

The Good Samaritan

Sabrina, an on-campus resident, is all smiles this holiday season



Sabrina is done running.

After years of avoiding the pain from her past, she's finally facing it.

"It's time for me to speak up," Sabrina said. "That's why I'm seeing Matt and Pam (Clinical Coordinators in SVDP's Mental Health & Substance Use Program). I feel like everything is going right for me now, and it's time for the truth to be out. I just feel like there were a whole bunch of family secrets not being told."

Sabrina calls it the "childhood from hell." She experienced things that no young girl should have to endure. Her innocence, purity, and positive outlook on the world were shattered.

"What happened to me, it hurt me because I had endured everything," Sabrina added. "I'm trying to cope with what I went through ... my past trauma."

She was born and raised in Atlanta. Her dad was rarely in the picture, while her mom was on drugs and lived with an abusive pimp.

When she was 6 years old, a day at grandma's house turned into two years. At the age of 8, she played the role of mom by taking care of her little sister. She changed her cloth diapers, had to collect cans for money, and was bouncing from school to school and apartment to apartment. As a young girl, she didn't

have any friends because of this. She moved out at 17.

Despite all of this, Sabrina still graduated from high school. Shortly thereafter, she had children. The father wasn't around.

In 2009, Sabrina and her two children moved to Louisville for a fresh start.

"I got tired of the lifestyle I was living. I wanted to slow down," she said.

Things were somewhat normal until 2021, when she lost her housing. Over the next two years, a lot happened.

Sabrina slept on the streets, stayed at her family's house, in hotels, and a friend's place. She had no safety or stability (her children were grown at this point). She even got married and gained custody of her two grandchildren.

However, the marriage quickly ended in domestic violence, and the Coalition for the Homeless referred Sabrina to our Domestic Violence Transitional Housing Program in March 2023.

While she struggled with heavy drinking during this time, she was able to receive the help she needed.

"We were sheltered. We had somewhere to go. I liked the staff, and they got close to my grandbabies," Sabrina said. "I felt like I was cared for and safe ... It's not a place where you want to continue to be, but a stepping stone for us."

In June 2023, Sabrina and her 5-year-old granddaughter (she lost custody of her grandson) moved into a fully furnished, two-bedroom apartment on our campus. She pays no more than 30% of her income towards rent.

"We love it. It's so big and spacious. One, big bathroom looks like a bedroom," Sabrina added.

Sabrina is staying focused. She attends one-on-one and weekly group counseling sessions through our MHSU Program.

She utilizes our Food Pantry, and signed her grandchildren up to receive presents for Santa Shop this year.

"I'm taking advantage of all the benefits here on campus ... I want to take advantage of all the help that I can get. It's making my life a lot easier. I know I'm still going to have to go through bumpy roads. Not every day is a good day. I have to learn to cope with those days when they come."

Sabrina isn't where she wants to be yet—like many of us—but she's not where she used to be.

"I know my story and where I was at, where I'm at now, and where I'm still trying to get to. I can't get comfortable. That will set me back and hold me up," Sabrina said. "One thing that's kept my journey going and motivated me so much is God. I joined a church. I have a relationship with God now."





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The Good Samaritan

The monthly newsletter of
St. Vincent de Paul Louisville

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Our Mission

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

Support SVDP

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St. Vincent de Paul Louisville

In the **TRENCHES** of **TRAUMA**



Earlier this year, we were awarded \$281,858 in local grant funding from the Kentucky Opioid Abatement Advisory Commission that will allow for the expansion of our Mental Health and Substance Use Program (MHSU).

We provide housing and supportive services to 137,753 people annually through our emergency shelter, transitional and permanent supportive housing programs, food assistance programs, Veteran assistance, mental health and substance use counseling, and after-school tutoring and summer programming.

This new funding source will allow us to expand program staff to hire an additional clinician and peer support specialist to increase our capacity to assist more clients in crisis.

