

GOOD SAMARITAN

St. Vincent de Paul | Louisville, KY

Volume 1 | Issue 4

April | 2011

After Crises, Single Dad Puts Priority on Providing Stable, Loving Home for His Son



Ted, an out-of-work construction worker, was days away from being evicted.

At 48, after years of labor, his body had broken down. With plates and screws in his neck from spinal fusion surgery, two bad knees and a bad back, and his arm in a sling from a torn rotator cuff, he was unable to do the kind of work he'd done all his life—and he was untrained to do anything else.

“I always had good jobs, working in construction or manufacturing,” he says. “I’ve never been evicted in my life.”

But late last summer, as he battled his previous employer for workman’s comp and began the arduous task of applying for disability income, he fell behind in his rent.

(Continued, back page)

GOOD SAMARITAN

GET TO KNOW OUR STAFF: Adam Shelley, MSSW, CSW

Age: 32

Title: Program Manager, Homes With Hope, Follow Up, and Simon Hall

Family: wife, Shannon; two dogs—Lilly and Max

Education: BA, Philosophy, Indiana University Southeast
Master's in Social Work, University of Louisville



Background: US Army Reserves (1999-2005); retail management for eight years; community mental health, working in the field of substance abuse and with mentally ill homeless adults.

What led him to social work? The realization that our relationship with God is directly dependent upon how we treat “the least of these.” Like Paul said in Corinthians: “If I don’t have love I’m just a resounding gong.” That says to me that we can claim to love Jesus, but if we don’t do anything to attempt to mitigate the pain and suffering that exists—literally—right outside our own front door, then we don’t really love God at all.

What do you like about being at SVDP? I love that St. Vincent de Paul is a faith-based organization. When I worked for other non-profits in the past, I had to be very careful not to share my faith with clients. Here, though, I can encourage a client by advising them to rely on their faith. Also, all the people here are great! From the executive director to the volunteers and everyone in between—they’re all great people to be with on a daily basis.

FAVORITES:

Music: David Crowder Band, Third Day, the Avett Brothers, Old Crow Medicine Show, “newgrass,” pretty much anything you hear on WFPK Radio.

Foods/Restaurants: I love food. I’m an equal opportunity eater. I love to try new things (recently tried a Cuban/Caribbean restaurant), but also rely on old favorites like The Bristol (green chili wontons) and Skyline Chili (cheese Coney dogs).

Movies/TV: *The Outlaw Josey Wales, The Big Lebowski, Office Space, Law & Order SVU*

Quotes: “Do not be daunted by the enormity of the world’s grief. You are not obligated to complete the work; nor are you free to abandon it.” *The Talmud*

Things to Do: I love to spend time with my wife. She has a great sense of humor and we keep each other laughing pretty much non-stop. We like to walk the dogs, ride bicycles, go to outdoor concerts in the spring/fall/summer, read, hang out with our friends and neighbors, play Xbox.



*From the Staff of
St. Vincent de Paul,
We Wish You a Happy
Spring and a
Joyous Easter!*

St. Vincent de Paul Honors Three and Inducts Vincentians

Three outstanding Vincentians were honored, and 25 new Vincentians were inducted into the Society of St. Vincent de Paul on Sunday, Feb. 13, at St. Agnes Catholic Church.

Shirley Bowling, Ken Walden and Peggy Hyland (top photo, from left) were honored as the year's outstanding Vincentians

Bowling, a member of St. Stephen Martyr Conference, received the Top Hat Award, the highest honor presented by St. Vincent de Paul's Conference Affairs Committee. The award is given to the person who exemplifies the spirit of St. Vincent de Paul's founder, Frederic Ozanam.

Ken Walden, from St. Ignatius Conference, was awarded the Ozanam Medallion, for being an outstanding Vincentian role model and an inspiration to the broader faith community.

The St. Vincent Award, presented each year to an individual who has dedicated their life to those in need, was awarded to Peggy Hyland of St. William Conference. She has devoted many years to making home visits and advocating on behalf of neighbors in need who had inadequate housing, jobs and resources for education and healthcare.

Joining these three outstanding Vincentians in their spiritual commitment to serving the poor are new members. The following people were inducted as new Vincentians:

- Evelyn Birke – St. Gabriel
- Sheila Geiger – St. Gabriel
- Tom Geiger – St. Gabriel
- Wanda Huffer – St. James, Elizabethtown
- Erika Martin – St. James, Elizabethtown
- Nadine McKenting – St. James, Elizabethtown
- Judy Sharer – St. James, Elizabethtown
- Suzanne Shircliff – St. James, Elizabethtown
- Randall Thompson – St. James, Elizabethtown
- Doug Habeeb – St. Agnes
- Kathy Goodin – St. Michael
- Al Bedel – St. Michael
- Jeff Krimple – Holy Spirit
- Mark Fitzgerald – Holy Trinity
- Ann Casale – Holy Trinity
- Louis Casale – Holy Trinity
- Ed Reinert – St. Ignatius
- Mark Zaccone – St. Edward
- Jay Hall – St. Anthony of Padua
- Denise Hammond – St. Anthony of Padua
- Art Baltes – St. William
- Judy Heitzman – St. William
- Tony Heitzman – St. William
- Jo Ann Kalb – St. William
- Debbie Thompson – St. William



April Gifts Help Us Fight Hunger

During April, when you designate donations to St. Vincent de Paul to go toward hunger relief, the Feinstein Foundation of Cranston, RI, will offer a match. For the 14th year, the foundation will divide \$1 million among anti-hunger agencies nationwide.

