

The Good Samaritan

Client Gives Moving Speech at Clubs & Cocktails

On Sunday, September 8, we held our annual fundraiser, the Abel Construction Clubs & Cocktails, at Louisville Marriott East. Each year we ask a client to share how they came to St. Vincent de Paul Louisville and each client story is a testament to how much work it takes to lift yourself out of poverty, homelessness, and addiction. No matter how bad things seem, there is always hope and things do get better.

This year our guest speaker was Adrienne Elmehalaway. With her permission, we are sharing her story as presented at Clubs & Cocktails.

Hello. I'm honored to be here to speak with you this evening. My name is Adrienne and I'm here to speak to you about homelessness. Believe it or not, I was homeless not too long ago with a child but before I tell you about that I want to share a little bit about myself.

Growing up as a child on the outside looking in you could say I had a picture perfect family until you took a deep look. My father is an alcoholic/addict and my mother was the same. So when I became an addict in my young adult years there was no surprise. Growing up in a chaotic environment I learned not to trust anyone which followed me through life until I got help around age 25. I've always had this alone feeling and not being wanted probably due to my parents divorcing. My mother left us and my father sent us to live with my grandmother because he was more worried about his job. So I promised myself once I turned 18 I would move to the city! Living in the country all my life, Louisville was a big city to me.

After graduation I moved into an apartment with a friend and I thought all my problems would go away. Little did I know all the new problems that come along with being a young adult. I had to work two jobs to be able to afford my part of the rent on top of my shopping addiction. After years of this I became tired so I moved back home to try to save some money but that didn't work out very well. I then started to spend most of my time hanging around older men, drinking and dealing with daddy issues. This was a disaster waiting to happen. Years later, I got married for the first time for all the wrong reasons. Needless to say after seeing my mother being beat, I promised myself I would never put myself in that situation so I left and we divorced.



From left to right, guest speaker Adrienne Elmehalaway, Adrienne's case manager Bridget Key, and Director of Programs Jennifer Clark at the 2019 Abel Construction Clubs & Cocktails.

I fell in love with someone who changed my life forever. I was introduced to pain pills for the first time and I fell in love with it. I was so in awe that a small tiny pill could take all my worries away, give me crazy energy all at the same time. It started out as a weekend thing that turned in to a week thing. Then it got to the point to where I had to have it every day or I was sick.

In all the madness of addiction I became pregnant and I didn't even realize it until I was almost two months pregnant. After finding out I knew things had to change but I didn't think I had the strength to do it. Soon after finding out I was pregnant I got married for the second time. I was still struggling with my addiction—lying, stealing and manipulating to get money for drugs. This is where my addiction got bad. I was in and out of jail, stealing, you name it. I did it and I hid it very well until one day we were getting ready for work and the police were looking for me! That's when my husband figured out what was going on. He gave me an ultimatum to either stop doing drugs and be with him or keep using and he would leave. I chose drugs so he left. After that point in my life I knew I had to stop so I did for a while. I had a beautiful baby boy that was healthy.



St. Vincent
de Paul
LOUISVILLE

The Good Samaritan

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Our Mission

St. Vincent de Paul Louisville partners with individuals and families in crisis and helps them navigate a path to stabilize their lives and reach their full potential.

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at St. Vincent de Paul Louisville



Many times when clients come to St. Vincent de Paul Louisville, they often have nothing more than the clothes on their back. In an effort to provide a warm and welcoming environment for the new faces on campus, we're launching the Help Make It A Home program.

Part of the program is a registry we've created with items that will fill in the gaps that we so often take for granted—everyday items like linens, trash cans, cleaning supplies, utensils, and all the necessities to care for a child. This program will benefit Robert's Hall,

the SRO and other campus housing programs, including the new Youth Homeless Demonstration Project.

What You Can Do to Help

With your support, we can welcome new clients with the essentials they need to prepare them for the next stage of their life—the road to sustainable living.

Simply select the items you would like to purchase from the registry and they will be mailed to SVDP!

Visit svdplou.org/help-make-it-a-home and make a difference.

Join Us Oct. 9 for Tour de Change

Join us for a coffee, pastries, and a brief tour of St. Vincent de Paul Louisville's campus and learn more about our mission: Changing Lives.

Our next tour is scheduled for Wednesday, October 9 at 8 am. We'll meet in the Family Success Center, 1029 South Preston Street, and you'll hear from clients and staff about the impact of our work, as well as take a walking tour of campus.

To attend the next tour, please send an email Jon Wysong at jwysong@svdplou.org or give him a call at (502) 301-8695.

We look forward to seeing you!



Mayor Announces Continuation of Aid to Help Homeless

Louisville Metro Government is continuing its commitment to addressing the needs of the homeless in our city. On Friday, September 6, Mayor Greg Fischer announced that \$1 million from the city's FY20 operating budget will be dedicated to continuing the work started in 2019.

In collaboration with the Coalition for the Homeless, the city will back initiatives that align with the eight recommendations outlined in the University of Louisville study, "Solving Street Homelessness in Louisville, Kentucky," released in June. You can read the full report at <https://louhomeless.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/Solving-Street-Homelessness-in-Louisville.pdf>.

"Louisville, like many American cities, has seen a rise in unsheltered homelessness in recent years and an increase in homeless encampments. We've made clear progress but there's more work to do to ensure that every Louisvillian has a place to call home," said Mayor Fischer said, adding that, "There is no one-size-fits-all solution. We have to help our homeless population deal with and overcome their challenges one person at a time. That's what a compassionate city does."

St. Vincent de Paul Louisville will receive funds to support low-barrier shelter beds at Ozanam Inn Men's Shelter.

