

GOOD SAMARITAN

St. Vincent de Paul | Louisville, KY

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STUDENTS EMBRACE SOCIAL JUSTICE MISSION

Hundreds of students visit our campus each semester. Sometimes, these youths are so inspired that they share their reflections about their experiences on our website's blog, On the Ground.

Several 8th-graders from St. Athanasius School, who toured our campus this spring, blogged particularly insightful observations:

- *"Going to St. Vincent de Paul was really moving for me. It showed me that not everyone is as they seem on the outside. People we know and socialize with could have home problems or be homeless. It really opened my eyes to the world around me."*
- *"It taught me that life can be really tough and anything could go wrong at any time, even if you make a small mistake. I also learned that not all homeless people are just bad people, they are normal then something bad happened that changed their lives."*
- *"When I went to the soup kitchen, I learned that normal people like me could be homeless. I also learned that they don't want people to feel sorry for them."*
- *"It really opened my eyes to see how homeless people really are. Before, I thought they would be in tattered clothes, living in a box, but I was way off."*
- *"I expected the people there to be dirty, not shaven, have raggedy clothes, and long hair. But when they came through the door, they looked like normal people. I felt like I could talk to them like a friend instead of asking them what their story was."*
- *"I felt [going to St. Vincent de Paul] was life-changing because I realized that all of the people were someone's dad or son or even daughter. Seeing what everyday people have to deal with and knowing that others look down on them ... it's crazy."*

Thanks to teachers Amanda Brown and Emily McCarty for encouraging their students to challenge stereotypes and to consider the plight of the poor among us. To read more blog entries from staff, volunteers and other visitors to our SVDP campus, go to: www.svdplou.org/blog.



Volunteers Host Dinners for Residents

Women who live at Roberts Hall, one of St. Vincent de Paul's supportive housing programs, got a special treat when seven Bellarmine University coeds, led by Katie Dorminey, served dinner at the home. "Everyone had a good time," says Kay Redfern, program manager for Roberts Hall, a dormitory-style residence for formerly homeless women. "They had salad, pasta and pizza, with cake, pie and pudding for dessert." The college students also took the time to talk with the women, to listen and to get to know them, adds Redfern. "That meant a lot to the ladies."

Simon Hall, the house on St. Vincent de Paul's campus that is home to formerly homeless men, was also the site of a spring party. Members of the St. Bernadette Conference brought in a dinner of barbecued ribs, baked beans, coleslaw and pineapple upside down cake. After the meal, the group had fellowship with one another. "They [the residents] all really enjoyed the evening and were very appreciative," says Edward Johnson, Simon Hall's resident manager. "Before they left, they gave us crosses."

Thanks to Therese Allen, Dennis Schmidt, David and Rebecca Najewicz and Keith Hodge for making this evening possible.

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Welcome, New Staff Members

Three new employees have joined the full-time staff at St. Vincent de Paul.

They are (from left): Tony Hall, Beth White and Adam Atherton.

Atherton and White are case managers who work with clients in our Follow Up program. White also serves families in our Homes with Hope program.

Hall is our new housing manager assistant, working with Kate Westmoreland-White to find affordable, off-site housing for clients in our programs.

Welcome to all!



Corporate Partnerships with SVDP on the Rise

In our ongoing commitment to serve the poor and homeless in Louisville and Southern Indiana, St. Vincent de Paul is pleased to have the support of many valued community partners.

Through event-oriented promotions and ongoing customer-loyalty programs, these partnerships make giving easy. Whether you're filling your gas tank or placing an order for floral delivery, you have an array of convenient options that make helping those less fortunate become a part of your daily routine.

Now through May 14, the Meijer store on Westport Road is selling \$10 gift cards benefiting St. Vincent de Paul's food pantry through its Simply Give program. Another grocer, The Kroger Co., has been our longtime partner through their gift card program for charity. Louisville florist Nanz & Kraft offers yet another avenue for contributing.

One of the newest promotions involves the 2011 Senior PGA Championship in May at Valhalla Golf Club. When you buy tickets online, St. Vincent de Paul will receive a percentage of the purchase price.

We're extremely grateful to all the businesses who endorse our mission and our daily efforts to help families and individuals struggling with poverty, hunger or homelessness. More details on all of these programs are available on our website.



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SOCIETY of
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LOUISVILLE

Formerly Homeless and Suicidal, Angela is Happy and Grateful to Be Alive

Angela is one of the latest success stories to emerge at St. Vincent de Paul. After decades of hard living, two suicide attempts and time spent in prison, she has turned her life around. Having found the structure and encouragement she craved for so many years at our St. Jude Women's Recovery Program, she is happier and more optimistic about her future than she has ever been.

"I believe I can do anything I put my mind to because of the support I got from St. Jude," she says.

Angela's problems began in childhood. Her parents divorced, and when her mother remarried, she gained new step-siblings and a stepfather, who she said was strict and uncaring. Feeling neglected, at 13 Angela went to live with her dad, who loved her and spoiled her with material things. "But he was never home," she says. "He worked all the time."

