main reason** why they needed help.
- **28% cited family or other violence** as the main reason they were homeless.

Source: [Homeless Statistics in Australia: Facts, Causes, & Solutions You Need to Know](#)

- Violence at home – **domestic and family violence is a leading cause of homelessness** in Australia, with people fleeing their homes to escape the violence.
- **Sudden life changes can trigger homelessness** – an unexpected illness or loss can have devastating consequences.
- **Mental health challenges** – without access to appropriate care, people often find themselves facing homelessness when struggling with poor mental health.
- **For young people, homelessness is not a choice**, but sometimes the only option. Unstable home environments, family breakdown, neglect, death of a guardian or loved one or substance abuse can all force young people to leave their family home.

Source: [Homelessness in Australia Statistics | Mission Australia](#)

IF YOU OR SOMEONE YOU KNOW NEEDS SUPPORT,
PLEASE CALL OUR HELPLINE ON 13 18 12.

WHAT ARE THE IMPACTS OF HOMELESSNESS?

- Studies show that people experiencing homelessness **die an average of 22 to 33 years younger** than those who are housed.
- There is a **63% increase in preventable deaths** in people experiencing homelessness.

Source: [The potentially deadly impacts of homelessness | InSight+](#)

- Health problems include **malnutrition and dental problems** (Goode et al 2018; Huang et al 2022)
- Homelessness can **expose people to violence and victimisation**, result in long term unemployment and lead to the development of chronic ill health. (Larney et al 2009)
- Meeting basic physical needs such as **food, water and a place to sleep** can be the most important day to day priority for people experiencing homelessness, especially rough sleepers.

Source: [Health of people experiencing homelessness - Australian Institute of Health and Welfare](#)

- For children and families, homelessness can have devastating consequences including **developmental delays, disruptions in education and family separation**.
- Without intervention, many children **repeat the cycle of homelessness** as adults.

Source: [The Costs and Harms of Homelessness - Community Solutions](#)

- 1 in 3 median income households is **experiencing food insecurity**.
- 10% of these are severely food insecure meaning they are skipping meals, reducing portion sizes and even **going entire days without eating** to ensure they can keep a roof over their heads.
- 59% of all food insecure households (2 million) are at the **severe end of the food insecurity spectrum**
- **97% worried whether food would run out** before they got money to buy more
- **79% of households ran out of food** and did not have money to purchase more
- **93% couldn't afford to eat balanced meals**.
- Severely food insecure households are **over two times more likely to use coping mechanisms** such as reducing the purchase of dairy products, fresh produce or meat, cutting back on cleaning products and toiletries or spending more on credit cards or buy now, pay later schemes.

Source: [Foodbank Hunger Report 2024 - Foodbank Reports](#)

IF YOU OR SOMEONE YOU KNOW NEEDS SUPPORT,
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HOW TO GIVE

MATERIAL DONATIONS

Can be received by:

- Local Vinnies Conference
- Vinnies Support Centre/Community Hub
- Vinnies Service (e.g. Food Vans, Refuge)

Contact your Vinnies Schools Engagement Officer to connect with your local Vinnies Conference, Support Centre, or Service to confirm your recipient's donation needs.

Please ensure donated items are in a new condition and have a 6 month use-by date.



FINANCIAL DONATIONS

Can be made through:

- Vinnies Website
vinnies.org.au/nswwinterappeal
- Vinnies School-based Fundraising page
<https://fundraise.vinniesnsw.org.au/fundraise-your-way/>

- Direct Debit

Bank Name: Commonwealth Bank

Account Name: St Vincent de Paul Society Appeals Account

Account Number: 10057471

BSB Number: 062 193

Branch: LEICHHARDT NSW



Reminder: please email your Vinnies Schools Engagement Officer a record of all donations made by your school community (and please send any Direct Debit remittance advice to remittances@vinnies.org.au). We would like to acknowledge your school's generous efforts!

SCHOOL SLEEPOUTS

Running a school sleepout is an interactive way to experience the impacts associated with homelessness in a safe environment, as well as to raise funds and prompt action in your school community.

Sleepouts are also a great way to connect with your local Vinnies Conference and hear from Vinnies volunteers' experience of providing assistance to our clients.

Before fundraising commences, all School Sleepouts must be registered with Vinnies at <https://fundraise.vinniesnsw.org.au/create-your-own-vinnies-school-sleepout/>



PRAYER AND ADVOCACY

Schools can make a difference by praying for those experiencing homelessness. Students and staff can gather for prayer during assemblies or in classrooms, asking for shelter, safety, and hope for the homeless.

Through prayer, we remind students of the importance of empathy and compassion.

Schools can also encourage individual or small group prayers, fostering a deeper sense of connection. This simple act helps create a community that stands in solidarity with those in need, ensuring the homeless are not forgotten this winter.

