

The Good Samaritan

Clarence's Story: Why Domestic Violence Doesn't Always Look Like You Expect

Clarence doesn't strike you as someone who would be a victim of domestic violence.

He's physically able. He comes across as calm and confident. His father was in the military, and he has two sons. He's also worked in security and construction.

But, as a 57-year-old male, he experienced domestic violence last Christmas. It was his response—or lack thereof—that was even more powerful.

It's been said that meekness is not weakness, rather, meekness is strength under control. Clarence embodies that sentiment.

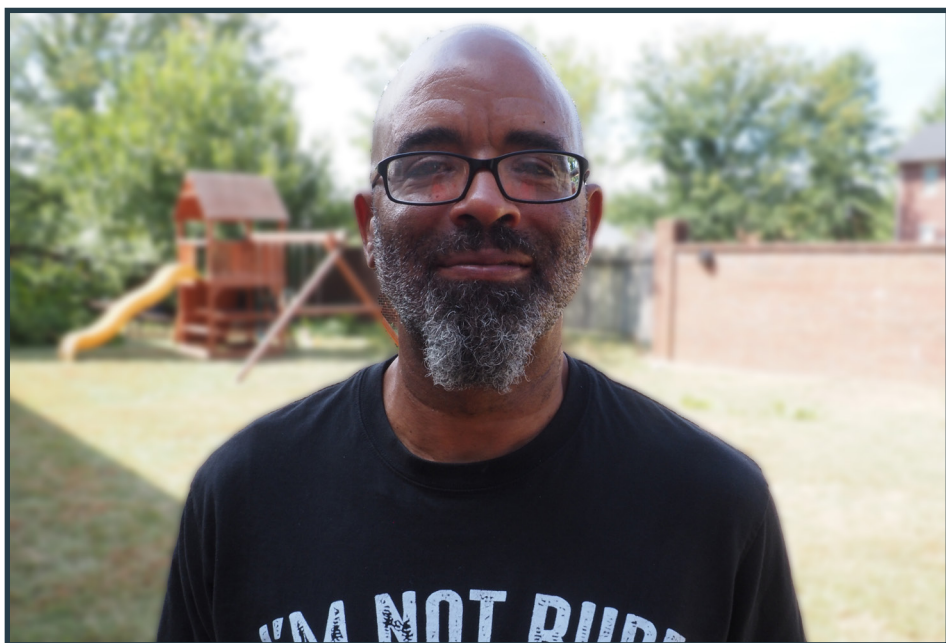
"How I was raised, just because you can, doesn't mean you should," Clarence said. "If I know I can defend myself without hurting somebody, that's my first choice, especially a female ... It's not worth it."

Clarence was renting a room from a female friend. After pulling a double shift as a security guard, he returned as usual to the apartment. She was drunk, and was trying to force herself on him. He began packing his bags to leave. She grabbed a sword off the wall and tried to swing it at him. In self-defense, he hit her in the throat. She called the police.

After discussing the incident with police officers, Clarence's roommate was arrested, but he was unable to remain at her place. He spent the night at Wayside, and stayed in a motel for a week.

In January, Clarence came to our DV Transitional Shelter. While the majority of those we serve in our Domestic Violence Program are women and children, we serve men (five men total from Oct. 1, 2024 to Aug. 31, 2025).

"I'm very thankful for this place," Clarence added. "I didn't realize that being in a domestic violence



situation as a man, that there would be any help for you if you do the right thing. This is a good program. It's a place where you can feel secure and rebuild yourself."

Though domestic violence is the leading cause for women becoming homeless, it can still be something men face.

"Domestic violence presents itself across communities regardless of race, gender, or religion. Men often struggle conceptualizing that they are a victim," said Danielle Bell, SVDP's Domestic Violence Sr. Program Manager.

The data on men who are victims of domestic violence compared to women ranges widely—from 1 in 3 to 1 in 10.

Clarence not only received housing, but the opportunity to reconnect with his children. In June, he regained custody of Gabriel, 12 years old, and Michael, 11 years old. They were able to stay with him in his private room.

"I hadn't seen them for six years ... it gave me the time to catch up with them," he said. "This place allowed me to have somewhere to stay so I could chill with my kids over the summer."

They visited the park and splash pads, and played with RC cars and water guns—the simple things boys like.

Clarence also received meals from the Open Hand Kitchen and groceries from the Food Pantry.

"It's been helpful. My boys like to eat, and I like to cook," Clarence said.