Deeply unhappy and painfully insecure, Angela got in with the wrong crowd and started abusing drugs and alcohol. "I was very alone," she says. "I never felt like I fit in." She became a habitual runaway. "I would go with people I'd just met the weekend before. I ran away to six states," she says.

Troubled teen

At 13, she was caught stealing. At 15, she made her first suicide attempt. Counseling, along with a switch to Catholic schools in 8th and 9th grades, helped temporarily, but she reverted to old habits with a return to public school in 10th grade. She escaped through harder drugs. "I did anything I could so I didn't have to feel any of the pain or loneliness."

Hanging with the wrong crowd had dire consequences. At 17, Angela was accidentally shot in the back by a gang member. She was rushed to the hospital with internal bleeding and a collapsed lung. Surgeons removed her spleen, and she eventually recovered—but the scars are permanent. "I still have pieces of bullet fragment in my body," she says.

Pregnant at 17, she dropped out of high school, stopped using drugs and completed her GED. But in the years that followed, she had another child, and her recreational drug use progressed to full-blown addiction. She lived with a violent, abusive man who was heavily into drugs. A raging alcoholic, he beat her so badly that she and her children fled to a domestic violence shelter. "He told me nobody else would want to be with me," she remembers. "I lived in fear."

She pressed charges, and he went to prison.

But so did Angela. Having committed crimes to support her drug habit, she served a year for theft and fraud. Within 10 months of being released from prison, she was caught dealing drugs and sent back to prison for three years.

After her release in 2007, she stayed sober for three years. When she found out her 15-year-old daughter was pregnant, she lost control and had a severe relapse. She went missing from family and friends for nine days, holed up in a motel room. "I was continually putting dope in me, like every hour," she recalls tearfully. "I had no food or drink in nearly a week. I weighed about 90 pounds."

Again, Angela tried to kill herself, but she woke up on the bathroom floor next to the suicide note she'd written. "I was angry with God for not letting me die," she says.

Hope at last

With her dad's help, last summer she entered St. Vincent de Paul's St. Jude Women's Recovery Center. Pat Schneider, Angela's case manager, says she has made exceptional progress and is a new person. "I prayed. I really got in touch with God," Angela says. "And once I found some acceptance in my life and got Him back in my life, I just knew that everything was going to be OK."

Today, Angela is on good terms with her daughter, 15, and son, 12. And she finds joy and unconditional love in being a grandmother to her 5-month-old grandson. In addition, she works full-time at a restaurant and goes to college. She hopes to become a social worker so she can help others learn from her mistakes. "I've been through it all," she says.

The recovery program at St. Vincent de Paul provided structure and support like she'd never had before. "I have someone who understands me. They understand the bad days, and they celebrate the good days with me. The promises of this program do come true, but you have to do the work for them to come true."



If You Need Help:
(502) 301-8697

**To Schedule Pick-up of Your
Thrift Store Donations:**
(502) 589-7837

To Donate Cash:
(502) 301-8697

HELP SUPPORT OUR FOUR THRIFT STORES



In order to meet the ongoing needs of our four local Thrift Stores, St. Vincent de Paul is in need of new or top-quality used retail fixtures—shelving display cases, clothing racks, etc.

Stocked with everything from sofas and vintage hats to dinner plates and children's books, our stores play an important role in supporting the work of SVDP.

Unlike many other thrift-store chains, 100 percent of the profits for our store sales are turned back into our many programs supporting neighbors in need right here in Louisville and Southern Indiana.

If you can help with this request, or if you know of a business that might be auctioning off its retail fixtures in the near future, please contact Judy McCoy at (502) 301-8676. Thanks for your help.



Our Convenient Store Locations

1029 S. Preston Street
(502) 583-8158

248 E. Market Street
(502) 583-8158

2217 Hikes Lane
(502) 473-8856

651 Eastern Blvd., Clarksville, IN
(812) 288-1165

CALENDAR OF UPCOMING EVENTS

May 21

Spiritual Advisors Workshop

*With Sister Caroline
Clark, Spiritual Advisor,
Detroit, Mich.*

Conference Room, Administration Building
9 to 11:30am

May 21-22

Thrift Store Truck Weekend

Holy Trinity
501 Cherrywood Road, Louisville, KY 40207

June 8

Council of Louisville Meeting

Open Hand Kitchen
6pm Dinner, 7pm Council Meeting

June 24-26

Mid-East Regional Meeting

Dayton, Ohio

July 23

Ozanam Orientation*

Conference Room, Administration Building
9:30am to 3pm

All new SVDP members, as well as those who have not had a previous opportunity to attend this orientation, are welcome and encouraged to attend. The \$10 registration fee covers the cost of resource materials. Donuts and lunch will be provided.

• To register, contact Donna Young at (502) 301-8688; dyoung@svdplou.org.