

# GOOD SAMARITAN

## St. Vincent de Paul | Louisville, KY

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### Crystal Credits God and SVDP for Saving Her Life At 31, She Is Balancing College, Work, Family and Sobriety

People who know Crystal Burt can hardly believe her amazing transformation.

A few years ago, she had hit rock bottom. A homeless alcoholic and drug addict, she barely existed, "couch-surfing" at fellow drug users' apartments "in the projects" or wherever she could crash. Having lost all self-respect, she had no hope that she could ever climb out of the deep hole in which she found herself, she recalls.



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Far from that angry, emaciated young woman who entered St. Jude Women's Recovery Center three years ago, today Crystal is happy, and it shows. Coffee cup in one hand, school books in the other, she is confident but reflective as she talks about the balance she has worked so

hard to achieve in her life. "I'm a very spiritual person," she says. "I get up every morning and hit my knees in prayer. Prayers thanking God for getting me through another night clean and sober."

After 11 months of successful

# GOOD SAMARITAN



## Cookbook Ladies Get a Taste of the Limelight

Mary Yanutola, Marie Barrett and Lola King (pictured, from left) were among the women who willingly volunteered time and recipes for our cookbook, *Gifts from the Heart*.



But when the *Courier-Journal* newspaper asked to interview and photograph them, they humbly tried to beg off. Eventually, convinced it was for a good cause, they agreed.

As a result of the Dec. 22 feature story, the cookbooks quickly sold out of our Hikes Lane Thrift Store the very next morning! Rest assured, supplies have been replenished. The cookbooks (\$15) are for sale in all four Thrift Stores.

Missed the article? Read it at:  
[www.svdplou.org/svdp-in-the-news.html](http://www.svdplou.org/svdp-in-the-news.html).

## SUITE TREAT: Clients' Children Enjoy Cardinals Basketball Game

In mid-December, children in our DePaul apartments and other kids, whose parents are in our Follow Up program, went on a field trip to see a University of Louisville men's basketball game at the new Yum! Center downtown.

Though the Cardinals lost, the kids got the VIP treatment in a suite that had been donated as a Silent Auction item at our fundraiser last September.

Thanks to Phil Gahm for donating the auction item, and to Shane Huffman for his winning bid—and generously donating it back to the children we serve.

Chaperones for the Saturday afternoon game included SVDP case manager Robin Wickham and members of the St. Gabriel Catholic Church Youth Group.



### SVDP FACT:

On an average night, more than 200 people sleep in St. Vincent de Paul's overnight emergency shelter and other supportive housing programs for men, women and families.

# HOLIDAY OUTREACH AT ST. VINCENT DE PAUL

Thanks to the generosity of donors and volunteers, St. Vincent de Paul was able to help thousands of people during the 2010 holiday season. At our Santa Shop, parents in need chose free Christmas gifts for a total of 785 children. An additional 180 poor families received food baskets with provisions for a traditional holiday meal—including a turkey or ham. Countless people brought in donations of new toys, warm winter coats, and food. Volunteers of all ages, including Boy Scout Troop 380, brightened the spirits of our clients. We offer heartfelt thanks and gratitude to all of you.



*For photo credits,  
please see next page.*

# Important Contact Information

# Upcoming Events 2011:

*Please check our website for all the latest information: [www.svdplou.org](http://www.svdplou.org)*

**If You Need Help:**  
(502) 301-8697

**To Schedule a Pick-Up of  
Your Donations to Our  
Thrift Stores:**  
(502) 589-7837

**To Make a Cash Donation:**  
(502) 301-8682

**February 23-27 Vincentians Retreat for Renewal**  
Seton Cove  
Indianapolis, IN

**April 6 Mid-Year Meeting**  
Hilton St. Louis at the Ballpark  
St. Louis, MO

*For more information, contact Donna Young at  
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## *Crystal, continued from Page 1*

residential treatment at St. Jude, she became a client in St. Vincent de Paul's Follow Up program. Through this program, she receives financial assistance with her apartment rent, and counseling with an SVDP case worker. "I get to vent," Crystal says of those sessions. "She listens, and she's strong. She'll call you out if necessary, which I need sometimes. When I start feeling sorry for myself, she'll say, 'Get off your pity pot,'" Crystal explains with a laugh. "She keeps me motivated."

A single mother to a 12-year-old son, Crystal attends community college classes four mornings a week and works weekends as a concessions supervisor at Freedom Hall. Although she's making A's and B's, she started classes last year worried she wouldn't be able to cut it. "I was scared to death," she says. "But I love it, and I found out I'm a lot smarter than I thought I was."

Her long-range plans include graduating and then undergoing necessary training to become a police officer.

Despite the hectic schedule, she makes her sobriety a priority by attending weekly 12-Step meetings at St. Jude, where she is a sponsor for two women still struggling with recovery. "You can't keep it (sobriety) without giving it away," she says. "Besides, it makes me remember where I came from—and reminds me I don't want to go back."

Although self-confident, Crystal is filled with gratitude and humility. "If you ever would have told me I'd be sitting here today, I wouldn't have believed it," she says. "I thank God, and I thank St. Vincent de Paul for all they've done for me."

## PHOTO CREDITS

*Preceding page, top photo: An overview of the 2010 Santa Shop in our Open Hand Kitchen.*

*Top row, far left: Jefferson County Public Schools human resources personnel, including (from left) Angela Reed, Will Olliges and Patricia Craddock, purchased and gift-wrapped hundreds of new toys for children living on the St. Vincent de Paul campus.*

*Center, and lower left: Members of Boy Scout Troop 380, St. Patrick Catholic Church, play Christmas carols on the piano and Bingo with clients at a party for homeless men staying at our Ozanam Inn shelter.*

*Right: More than 100 volunteers, including high school and college students from throughout Louisville, spent a Saturday morning filling food baskets for needy families.*

*Lower right: Luke Nall, Vanessa Gregorchik, Skylar Halsema, Nina Carroll, Allison Burry and Cindy Black, from St. Patrick's Youth Ministry, delivered gently used coats collected by their parish.*