

# GOOD SAMARITAN

## St. Vincent de Paul | Louisville, KY

www.svdplou.org

September | 2012

## Tackling Childhood Poverty Project Possibilities Nurtures At-Risk Kids

Having just completed our fourth successful summer of Project Possibilities, there are tangible signs that the children's enrichment program is having a positive impact on young people entrusted to our care.

Each year, kids ages 6 to 12 who live in SVDP's housing participate in a structured learning program that combines fun projects with lessons in core academic subjects, including reading, math and science.

The camp balances classroom work designed to strengthen basic skills like writing and reading comprehension while engaging students in fun activities that focus on character-building, problem-solving and improving social skills and kids' self-esteem.

Children who live in poverty desperately need this kind of nurturing and extra attention.

Last month, results of the annual Kids Count survey showed that childhood

poverty is rising dramatically in the United States. From 2005 to 2010, Kentucky saw an 18 percent increase in the number of children living in poverty, while Indiana's childhood poverty rate spiked 29 percent.

As a July 26 *Courier-Journal* editorial noted, "For many ... children, poverty will have a profoundly adverse impact on their educational attainment, health, well-being, and their status as adults. For a child, it's a terrible disadvantage."

Initially, when Project Possibilities was launched with a one-time-only Community Foundation of Louisville grant, the goal was to address the "brain drain" that can occur when children are on summer break from school.

With our 2012 Project Possibilities, teachers discovered that children needed not only educational help but also "help developing missing social skills and ways to cope with unusual levels of stress and anxiety."

"They worry about everything," says Bethany Borgemenke, a master's-level teacher who has led the program since its inception in 2009. "The things these kids have to deal with are so stressful."

As a result, she and her 2012 co-teacher,



Megan Fleming, tailored this year's curriculum to include more lessons and re-directing activities to help children who have emotional or mental health issues and behavioral problems.

Keeping kids focused was a challenge, the teachers say, but the children responded well, learning to work together on issues such as teamwork, conflict resolution, and addressing their frustrations and disappointments, their hopes, dreams and successes.

With the support of our donors and the energy, enthusiasm and commitment of a host of volunteers, St. Vincent de Paul is building a foundation for children living in poverty.

Through the love and lessons they have been able to experience here on our campus, it is our hope and our expectation that each of these children can reach for a more promising future.

### POVERTY ON THE RISE

#### 2005 to 2010

**Kentucky:** 18 percent increase  
263,000 children

**Indiana:** 29 percent increase  
342,000 children

Source: 2011 Kids Count, Annie E. Casey Foundation

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## On the Ground By Nancy Naughton



This year the Open Hand Kitchen will serve more than 107,000 meals to men, women and children in need of a warm, nutritious meal. The St. Vincent de Paul shelter

and housing programs are all operating at capacity, many with a waiting list.

This summer, our Project Possibilities program for the children residing on the St. Vincent de Paul campus completed its fourth year. Tutoring and enrichment programs will begin shortly, supporting the academic and personal development of our young clients during the school year.

Instilling the importance of education and staying in school is a critical deliverable to help these children break out of poverty. Over a lifetime, dropouts lucky enough to find a job will earn 60% less than

those with a high school diploma. The unemployment rate is over three times higher for high school dropouts compared to individuals with a college degree.

All of these programs are possible because our community has come together to help our neighbors in need. Our donors care passionately about the plight of the poor and the homeless and sacrifice to help them. Literally thousands of people across Louisville and Southern Indiana help St. Vincent de Paul through their donations, many of them providing monthly donations through the Good Samaritan program.

Thirty years ago, a St. Vincent de Paul board member was inspired by the idea of the “miracle of sharing.” Such a miracle occurred when Jesus fed a crowd of 5,000 with just a few loaves of bread and a few fish.

Taking this concept to heart, the board member started to spread the word, and ultimately spoke before thousands

of people at Sunday liturgies. He asked them to give something small – the result of which would later become miraculous. Specifically, he asked them to consider sharing a portion of their resources, such as \$30 each month, with St. Vincent de Paul, to help those in need. Those who answered his plea became Good Samaritans of St. Vincent de Paul.

We thank all of our Good Samaritans for their generous and steadfast support. If you are not currently part of the Good Samaritan program, please consider joining us. Your sacrifice will make a long and lasting difference to many people in need.

### Ways to make your gift:

- Visit [svdplou.org](http://svdplou.org)
- Call us at 502.301.8695
- Mail your gift in the enclosed envelope



Kids Camp Comes to a Close. At left: St. Gabriel youth accompanied the children who participated in Project Possibilities on an end-of-summer field trip to Mammoth Cave. Above: Teagan (left) was among the kids who enjoyed one-on-one time with volunteers from the American Jewish Society for Service, which hosted a fun day of board games and arts and crafts activities for the children in the camp's final days. See slideshows @ [www.svdplou.org](http://www.svdplou.org).

## Case Manager David Tarullo:

### “Exceeding Our Limitations Is the Heart of St. Vincent de Paul”

*With a strong desire to help homeless men whose lives have been derailed by addiction and other problems, David Tarullo, 27, started working as a program aide at St. Vincent de Paul’s men’s shelter four years ago. Here are excerpts from his story. The full version is at [www.svdplou.org/blog](http://www.svdplou.org/blog).*

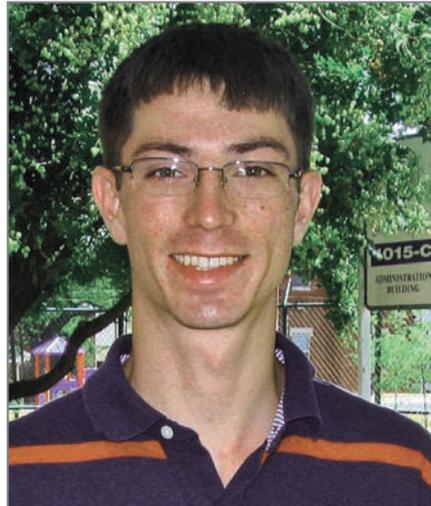
“As a young student with an intense passion and calling for helping others, I was eager to get my foot in the door of the counseling profession,” he explains.

