

The Good Samaritan

Ronald, formerly homeless, secures housing and purchases a car



Ronald lives in a one-bedroom apartment through our off-campus housing program. He purchased a 2004 Honda Pilot with the help of our vehicle donation program.

Ronald used to have his own home. He used to have a family, with a wife and one son. He used to work in construction. Times were good.

However, at the turn of the century, things quickly went south. Life happened.

"I went through a divorce and some rough times, so things went downhill in my life," said Ronald, who is 64 years old.

It would take nearly two decades for things to get better, and Ronald had become accustomed to homelessness.

"I've walked the streets, slept on benches, in between bushes, everywhere," Ronald added.

A Louisville native, Ronald isn't alone. According to the Coalition for the Homeless, nearly 1,200 people experience homelessness every night in Louisville. With roughly 800 shelter spots—depending on inclement weather situations—that leaves 400 people left looking for somewhere to stay.

For those who make their way to St. Vincent de Paul Louisville, many report their homeless situations prior as coming from an emergency shelter, hotel, places not meant for habitation (such as cars, parks, sidewalks, or abandoned buildings), a hospital, psychiatric or substance abuse facility, staying with a friend or family member, or jail.

That's where Ronald found himself in 2018, where he spent five months in jail. When he got out, it was "hard," and the only thing he knew to do was to figure out ways to survive on the streets.

After calling Metro United Way's 2-1-1 help referral service line—as we are the number one service provider for its call center in the Louisville area—he was able to secure a bed at Ozanam Inn Men's Emergency Shelter.

After a few months on the waiting list, Ronald received a housing voucher. Since July 2018, he has lived in a one-bedroom apartment with a kitchen, living room, and bathroom. It's the stability he has needed to turn his life around.

"It's been everything," he said. "I'm on a fixed income, so this helps me out a whole lot. I'd probably be in a shelter or still be on the Section 8 waiting list."

Ronald's apartment is a part of the Collaborative Housing Initiative (CHI), which is one of our five off-campus housing programs. CHI provides permanent supportive housing to 46 homeless individuals and families where at least one member of the household has a disability. Currently, these 46 total units (ranging from one-bedroom to five-bedroom residences) provide a minimum of 63 beds, but we often provide 80 to 100 beds when serving larger families.

"Ronald has had his share of ups and downs, but hardly lets anything get to him," said Johnetta Hardin, the CHI Senior Case Manager. "He always looks to a brighter day. He works hard at completing his daily living goals, such as making sure his bills are paid on time and ensuring his transportation for the following month is secured. He makes and keeps his medical appointments independently and never needs reminders or help with anything. I'm proud of his progress in the SVDP program."

Ronald has breathing problems, and is in and out of doctor appointments. He primarily rode the bus to make it to his appointments, but he recently purchased a red 2004 Honda Pilot through our vehicle donation program. He saved up money over the past year and says it "saves a lot of time." Ronald regularly goes to the Food Pantry on our Shelby Park campus to receive groceries.

He also reconciled with his son, and now enjoys spending time with his two grandchildren.

For Ronald and others, to be able to have a place to stay, a means of transportation, and meaningful relationships makes a world of difference in their lives!



ST. VINCENT
de PAUL

LOUISVILLE

The Good Samaritan

The monthly newsletter of
St. Vincent de Paul Louisville

Send correspondence to PO Box 17126,
Louisville, KY 40217-0126

Visit us at 1015-C South Preston Street,
Louisville, KY 40203-2733

Dave Calzi
CEO/Executive Director

Pam Evans
Director of Development
pevans@svdplou.org

Donna Young Cicchiello
Director of Conference Affairs
& Volunteer Services

Tony Nochim
Communications & Public Relations
Coordinator

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

Our Mission

We house, feed, and support those in
need with compassion and dignity.

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To find out more about our work or
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St. Vincent de Paul Louisville

FINDING

love

AT THE FOOD PANTRY



John Bowling is one of nine children.

