

# Former MP backs charity

## VOLUNTEERING

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FORMER LEEDS MP John Battle is one of 600 volunteer members of the St Vincent de Paul Society (SVP).

Mr Battle, who represented Leeds West from 1987 to 2010, is both a parish member and patron of the charity.

The SVP helps thousands of people in need in Leeds and Mr Battle is one of the volunteer members committed to making a difference in the lives of the poor.

While training to be a priest,

Mr Battle spent time engaging with pastoral community work.

He helped build up tenants' associations in Liverpool, and gained a great sense of purpose and reward from doing practical work with local people.

He moved to Leeds to make contact with a religious community who were ordinary workers living in an ordinary house but managing to live a "life of contemplation in a world of action".

Later, his life would lean from prayer towards action, when asked to stand as a councillor and later as an MP.

After retiring from Parliament, he decided he wanted to take on community work and



**VOLUNTEER:** Former Leeds MP John Battle (centre).

looked at various projects to engage with. The St Vincent's Support Centre in Leeds, part of the SVP, appealed to him.

He became a trustee and works avidly to raise funds and the profile of the Centre.

He also understands the value of reaching out to people

in need at grassroots level and joined his local SVP group conference at his parish.

Here he visits lonely isolated people, and once again his listening ear and ability to tune in to people's needs and dreams is at the forefront of his work.

He said: "In all these people

I see great, gentle, unassuming warmth. They do not shout about what they do but serve others with deep compassion and kindness.

"What gives me energy is not jogging or taking tablets.

"People give me energy. People inspire."

## EDUCATION

# Final for gifted duo

TWO TALENTED youngsters from Leeds have beaten competition from more than 75,000 others to reach the national final of a spelling bee competition at Anglia Ruskin University.

The Grammar School at Leeds year seven pupils Thomas Flint (Spanish language) and Uma Schuth (French language) will be amongst 108 national finalists who have been given 200 words to learn in their chosen language for the final on July 1.

The winner of the Routes into Languages National Spelling Bee will be the pupil who can correctly translate and then spell the most words in 60 seconds.

Sarah Schechter, who is the project manager for Routes into Languages East at Anglia Ruskin University, said: "We're very excited to be able to give these talented youngsters a chance to show their flair for languages."

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