

# GOOD SAMARITAN

## St. Vincent de Paul | Louisville, KY

www.svdplou.org

May | 2012

### A Place of Their Own

#### ***“It Makes Me Feel Like I Can Be A Better Mother”***

For a formerly homeless family of four, moving into their own apartment here on the St. Vincent de Paul campus has been a joyous occasion.

“When we first opened the door and walked in, they couldn’t believe it,” LeeAndra says. “They couldn’t believe it’s ours.”

Earlier this spring, her family was among the first to move into the new apartments for homeless families and individuals. The 2- and 3-bedroom family apartments, in two adjacent buildings along Kentucky Street between South Jackson and South Preston streets, are furnished with kitchen, living room and bedroom furniture.

Residents pay rent based on a percentage of their income, and enter into a contract to receive case management from SVDP staff to develop a plan to work toward self-sufficiency.

“I look around and I just can’t believe this is my apartment!” exclaims LeeAndra. “We just love it here, and we feel so lucky. Nobody has ever done anything like this for me.”

The mother of four children, LeeAndra raises Ayana, 10; Samya, 8; and Sammy, 4, on her own. Her oldest child, Chelsea, age 12, lives with LeeAndra’s mother.

LeeAndra, who’d worked as a certified nursing assistant, has had difficulty maintaining a stable home for her kids. “We’ve been going from place to place,” she says.

In a practice common to homeless families, they have been “couch surfing” – staying with friends and relatives and going from place to place as she tries to get back on her feet and get a place of their own.

For a time, LeeAndra stayed in a homeless

shelter. They have slept in their car. They have tried desperately just to survive.

“I’ve always tried to work and pay my own bills, but without child support it’s hard.”

As a mother, she feels guilty and inadequate, she says. “I try to make it a little better for the kids,” she says. “But we have never had stability, and that makes me feel like a bad mom.”

They used to ask her: “Momma, where are we gonna sleep tonight?”

It broke her heart and made her feel ashamed.

Since moving into their new apartment, however, she has a new, more positive outlook.

“I told the kids we can finally stop living out of bags and buckets. Now we have a place to put our things, and we can cook food whenever we want to because we have a nice kitchen. It’s just beautiful.”

For LeeAndra, moving into St. Vincent de Paul’s family apartments was a chance to start over. Working with her case manager is part of the process that will help her regain her financial footing and make sound decisions for the family’s long-term future.

“I’m able to start paying off my debts now and saving a few dollars and I’m trying to get back on my feet,” she says. “Since being here, I just feel like every day is a brighter day.”



The moment the children first walked into their apartment will be in LeeAndra’s memory for a lifetime: “They opened the door and they just couldn’t believe it. They were so happy, they just started running back and forth through the apartment.”

Bunk beds were the biggest thrill for 4-year-old Sammy, who now has not one but two beds of his own. “Before, we always had to sleep altogether in one bed,” she says.

Being in the apartment has made it easier to enjoy family togetherness. “We have little talks around the dinner table now,” she says. “It’s nice.”

“And I feel like now I can take care of them better. We can just be together as a family, and it makes me feel like a better mother.”

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By Nancy Naughton

## On the Ground

On the St. Vincent de Paul campus, 54 new apartments are now open and fully occupied by individuals and families who were previously homeless. Welcome baskets, generously prepared by the St. Vincent de Paul Conferences, were in each apartment to welcome our new clients. You can imagine their delight as they were handed the keys to their new home.

Our case management team is hard at work helping our new clients settle into their new homes. A customized plan has been created for each individual and each family to help them on their way to self-sufficiency.

Twenty of the new apartments are two- and three-bedroom units for families, and we now have the great pleasure of meeting all of our new young residents, ranging from infants to teenagers. These children have experienced the strain of homelessness, which can severely impact their health, social skills, and academic performance.

For example:

- Homeless children are sick at twice the rate of other children.
- They have twice the rate of learning disabilities and three times the rate of emotional and behavioral problems.
- Fewer than one in four homeless children graduates from high school.



*A welcome basket awaits residents of this new family apartment on our campus.*

Without active and meaningful intervention, these disabilities will result in an unbreakable cycle of poverty for these children.

We will be working diligently with our young clients to help them overcome these disadvantages by providing after-school tutoring, social outings, and our Project Possibilities Summer Program.

This is the third year for Project Possibilities, which is held daily throughout the summer. Our conference room serves as home base for the program, which brings a lively air to our administration building! Throughout the summer the children enjoy crafts, outings, cooking, gardening, and other adventures.

On behalf of all the clients served by St. Vincent de Paul, thank you for your unwavering support and for making a brighter future possible for so many.

*Naughton is associate executive director of St. Vincent de Paul | Louisville.*

## Gift Cards Needed for SVDP Kids' Program

St. Vincent de Paul's Project Possibilities summer enrichment day camp for children living on our campus gets underway in a few weeks, and we need your help to make it a success.

Cash donations or gift cards to Target and Meijer are needed so that we can purchase arts and crafts materials, gardening items, and other classroom supplies throughout the next few months.



Gift cards will also allow us to purchase food and paper products. The curriculum includes lessons on nutrition, meal planning and preparation, as well as cooking. With adult supervision, the children prepare their own meals or picnic lunches as part of their planned activities.

If you'd like to help, please send gift cards to Nancy Naughton at 1015-C S. Preston St., Louisville, KY 40203. To make a cash donation, please contact her directly at (502) 301-8682; [nnaughton@svdplou.org](mailto:nnaughton@svdplou.org).

