

Food with Dignity for Greater Victoria Social Concern Office

Help honors when the bread that nourishes it adds the visit that consoles; the advice that enlightens, the friendly shake of the hand that lifts up the sinking courage.

Frederic Ozanam (1813-1853)

The **Society of Saint Vincent de Paul Vancouver Island** has prioritized, food security and dignity for those we serve as a significant part of our mission. part of our food security priority, the Society has been designated a Good Food Organization through [Community Food Centres Canada](#).

This designation allows us to join a growing network of like-minded organizations across Canada who share a commitment to offering healthy and dignified food programs in their communities. And it provides access to free training, resources and opportunities to apply for grants to build on our food security work.

For Greater Victoria, our food emergency distribution program is managed centrally through the **Social Concern Office** (833 Yates Street, Victoria). Operating 5 days a week, the SCO serves as many as 150 singles, couples and families with children. Following a recent move to a refurbished location, a new “**Food with Dignity**” shopping model was successfully implemented.

The model is centered on a shopping experience that returns the dignity of choice to those in need. Clients of the SCO pick the items suited to their dietary and cultural preferences, including fresh vegetables, fruit, gluten-free and dairy products. In addition to food, free clothing and household items are available in our clothing area.

The new program uses compassionate shopping helpers, which provides Opportunity for them to share nutrition information, meal planning and referral information.

The benefits of this new shopping system include:

- A more efficient system with less waste, with donations going right on the shelves.
- Providing opportunities to educate people about nutrition and meal planning.
- Volunteers spending more time walking with the poor and supporting them in their choices.

A new SCO advisory group, including clients, volunteers and staff, is being set up to expand programming - to support those in need beyond food emergency to a more secure future. One of the first new programs implemented is a community partnership to provide art gallery space in our new location this will give low income



artists in the community a hand up and create a welcoming space for our visitors..

To learn more about the Social Concern Office and the success of **“Food with Dignity”**, please contact Margaret Forbes at mforbes@sdpvictoria.com.

