

The Good Samaritan

Single mother of three shares of her first homeless experience



Angela is a single mother of three. She is pictured with her daughter, Audrianna, and her son, Tristen, in their fully furnished, on-campus apartment.

When business slowed down at the Mexican restaurant where Angela was pulling double shifts, she and her three children became homeless and lived at a local shelter for 10 months.

It was her family's first bout with homelessness, which began in May 2017.

"It was so difficult," Angela said. "I mean just going through a break-up, working for almost nothing since it cost me \$30 to get back and forth from work because I don't drive. Just trying and trying and failing."

Angela and her three children—elementary-aged twins and a teenage son—spent Christmas morning that year surrounded by strangers and squished next to one another, with presents scattered across the shelter.

"There's nothing worse for a parent than not having anything under the tree for your kids. It makes you feel like a failure, but seeing your kids happy is so important," Angela added.

That was then. This is now.

Angela, who had not heard of St. Vincent de Paul Louisville prior, has lived in West Family Apartments on our Shelby Park campus since March 2018.

"It has been wonderful compared to what we've been through," she said. "To have our own place, not just a room. To actually be able to breathe," she said. "It's nice not being scared. It has given me a chance to work on my mental health. To work on my physical health."

For the last several winters, Angela and her family woke up on Christmas morning in their three-bedroom, two-bathroom apartment without the worry of making rent or putting food on the table, and they had presents under the tree.

"Just having a safe, warm space with presents for my kids, a place to bake cookies, and to talk about Jesus and what it means for Him to come into the world," she said.

We have seven on-campus housing programs with 225 beds available, including about 60 children. East and

West Family Apartments have six two-bedroom and four three-bedroom apartments each with up to 48 total beds for homeless families. Angela's apartment came fully furnished with a large balcony, primary bedroom, and walk-in closet.

These are permanent supportive housing units (PSH). PSH is permanent housing in which housing assistance, such as long-term leasing or rental assistance, and supportive services are provided to assist a houseless person with a disability in achieving housing stability.

Angela and her children don't just have a stable place to stay, but also receive supportive services. She participates in counseling through our Mental Health and Substance Use Program, with the purpose of addressing the underlying causes of homelessness, such as addiction, mental illness, and trauma history, in a safe, supportive environment.

Her twins are also involved in the Family Success Center's after-school program Monday through Thursday.

"Both my kids are well behind in reading, so I was trying to get them involved in reading," Angela said. "Socially, it's helped a lot. They enjoy going, just being able to play with other kids, and they do learning activities or fun crafts."

Since Angela doesn't drive, she can walk to the Food Pantry twice a month to receive fresh groceries. This helps cover the gap where her Supplemental Security Income (SSI) doesn't.

"Kids are expensive and food is expensive, and trying to keep them in clothes and shoes and stuff they need for school," Angela added. "It's still a struggle ... and the food definitely helps."

Your financial donations allow families like Angela's to create moments and memories as simple as baking cookies on Christmas morning. Thank you!



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St. Vincent de Paul Louisville

Santa Shop still delivering Christmas presents 27 years and counting



For Christmas, Lisa's four-year-old son wanted a Woody action figure from the movie series "Toy Story."

While shopping for the first time at the 27th annual Santa Shop, Lisa was able to look through the new, unwrapped gifts for her son.

"You had nothing like this where I grew up," said Lisa, who lives in one of our on-campus housing programs. "He's been asking for a Woody toy, and I happened to find one."

The Santa Shop, which is held in the Family Success Center gym, had a mini-mall set up on Sunday, Dec. 10, from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. This year, we helped 292 households by providing 873 children (ages infant to 17 years old) with presents under the Christmas tree. This was all made possible because of the help of 247 volunteers and countless individual and group donations.

"This is my second time helping out," said Curtis, a volunteer from Saint Michael Catholic Church. "My wife and I are longtime supporters of St. Vincent de Paul. It's a good organization."

While walking with a volunteer, otherwise known as the "elves," parents or guardians receive stuffed animals, dolls, sports balls, toys, outfits, hair accessories, clothing, pajamas, winter coats, books, board games, and stocking stuffers for their children. Parents can also have their gifts wrapped if they'd like.

"I wasn't expecting a big mall. There aren't words for it. What you all do for the Santa Shop is life-changing for people. You all definitely give back. Everyone is kind. I haven't met someone without a smile on their face," said Martin, a father of four.





Martin and his wife were shopping for three of their children. He heard about the Santa Shop through his neighbor, and it was a huge help because he's currently laid off.

"I can't believe all the stuff you all have. My daughter would have a field day with all these dolls," Martin added.

Martin wasn't the only one in need of a lending hand this Christmas. Someone who lost their husband to cancer last year had several children to shop for. There were families with upwards of nine children.

Sharicka, who had shopped for her kids many years ago, was now helping shop for her 7-month-old grandson.

Knakiya, who heard about the Santa Shop for the first time through our Food Pantry, was shopping for her daughter Faith, who is 8 years old.



"It was pretty fun to shop for her. It's helped a whole lot. Her favorite toy will be the L.O.L. doll. Christmas is the best time of the year," Knakiya said.

Shoppers and volunteers alike shared the Christmas spirit.

"It was good to show the true meaning of the season," said Bill, who volunteered with his son, William, and is a member of Holy Trinity Catholic Church.

Volunteers Chris and Natasha found out about the Santa Shop while Googling ways to give back this holiday season. Natasha said it was well-organized.

"It's really good. This is my first time volunteering at something like this," Chris added.

Thank you to everyone who made the 27th annual Santa Shop such a huge success!



Save the Date

UPCOMING EVENTS AT
ST. VINCENT DE PAUL LOUISVILLE



Come Join Us!

Roses & Rosé

Sunday, April 28

Clubs & Cocktails

Dinner: Sunday, September 22

Scramble: Tuesday, September 24

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

Our thanks to
Louisville Metro
Government for
their support



Rainy Day Fund Update: Goal \$150,000

When my husband and I moved into our home in the Highlands neighborhood, it was nearly 100 years old. Over the last 15 years, we've raised six amazing children into adulthood and celebrated many special moments in our old house. In 2022, we finally decided we had to invest in our home, if we wanted it to continue to be our family home for the next 15 years. We spent a year renovating with new windows, doors, a roof, HVAC, gutters, exterior painting, and other repairs. While costly, we are thrilled that we could make the investment in our aging home to bring it new life for many years to come!

In much the same way, SVDP's campus in Shelby Park has aging buildings that need significant investment. With a large campus footprint, including owned and leased property totaling approximately 200,000 sq. ft., our buildings require regular maintenance and significant upkeep. We have nearly 250 individuals on campus every night that depend on us to provide a clean and safe environment for themselves and their families.

Established in 2021, the Rainy Day Aging Building Fund (RDF) supports critical maintenance, repairs, and other emergency expenses over \$3,000. Over the last three years, thanks to support from you, we've replaced a heat exchanger, updated AC units, paid insurance deductibles, purchased large fans for the Open Hand Kitchen, rewired electrical, purchased a new commercial oven, installed cameras and other security needs,



Simon Hall needed its roof replaced at the end of last year. This is one of several aged buildings we would like to update.

repaired and replaced aging or damaged roofs, and many other unexpected or unbudgeted maintenance expenses.

During the New Year, help us replenish our RDF to ensure we have essential funding for aging buildings and unexpected maintenance costs.

Donate directly online, by scanning our QR code, or via mail.

I look forward to updating you on the progress. Thank you for your support!

Pam

Pam Evans

Director of Development

