

The Good Samaritan

Homeless, But Not Helpless



Michael Rondinelli of Empire Education Group volunteered to provide haircuts for the group.



Shawnesha Mahoney watches as the group prepares an apple crumble for cooking class.



Cassidy Kennedy, Program Manager (third from left), Darnell Ferguson (center), and Shawnesha Mahoney (far right), with the men participating in the Capstone Project.

For many years, St. Vincent de Paul is host to practicum students from the University of Louisville's Kent School of Social Work. This year one of those students, senior Shawnesha Mahoney, is conducting her practicum in Ozanam Inn Men's Shelter and chose to work with eight of the men for her Capstone Project. The title of her project is "Homeless, Not Helpless: Phoenix Rising" and its aim is to raise self-esteem and self-efficacy. When asked how she came up the program, Shawnesha said, "When I would work with clients I got a vibe that they didn't have high self-esteem. They felt like they couldn't accomplish anything because they were beating themselves up and because other people in their life had told them 'No, you can't do this.'"

The six-week program included a mindfulness meditation class, resume creation, haircuts, cooking class, an art night, and a visit from local chef Darnell Ferguson of SuperChefs. "When we first started, I told the guys, 'This will be fun!' They said fun was not a word in their vocabulary. 'We're used to pain and disappointment.'" Shawnesha's response? "Well, fun needs to be in everyone's vocabulary."

Shawnesha partnered with people like Michael Rondinelli of Empire Education Group for haircuts and Lacey Latimer of Run Possible for cooking class. Darnell Ferguson, owner of SuperChefs, spoke to the men about how he went from drug addiction and jail to being homeless to eventually owning his own restaurants. Speaking about homeless shelters, Darnell shared, "This is my birthplace. Being here with you all, it was the first step for me. It's where I was planted to grow. It's where I learned the most about myself."

The program was a hit with the men. "As the program progressed, more guys wanted to join so that's a good sign," says Cassidy Kennedy, Program Manager at Ozanam Inn. "Even one of the guys that moved out has come back to participate in the program."

The program wrapped with dinner at Texas Roadhouse and the men received a resource binder filled with information to help them continue the work Shawnesha started.

St. Vincent de Paul Louisville has helped homeless men since 1984 by providing safe shelter on a nightly basis. Ozanam Inn has 58 emergency overnight beds, 12 transitional housing beds, and 20 beds reserved for



St. Vincent
de Paul
LOUISVILLE

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The monthly newsletter of
St. Vincent de Paul | Louisville
1015-C South Preston Street
Louisville, KY 40203

Ed Whorowski
Executive Director

Angela Champion Sprowl
Director of Development

Donna Young
Director of Conference Affairs
and Volunteer Services

David Sharpe
Marketing & Communications
Coordinator

Send comments and change
of address notifications to
dsharpe@svdplou.org

Our Mission

St. Vincent de Paul Louisville
partners with individuals and
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navigate a path to stabilize their
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Student of the Month

1st Grader Casey is our
Student of the Month
for February. She has a
great attitude and loves
her Family Success Center
assignments and homework.