Last year, the Feinstein challenge raised a record \$1 billion for more than 2,000 agencies in the United States. Awards ranged from \$250 to \$40,000 per agency.

Please join in this challenge by earmarking your check to St. Vincent de Paul for the National Campaign to Fight Hunger. For more information, visit: www.feinsteinfoundation.org.

Mail your donations to: Development Dept., St. Vincent de Paul, 1015-C S. Preston St., Louisville, KY 40203. To make a secure, online donation, visit: www.svdplou.org.

Truck Weekends:

April 2-3

Our Lady of Perpetual Help
1752 Scheller Lane, New Albany, IN

April 9-10

Church of the Epiphany
914 Old Harrods Creek Road

April 16-17

St. Bernadette Catholic Church
6500 Saint Bernadette Ave., Prospect

Plan Ahead:

June 8

SVDP Louisville Council Meeting
Open Hand Kitchen

June 24-26

SVDP Midwest Regional Meeting
Dayton, OH

*More info: Contact Donna Young:
dyoung@svdplou.org*

Contact Info:

If You Need Help

(502) 301-8697

To Schedule a Pick-Up of Your Donation to Our Thrift Stores

(502) 589-7837

To Make a Cash Donation

(502) 301-8682

nnaughton@svdplou.org

(Continued from front page)

"I was literally three days away from the sheriff coming to haul all my belongings out to the street," says Ted, who is divorced and lived alone.

That's when he got the call about an emergency with his 6-year-old son. The church daycare center where the boy had been left could not find his mother.

Ted's heart sank. His former girlfriend, with whom he had the child, had become a hardcore drug addict. Having been an active part of his son's life in the years following the couple's split, Ted had been worried sick and trying for months to get authorities to investigate his claims of child abuse and neglect.

"I called twice. My sister called," he says. "Neighbors called."

On this particular day, child protective workers stepped in, ultimately removing the boy from his mother and terminating her parental rights.

"He had no supervision whatsoever," Ted says. "He had no structure, no schedule."

The boy was barely surviving in a heartbreakingly cruel environment, and often living on the fringes of homelessness. "He's been through so much," Ted says sadly.

Ted doesn't pretend to be perfect, describing himself as a former alcoholic who has been sober for eight years. He blames himself for a lot of things, such as "not planning ahead" and being so financially unprepared when he could no longer work.

But the love Ted feels for his son seems abundantly clear in his warm expression as he talks about his little boy, and the turn of events that brought them together in a new chapter of their lives.

Ted considers the timing of his son's emergency—coming just as he himself was facing his own financial crisis—as a divine intervention of sorts. Within a matter of a few weeks, their child protective services worker referred Ted to St. Vincent de Paul's Homes with Hope program, and Ted was awarded custody of his son.

"It's been like a miracle," he says.

With St. Vincent de Paul's assistance, last September Ted and his son moved into a two-bedroom apartment near Iroquois Park. Their case manager gave them a voucher to furnish their new home with a table and

chairs, two beds, dressers and a couch, all obtained at an SVDP Thrift Store.

"It's great," Ted says. "We love being by the park."

Still, there are significant hurdles and everyday setbacks. His son has had violent outbursts that have led to several psychiatric hospitalizations over the past year. And a few months ago, Ted's used van was totaled when he was rear-ended in traffic.

Now, he and his son take the bus—his son to school and Ted to St. Vincent de Paul, where he volunteers five days a week in our Open Hand Kitchen.

"One of the requirements for food stamps is that I volunteer, and even though it's across town, I wanted to do it here, at St. Vincent de Paul," he says. "I wanted to give back, because they've done so much for us."

Ted's son, now seven years old, attends a school for children with severe behavioral problems. He's making progress, but the trauma he has endured has heightened his insecurities.

"He won't get three feet away from me," Ted says. "He's afraid he might get left again."

While they have always enjoyed a close relationship, now the father and son are bonding as a family of two, Ted says. They find reassurance in their daily routine.

"We get up at 5:30am. He's on the school bus by 6:25, and then I catch another bus at 6:55. I volunteer [at St. Vincent de Paul] from about 8 to 1pm, then take the bus home. I'm home by 2:30, and then he comes home at 3. After we have a snack and do homework, we play," Ted says, smiling. "Then it's supper, bath, and time for bed."

The pair also attend therapy, and Ted is working with his Homes with Hope case manager, Adam Shelley, on next steps, such as vocational training.

Ted says he's eager to get back on stable financial footing. In the meantime, he has a single-minded focus.

"My No. 1 thing right now," he says, "is just to take care of my son."

• *For more information on Homes with Hope and other St. Vincent de Paul programs that help families and individuals in need, visit: www.svdplou.org.*