

The Good Samaritan

Beyond the Lease: A Louisville Landlord's Compassion for the Unhoused



Landlords often hold the keys to open doors for our clients.

Unfortunately, many say no because it's not always a fairy tale ending after we help our clients secure housing. There's still a learning curve for them to adjust to life after housing.

"Many landlords say they'll house our clients until there's a problem," said Renee Bailey, SVDP's Housing Specialist. "Anytime a landlord rents to someone, they are taking a risk because tenants may damage property or have conflict with their neighbors."

People who have been unhoused for a longtime often need the support of case managers to help them adjust to living in their apartments. They help clients understand the terms of their lease and their responsibilities as renters.

This can be a gift to landlords like Mahendra Eshwarayya.

He moved from India to Louisville with his family in 2007 and is a landlord for 10 of our clients. He owns more than

100 units—duplexes, single family homes, and apartments—across the city.

"It's uncommon that you have a landlord so willing to work with our clients," Bailey added. "He's very patient with the clients. He's very understanding."

When Eshwarayya talks to other landlords, they tell him that they won't help anyone who has experienced housing instability. They don't want Section 8 tenants, those who struggle with substance use, or the mentally ill. It's too messy.

Eshwarayya says partnering with an organization like St. Vincent de Paul Louisville is vital because he's not housing people coming directly off the streets. Rather, we have helped provide that person with case management, counseling, and other supportive resources.

"I didn't see these kinds of organizations or nonprofits like this in India. Whatever their support was, it came from the government," Eshwarayya said. "Everybody on staff at St. Vincent—working with this team—it's very easy. It's good. I'm happy with that."

Eshwarayya sometimes sacrifices his sense of peace, his time, and resources where other local landlords may not.

"I thought we can give them a better and more livable service," Eshwarayya added. "I definitely feel good because I know they're not on the street, but safe."

One of those tenants is Daryl, who lives in a one-bedroom apartment. He says Eshwarayya is "a great landlord and takes care of issues instantly."

"I was homeless for quite some years," Daryl said. "I was on the streets, living in an alley on 4th St. behind a hotel next to a dumpster. I wasn't accustomed to that lifestyle ... It takes a toll on you. I wanted to better myself. It got to the point where I didn't feel like a human being or a part of society anymore because of the way people looked at me and treated me."

Daryl is in our Collaborative Housing Initiative (CHI), which provides off-campus permanent supportive housing to 46 homeless individuals and families where one member of the household has a disability.

My experience at St. Vincent de Paul has been exceptional. The staff are some of the nicest people I've met. They're always there for me. I love SVDP. They made me feel like I'm a person and citizen again. They gave me back something that I thought I lost. For that, I feel like I'm forever indebted.

—Daryl

Eshwarayya is willing to work with us.

"I'm used to it now because I've been in the business for a long time," he said. "Whatever comes, I go with the positive. Nothing is impossible to resolve an issue."



St. Vincent
de Paul

LOUISVILLE

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The Good Samaritan

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Our Mission

We house, feed, and support those in
need with compassion and dignity.

Support SVDP

To find out more about our work or
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St. Vincent de Paul Louisville

'FROM FRIDAY TO FRIDAY': HOW CONFER

27

SVDP Conferences

Conference Members

629



\$1.75
million

Food,
clothing, and
financial
assistance
to 29,815
people



Rebecca Najewicz's first home visit was one she couldn't unsee.

Although it was more than 35 years ago, it has stuck with her ever since.

"They're all a little bit scary until you know what you're doing," Najewicz said. "The first home visit I ever made was to a young girl. She was probably 17 or 18. She just had a baby. She was in an apartment. When we walked in, there was absolutely nothing in the apartment. It was totally empty ... There was nothing except a queen mattress with no bedding on the floor. I remember it like it was yesterday. It was so impactful. So we gave her everything we had."

That home visit was in the late 1980s while she lived in Seattle, Washington. Najewicz has now been a longtime member of the St. Bernadette Conference.

"I think it's the people that you get to work with," added Najewicz. "The SVDP conference's vision statement is that it starts with a group of friends. You must be friends first. That's how the society started. It was a group of friends who came together. That is what each conference is about."

The St. Bernadette Conference, which has a dozen members, is one of 27 SVDP

parish-based conferences throughout Louisville and Central Kentucky. Our 629 SVDP conference members respond with urgency to those in need.

SVDP conferences are in the prevention business. They stand in the gap for those who may be one paycheck away from entering homelessness. Each day, they are a lifeline for those struggling—providing not just help—but hope. The stats above are from this past fiscal year.