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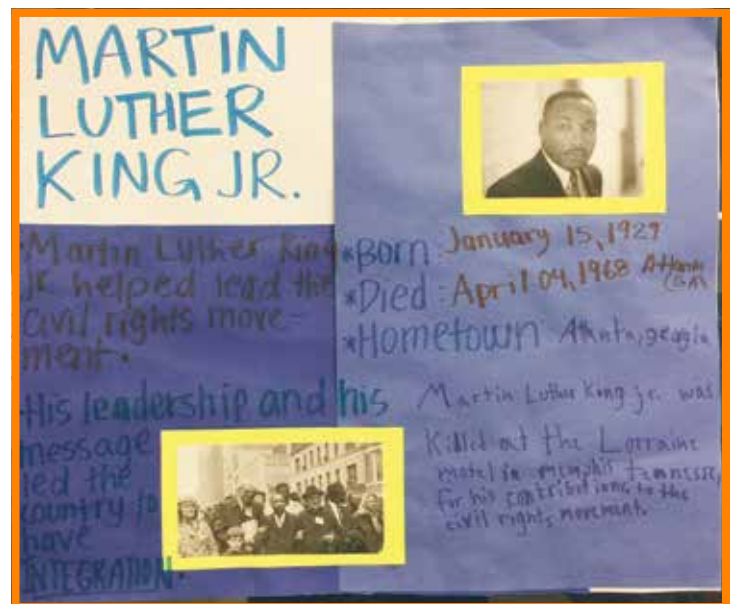
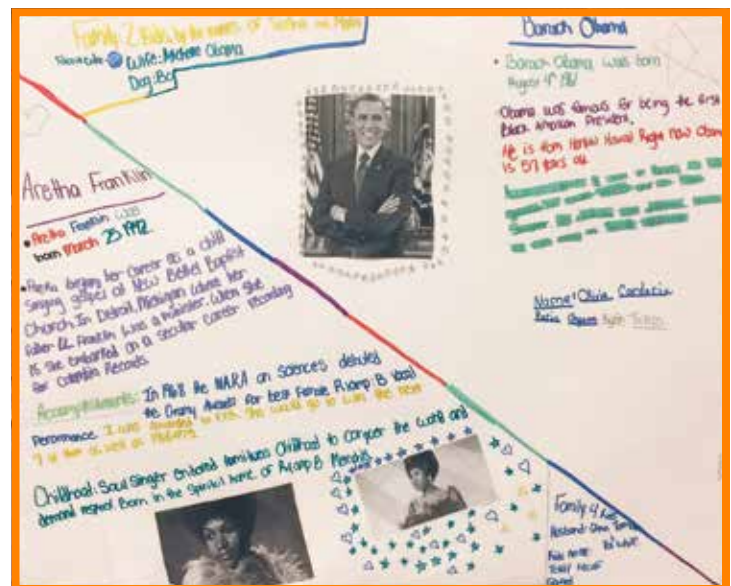
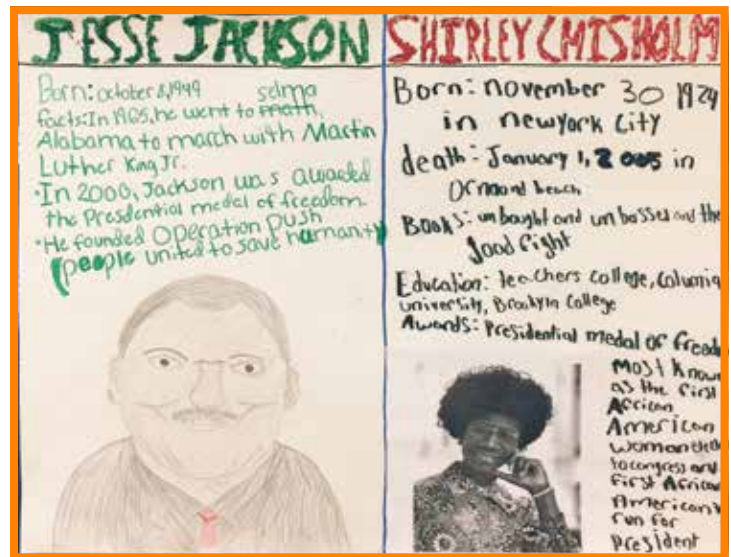
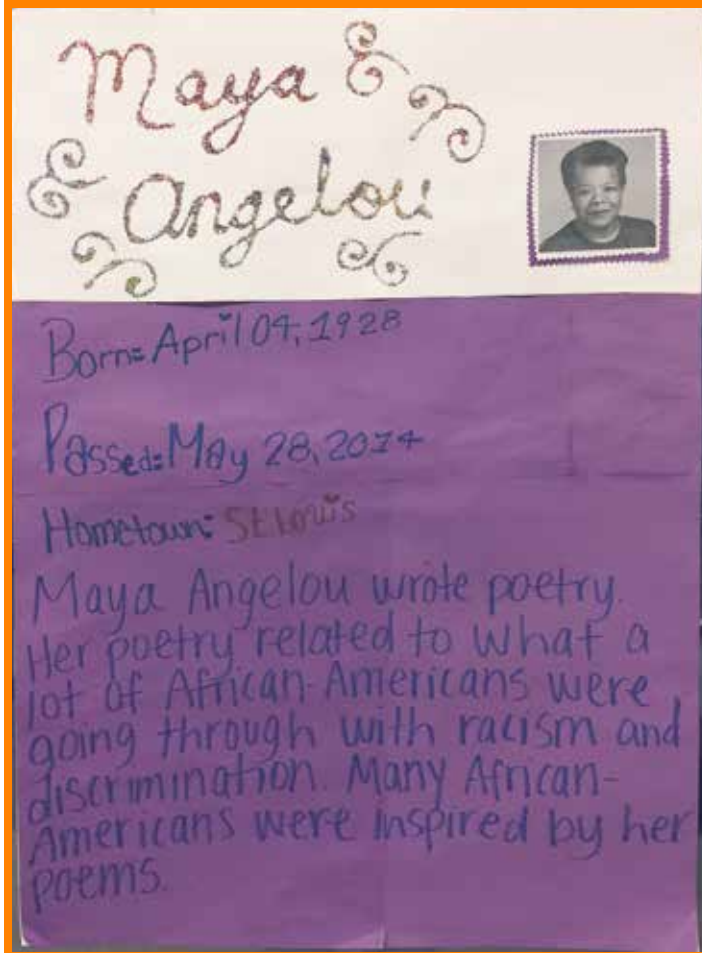
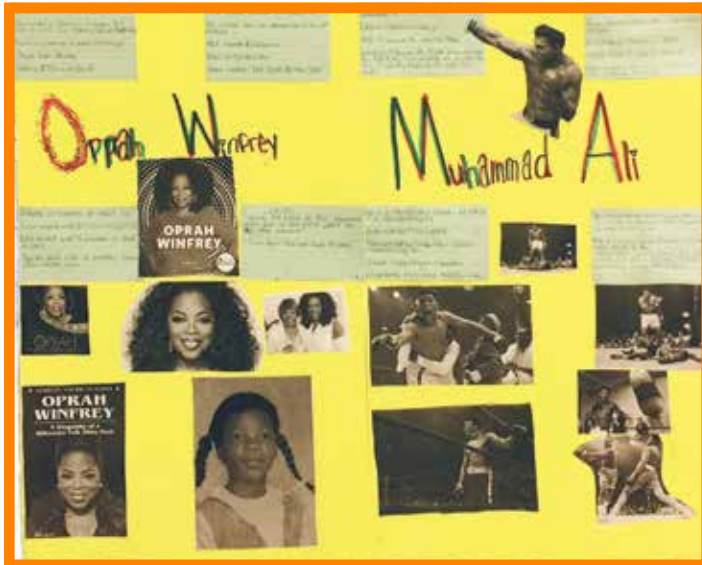


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Heroes of Black History

During Black History Month, students at the Family Success Center created posters celebrating the achievements of prominent African Americans such as Muhammad Ali and Maya Angelou.



SAVE THE DATES! Two Ways to Show Your Support

For tickets and sponsorship information contact Abigail Costello at (502) 272-2134 or acostello@svdplou.org



HOMELESS

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Veterans. It also serves as a White Flag site during dangerous weather conditions.

Thanks to the hard work of our case managers, and practicum students, we have a growing success rate with moving homeless clients into more stable lives through planning and coaching toward employment, education, and stable housing.



Using paints, pencils and markers, the group worked on a large drawing of a phoenix.