

# The Good Samaritan

## 'I'm Still Here': The heart of a father, even in homelessness



Michael is a genuinely good guy who fell on hard times.

Until recently, there was nothing out of the ordinary in his life. He was raised by loving parents—though separated, they were actively involved—and argued with his two older siblings.

"We had a tight-knit family," said Michael, who turns 62 years old in July. "I never had any problems. I had a normal childhood. Get in trouble, get a whooping, don't get back in trouble anymore."

Michael earned A's and B's in school. He played several sports and graduated from Waggener High School in 1982.

"My father told us there were only four things you could do—be an NBA or NFL player, go to the military, to school, or work," Michael added. "My option was I'm going to work. I worked all my life, from little jobs at the hospitals to the city of Louisville."

Michael was an employee at Louisville Metro Government for 25 years before retiring with a pension. He was in their Waste Management Department. He paid his bills on time and held his own.

Michael has one daughter, Micheshia, and granddaughter, "Little Nique." In 2017, his grandson, Dequante, was killed by a stray bullet while eating a piece of birthday cake in their home.

"That tore me and my family apart," he said. "I said to myself, 'I can't let that bring me down.' I had to be stronger for my daughter."

In 2023, things got worse. When Michael's mother fell ill, he moved into her home to care for her. After she passed, he remained in the home. However, his sibling sold the house without his knowledge. He was unprepared.

"Unlike many of the guys I work with, Michael comes from a tight-knit family, and it seems like his daughter would be more than willing to let him stay at her place. He is so wary of being a burden though, he won't do it," said Anna Walsh, Housing Specialist at St. John Center.

Michael entered homelessness for the first time. In Dec. 2023, he began staying at Ozanam Inn Men's Emergency Shelter.

"I appreciate St. Vincent de Paul for helping me because I did not want to live on the streets," Michael said.

Michael has been a blessing to the other residents and staff ever since.

"Michael mentors other residents at Ozanam Inn through word and action and always asks staff how he can help," said John Civardi, Ozanam Inn Case

Manager. "He goes out of his way to help keep Ozanam clean, mopping the floors or cleaning the bathrooms and common areas. He's always smiling—his positive attitude is contagious."

That attitude carries over into his daughter and granddaughter's life. Walsh says he is very present in their lives.

*Michael often talks about his daughter and grandkids. He clearly loves them a lot. He visits every day, babysits, cooks, and they celebrate the holidays together. Michael is careful with his money ... At one of our meetings, I remember noticing that his savings had taken a sizable hit ... he told me his daughter's TV was stolen so he bought her a new one. Not many people lacking in basic necessities would be so generous.*

Not only a TV, but he helped his daughter purchase her first home with the money he received after his father died.

"I'd rather them have what I don't have," Michael said. "I could have my own house, but I'm not worried about me. People ask me why I don't buy a house or car. I say I don't need that. I'm a father. I've got a grown daughter to support. To let her know I'm still here."

He should secure an apartment soon.

"My mind is strong and focused," Michael added. "Homelessness woke me up ... I thank God for St. Vincent de Paul and St. John Center."





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## The Good Samaritan

The monthly newsletter of  
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## Our Mission

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

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St. Vincent de Paul Louisville

# MANY PATHS, ONE CALLING:



Back row left to right: Steven Kehoe, Todd Seiler, Matt Henry, Ozanam Inn Case Manager John Civan  
Front row left to right: Peter Trinh, Lucas LaRosa, Michael Florin, Stephen Trinh, Hunter Dickens, Son Le

The dozen St. Meinrad seminarians who serve with us might surprise you.

Though each student feels called to the life of priesthood, their stories are anything but similar.

Ryan Carlson was a firefighter. Lucas LaRosa graduated with a Bachelor's degree in math from the Butler University. Todd Seiler worked as a professional videogame creator. Peter and Stephen Trinh and Son Le are from Vietnam. Benjamin Keating was a music major in New York before joining the marines and then attending medical school. Sean Sullivan has a computer science background.

*"Being on St. Vincent de Paul's campus has helped put a face on poverty per say. You can donate online, but once you're actually here helping those in need, you see the reasons you should be doing it is for that person. It makes it concrete that I'm helping this person in this moment."*

—Seminarian Sean Sullivan

The seminarians' various backgrounds have made them relatable to the clients at

Ozanam Inn Men's Emergency Shelter and those in need.