## SVDP Receives Grant for Thrift Store Signage

St. Vincent de Paul has received a Signs of Support Grant from Sign-A-Rama Downtown, a small business in Louisville.

The grant will provide in-store signage for our two largest Thrift Stores – on Hikes Lane and in Clarksville, Ind. All four local SVDP Thrift Stores are an important source of revenue for our charity's programs and services. All proceeds from retail operations go back into programs and services for the poor and homeless here in our community.

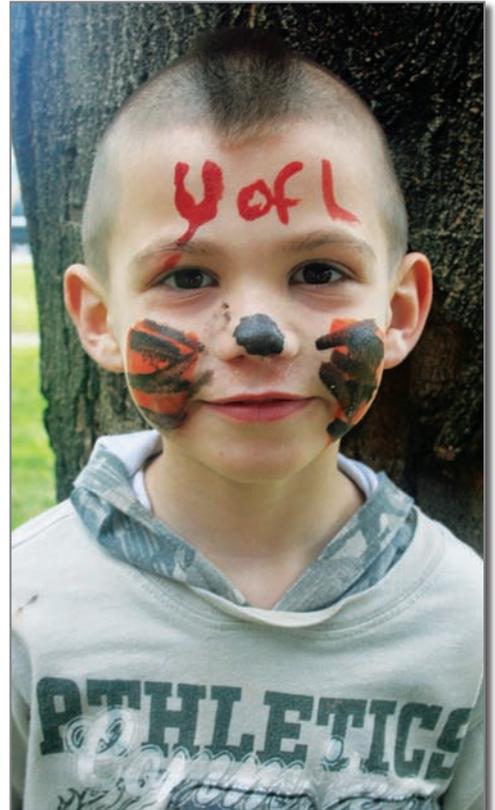
Find store locations, maps and donation guidelines at [www.svdplou.org](http://www.svdplou.org).

## St. Gabriel Youth Hosts Annual Easter Egg Hunt

Dozens of children ranging in age from infants through pre-adolescents recently participated in an Easter Egg Hunt on the playground outside DePaul Apartments.

The youth group and volunteers with St. Gabriel the Archangel Catholic Church once again hosted the seasonal outdoor activity, bringing brightly colored plastic eggs filled with candy, as well as games, face-painting activities and all the fixings for a picnic lunch of peanut-butter-and-jelly sandwiches, chips and drinks.

Thanks to Pat Lynch, St. Gabriel's youth minister, and to everyone who volunteered to make this a fun event.



# Plan Ahead:

**To Get Help from SVDP:**  
(502) 301-8697

**To Make a Cash Donation to SVDP:**  
(502) 301-8695

## Service Projects Benefit Campus

Sean Murphy (pictured, below) recently completed a daylong service project at St. Vincent de Paul toward obtaining his Eagle Scout status.

Murphy, of Boy Scout Troop 71, built a retaining wall outside the southeast corner of St. Jude Women's Recovery Center. The grassy slope between the corner of the brick building and the sidewalk had become a problem due to soil erosion.

Murphy was able to get most of the supplies and tools donated or loaned to him to build a masonry retaining wall between the sidewalk and St. Jude's grounds. He was assisted by other members of the Troop and several adults.

Papa John's Pizza even donated pizzas for the boys' short lunch break. Thanks to everyone for helping make this improvement to our campus a reality!



Justin McGohon, a senior at Holy Cross High School, recently completed a food donation drive for St. Vincent de Paul's Open Hand Kitchen.

As part of a class project, he solicited donations of canned goods and other pantry staples, collected the food, and then delivered the donated goods to our campus. He documented the effort on video and in photos as part of the class work.

Food drives like Justin's go a long way in helping SVDP feed men, women, and children who might otherwise go hungry. Our Open Hand Kitchen serves more than 100,000 meals each year, free to anyone in need.

*Austin Bickett (left) assists Justin McGohon with food delivery outside our Open Hand Kitchen.*

## Varied Events on Tap for the Coming Months

- The St. Vincent de Paul Louisville Council meeting will be held **May 9** at Holy Trinity Catholic Church, 501 Cherrywood Road, Louisville, KY 40207.

Mass will begin at 5:30pm, followed by dinner, fellowship, and the meeting. Reservations are requested.

- A Home Visit Workshop for Vincentians will be offered from 9:30am to 12pm **May 19** in the SVDP Administration Building, 1015 C S. Preston St.

David Dutschke, president of District 2 of SVDP's Louisville Council, will lead the workshop. Advance registration is requested.

- St. Vincent de Paul Louisville will host the Society of St. Vincent de Paul's Mid-East Regional meeting this **Aug. 3 and 4** at the Galt House.

- The 5th Annual Friends of the Poor Walk has been scheduled for Sunday, **Oct. 14**, at Churchill Downs.

Registration will begin at 1pm, followed by the walk at 2pm. More details will be announced in the coming months.

*For more information on any of the events listed above and to make reservations, please contact Donna Young at (502) 301-8688.*

## TRUCK WEEKENDS

**May 19-20**  
Holy Trinity  
501 Cherrywood Road  
Louisville, KY 40207  
(502) 897-5207

**May 26-27**  
Our Lady of Mt. Carmel  
5505 New Cut Road  
Louisville, KY 40214  
(502) 366-5651