

GOOD SAMARITAN

St. Vincent de Paul | Louisville, KY

www.svdplou.org

December | 2012

Housing Stability Provides Transition for Single Mom



In the past year since St. Vincent de Paul first opened the doors to 20 new low-income apartments for families, many different types of people have moved onto our campus here in one of Louisville's poorest neighborhoods.

These furnished, 2- and 3-bedroom homes, known collectively as a supportive housing program, are designated for families who were homeless or who were on the verge of becoming homeless. These homes offer stability and security for struggling parents as they begin the challenging process of rebuilding their lives.

Megan, 26, is one of these new tenants. An only child raised by "wonderful" parents, she is a former honors student who attended Morehead State University on a full-ride scholarship.

This young woman now seems both horrified and humbled by the unfathomable heroin addiction that brought her to our doorstep.

"I still have the needle marks in my arm," she says, looking at the inside of her left elbow. "I didn't wake up every day wanting to do this, but I just didn't know how to stop. I felt I didn't deserve to live because of the things I was doing."

After the birth of her daughter, now 4, Megan suffered from severe postpartum depression. At the same time, she was prescribed medication following surgery to remove ovarian cysts. Before she even realized it, she had become addicted to Oxycodone and other opiates, and eventually became an IV-drug user.

"I never thought, 'Oh, when I grow up I want to be an addict and steal from people,'" she says. "I did not see this ever happening to me. I was spiritually dead. I walked around like a shell. I

GOOD SAMARITAN

*The St. Vincent de Paul Staff
Would Like to Wish All of Our
'Good Samaritan' Supporters
A Blessed Christmas and
A Joyous New Year!*



Continue from Page 1

weighed 95 pounds soaking wet, my face was sunken in, and I'd lost the ability to cry."

After years of self-destructive behavior, with the help of her parents she sought treatment. The day she entered rehab, she learned she was pregnant. Determined to put the health of her baby first, Megan got sober, completed the program, and has been in recovery for more than a year.

"Now I sponsor others in recovery," she says. "I have been sufficiently horrified by my disease, and I do not ever want to go back to that lifestyle. I cling to the 12 Step Program like a drowning man."

Working with her SVDP case manager, Megan is on track to become successful and independent. Her days begin at 6:30am, when she takes her kids to day care, and she doesn't arrive back at home until 6:30 or 7pm. She works a full-time job in retail and attends community college classes at night. She expects to earn her associate's degree next semester before transferring to the University of Louisville's Kent School of Social Work.

It's an understatement to say that Megan is motivated to create a better life for herself and her two children. "I don't understand how some people only want to figure out how to do the least amount of work possible. Not me," she says.

"St. Vincent de Paul has been such a blessing. I'm grateful for having a stable place to live, but this place is a transition until I can get out on my own. I love it here, but I want to move on and be able to take care of myself so that I can give my place to someone else who's willing to do the same."

A Bit More About Megan...

Megan's dream is to open a halfway house for women struggling with substance abuse, so that their babies aren't born addicted. She is passionate about the plight of these women and wants others to understand: "You don't know how many women are lying awake at night crying their eyes out because they hate what they're doing to themselves and to their children, but they don't know how to stop," she says. "Today's society is so ready to condemn. But I think maybe it's just a lack of knowledge. It's much easier to condemn these women than it is to ask: How can we help?"

How St. Vincent de Paul Has Helped Her

"This place has made a difference for me. It's not only a great place to live, but it has given me structure. I have to attend so many meetings a week and meet with my case manager and attend classes. They've taught me so many things... how to budget, how to work on my resume, things that people take for granted.

"I've learned how to keep house. When I was using [drugs], I didn't care about cleaning my house. But now I keep my house clean, my laundry done, and everything in order."

Megan's Faith

"Never give up on yourself or that family member who's struggling. As long as they're still breathing, there's still hope. You just have to put that willingness and action behind it. It's that mustard seed of faith.

"I was raised a fire-and-brimstone Baptist, but now the God of my understanding is much different: Today it's just a message of grace and unconditional love.

"That's not an excuse to do bad things. I'm human. But I know if I mess up God will not forsake me. What I've learned is that God never left me. I was the one who chose to walk away. But He was always there waiting."

WISH LISTS from SVDP's PROGRAM MANAGERS

ROBERTS HALL

Our 24-bed dormitory for women

Large plastic storage containers
Hair brushes & combs
Deodorant, lotions
Laundry baskets
Towels
Plastic bowls with tops
Personal-size hand sanitizer
Pocket-size Kleenex
Flashlights and batteries



DePAUL AND SVDP HOMES' FAMILY APARTMENTS

Diapers size 1-5
Household cleaning supplies

OZANAM INN

Our men's homeless shelter

Ozanam desperately needs fully enclosed, zippered mattress protectors. These need to be sturdy and dependable because of the amount of wear and tear they receive. We could also use twin air mattresses, blankets and pillows as we are moving into the White Flag season again. [White Flag occurs when the temperature dips below 32 degrees F., and people living on the streets are encouraged to seek shelter indoors].

– Cory Bledsoe, Director of Programs

WOMEN'S SRO

Our new 24-bed supportive housing program

Clothing rack
Freestanding closets
Storage bins
Cookware
Dishes
Silverware
Tupperware containers
Kitchen towels/dish cloths
Bathroom towels/wash cloths
Hygiene products
Body wash, shampoo/conditioner, lotion



Lastly, some really big items for the wish-list:



Icemaker
Picnic table
Antenna/digital boxes for the first- and second-floor living rooms
Computers, for homework and job search

– Hannah Jackson, Program Manager, Women's SRO

If you can help with any of these needs, please contact us at (502) 584-2480.

Calendar:

Dec. 9
Santa Shop
Open Hand Kitchen
Louisville, KY

Dec. 25
Christmas Meal
Noon, Open Hand Kitchen

Saturday, Jan. 12
Ozanam Orientation, 9am to 1pm
Conference Room, St. Vincent de Paul (Downtown Campus)
1015-C S. Preston St., Louisville, KY 40203

Sunday, Feb. 10
The **Vincetians Induction Ceremony** will be held at St. Patrick Church, 1000 N. Beckley Station Road, Louisville, KY 40243

For more information, contact Donna Young at (502) 301-8688



These smiling St. Albert the Great students recently toured SVP. Here, they are lined up outside our men's homeless shelter entrance.

FOOD NEEDED FOR HOLIDAY OUTREACH

St. Vincent de Paul, in response to the growing needs of our community, will provide food baskets to people living in our area this holiday season. The baskets will be distributed to families that call our office, request assistance and whose needs can be verified.

We need your support and assistance with this endeavor. Please help us by donating soon. Listed below are the food items that will be included in the baskets.

- Stuffing Mix
- Chicken Broth
- Canned Corn
- Canned Green Beans
- Cereal
- Cranberry Sauce
- Cake Mix/Frosting
- Instant Mashed Potatoes
- Dried Beans
- Macaroni and Cheese
- Pasta/Macaroni
- Spaghetti Sauce
- Hamburger/Tuna Helper
- Tuna
- Sugar
- Flour
- Peanut Butter
- Jelly
- Coffee
- Cereal
- Kool-aid

Thank you for your support in helping us to provide Christmas Dinner to those we serve.

May your holiday season be filled with peace and love.