When his dad died unexpectedly, John was only 14 years old.

"We never went hungry, but there weren't very many steaks at our house," John said. "We hardly ever ate out. You can't take nine kids out to eat."

As a Food Pantry volunteer, John knows what it's like to make a little go a long way.

"We were fortunate that we didn't have to miss meals," John added. "When you think about that, it sounds like a given, but then you look around when you're down here and you know that the people we serve are missing meals. If it helps them spend their food dollars on something else, that's a good thing."

The Food Pantry, which is open on Tuesdays and Thursdays, provided groceries to almost 7,500 households and 16,500 individuals in 2023. This includes nearly 5,500 children from infants to 17 years old, more than 3,000 seniors, and 899 Veterans.

To make sure each person and family receives enough meat and produce takes intentional planning. John's background

as vice president of purchasing for 43 years has helped with his role at the Food Pantry. After retiring in 2015, John ensures the inventory at the Food Pantry is stocked and lasts throughout the month.

"He's always been really good about making sure that the food gets out there at the Food Pantry," added Betsy, John's wife. "He knows what it is to not have what you need, so he's very generous."

Finding the Food Pantry

John and Betsy, members of Holy Trinity Catholic Church, are longtime volunteers at the Food Pantry on Tuesdays. The Bowlings enjoy serving together and the "commonality" in their relationship. They both retired about a year apart and wanted to use their time wisely. Several Holy Trinity members were already serving, which was how they found out about getting involved at the Food Pantry.

"I enjoy the variety of people, clients, volunteers, and jobs that are available," Betsy said. "One week I might be working the window, the next week I'm opening bags in the back."

"If I didn't have something to do, I'd probably go crazy," John added. "I believe



Finding Each Other

The Food Pantry is a large part of John and Betsy crossing paths. They both were married for a long time—John for 25 years, Betsy for 35 years—before they became widows in 2012 and 2009, respectively.

They hung out in the same circle of friends from Holy Trinity. They had become familiar with each other over time and had similar interests.

“We thought, well life is short and we’re not getting any younger, so maybe this will work,” Betsy said.

It has. They started dating in Jan. 2017, engaged a year later, and married at Holy Trinity in July 2018. They were surrounded by their children and grandchildren to tie the knot.

“On the day we got married, John said, ‘I want everyone in the wedding,’” Betsy added. “So, he inherited eight grandchildren. Now we’re up to nine with a great grandchild.”

John shares the secret to a successful marriage.

“The only thing I guaranteed her is that I’d make her smile every day.”

“And he has,” Betsy added.

you have to do something, so why not do something that’s going to help other people. I would say I could take up golf, but I’m terrible, so that would be bad for everybody.”

The comradery amongst the group has been something that makes the hard work of serving every week worth it.

“There’s like eight to 10 of us who go out to lunch afterwards,” he said. “We have a good relationship. We all laugh and have a good time, otherwise you wouldn’t be doing it.”

The Bowlings have served faithfully for a number of years.

“Their many hours of service are much appreciated,” said Donna Young Cicchello, Director of Conference Affairs & Volunteer Services.

Save the Date

UPCOMING EVENTS AT
ST. VINCENT DE PAUL LOUISVILLE



Come Join Us!