Spotlight on St. Bernadette



Back row left to right: Ellen Creely, Rebecca Najewicz, Judy Clausen, Dan Langan, Bruce Davis, Charlie O'Bryan. Front row left to right: Brenda McMahon, Jane Queenan, Pat Cheever, Janet Gardner

The St. Bernadette Conference, located within Norton Commons in the 40059 zip code, helps with financial assistance for food, utilities, gas, and rent.



CONFERENCES HELP HOUSEHOLDS ON THE BRINK

56,171
hours spent
volunteering



12,723
In-person visits
to those in need

49,688
miles driven



Pat Cheever is the conference president.

“Our main goal is to try to keep individuals and households from homelessness,” Cheever said. “We help people that are down and out. Our church is in a very affluent area, but you are still very surprised with how much need there is.”

Prospect is not known for its poverty. In 2023, the median household income of Prospect households was more than \$172,000. Only 2% of households are under the poverty line. However, when life happens, the bills keep coming.

“It’s shocking. They’re just living from Friday to Friday and something bad happens. Then, they’re all messed up. It’s sad. It’s a shame. There are so many people, women with children, and men that aren’t involved,” Cheever added.

Cheever shared one example of Bree, a single mother of four. When her hotel job cut back on her hours, she was able to secure a job at a grocery store. However, between the hiring process and receiving her first paycheck, there were five weeks of waiting. The St. Bernadette Conference paid \$2,000 so that she wasn’t evicted.

Those are the situations families find themselves in. They’re trying their best, doing nothing wrong, but need help.

The average rent in Jefferson County is roughly \$1,300 per month. The cost of housing is still the biggest hurdle they see.

“We try to pay for multiple months because sometimes if you just pay one month, they’re already so far behind that they don’t have time to get the next month together,” Najewicz added.

The St. Bernadette Conference often fields calls from neighboring zip codes.

“I’m amazed at the need for food,” Najewicz said. “I always tell people if you’re really wondering what you can do—and it’s not glamorous—give food.”

Here is a snapshot of three months’ worth of work (Oct. to Dec. 2024):

- Paid four people’s rent for \$4,579 total
- Partnered with Eastern Area Community Ministries totaling \$2,100
- Helped 19 families from other SVDP Conference zip codes for \$3,258 total
- Helped a total of 45 families, including 54 children
- Purchased 48 pairs of men’s slippers during renovations at Ozanam Inn Men’s Emergency Shelter

To connect to a conference, visit www.svdplou.org/svdp-conferences.

UPCOMING EVENTS at
ST. VINCENT DE PAUL
LOUISVILLE



You’re Invited!

Roses & Rosé

Sunday, April 27

Winsday

Wednesday, April 30

For event information, please contact Makenzie Greenwell at (502) 272-2134 or mgreenwell@svdplou.org.

Our thanks to
Louisville Metro
Government for
their support



SVDP Monthly Podcast

This podcast shares stories of people, partners, and programs in the Louisville community and across the country who care about our mission.

You can watch or listen today at
www.svdplou.org/podcast/

**SVDP
merch**



Archbishop Fabre joins podcast to share his story and talk Easter season



In this month's podcast episode, we are excited to interview the face of the Catholic church in the Louisville area—Archbishop Shelton Fabre.

He shares his story, experience in the Archdiocese of Louisville, the Catholic call to help those in need, this upcoming Easter season, and how to grow in

your faith. The Archdiocese of Louisville consists of 110 parishes stretching from the Ohio River to the Tennessee border.

This episode officially airs on Tuesday, April 8.

To check out our

podcast, you can scan the

QR code or visit our YouTube channel @ svdplouky.

You can also listen on Spotify Music, Apple Music, or YouTube Music.



Turn Derby Week into a Giving Day—Join Us for Winsday

Get ready for Winsday! Not Wednesday, but Winsday!

Join us on Wednesday, April 30, where your purchased race day ticket can help our clients cross the finish line.

This is a new and unique opportunity during Derby Week where you can purchase a race day ticket and support a local nonprofit.

St. Vincent de Paul Louisville was one of the nonprofits chosen to participate.

For every ticket sold through our unique link, \$5 goes directly to our mission to house, feed, and support those in

need with compassion and dignity. Make it a beautiful day at the track with family and friends! You can purchase tickets by

scanning the QR code to be taken to our link.



HELP SUPPORT OUR MISSION!

Purchase your Winsday tickets today!
\$5 from each ticket sold directly supports our work.
Act now and help us make a positive impact!

St. Vincent de Paul
Louisville



Purchase a Meal for our DV Shelter

<https://svdplou.maestroweb.com/>