Vinnies Spirituality Resources are available at <https://youthnsw.vinnies.org.au/resources>



Reminder: please email your Vinnies Schools Engagement Officer with any photos/video (with media consent) from your school's involvement in the Winter Appeal. Share your pictures and stories by tagging us on **Instagram:** @VinniesYouthNSW and **Facebook:** @NSWVinniesYouth

WARMTH IN ACTION: 6 ADDITIONAL WAYS TO SUPPORT THE VINNIES WINTER APPEAL

1

TINNIES FOR VINNIES

Get involved in 'Tinnies for Vinnies' by gathering canned food donations to support your local Vinnies Conference or Food Vans.

These donations help provide nutritious meals for people experiencing food insecurity this winter.

To make it extra special, consider adding stickers with messages of encouragement to brighten someone's day.

♥ *All donated food must be non-perishable, such as soups, beans, pasta sauces, or canned vegetables.*



2

HOST A SLEEPOUT

Experience a night in the cold to raise awareness and funds for those without a safe place to sleep. Organising a school sleepout or virtual sleepout not only fosters empathy but also encourages important conversations about homelessness. By giving up your warm bed for one night, you can help create change for people who sleep rough every night.

♥ *Every dollar raised goes towards emergency relief, food, and shelter for people in need.*

3

WINTER WARMERS DRIVE

A simple blanket, a warm coat, or a thick pair of socks can make all the difference for someone facing the cold this winter. Organise a collection drive at your school, workplace, or community group to donate essential winter items to Vinnies. These donations provide warmth and comfort to individuals and families struggling to stay warm.

♥ *New or good-quality pre-loved items are welcome!*



4

COOK UP KINDNESS

Nothing says care like a warm meal. Host a bake sale, a soup-making day, or a cooking event, with proceeds or meals donated to Vinnies services. Whether you're baking sweet treats, preparing hearty soups, or making sandwiches, your kindness will provide nourishment and hope to those doing it tough.

♥ *Get creative with a 'pay-it-forward' meal initiative to help feed people in need.*

5

GOLD COIN FOR GOOD

A small act of generosity can create a big impact. Organise a gold coin donation day at school or work, encouraging everyone to give what they can. Whether it's a casual clothes day, a themed fundraiser, or a fun challenge, every dollar collected helps provide food, shelter, and support to vulnerable people in your community.

♥ *It's a simple way to make a big difference!*



6

VOLUNTEER YOUR TIME

Your time is one of the greatest gifts you can give. Volunteer at a Vinnies shop, Soup Van, or local community event to support people in need. Whether you're sorting donations, preparing meals, or lending a listening ear, every small action helps spread warmth and kindness this winter.

♥ *Even a few hours can make a huge impact on someone's life.*



Contact your Vinnies Schools/Youth Engagement Officer for more information.

CARDS OF HOPE: SHARE A MESSAGE OF LOVE

ACTIVITY DESCRIPTION:

We all want to be seen, valued and loved.

We invite you to create a card of hope by following these steps and share a rainbow of colour with someone on a dark day.

1. Choose your colour of card and envelope. Ensure your card fits inside the envelope.
2. Decide if you'd like to draw a picture, cut out images or words from magazines, brochures or printed from online.
3. Choose images that remind you of home, things that make you feel happy, warm and valuable, or images of kindness.
4. Choose a message to be placed inside the card on the right-hand page. (see the suggested messages).

What message of hope do you want to share with someone to let them know you see them, that they are valuable and loved...

Thank you for choosing to be kind and change a life.

Suggested wording:

- *You are wonderful and valuable just as you are.*
- *You are strong and courageous. Our world needs your strength.*
- *Thank you for being brave. Our world needs you.*
- *May this card bring you warmth. You are seen and you are loved.*
- *Each day is new and holds endless possibility.*
- *May the sun shine on you today.*
- *May tomorrow bring sunshine and all your dreams to life.*
- *I see you. Your story matters.*
- *May you feel the sun shine in your heart. May you see all the colours of the rainbow. May you know you are loved and valuable in our world.*



DO YOU NEED HELP?

- FOOD
- BILLS
- HOUSING
- ELECTRICITY

VINNIES IS HERE

Call our intake line
13 18 12
vinnies@vinnies.org.au



- All cards need to include the Vinnies logo and support information patch.
- Please use semi-thick card (not paper) when making these cards of hope.
- Once your school group has made these cards, please contact your Vinnies Schools/Youth Engagement Officer to arrange a drop-off of the cards for Vinnies clients.

CREATE A POSTCARD: WHAT HOME MEAN TO YOU

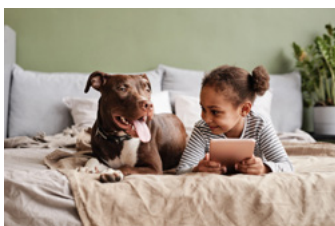
ACTIVITY DESCRIPTION:

Have students create a postcard filled with things that remind them of home. Students will observe their image and make a list of things different from the lives of Abigail and Isabella.

