

GOOD SAMARITAN

St. Vincent de Paul | Louisville, KY

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Dogs Offer Humor and Healing, with Unconditional Love

Research has shown that caring for a pet can combat loneliness and depression.

Petting a dog, for example, can lower a person's blood pressure, reduce stress and instill a sense of calm. Dogs can also make you smile uncontrollably and laugh out loud.

That's what the three dogs at St. Jude Women's Recovery Center do for St. Vincent de Paul clients.

"Tucker is not a dog," says Nicole. "He thinks he is a person. And we think of him as a person! He is like the king of this house."

Tucker, a portly pooch who came to St. Jude as a stray about 3 ½ years ago, has melted the hearts of many women.

Often, the clients arrive at the recovery center angry, defiant, scared, sick and in trouble.

The short-legged, fat white dog that waddles up to them in the hallway doesn't care. Tucker greets them with a wagging tale and kind brown eyes that convey instant acceptance, complete trust and unconditional love.

Heather admits she never liked dogs much. "But that was before I met Tucker," she says. "He won me over."

For Sherri, another St. Jude client, the dogs remind her of happier times.



Tucker, along with Program Manager Debbie Slagle-Pike's two fluffy black Shih-Tzus – medium-sized Buddy and tiny moptop Mojo – the animals remind Sherri of home and her beloved pets.

"I fell in love with Tucker at first sight," Sherri says. "He's always glad to see me. Everybody wants that unconditional love."

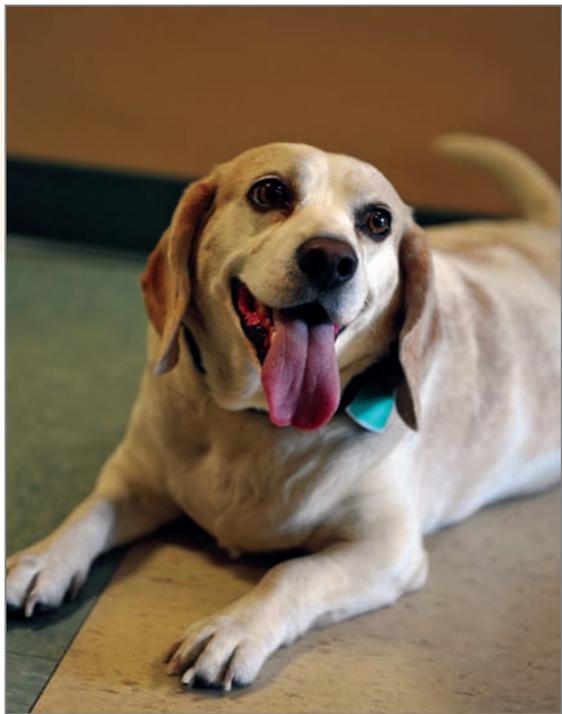
On some level, she thinks Tucker understands the disease of addiction that she and other St. Jude clients are struggling to overcome. "Tucker's in 'the madness' too," Sherri says. "He's addicted to food." Stories abound of Tucker sneaking forbidden morsels, such as the expensive chocolate truffles he gobbled up from the desk of a case manager who had just left the room.

Comic relief aside, the dogs' presence at St. Jude is very profound for many clients, including Sara. "He lightens my heart," she says. "I'm a pretty solitary person. I was an only child, and I like being alone sometimes. It's hard here, because you're in this house with 30 other women. But with Tucker, I can be alone but not be by myself. He's like a constant, silent companion.

"He loves me no matter what."



GOOD SAMARITAN



On the Ground

By Nancy Naughton
Associate Executive Director
St. Vincent de Paul | Louisville



Each day, approximately 200 men, women and children are provided a home on St. Vincent de Paul's campus. The St. Vincent de Paul case management staff and our wonderful volunteers work diligently to ensure each person feels welcome, safe and important.

The signs of home are all around campus ... homemade meals prepared at the Open Hand Kitchen, summer programs and after-school study sessions for the children and even pets to welcome our residents home at the end of the day.

It is not uncommon to see one of our resident canines out for a walk around campus with a St. Vincent de Paul client.