"This past fiscal year, nearly 350 people utilized our counseling and services," said Jennifer Clark, SVDP's CEO and Executive Director. "Doubling our program staff to assist more people through individual or group therapy will significantly improve outcomes for those we serve. For example, 15 suicides were prevented through crisis intervention."

While helping the unhoused and fighting food insecurity are vital to our mission, support is often the necessary link for our clients' success in these areas.

"We're trying to get to the bottom of the root cause of homelessness and—almost 100% of the time—even being homeless itself is a trauma," said Matt Weaver, SVDP's Associate Director of Clinical Services. "Often, people are not facing those traumas, so they are generally self-medicating—whether that be through eating, running away, drugs, or alcohol."

Every client who is in one of our on-campus or off-campus housing programs is offered access to one-on-one and group counseling through the MHSU team. This also includes crisis intervention, de-escalation, suicide prevention, and staff training for the importance of mental health.

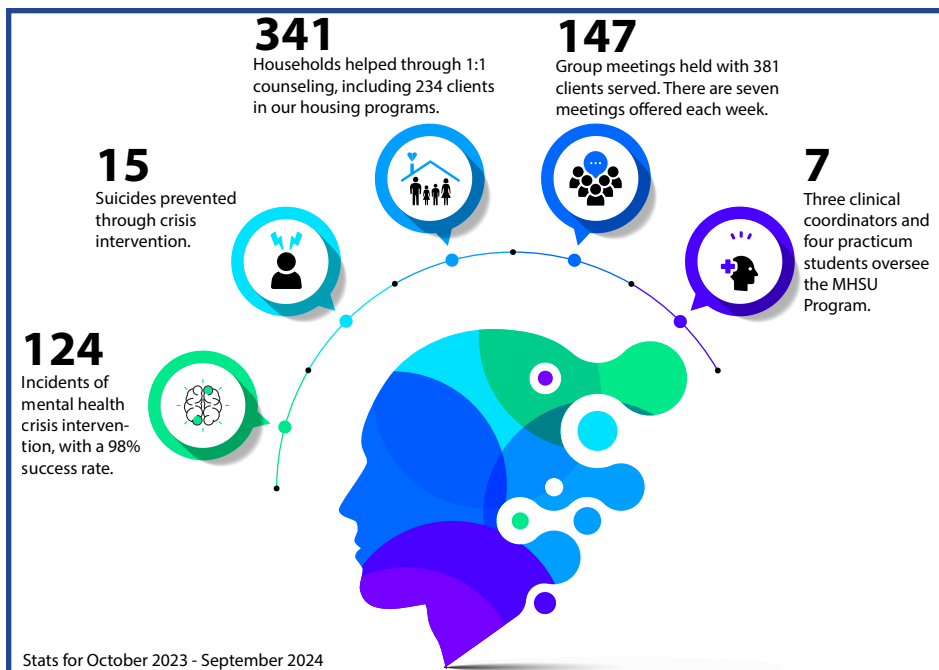
"Once a client gets to the root of what is preventing them from keeping a job or securing housing, they begin to work towards not only the cure, but towards having skills that they might not have learned growing up. They look towards resolving some of the traumas that kept them down or afraid of trying to try again," Weaver added.

Tiffany is one such client. She lives in one of our on-campus housing programs, and meets with Weaver every week.

"It's very important for me because he helps keep me organized, with phone calls, paperwork, my appointments, and mental health," Tiffany said. "I was a victim of gang rape ... In our meetings, there's no judgment. It's private. He goes the extra mile. This is a big help for me."

For those in our housing programs, a high percentage of our 400 clients also have multiple mental health conditions. See the impact our MHSU Program plays in our client's journeys and the invaluable experience our practicum students gain.

SUPPORT OUR ANNUAL SAN



Meeting the *Practicum Students*



JOY ABELL

University of Louisville; first year graduate student; Master of Social Work

"I have loved working at SVDP for the people! Everyone has been so great at helping me navigate school and get an all-inclusive field experience. I enjoy going to look at housing with clients and see the excitement of them being able to take the next step."



