

# The Good Samaritan

## Jennifer Clark is first female leader in SVDP's 170-year history

Jennifer Clark was recently promoted to St. Vincent de Paul Louisville's Chief Executive Officer / Executive Director amidst the retirement of Dave Calzi who has served in that role since Jan. 2022. Clark will serve as the first female leader in the organization's 170-year history. She joined SVDP in 2017 and has served as Chief Operating Officer since 2021. We sat down with Jennifer to hear her story.

### How did you end up in the nonprofit world?

I started volunteering at a very young age and I think that's where my love of and exposure to nonprofits started. When I got to the University of Louisville in undergrad, I really went deep with it in Louisville. I did like 900 hours of community service.

### Why is housing such a passion for you?

I was just so captured by how many things housing addresses for people. I just think it's so hard to do anything else—to get an education, to hold down a job, to support your mental health, to get better and recover on any number of issues—without housing. Housing is that issue that intersects with every system.

### How are you feeling about this new role?

It's difficult work but I definitely feel called to it. As hard as it is, there are very few things that are more satisfying, and it's something that I'm passionate about. I'm excited to grow more and represent the work that St. Vincent de Paul does and that our team does because I think they're amazing. Transitions are difficult. I want to help this organization get to a place where we're stable, sustainable, a great place to work, and provide quality services and housing to the community. That's really my number one goal.

### What is your focus as you transition into CEO?

St. Vincent de Paul is facing some financial headwinds, which I think is true in a

lot of the community. This economy has been a rollercoaster. We've experienced massive inflation and the challenges that a lot of nonprofits are having. I came right in at the beginning of our budget process for the next fiscal year and the beginning of our strategic planning process for the next five years. I love the big picture, figuring it all out, and making a beautiful picture out of a bunch of puzzle pieces.

### If St. Vincent de Paul went away, what would happen to the community?

I think it's easy to take an organization like St. Vincent de Paul for granted. We've been here 170 years and over that time we've taken on more and more and expanded and grown. It's been amazing. You think about what we do, we have a retail operation, property management, maintenance, case management, mental health and substance use counseling, we serve kids, we serve people fleeing domestic violence, we run an emergency shelter. We do all of that with an incredibly lean team. It's hard for the community to understand what that takes to maintain an organization like that. I think what happens sometimes with that is—for the community and donors—is it's easiest to tune out. If St. Vincent de Paul went out of business, there would be hundreds of people on the streets.

### How can we have empathy for the unhoused population?

If you've always had electricity, plumbing, easy access to a refrigerator or medication, a way to charge your phone, then it's hard to understand what the unhoused population is going through. I think people can empathize with what it

would be like if they've never experienced that just by thinking through some of the hard times that they've had.

### How does your personal faith influence your work to help those in need?

I really consider this work my faith in action and it drives why I do this. There's something about being a part of something bigger than yourself that has such an incredible purpose and impact in individual lives and the community. I think anybody who comes here will tell you there's a sacredness to this work.





St. Vincent  
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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

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

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St. Vincent de Paul Louisville

# THE FAMILY SUCCESS CENTER CELEBRATES 10 YEARS

It's as simple as pineapple.

Zaire Royster, an incoming sophomore at W.E.B. DuBois Academy, reminisced about his time at the Family Success Center (FSC) as an elementary student.

"They would have us go to the gym when we got there to decompress from school. They would feed us so we wouldn't be hungry all day. They would give us fresh fruit, and that's where I learned about pineapple. It was the first time I had it, which was pretty nice," Royster said.

While attending after-school and summer programming, Royster received help with homework, learned about geography and wrestling, improved in math, and was taught conflict resolution with peers.

"Those were some of the best years and highlights after school," Royster added.

Over the years, Royster was one of four siblings whom his mother, Sharita Stephenson, got involved at the FSC.

"It took a lot of the burden off me because a lot of the times I didn't have that extra time," said Stephenson, a single parent. "It was very helpful for our routine. They helped them with their homework. They helped them academically. They were able to catch the school bus when I had to work ... They were able to make friends. It was a structured and positive environment. They learned a lot."

### Investing in the Next Generation

This family is one of hundreds of households that the FSC staff, its partners, and volunteers have invested in



over the last 10 years. As we celebrate the FSC's launch in Sept. 2014, this program has provided year-round educational and social development opportunities to the next generation. This includes after-school and summer programming to elementary and middle school students.

In October 1992, the FSC was originally built and dedicated as a new Thrift Store & Warehouse Operations. In 2014, the FSC project was pursued because of an increase in on-campus housing of 54 permanent affordable housing units, which brought additional families.

Jamico Morris, who has worked with youth for 40 years, shares his experience working at SVDP for two summers.

"Belonging is important because sometimes they can feel like they're outcasts when they're amongst their peers. Once the other kids find out what they're going through, they don't want to bother with them. It's hard for them to trust others and gain friends. The FSC gave them a sense of belonging because no one was judged there."

Roughly one-third of the students served are McKinney-Vento eligible. This means they are considered homeless due

# 21st ANNUAL ISCO INDUSTRIAL

# Clubs & Cocktails



to a lack of having a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence.

"They wouldn't worry about what was going on at home. Once they came to the FSC, all of that was forgotten," he added.