Each time I see them I am reminded of the important role St. Vincent de Paul plays in the lives of our clients, providing them with some of the simple pleasures of home while they work so hard to reclaim their independence.

As an animal lover, I am always delighted to see Buster, who lives at Simon Hall, or receive a greeting from Tucker, our resident dog at St. Jude.

We hope you enjoy meeting some of these lovable companions in this issue of the *Good Samaritan* and learning about the positive impact they have on the many people served by St. Vincent de Paul.

Providing a home for our neighbors when they are in great need would not be possible without your help.

Requests for assistance remain high, especially among families having difficulty making ends meet. In fact, calls for aid from families in crisis have increased 29 percent versus a year ago.

We are here to help.

St. Vincent de Paul's new family apartments will come on line by the 4th quarter of this year, allowing us to welcome 20 homeless families to our campus, where both parents and their children will be provided with a place to call home and help to secure a more stable future.

On behalf of all the men, women and children St. Vincent de Paul is privileged to serve, thank you for making a home for those in need!

For more information, or to make a donation, please contact Nancy at nnaughton@svdplou.org.

Community Partnerships with Retailers Support St. Vincent de Paul's Mission

Any fall home improvement projects in the works? One of our community partnerships may save you money and help St. Vincent de Paul at the same time.

Customers will receive a 20 percent discount on paint, primer and stain purchases at PPG Porter Paints stores by using the digital coupon available on the St. Vincent de Paul website. Five percent of all purchases you make at the store will benefit St. Vincent de Paul.

While the Paint it Forward campaign is one of the newest charity programs available to our supporters, other businesses offer similar incentives.

Purchase \$25 Kroger gift cards from us, and St. Vincent de Paul will receive 4 percent of your purchases on groceries, fuel, and pharmacy items. To order your cards, call us at (502) 301-8695. Additionally, Louisville florist Nanz & Kraft's Helping Hands program includes SVDP in its list of charities. When placing a floral online order, choose SVDP from the pull-down menu choices, and we receive a \$2 donation.

These donations can really add up over time, providing vitally needed resources that allow St. Vincent de Paul to carry out its service to the poor and homeless in our community. More information about these programs can be found on our website: www.svdplou.org/community-partnerships.



Paint it **Forward**

Client Profile

Edward, 52, is a St. Vincent de Paul client who lives at Simon Hall, our supportive housing program for formerly homeless men with mental or physical disabilities. Six months ago Edward assumed the title of Resident Manager of Simon Hall.

Q & A

How long have you been at St. Vincent de Paul? 4½ years. He entered the homeless veterans program at Ozanam Inn, staying for six months before obtaining permanent housing as one of 10 residents at Simon Hall here on the SVDP campus.

Hometown: Louisville.

Background: Joined the army at 17. Spent time in Germany as a staff sergeant in the U.S. Army (1977-1985). He has worked all his life: "I am a jack of all trades. I've been a welder, carpenter, laser printer technician, mechanic... I was the environmental services director for a 300-bed nursing home in Atlanta."

What led to you becoming homeless? Employment issues related to lifelong, undiagnosed mental illness and substance abuse that began at age 8. As a child, he faced trauma and violence in his home. "I needed therapy back then but didn't realize it. Before I addressed my mental health issues, I was always trying to medicate myself through my [drug] addiction."

How did that affect your life? "Suicide attempts... I was homeless for 15 years, from the late 1980s all through the 1990s. I barely survived, living on the streets in downtown Los Angeles. I slept under bridges, sidewalks, on cardboard boxes. I was tired of living that way, but I didn't know how to change it."

How did you turn your life around? He detoxed, embraced the principles of a 12-Step program and sought professional help to address his severe depression and other mental health issues.

How are you managing these conditions today? Edward cites proper psychiatric care that includes medications and twice-monthly therapy sessions, administered through the Veterans Administration. An active speaker and participant in Narcotics Anonymous, Edward has been sober since coming to live on the St. Vincent de Paul campus 4½ years ago.