BRIAN JONES

Eastern Kentucky University; second year graduate student; Master of Social Work

"I appreciate assisting those who are in need at SVDP. Partnering with residents through their journey to reintegrate back into society has been an invaluable learning experience and I have met a lot of great people through this process."



NINI MOHAMED

University of Louisville; final year graduate student; Master of Social Work

"My enjoyment is the ability to work and help people in need. The world is built on people helping each other and I enjoy doing that. Every client is unique. We were able to help one client apply to Section 8 housing."



KATHERINE WINCHELL

Eastern Kentucky University; final year graduate student; Master of Social Work

"Completing my practicum at SVDP has been eye opening. The clients I work with have so many strengths and resilience to have made it through all the difficult circumstances in their lives."

UPCOMING EVENTS at ST. VINCENT DE PAUL LOUISVILLE



You're Invited!

Santa Shop

Set-up: Friday, December 13
Event: Sunday, December 15

For event information, please contact
Bex Willenbrink at (502) 301-8695 or
rwillenbrink@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/

OUR 28TH ANTA SHOP



SVDP Louisville launches a new website

We're thrilled to announce the launch of our new website! Our goal is to provide a resource-rich experience where you can:

- Discover our mission and the impact of our work
- Find opportunities to volunteer or support an event
- Learn about our thrift stores and how they support our cause
- Access resources to understand issues such as homelessness, food insecurity, and trauma
- Easily donate to make a difference

Our new "Get Help" page also connects those in need with tailored resources for their situation. We invite you to scan the QR code to explore the site!

A new, cleaner look

Easier Navigation

Computer, Tablet, and Mobile Friendly

One family shares why they donated their vehicles



The Greathouse family has donated two cars to St. Vincent de Paul Louisville.

"My grandfather was very active in the Society of St. Vincent de Paul during the Great Depression. That was at the St. Elizabeth of Hungary Catholic Church," said Dana Greathouse, a longtime SVDP supporter. "He passed that love for the organization along to my dad and he passed it along to me. So, when it came time to donate our car, it seemed logical that St. Vincent de Paul would be the choice ... I just really feel like St. Vincent de Paul's mission embodies Christianity."

In 2016, the Greathouses donated their 2003 Honda CRV, and this year, a 2012 Toyota Odyssey. Instead of trying to get extra cash, there was no hesitation in donating it to SVDP.

"It wasn't hard at all ... We could have certainly sold it to an individual or dealer, but we were glad to do it," Dana added. "It helps another human being, and it didn't cost us anything so to speak, so it seemed like the right thing to do. It was

a great donation for the organization, and we get a tax donation. It's a win-win."

The donation comes full circle. The person who purchased the Toyota Odyssey is a single father of two daughters who has received services from SVDP in the past.

"It served us well all these years for many family vacations, swim meets, sleepovers, transporting kids, and our daughter is in college now," Dana said. "We purchased a different vehicle to better meet our needs, so we decided it was time to let someone else take advantage of our Odyssey. We've taken good care of it for all these years, so there's no reason to think that someone else can't enjoy it too."

The Greathouses are one of many repeat donors, and SVDP received 94 vehicles this past fiscal year. All profits directly support our campus programs.

"While there are many reasons why someone decides to donate, the most important reason is the sense of satisfaction in knowing that the vehicle or proceeds from the sale can help someone in need,"

said Wanda Selph, SVDP's Coordinator for Store and Vehicle Donations. "The vehicles provide a means of transport for folks who cannot afford to pay retail price that may require a loan and a monthly payment."

How to Donate Your Vehicle Today



You can donate a vehicle, running or not, and we'll do the rest. Call us at (502) 468-8953 for more information.



While we prefer you drive your vehicle to the SVDP campus, if it's not in drivable condition, we will tow it free-of-charge.



On the day of the donation, have the title ready (free from liens) and make sure the taxes are up-to-date. Then, you get to claim a tax deduction.

For more information, visit www.svdplou.org/vehicle-donations.