"It is indeed good news, given the Metro Budget constraints due to the pension crisis among other funding challenges. The move towards a lower barrier shelter environment will allow us to address some of the identified needs of the street homeless population. The Metro Louisville funding will help defray the additional costs of case management, mental health counseling and shelter operating expenses," said Ed Wnorowski, Executive Director/CEO at St. Vincent de Paul Louisville.

In the fall of 2017, Mayor Fischer created the Homeless Encampment Task Force, chaired by Eric Friedlander, director of the Office of Resilience and Community Services. The success of the



Mayor Greg Fischer announces continued funding for initiatives that address the needs of the homeless in Louisville. Members of St. Vincent de Paul Louisville's staff attended the press conference, including Cassidy Kennedy (far right), Program Manager at Ozanam Inn Men's Shelter.

participating agencies informed the task forces decisions about future funding allocations.

"We know that no one idea will address the multiple issues impacting people who are homeless, nor the complex needs of this diverse population," said Friedlander. "That's why I am so appreciative of the work, expertise and understanding of our partners, including organizations that are part of the coalition, and the street outreach groups that engage people where they are. Working together, we've shown we can make a difference."

Councilwoman Barbara Sexton Smith (District 4) said, "Our local government is focused on implementing common sense solutions for the complex challenges surrounding those experiencing homelessness. I have stated several times before, there is room for everyone to step up and help. In addition to the more than \$1.5 million made available during this past year we still need more businesses, nonprofit organizations, healthcare, education and the interfaith communities to reimagine their roles and create common sense solutions that will produce real results for real people needing assistance because this is our reality."

Metro Councilman Bill Hollander (District 9) said, "This funding builds on the work we started in January. It provides shelter for men, women and families and also funds outreach workers who can help address the root causes of homelessness. Even as Louisville Metro deals with a very difficult budget, we can't ignore the needs of our neighbors experiencing homelessness."

"The funding from the Louisville Metro Resilience and Community Services (LMRCS) will support our effort to get more people off of the street and into safe, affordable housing. We're grateful to the Mayor, Eric Friedlander and his team at LMRCS, the Coalition for the Homeless and Louisville Metro Council for making this happen. In addition to the financial support, we are excited to be part of the effort to develop and evaluate best practices for ending homelessness. With the support of the University of Louisville and all of the other amazing service providers that are part of this effort, we will save lives and develop a better system for getting people off of the streets and into permanent housings," said Jennifer Clark, Director of Programs at St. Vincent de Paul Louisville.

SUCCESS STORY

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Fast forward several years and my son was three years old. My husband and I were trying to work things out but by that point I knew the relationship was over. I wanted my son to have a father figure in his life because I never really had that so we stayed together for a while until I met someone else. I got pregnant again but I lost the baby and my husband found out so he filed for divorce.

At this time I was offered an amazing job in Florence, Kentucky. Everything in my life wasn't good so I thought it would be a fresh start. Little did I know my addiction reared its ugly head and I relapsed. I was still dealing with court from previous charges so I was court ordered to go through HIP (home incarceration program) in Louisville for 30 days. I was lucky enough to have a friend that was willing to let me do it at her house and I had to bring my son. At this point in my life I was so alone with everything. So when I got done with my 30 days I started a methadone program that literally saved my life. By that time the guy I was with was over everything so he left and I was stuck paying the full rent on my own. I did for a little while but it got to be too much. I decided to move back to Louisville, I got a small apartment and things were great for a while until I was out of work for some time.

I was then forced to move in with my mom because I was being evicted. The first night at my mom's house, the front of the house catches on fire! We end up getting a trailer together. I put the water bill in my name to contribute to the bills but that wasn't enough for my mom. She wanted money on top of that. Mind you I'm trying to save money so my son and I can get our own place.

I was forced to move out because it was too stressful and my son didn't need to be around all the fighting. My friend was willing to let us stay there for a bit until I found something but that time came and went and we had nowhere to go so I called the Coalition for the Homeless. I asked if they knew of a place we could

go because we had been sleeping in my car for a few days. They took my phone number and said they would call once they had something.

Well we were lucky enough to get a call back and was told about the Volunteers of America. I was so excited that things were looking up. Little did I know it took us 10 months to finally get in to a place. I was very discouraged because I had been doing everything I was supposed to with case management. I took classes that taught me a lot and was finally able to get Medicare for myself. But one day I got a call from Mr. Julio from St Vincent de Paul and was told about the family apartments they had. I was so excited to see all my hard work had paid off.

Once at St. Vincent de Paul I was introduced to my case worker who at the time was Ms. Stephanie. She went above and beyond her job to help me in any way she could. She got me involved in workshops and meetings. They introduced me to the St. Jude recovery meetings. I was sad to see her go but I

now have another great case manager, Bridget that cares just as much about her clients. Bridget recently informed me about the move-up voucher they offer, so I am currently waiting for that.

Homelessness can happen to anyone at any point in your life but there are places like St. Vincent de Paul that can help if you are willing to accept it and do what is asked of you.

After Adrienne shared her story, Jennifer Clark, Director of Programs, added, "Adrienne is absolutely one of our success stories. I have watched her struggle and overcome so many obstacles. She is a fantastic mother to her children. She is getting ready to move out on her own, and after everything she has been through, I think she finally knows that she is enough and she can do this."

Your support at events like Clubs and Cocktails helps people move their lives forward. Look for a full event wrap up in the next "*The Good Samaritan*."

New Semester Brings New Practicum Students



We have four new practicum students from the UofL's Kent School of Social Work. From left, Matt Weaver (Coordinator of Clinical Services), Sara Awayid, Allie Howard, Erin Nelson, Cynthia Keller and Jennifer Clark (Director of Programs). As in year's past, the students will work alongside St. Vincent de Paul Louisville case managers, attend staff meetings and begin their Capstone Projects that are presented at the end of the program next semester.