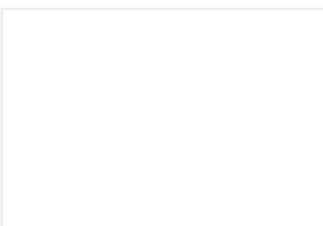
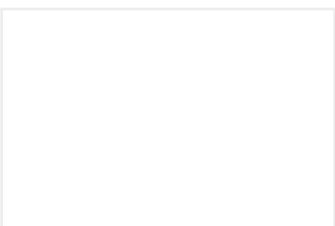
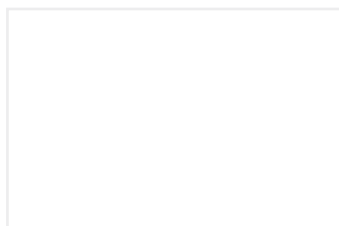
Have students select images and words that remind them of home and cut them out to place on the postcard template “HOME” below.

What makes you think of home _____

Write words, draw and attach images that create a picture of home



What do you see that was different for Abigail and Isabella?



GROCERY BUDGET CHALLENGE

ACTIVITY DESCRIPTION:

In this interactive budgeting activity, students will plan three meals, calculate the cost of ingredients, and adjust their choices to fit within a randomly assigned budget. This challenge encourages financial literacy, smart shopping, and nutrition awareness.

1. Prepare the Materials:

- Print and distribute Budget Cards.
- Students will use the Woolworths website or a printed catalogue to find item prices.

2. Plan Three Meals:

- Each student selects three meals they would like to make for a family of four (2 adults, 2 children). If needed suggest websites such as [Recipe Tin Eats \(Quick Dinner Recipes - RecipeTin Eats\)](#)
- Once students have found 3 recipes, they need to list the ingredients needed for each meal.

3. Find the Costs:

- Students research the prices of each ingredient using an online food website in the area e.g. Coles, Woolworths, IGA. If students do not have access to their computers, please print a copy of their weekly catalogue e.g. Woolworths
- Once all ingredients are listed, they calculate the total cost of their three meals.

4. Draw a Budget Card:

- Once students have completed steps 1-3 they randomly draw a Budget Card to determine their spending limit.
- It is likely that the budget card will be lower than the total needed for their ingredients.

5. Adjust for Budget:

- If their total cost exceeds their budget, students must make swaps, remove items, or choose budget-friendly alternatives.
- Encourage them to consider nutrition, portion sizes, and value-for-money choices

6. Challenge Cards (Optional):

- Students can pick a Challenge Card to introduce unexpected financial changes.



BUDGET CARD

Your grocery budget is: \$80

- Use this budget to buy ingredients for your three meals.
- If your total cost is over budget, swap or remove items!



BUDGET CARD

Your grocery budget is: \$60

- Use this budget to buy ingredients for your three meals.
- If your total cost is over budget, swap or remove items!



BUDGET CARD

Your grocery budget is: \$50

- Use this budget to buy ingredients for your three meals.
- If your total cost is over budget, swap or remove items!



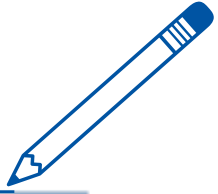
BUDGET CARD

Your grocery budget is: \$40

- Use this budget to buy ingredients for your three meals.
- If your total cost is over budget, swap or remove items!



SHOPPING LIST



Item's name

Price

Total



CHALLENGE CARD



Two extra guests (adults) are coming for dinner one night.

- Adjust your meal plan to serve six people
- If your total cost is over budget, swap or remove items!

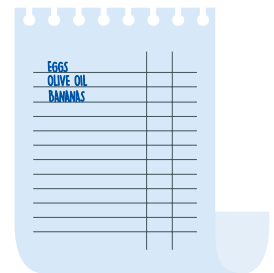
CHALLENGE CARD



One family member has just been diagnosed with a gluten intolerance.

- Swap out ingredients to make at least one meal gluten-free
- If your total cost is over budget, swap or remove items!

CHALLENGE CARD



You just received a bill for an urgent house repair.

- Your grocery budget has been cut by \$10—adjust your plan
- If your total cost is over budget, swap or remove items!

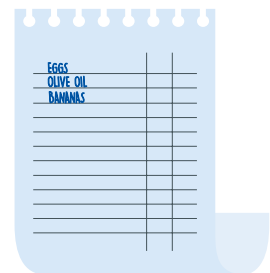
CHALLENGE CARD



You have a busy evening ahead

- Need to replace one of your meals with something that can be cooked in under 20 minutes
- If your total cost is over budget, swap or remove items!

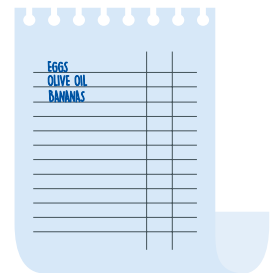
CHALLENGE CARD



One of the children refuses to eat one of your planned meals

- You must adjust the meal plan to include an alternative dish
- If your total cost is over budget, swap or remove items!

CHALLENGE CARD



The family's oven is broken, and they can only use a stovetop or microwave

- Adjust your meals to fit this restriction
- If your total cost is over budget, swap or remove items!

VINNIES IS HERE TO HELP

SUPPORT HOTLINE: 13 18 12

WWW.VINNIES.ORG.AU



St Vincent de Paul Society
NSW

good works