Deloris Fenwick, who worked at the FSC, would make flash cards with words and definitions for elementary students. Braden Baker, a student at Saint Xavier High School, had "fun volunteering and chasing the students outside" during summer programming.

Here's what a few students had to say:

- Laeya is a fourth grader who enjoys playing in the gym and outside, as well as eating lunch.
- A fifth grader, Dakahri likes to play in the gym and the enrichments. He enjoyed building plastic swords with pool noodles.
- Zayden, a sixth grader, likes meeting new people and is thankful for help with math.

The FSC programming strives to improve students grades for the main school subjects. Programs include tutoring, athletic programs, and enrichment workshops such as art classes,

interpersonal communication, robotics, and cooking classes.

#### What Partners are saying about us

"Congratulations to St. Vincent de Paul Louisville's Family Success Center on its 10th anniversary. JCPS is grateful for our partnership with the FSC, which is providing after-school and summer education and enrichment opportunities to hundreds of students who need and value that support."

—Dr. Marty Pollio, JCPS Superintendent

"When children receive proper nourishment, the possibilities for their futures are boundless. We are tremendously appreciative of our partners like SVDP for their efforts in addressing barriers to food insecurity and so much more."

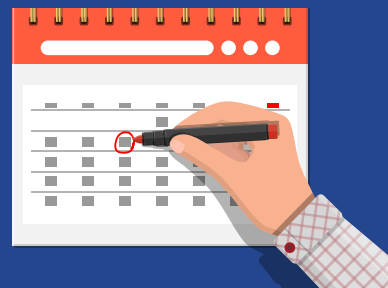
—Vincent James, CEO at Dare to Care

"The FSC is a perfect setting for educational and enrichment programs not only for children on their campus, but for youth in the surrounding neighborhoods. We are proud to partner with SVDP to provide quality summer engagements and intensive reading tutoring after school."

—Marland Cole, Executive Director at Evolve502

## Save the Date

UPCOMING EVENTS AT  
ST. VINCENT DE PAUL LOUISVILLE



*Come Join Us!*

### Clubs & Cocktails

Dinner: Sunday, September 22

Scramble: Tuesday, September 24

### Tour de Change & Give for Good

Thursday, September 12

For event information, please contact  
Makenzie Greenwell at (502) 272-2134 or  
[mgreenwell@svdplou.org](mailto:mgreenwell@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/](http://www.svdplou.org/podcast/)

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# SECURE YOUR SEAT



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## GET READY FOR GIVE FOR GOOD AND THE FALL TOUR DE CHANGE ON SEPTEMBER 12



The Community Foundation of Louisville's Give for Good Louisville day is Thursday, Sept. 12. Last year, your generosity raised a record \$55,477! For St. Vincent de Paul Louisville, you have personally given more than \$205,000 since we started participating. That's an amazing feat!

Joyce Teel is a longtime SVDP donor who gives annually on Give for Good day.

"When I was growing up, my parents volunteered with St. Vincent de Paul. I would go along to be helpful as a young child. Eventually, my family and I volunteered at the Open Hand Kitchen and Santa Shop," said Teel. "Whatever I can do to help, I want to do. There's no bigger joy in life than giving. I think the Lord raised us to love Him and love our neighbor. I try and live by that. I'm excited to give on Give for Good day because you're helping others."

This year, our goal is \$60,000. We are focusing on our overall mission, which is to house, feed, and support those in need with compassion and dignity. These three areas in someone's life are not disconnected from one another, but often overlap and link together. If you have housing, it's much easier to have regular access to food because you can store food and are able to cook. When you have support in the form of resources, case management, or counseling, it often leads to housing stability and food security.

Your donations must be made on Sept. 12, not before or after, so that it counts towards the Give for Good day total. To see the impact of your giving, we encourage you to follow us throughout the day as we post on Facebook / Instagram (@svdplouky), or LinkedIn (St. Vincent de Paul Louisville). You can also learn more on our Give for Good webpage at <https://www.giveforgoodlouisville.org/organization/st-vincent-de-paul-louisville>.

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You can help us double the impact of every donation made by being a matching sponsor. For more info, reach out to McKenzie Greenwell, our Senior Development & Events Coordinator, at [mgreenwell@svdplou.org](mailto:mgreenwell@svdplou.org) or (502) 272-2134.

### Tour de Change on Sept. 12

As a part of the excitement of Give for Good, we are hosting our fall Tour de Change on Thursday, Sept. 12 from 12 to 1:30 p.m. You may be a longtime SVDP supporter, but if you haven't seen our Shelby Park campus in-person yet, we invite you to see the difference your generosity is making. This is a free event, including a light lunch. RSVP by scanning the QR code to the right.



## GE APPLIANCES VOLUNTEER DAY AT THE FSC PLAYGROUND

“GE Appliances, a Haier Company, is dedicated to giving back to the communities where we operate. In Louisville, we are committed to supporting local charitable organizations and their missions. As a volunteer group, we visited the St. Vincent de Paul Louisville campus to help beautify the playground, making it a more inviting, creative, and fun space for the families and children who use it. We aim to support SVDP's mission to ... support those in need with compassion and dignity.”

—Karen Edberg, Senior Mechanical Design Engineer

