

The Good Samaritan

When Illness Leads to Homelessness: “We’re getting our life back together.”



Steven got his strong work ethic from his father.

“My mom was a stay-at-home mom. My dad always worked. He always provided. We never had to worry about having food, clothes, or a place to live,” said Steven, now 62 years old.

Since starting out as a stockboy at a mom-and-pop grocery store from the age of 11, Steven has worked all his life.

“I’ve done it all since 11- to 58-years-old,” added Steven.

Steven, a graduate of Shawnee High School, always provided for his family. That is until a series of physical illnesses slowed him down in 2020-21.

“With me, it was frustrating because I couldn’t provide. I was never brought up that way. It makes you feel really kind of low because you can’t provide for your family. It’s really tough,” he said.

Not everyone who experiences homelessness is unwilling to work. The National Coalition for the Homeless estimates roughly half of the unhoused population has a job or multiple jobs.

In Steven’s case, it was because he couldn’t work. The Department of Trans-

portation would no longer approve him driving commercial trucks at Rumpke following a mild stroke and battling vertigo. Most of his jobs were related to commercial driving, though he spent five years in the Louisville Metro Police Department. Steven now receives Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI), but between the time of the judge’s ruling and receiving SSDI, he was unable to work and they were “scraping by.”

Steven and his wife, Mary, have full custody of their two granddaughters, Jala (14 years old) and Ava (8 years old). During this transition, they began couch surfing, living with family and friends, or sleeping in hotels. After they stayed at the Volunteers of America, they moved into one of the 36 family housing units on our Shelby Park campus in Dec. 2023.

“St. Vincent has really helped us and put us in a good place. It’s got us back on track because we were in a really bad place,” Steven said. “I don’t think we could ask for anything better.”

Sometimes stability is all it takes.

“It was the housing. Once we got stable, then we were fine because you never know what’s going to happen from one minute

to the next. And when you have kids, it’s hard to walk around the streets with them,” Steven added. “It’s been helpful to be together and not have to move from one house to another. We’re getting our life back together.”

Their permanent supportive housing unit, which is fully furnished, provides housing assistance and supportive services to assist a houseless person with a disability in achieving housing stability. Our 36 family units have housed 101 people, including 52 children, with more than 75% who have lived in their apartment from one year to more than five years (Oct. 1, 2024 to July 1, 2025).

Steven and his wife, who were without a car for three years, also bought a car through our Vehicle Donation Program. It is one of 90 purchased vehicles this fiscal year (same time period as above).

“They are grateful for what they have and what their situation currently entails,” said Doug Vasquez, a SVDP Case Manager. “He loves his two granddaughters dearly. He does just about everything he can to provide for them.”

Steven and his family are currently waiting for Section 8 to reopen in the Louisville Metropolitan area.

“Me and my wife were talking, and we said, ‘We’re not going to let this get us down. We will get back up. We don’t know how long it’s going to take, but we’ll be back,’” Steven said.





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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

A RAINBOW AFTER THE RAIN

IRIS'S FAMILY MOVES FORWARD



Ariel Perkins (left), SVDP's Mental Health Clinical Services Coordinator, is pictured with her client, Iris. They are meeting for their one-on-one counseling session.

Iris's name means rainbow. As you know, to see a rainbow, it must rain.

Likewise, while Iris and her daughters are enduring a challenging season, she knows it's temporary.

"I've often said that this is a minor setback for a major comeback," Iris said.

Iris has three daughters, two of whom are with her at our Domestic Violence Transitional Housing Program—Rhiyan and Nvayah, 15 and 10 years old, respectively. Nvayah has autism.

Domestic violence is the leading cause for women becoming homeless. The day after Christmas in 2024, life abruptly changed. While video calling her aunt on Facebook Messenger, her aunt noticed Iris was wearing sunglasses inside the house. She knew something was off.

Her aunt and uncle, who live in Louisville, drove to St. Louis and picked them

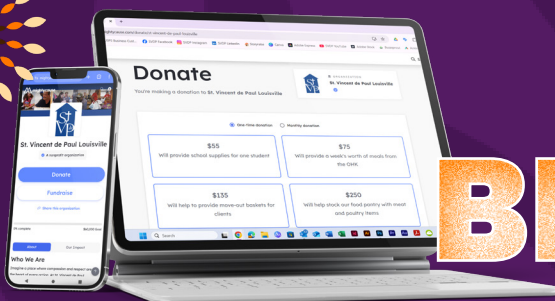
up. They quickly packed their backpacks and fled.

"I never looked back ... I had to leave everything that I knew—my house and car. I just had to walk away. It was kind of hard," Iris added.

With her daughter's autism, they decided not to stay with her aunt and uncle. They lived in a hotel, but eventually Iris's money ran out. While her aunt and uncle tried to find her an apartment and pay rent, nobody would accept Iris's applications because she didn't have a job. Regardless, Iris has shown resiliency while staying at various local shelters.

"I'm homeless. I'm not crazy. I don't care if my children and I have to go in a bathroom somewhere. We still have to represent ourselves no matter what we're going through," she said.

This Valentine's Day, Iris and her daughters came to our shelter, where they



BIGGEST

have experienced enduring love through stability, safety, and support.

"It's been very, very good. Everyone here welcomed us with open arms. With my daughter, they understand," Iris said.

Iris and her daughters are one of 91 individuals who have been helped in our Domestic Violence Transitional Housing Program (see graphic; Oct. 1, 2024 to June 30, 2025).