In late Sept., Clarence moved into an apartment with his two sons as part of the Rapid Rehousing component.

**“THIS PLACE HAS GIVEN ME
HOPE.
NOT BEING FROM HERE, IT'S HARD
WHEN YOU'RE STRUGGLING. IT'S
HARD TO DO IT ALONE. YOU'VE GOT TO
START OVER, AND THEY GAVE ME A
FOUNDATION TO DO THAT. I HAVEN'T
HAD MY OWN PLACE IN A FEW YEARS.
IT'S A NERVOUS FEELING, BUT IT'S ALSO
AN EXCITING FEELING. JUST KNOWING
I HAVE A PLACE FOR ME AND MY
BOYS, AND WE CAN HAVE CHRISTMAS.
IT LIFTS YOU UP.”**





St. Vincent
de Paul

LOUISVILLE

svdplou.org

'The Good Samaritan'

The monthly newsletter of
St. Vincent de Paul Louisville

Send correspondence to PO Box 17126,
Louisville, KY 40217-0126

Visit us at 1015-C South Preston Street,
Louisville, KY 40203-2733

Jennifer Clark
CEO & Executive Director

Pam Evans
Sr. Director of Advancement
pevans@svdplou.org

Nicky Peck
Volunteer Engagement Coordinator
npeck@svdplou.org

Tony Nochim
Communications & Public Relations
Coordinator

Send comments or change of address
notifications to tnochim@svdplou.org

Our Mission

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

Support SVDP

To find out more about our work or
make a donation, visit our website.

svdplou.org



svdplouky



svdplouky



St. Vincent de Paul Louisville

Where Are They Now? From Coat Closet to Career at SVDP



Sometimes compassion comes in the
form of a coat.

And sometimes that coat is handed
out by a child. At the age of 7, Makenzie
Smith (now Greenwell) was so struck by a
conversation at Borden Elementary that it
changed the trajectory of her life.

"I was in second grade, and my teacher
started talking about the upcoming winter
and how people don't have something as
simple as a coat," Greenwell said. "To a
7-year-old, that seems insane. When I
got home from school, I told my parents I
wanted to do something for those in need,
and we came up with the 'Makenzie's
Coat Closet.'"

In 2006, Greenwell donated 78 winter
coats to St. Vincent de Paul Louisville. It
grew to more than 1,000 coats collected
per year for a decade, which included a
distribution day on our Special Works
Campus. She says it was a yearlong
"family project."

"To be able to interact with them, hear
their stories, and how grateful they are to
take a coat home was very touching for
me and my family," Greenwell added.

She hasn't looked back. After Green-
well graduated with a Master's from
Purdue University, she was hired as
SVDP's Development Coordinator in
2021.

"It was really neat to start my career at
the place that started it all for me," she
said. "It was definitely a dream. I always

thought it would be super cool for me to
come full circle and work for the organi-
zation that started the passion and drive
for what I'm interested in."

Now SVDP's Special Events Manager,
her experience serving those in need
shaped her for her current role.

"I have a unique perspective, seeing the
direct impact on someone and what your
money goes towards," Greenwell said.
"With the Coat Closet, it was very hands-
on ... so from an early age I learned how
to be organized and detail-oriented and
run something like a distribution day,
which is a form of an event."

Greenwell now oversees our fundrais-
ing events, as well as donor relations.

"That something so small like a coat
could mean something so much to some-
body really drives me to be a perfectionist
and ensure our events are record-breaking
every year ... so that we can to continue
our mission to house, feed, and support
people," Greenwell added.

She is married to her husband, Addi-
son, and they have two doodles, Goose
and Bean.



A SENSE OF HOME AT OZANAM INN THROUGH ART

Following the completion of major renovations at Ozanam Inn Men's Emergency Shelter earlier this year, the 24/7 facility is in the process of boasting original artwork throughout its space.

Elizabeth Foley, an art teacher at Assumption High School with 25 years of experience as an accomplished artist, is overseeing the project.

"One of the things that attracted me to Ozanam Inn is the idea of home, and how do you have home when you are transient?" Foley said. "My dad was an artist, and we had art in our house ... as I became an adult, a friend of mine said, 'When you get to a new apartment, put something on the wall and it will start to feel like its own space.' So, that idea of how can we use art to help people transition to a space of their own?"

