

# GOOD SAMARITAN

## St. Vincent de Paul | Louisville, KY

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## Client's Hard Work Restores His Life

Gratitude. That's the word that comes to mind after listening to Billy Abel share his story.

When the 51-year-old former resident of our Ozanam Inn men's homeless shelter visits the St. Vincent de Paul campus these days, it's to touch base with his former case managers or to offer encouragement to men still struggling to achieve the kind of stability and peace of mind Billy has found.

He can scarcely believe it.

"St. Vincent de Paul has saved me and taught me how to live," Billy says. "I was a real bad alcoholic, but this program and AA [Alcoholics Anonymous] showed me that I had a chance at life again. And I'm telling you, my life is so great now. I thank God for it every day."

Billy's transformation didn't happen overnight, and he acknowledges many missteps—periods when he quit drinking, only to succumb to the grip of alcoholism time and again. The addiction cost him everything: the home he built when he was

just 25 years old, his wife and two children, jobs...

"One day I was just done," he recalls. "I couldn't go on living like I was living."

SVDP program manager Cory Bledsoe (pictured above, at left, with Abel) says his client had a strong desire to get better, and the will to do it. "Divine providence" also played a role, he believes, as opportunities and people arose in Abel's life.

Billy's referral to St. Vincent de Paul was a critical stepping stone to his recovery. Billy spent 14 months at Ozanam Inn through our Residential Recovery program, which is a collaboration with two other local agencies serving the homeless—the St. John Center and Phoenix Health Center (Family Health Centers of Louisville).

Clients are required to work or perform volunteer service—which is what led Billy to another transformative relationship, with St. Bartholomew Catholic Church.

"He came to us at a time where we desperately needed help," says Becky Box, director of religious education at St. Bartholomew. "We did not have the services of a janitor or a maintenance person. A mutual friend of ours had called to say he had a gentleman that needed service hours in order to be able to live at St. Vincent de Paul."

Billy was eager to prove himself. He volunteered for six months and never missed a day. "He was here all the time. He wanted to work," Becky says. "Little by little, we just adopted him. Somebody gave him a bike. Then we were in a position where we could hire him."

Becky had an immediate camaraderie with Billy. Her husband and two adult children are also in recovery. "We just love him," Becky says of the church staff and congregation, where he is now an active member. "He's so dependable and professional. And I know he loves his job and that he's very grateful for his recovery."

Billy says he never dreamed of such happiness. "I'm coming up on two years sober. I work in a church. I love what I do. I couldn't have asked for anything better if I'd been given an application and told, 'Fill it out with what you'd like to do.'"

Earlier this year, Billy moved from our men's shelter into a suburban rental home with a big yard. He bought a 2001 truck. He pays his own bills. He has regained his self-respect.

"St. Vincent de Paul has just amazed me," he says. "They treated me like a real person: They greeted me by name; they shook my hand. Cory would sit down and listen to my problems. He kept telling me the things I needed to do. He set goals for me."

"So everything he set for me, I did—and it has paid off."

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## Golf Scramble and Auction Event Raises Revenue for Programs

St. Vincent de Paul's 8th Annual Golf Scramble and Charity Auction Event Sept. 11-12 was a wonderful success.

Our only fundraising event of the year netted \$73,000 for SVDP's critically needed programs and services for families and individuals in need.

The donations generated by the event surpassed last year's record, a major accomplishment given the present-day challenges of the U.S. economy.

Twenty-seven teams competed in the Golf Scramble at Big Spring Country Club. Congratulations to SVDP board member Larry Blandford and his foursome, the winners of the golf event. His team members were Doug Gardner, Bill Mudd, and Brad Lehmann.

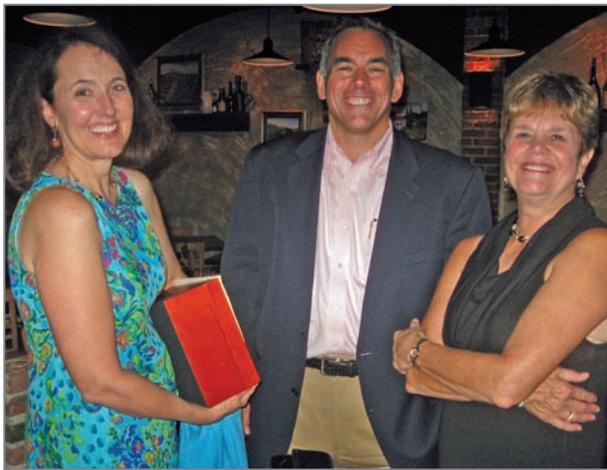
Second place winners were members of Doug Francke's team, which also included Ken and Chris Francke and Emmett Kaelin. The Brown-Forman Corp. team came in third. BF golfers were Tim Condon, Alan George, Jim Perry and Jim Murphy.

At the end of the day, the award-winning raffle ticket was drawn, with the \$5,000 prize going to Michael Lewis.

Special thanks to Big Spring Country Club and to Tim Coury, owner of Porcini restaurant, for hosting our events. In addition, we would like to extend our appreciation to our Golf Scramble Signature Sponsors Brandeis Machinery & Supply Co.; Fifth Third Bank; and Porcini. Society Sponsors were Abel Construction Co., Inc.; Caldwell Tanks, Inc.; LG&E, Stock Yards Bank & Trust Co.; Yang Kee Noodle; and Todd-Veredus Asset Management.

Finally, thank you to all who competed, donated auction items, bought raffle tickets or volunteered in any way. Your generous support of this important fundraiser is deeply appreciated.