"I think all of us very much look forward to ministry day," said seminarian Steven Kehoe. "It's an exciting time for us to participate as a class and really put ourselves to work because this is what we plan on doing with our lives."

The seminarians are in their second year and expect to graduate in seven to nine years. One of their classes is to have a hands-on ministry assignment. It is to "put into practice" what they learn at a partner organization.

"We're studying to be priests, so it's important for us to build up our minds," said seminarian Matt Henry. "But, at least for me, my heart wants to share the love of Christ with people ... being able to actually serve outside of our studies grounds what we're in seminary for."

The roundtrip from St. Meinrad to our Shelby Park campus and back is over two hours. The seminarians serve once a week for two hours during the semester.



SVdP National

# THE ST. MEINRAD SEMINARIANS



di, Ozanam Inn Sr. Program Manager Sam Schreier, Ryan Carlson, Ben Keating, Sean Sullivan.  
Le.

“St. Vincent has been a great lesson in always being ready to do anything—to be open and available to whatever the needs of the community are,” Keating said.

LaRosa is the student representative for this seminarian group.

“*I think there's a genuine care for the people here. That's noticeable. They're not just a number. These are real people with faces, names, and stories, and you want to get to know all of them.*”

—Seminarian Lucas LaRosa

The seminarians help with many tasks—like filling out job or housing applications, food prep, cleaning, sweeping, street outreach with our staff, or whatever else is needed for that day's work.

“We want to see people not as a task to check the box on, but as someone to pour our heart out to,” Carlson said.

It seems that the clients changed the seminarians more than the seminarians changed the clients.

“This could literally be me,” Seiler said. “They're normal, everyday people.”

“It's not the car that makes you a human. It's not the house. It's not a well-put-together life,” Kehoe added. “Humanity is far more basic than that.”

“If I think of how I could be homeless, I can't imagine that because I have so many people I can fall back on. It shows me how much isolation they experience and interaction they need,” Henry said.

Peter says there aren't organizations like this in Vietnam.

“One Scripture that comes to mind is ‘God is my refuge.’ St. Vincent de Paul is also a refuge for those in need,” Peter said. “That's exactly what Jesus Christ does. We open that love and welcome them to shelter and food. It's so meaningful for my life to contribute to this work.”

In May, St. Meinrad held an appreciation banquet for its partner organizations (see photo above).

“I'm grateful to St. Vincent de Paul for giving us this opportunity,” Sullivan said. “Also, it's important to know when I have a parish one day, that there are good organizations like here you can go to.”

UPCOMING EVENTS at  
ST. VINCENT DE PAUL  
LOUISVILLE



## You're Invited! National Conference

August 26 - 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/podcast/](http://www.svdplou.org/podcast/)

# Assembly comes to Louisville

REGISTRATION OPENS JUNE 15



## 'She Laughs, She Paints': Art workshop hosted at our DV Shelter

In April, volunteer Ruby Thomas donated her time and resources to host an art workshop at our Domestic Violence Transitional Shelter for families.

"As followers of Jesus, I believe we are to use all our gifts and talents to lift each other," Thomas said. "That's the mission of my painting ministry—'She Laughs, She Paints.'"

Art can be one way to help survivors of domestic violence heal in their journey.

This shelter is at a secure site, offering 18 rooms with up to 37 beds.



"The women were joyful and creative. They wanted to do their own thing and express themselves. The paintings turned out great. I was happy to see how each used color to express who she is."  
-Ruby Thomas

### HOMELESS INITIATIVE GRANT / \$200,000

This funding allows Ozanam Inn Men's Emergency Shelter to remain open 24/7.

## OUR THANKS TO LOUISVILLE METRO GOVERNMENT FOR THEIR SUPPORT

### EMERGENCY SOLUTIONS GRANT (ESG) / \$177,900

This grant allows us to continue to provide staffing and services to single men at Ozanam Inn (It is in addition to the Homeless Initiative Grant).

### EXTERNAL AGENCY FUND (EAF) / \$71,000

This funding aids our Domestic Violence Transitional Housing & Rapid Rehousing Program (\$36K), Ozanam Inn (\$25K), and the Family Success Center (\$10K).

Grants Awarded for 2024-25

## Recognizing Our Latest Grant Sponsors - Thank You!

- Dare to Care
- A Recipe to End Hunger and Need Inc.
- Lyndon & Helen Schmid Charitable Foundation
- State of KY Cabinet for Economic Development