What do you like about living at Simon Hall? "I love it here because I'm able to further my mental health progress. I'm maturing, and I'm able to deal with life better." He is trying to improve his education with remedial courses. When he graduated from high school, Edward says he was only reading at fourth-grade level. Edward is now taking math classes. "I love math now. And I'm good at math!" he says, with a look of surprise. In the future, he might think about trying to earn a college degree, he adds.

What are your primary job duties as resident manager? "I'm responsible for the cleanliness of the house and for making sure everybody stays on their medications. I try to unite [other residents] as a family with outings and things." Recent social events have included a July 4th barbecue, a movie night, and a group trip to Golden Corral restaurant and to Bass Pro Shop in Clarksville, Ind.

What else would you like to share with Good Sam readers? "If it wasn't for St. Vincent de Paul, I would be dead now. I know I would. Coming here allowed me to accumulate 'safe time' [as a newly sober person] in an atmosphere that was conducive to my recovery. I have a lot of hope for the future now."



Plan Ahead:

Sept. 11-12
7th Annual SVDP Charity Golf Scramble & Auction Event
Big Spring Country Club/Porcini
Info and registration: kjohnson@svdprou.org

Sept. 14
SVDP Council Meeting*
St. Ignatius Catholic Church
1816 Rangeland Road
5pm Mass
6pm Dinner
7pm Meeting

Oct. 15
SVDP Louisville
3rd Annual Retreat*
Nazareth Retreat Center,
Nazareth, KY
Louis Arceneaux, C.M. – Retreat Leader

Oct. 16
4th Annual
Friends of the Poor Walk*
Churchill Downs
1pm Registration
2pm Walk

*Contact Donna Young (502) 301-8688;
dyoung@svdprou.org

THRIFT STORE TRUCK WEEKENDS

Sept. 3-4
Our Lady of Perpetual Help
1752 Scheller Lane
New Albany, IN 47150
Sat. 9am to 4pm and 6:30 to 7pm
Sun. 10am to 2pm

Sept. 10-11
St. Rita
8709 Preston Highway
Louisville, KY 40219
Sat. 10am to 6pm
Sun. 9am to 1pm

Please drop off your gently used clothing, household items and other donations during these hours.



Pat Lynch, youth minister at St. Gabriel Catholic Church (back row, fourth from left), brought teams of volunteers to help with our summer program. The young adults formed close bonds of friendship with the children and served as positive role models for them.

Summer Enrichment Program Ends

With a long-awaited field trip to the Newport Aquarium outside Cincinnati, our 2011 Project Possibilities summer enrichment day camp came to a close. It was the third summer for the award-winning program, and by all accounts, it was the most successful yet. Children, from third-graders to eighth-graders, participated in the day camp, meeting Mondays through Thursdays here on the St. Vincent de Paul campus.

Highlights of the summer included:

- Weekly shopping trips to the grocery store to purchase food for meals prepared by the kids during camp hours.
- Cooking lessons that featured favorite dishes like spaghetti and meat sauce, tacos, marinated chicken breasts, and favorite pies.
- An extracurricular, creative writing workshop for the older children.
- Academic activities that encouraged children to research ideas for activities they wanted the group to consider doing together.
- Arts and crafts and science-related projects, such as constructing and igniting paper-mache volcanoes.
- Field trips to local parks, museums and Holiday World amusement park.

Thank you to instructor Beth Borgemenke and a crew of dedicated volunteers who helped make learning fun for these deserving children!

Friends of the Poor Walk Rescheduled for Oct. 16

St. Vincent de Paul's 4th Annual Friends of the Poor Walk has been rescheduled for Sunday, Oct. 16, at Churchill Downs.

Registration will begin at 1pm, followed by the walk at 2pm.

Walkers of all ages are invited to join in the non-competitive, family-oriented event, which takes place inside the world-famous racetrack.

All money raised by this event will be divided among St. Vincent de Paul's conferences here in Louisville, Central Kentucky and Southern Indiana. The funds will be used by these parishes to provide emergency financial assistance to families and individuals who need help with rent or mortgage payments, utilities, food and other necessities.

Registration is free, but pledges in any dollar amount are requested from participants. Those who want to register in advance may do so, though it is not required. Contact Donna Young at (502) 301-8695.