Foley and another local artist were chosen as the fourth cohort of Louisville Visual Art's (LVA) program Curate, Purchase, Inspire (CPI) Curatorial Fellows. This program started in 2022 to support Louisville's artists, curators, and organizations by placing original art in accessible spaces at local nonprofits.

Foley was one of the artists whose work was purchased for last year's cohort, but LVA representatives asked her to be on the curator side. Chris Manzo, the architect behind Ozanam Inn renovations, suggested to Foley, his wife, that Ozanam Inn would be a perfect fit.

With the goal of transforming Ozanam Inn's common areas—hallways, lounge area, and congregate rooms—into spaces that feel more like home, Foley envisions an exhibition that complements these renovations by making the environment more welcoming and reflective of hope.



By involving staff and residents in the curatorial process, she hopes to foster a sense of ownership and community around the project, ensuring that the art resonates deeply with those who live and work at Ozanam Inn.

"It's really fascinating how we all have this idea of comfort and homes, and it might be different for all of us," she said. "I don't expect everybody to love every piece that's on the wall, but if you connect with one, that's the success."

Her project, "From Which Your Life Flows," comes from Rainer Maria "Rilke's Letters to a Young Poet" and centers on the themes of home, security, self, and growth. She will commission and purchase \$30,000 worth of artwork for installation.

The work will be finalized in May 2026. LVA will also create a web-accessible catalog of the CPI artworks to view.



UPCOMING EVENTS at
ST. VINCENT DE PAUL
LOUISVILLE

SAVE
THE
DATE

You're Invited!
Santa Shop

December 13

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.

Stock the Shelves

As part of our monthly initiative, we are asking for **cooking essentials**—such as flour, sugar, baking powder and baking soda, cooking oil, salt and pepper, broth or bouillon cubes, and basic spices—in October. 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.





\$221,865 of Hope Raised at 22nd Annual ISCO Industries Clubs & Cocktails

Thank you to the 200 guests at the Dinner and Hope Award at the Olmsted, 26 foursomes at the Harmony Landing golf scramble, and all of our sponsors who made the 22nd Annual ISCO Industries Clubs & Cocktails a success on Sept. 21 and 23.

With your generosity, we raised more than \$221,865 at this two-day event. All

proceeds go towards our programming and services to our neighbors in need.

The Hope Award winner was Mike Devereaux, a longtime volunteer, monthly donor, and committee member.

Scan the QR code to download photos on our Events webpage.

We would like to highlight the following sponsors for making this possible:



“More Blessed to Give”: Holiday Opportunities at SVDP

Though many of us are blessed with festive homes, warm meals, and time with loved ones, this reality is different for those who come to us in need. Your support during the holidays is such a meaningful tradition, reminding us of the words of Jesus in Acts 20:35: *“It is more blessed to give than to receive.”*

Here are a few ways to support SVDP during the holidays.

29TH ANNUAL SANTA SHOP

While we've traditionally had a “shopping mall” setup, we are transitioning to a “sponsor a child” model. This focuses on the 200 families we directly serve through our housing programs and conference outreach. Families will complete a wish list form for each child, allowing them to ask for specific items based on their needs, age / size, and include a special toy that will bring joy to their child on Christmas morning.

Shop: You can sponsor a child based on the wish list provided. You will select a specific child to sponsor and then shop for that child, spending between \$75-100. As we intake completed forms, children will be added to our webpage.

Serve: Gifts will be bundled and distributed to families on Saturday, Dec. 13, from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. in the Administration Building on our Special Works Campus. We have two-hour shifts available, and it is on a first-come, first-served basis. There will also be volunteer opportunities leading up to the distribution day.

Sponsor: Is your business or group looking for a way to give back this holiday season? There are multiple opportunities or different giving levels available to partner with our organization.

HOLIDAY CHEER BAGS

This is a new option to support our Veterans, shelter, and transitional housing

clients. A perfect fit for a business or group, consider supporting our clients by purchasing small gifts to be handed out at Christmas.

HOLIDAY STOCK THE SHELVES

As part of our monthly initiative, we are asking for special items this holiday season. A full list is on our webpage.

OHK HOLIDAY HELP

The Open Hand Kitchen serves a special holiday lunch for our clients and anyone in need on Thanksgiving and Christmas Day. A limited number of volunteers will be needed.

MORE INFO COMING SOON

You can scan the QR code to be taken to our “Holidays at SVDP” webpage at www.svdplou.org/santashop. Thank you for helping bring joy, dignity, and hope to families during the holidays.