This is because clients will often start at our Domestic Violence Transitional Housing component for up to one year before transitioning to our Rapid Rehousing scattered-site option. This component offers an apartment or house with up to 12 months of rental assistance.

Not only help with housing, but through our Mental Health & Substance Use Program (MHSU), Iris has made progress to manage her stress levels and get her family stabilized.

"Iris is a naturally optimistic person and one of the most resilient individuals I've ever met," said Ariel Perkins, SVDP's Mental Health Clinical Services Coordinator.

"One of the things that I realized is there's nothing wrong

with sitting down with a therapist. Before talking to Ariel, I was putting on a front, but it's OK to let people see the cracks in your walls," Iris added.

Iris is one of 298 clients served through MHSU, which includes individuals and households. The MHSU team meets with women fleeing domestic violence, Veterans, men who have experienced chronic homelessness, and those in permanent supportive housing units. They have also held 194 group meetings and completed 55 incidents of crisis intervention (Oct. 1, 2024 to June 30, 2025).

Iris and her daughters were successfully housed at the end of June.



93% 
EXITED TO POSITIVE HOUSING DESTINATIONS

91 adults & children



45 adults 

RECEIVED ONE-ON-ONE COUNSELING

UPCOMING EVENTS at ST. VINCENT DE PAUL LOUISVILLE

SAVE
THE
DATE



You're Invited! National Assembly

August 27 - 30

Give for Good

September 18

Clubs & Cocktails

September 21 and 23

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/svdp-podcast



Give for Good
Louisville
COMMUNITY FOUNDATION OF LOUISVILLE



ONLINE GIVING DAY

Quiet Service, Lasting Impact: Food Pantry Volunteer Chuck Peters' Legacy



From left to right: Food Pantry volunteers Chuck Peters and John Bowling.

BY ALEX PAUL | Marketing Intern

Chuck Peters didn't necessarily set out to run a food pantry.

What started out as a neighborly favor has become more than a decade-long commitment to helping others. When Peters' next-door neighbor (former St. Vincent de Paul Louisville CEO & Executive Director Ed Wnorowski) approached him in 2013 about it, he said yes—and never looked back. It's now been more than ten years.

Peters was the person behind-the-scenes, making sure shelves were stocked by ordering the food that volunteers then distributed to clients. But it was the relationships—the people—that made it all meaningful.

"The group has become a little family," said Peters, reflecting on the volunteers and clients he came to know. "I really enjoyed the one-on-one interactions with the people I was serving."

In July 2014, SVDP's Food Pantry was born. Since the start of this year, our 100% volunteer-run Food Pantry has provided groceries to more than 675 households each month.

Peters has been integral to orchestrating this growth. His work at the pantry has been steady, humble, and rooted in a simple desire to serve. It was never just about giving out food. It was about offering kindness, listening, and meeting people where they are.

After years of ordering food, organizing volunteers, and serving clients, Peters is stepping back and passing the reins to his successor, long-time

volunteer John Bowling. While logistics are important, Bowling echoes the same heart behind the mission.

"Helping people on a day-to-day basis is gratifying," Bowling said.

It has been a smooth transition. Bowling is following in the footsteps of someone who showed what service looks like when done with compassion and dignity.

It's easy to look at the Food Pantry and focus on the shelves or statistics. But behind those are volunteers like Chuck Peters—those who answer the call, show up each week, and form a small but mighty community of care. His story is a reminder that acts of generosity, though often quiet, can leave a lasting impact.

As part of our monthly initiative, we are asking for jars of peanut butter or jelly to "Stock the Shelves" in August. You may drop off during Food Pantry hours or reach out to Nicky Peck, Volunteer Engagement Coordinator, at npeck@svdplou.org or (502) 301-8685.



Why I'm Grateful for My Grandpa's Generosity

BY ALEX PAUL | Marketing Intern

My grandfather, Larry Paul, has been a donor to St. Vincent de Paul for the past four years. He often says he started giving because I began working at the Food Pantry, inspired by what he calls my "generosity." But the truth is, I believe his generosity shaped me long before I ever stepped into the pantry.

Growing up, I watched my grandpa consistently show up for others. He was always involved in giving—through different organizations and quiet acts of kindness around Louisville. He first heard about St. Vincent de Paul from his brother, Uncle Bob, who volunteered at a local chapter in Anderson, Indiana, until the age of 90. That sense of lifelong service runs deep in our family, and I now realize that my own commitment to the

Food Pantry is more of a continuation of his legacy than something entirely my own.

When I began working at the pantry, my grandpa immediately showed interest. He believed in the mission of SVDP—that we are doing work for the people in our community who need it most. He recognized the willingness of the staff and volunteers to meet others where they are, and he wanted to be part of that. My grandpa is one of about 60 Good Samaritan monthly donors. He's not just giving out of support for me, but because he believed that this work mattered.

I'm deeply grateful to my grandpa—not only for supporting SVDP financially, but for giving me the foundation to care. He's the reason I got connected to this work in the first place. His actions have taught me

that generosity isn't just about money—it's about consistency, compassion, and showing up even when no one's watching.

My grandpa's commitment is a legacy. He has passed down something more powerful than words—a belief that when we help our neighbors, we change our communities for the better.

I encourage you to become a part of the Good Samaritan Monthly Donor Program. To learn more, visit www.svdplou.org/monthly-giving. Like my grandpa, you never know how far your impact might reach.