“At SVDP’s Ozanam Inn I jumped into the trenches, right on the front lines of poverty, checking in overnight shelter clients on Saturday and Sunday nights. This was my first experience working a real job in the field. I learned a lot about the homeless service system and the clients who stayed with us.

“I never could understand how some clients remained homeless for such long periods of time and never seemed to get off the streets. For many hours I contemplated how we, as an agency, could do more to address such a client base.”

*While attending University of Louisville’s Kent School of Social Work, Tarullo explored these ideas while continuing to work as a practicum study at Ozanam Inn. He devoted his senior thesis project to developing an intervention that could “break the chains of long-term homelessness” at Ozanam’s overnight shelter.*

*With the help of assistant director of programs, Cory Bledsoe, and Charles (“C.O.”) Orten, SVDP’s director of programs (who was a longtime program manager of Ozanam Inn), Tarullo developed a survey to assess our overnight shelter guests’ motivation to overcome homelessness, their willingness to change and their desire to live beyond a shelter. Tarullo then launched a weekly group counseling session for these men.*



“Through the group intervention process clients were able to explore the deeper desires for their life, seek greater possibilities for their future, and address issues they may have been running from,” he says.

“Many men from the group moved into transitional programs, and one moved into permanent housing after attending the group sessions and dealing with some of his barriers. One client decided to seek further help after living homeless with a substance abuse problem for nearly 30 years.”

*Tarullo’s initiative was recognized by UofL’s Kent School with a first-place award as the best thesis, and last spring he was hired full time as a case manager at Ozanam Inn men’s shelter. Now he is putting into practice the vision that he outlined in that thesis.*

“I am able to work intensively with clients in the overnight shelter until they get

into one of our transitional or housing programs. Clients are able to walk in off the street and begin concentrated work with our agency,” he explains. “I believe that the shelter and its transitional programs are the heart of St. Vincent de Paul’s services.”

*Toward that end, Tarullo is continuing to work with Orten and Bledsoe to improve efficiency in the client services offered through the shelter’s overnight emergency and transitional programs.*

“All clients who I work with are attending the Monday night counseling group, where they are addressing personal issues and problems.

“My experience at St. Vincent de Paul has been inspiring,” Tarullo says. “To be a part of such renewal in the programs and in men’s lives has been a wonderful opportunity for me. I look forward to the challenges and successes we will have in the future. I hope to persist in the creation of transformative services to the men that walk through our door...”

“Transformation—moving from one way of being to another—often means facing shadows of the past. The hurt and pain of the past can be healed. That healing comes from the heart—from emotionally authentic experiences of releasing judgments and forgiving.”

Unapologetically idealistic, Tarullo believes meaningful and lasting change can be achieved.

“When enough of us believe in the vision and live our lives through our personal mission, we will create unconditional love as the reality of our universe! We can do this!”

*Comments? We’d love to hear from you. E-mail us at: [lromine@svdplou.org](mailto:lromine@svdplou.org).*

# Calendar:

## Sept. 9-10

9th Annual SVDP Charity Golf Event  
Porcini and Big Spring Country Club  
Louisville, KY

## Oct. 10

Council of Louisville Meeting  
St. Rita  
8709 Preston Highway  
Louisville, KY 40219  
5pm Mass; 5:45pm Dinner & Fellowship;  
7pm Meeting

## Oct. 14

5th Annual Friends of the Poor Walk  
Churchill Downs  
Louisville, KY  
1pm Registration, 2pm Walk Start  
*Pledges benefit the conference of your choice!*

## Dec. 9

Santa Shop  
1pm, Open Hand Kitchen  
*Contact Donna Young; (502) 301-8688  
dyoung@svdplou.org*

# Truck Weekends

## September 8-9

St. Rita, 8709 Preston Highway, Louisville  
Saturday: 10am-6pm & Sunday: 9am-1pm

## St. Athanasius

5915 Outer Loop, Louisville  
*(times not available)*

## September 22-23

St. Aloysius, 212 Mt. Mercy Dr., Pewee Valley  
Saturday: 3pm-7pm & Sunday: 9am-1pm

## September 29-30

Our Lady of Perpetual Help  
1752 Scheller Lane, New Albany, IN 47150  
Saturday: 9am-4pm; 6:30-7pm & Sunday: 6:30-7pm

# Paws with Purpose Therapy Dogs Visit Kids' Camp

Elaine Weisberg, a volunteer with Paws with Purpose, brought two golden retriever therapy dogs to St. Vincent de Paul on July 30 to give a presentation to children enrolled in our summer enrichment day camp, Project Possibilities.

The retrievers—Oliver and Sage—delighted about 25 children and adult volunteers by following simple commands and demonstrating how they can assist their owners with tasks like opening doors, fetching items and removing their owners' socks and shoes.

The children asked lots of questions about service dogs and how they are trained.



They took turns petting the golden retrievers, and, in observance of Oliver's seventh birthday, the children sang "Happy Birthday" to the dog.

Weisberg called St. Vincent de Paul after seeing a local newspaper article about the dramatic rise in childhood poverty, which included comments about SVDP's summer kids' program. Weisberg offered to bring the therapy dogs for a demonstration as a way of reaching out to these children.



If your organization or group would like to get your group involved at SVDP, please contact us at (502) 301-8670.

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