*Pictured above: Guests enjoyed bidding on a variety of merchandise during the Sunday evening Charity Auction Event at Porcini restaurant. From left: JoAnn Haner and Scott Haner, an SVDP board member, chat with Kathi Johnson, development assistant at St. Vincent de Paul.*



## St. Gabriel Does It Again

Members of the St. Gabriel Catholic Church Youth Ministry, along with parents and other volunteers from the parish, hosted an end-of-summer cook-out one recent Friday evening on the St. Vincent de Paul campus. Beautiful weather and a large turnout for the event contributed to the festive atmosphere.

Hot dogs, hamburgers, grilled chicken and scores of potluck dishes were served buffet style from the picnic tables in the courtyard area between the SVDP administration building and the DePaul Apartments for families. Case managers and program aides on SVDP's staff (Ernesto Nuncio and Adam Atherton are pictured below) were also on hand to assist.



In addition to the clients from our shelter and supportive housing programs, residents who live in the Smoketown/Shelby Park area were invited to attend. Men, women and children eagerly gathered for the food and fellowship, creating a line that stretched into the alley that runs through the campus. By the end of the evening, more than 350 people had been served.

Games including Bingo, and activities such as basketball and face painting were a hit with guests of all ages. Our thanks to Pat Lynch and the entire St. Gabriel team for their continued, invaluable presence here at St. Vincent de Paul.



## New Children's Clothing and Canned Food Needed for the Holidays

St. Vincent de Paul's Christmas outreach is underway, and we need your help. New clothing for boys and girls, from infants through teens, is needed.

As our campus expands with the new clients who will be moving into our 54 new apartments for families and individuals in the coming weeks, the need for food, clothing and financial gifts will be greater than in previous years.

Compounding the growing need is the dramatic rise in the number of calls

for assistance that come into the St. Vincent de Paul offices every day. Requests from families asking for help with food, rent and utility bills are up more than 40 percent this year versus a year ago.

The donations will supply our Santa Shop on Dec. 11, when parents who have been pre-screened will be invited to our Open Hand Kitchen to choose gift items for their children, at no cost.

In addition, SVDP will give food baskets to other families in need. Canned fruits, vegetables and other

nonperishable pantry staples are needed.

Sheila Williamson was a first-time volunteer at last year's Santa Shop. She will be back again this year to help out.

"I was really overwhelmed by it all, but humbled by the people," she says. "I was moved by the amount of donations that were there, the good that was coming out of it, and the gratefulness of the clients."

*(Continued on next page)*

# Plan Ahead:

**Reminder: Christmas donations are needed by December 9th.**

**Nov. 5-6**  
St. Edward  
9608 Sue Helen Dr.  
Louisville, KY 40299  
Sat. 10am to 6pm  
Sun. 8am to 2pm

**Nov. 19-20**  
St. Stephen Martyr  
2931 Pindell Ave.  
Louisville, KY 40217  
Sat. Noon to 6pm  
Sun. 7am to 2pm

**Nov. 12-13**  
Holy Family  
3926 Poplar Level Rd.  
Louisville, KY 40213  
Sat. 8am to 6pm  
Sun. Noon to 5pm

**Sunday, Dec. 11**  
SVDP Annual Santa Shop

For more info on all events, contact Donna Young at (502) 301-8688; [dyoung@svdplou.org](mailto:dyoung@svdplou.org)

## Willingness to Serve Spans Generations

St. Vincent de Paul's Open Hand Kitchen continues to attract first-time volunteers to our campus.

Families, students, church groups, co-workers and members of professional organizations look to SVDP for an opportunity to offer their service and to connect with other people who care for those in need in our community.

More than 200 youths alone toured the OHK and SVDP campus in early October. These included 8th-graders from St. Athanasius School as well as students from Assumption and Trinity high schools.

Apprentices with the renowned Actors Theatre of Louisville also suited up in hair nets for their stint behind the steam tables.



Pictured below, they included (back row, left to right) Jonathan Finnegan, Liz Malarkey, Mariana McClellan, Amy Attaway and Rivka Borek; and (front row, from left) Matt Schatz, Sean Mellot and Lisa Dring.

Of course, these enthusiastic newcomers join the scores of dedicated teams who have been serving in our Open Hand Kitchen for decades. For example, Louise Marks (above), of St. Athanasius, has been a regular for more than 20 years. We thank you all!



*(Holidays, continued)*

Anyone looking to donate items that are in short supply should consider buying clothes to fit 'tweens and teens, who can sometimes be overlooked, she explains.

"Last year there were a lot of clients who were hunting for larger sizes. They wanted to get something for their teenager, but we didn't really have anything for them—at least not at my table."

In addition to children's gifts, canned goods also are needed for the food basket outreach. The week before Christmas, St. Vincent de Paul will give these boxes of food to families in need.

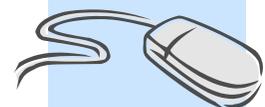
Whatever the contribution, be it clothing, food, or time, Williamson would like to encourage others to get involved.

"It's that old cliché: You get more out of it than you give," she says. "I know I walked away last year feeling really good. It was just a joyful experience."

*Please bring your donations of clothing and food no later than the first week of December to: St. Vincent de Paul, 1015-C S. Preston St., Louisville, KY 40203.*

*To volunteer, contact Donna Young at (502) 301-8688.*

*To make a financial donation, contact Nancy Naughton at (502) 301-8682.*



View photos from last year's Santa Shop on our website:

[www.svdplou.org](http://www.svdplou.org)