Roses & Rosé

Sunday, April 28

Clubs & Cocktails

Dinner: Sunday, September 22

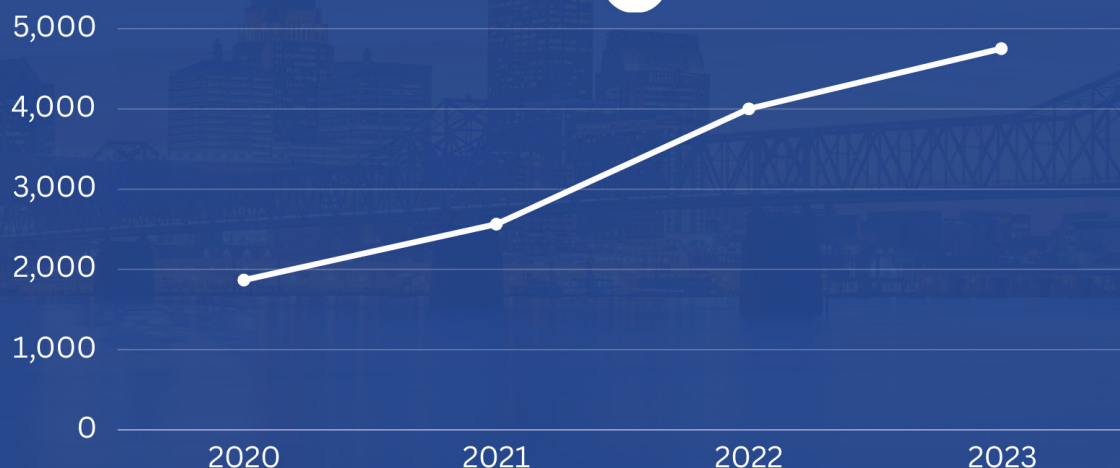
Scramble: Tuesday, September 24

For event information, please contact
Makenzie Greenwell at (502) 272-2134 or
mgreenwell@svdplou.org.

Our thanks to
Louisville Metro
Government for
their support



WHO YOU GONNA CALL?



3,000+

INCREASE IN
TOTAL CALLS
LAST 4 YEARS

76

ZIP CODES
SERVED

13,185

TOTAL CALLS
FROM 2020-23

SVDP is the number one referral service provider for Metro United Way's 2-1-1 call center in Louisville. The number of calls we receive isn't slowing down any time soon, and in fact, has largely increased since 2020.

"We call them back the very day that they call because we want to get to work for them. These people are desperate. We do what we can," said Ann Bizzell, longtime Vincentian at St. Edward Conference in Jeffersontown.

Inflation in rent, gas, and grocery prices have influenced an increase in need. Since the pandemic, there has been an upward trend in calls to our organization, which speaks to a growing need in our community. The calls might be about a rent or utility payment that's due the following day, otherwise they will be evicted, or their water has been turned off. These aren't light matters, but speak to how families can be one unpaid bill from experiencing a catastrophe and becoming homeless.

Here are some phone call stats:

- Since 2020, we have received an increase in calls every year (refer to the chart). In 2023, we received 3,000 more calls compared to four years ago.

- We took calls from 76 zip codes in 2023. We are serving 12 additional zip codes compared to 2020.
- The footprint we field calls for is extended beyond that of Jefferson County, which has 73 zip codes.

Metro United Way refers someone in need to us more than any other nonprofit in our area in large part to our 27 St. Vincent de Paul parish-based conferences (volunteer groups) throughout Louisville and Central Kentucky. Our 644 conference members respond with a sense of urgency.

"It's a collaborative effort with other conferences. We have such a good network," Bizzell added. "Other ministries and churches in the area are calling our conferences because they know we will take care of those in need."

Here's how the conferences have answered the call to those in need from Oct. 2022 to Sept. 2023:

- Provided \$1.4 million in food, clothing, and financial assistance to nearly 28,000 people
- 16,500 in-person home visits
- Drove more than 41,000 miles
- Volunteered more than 51,000 hours of service time

*You're
Invited!*



Join us for our sixth annual brunch event on Sunday, April 28 at The Olmsted from 1 to 3 p.m. Share a delicious meal, enjoy mimosas and rosé, bid on silent auction items, visit vendors, and check out the wine pull!

Purchase Tickets or a Table



Proceeds to benefit transitional housing for those fleeing domestic violence, sexual assault, or human trafficking.

Unable to attend but still want to support our cause? Purchase a nice meal for one of the many women we serve using the same QR code above.

RAINY DAY FUND UPDATE

\$7,000
of \$150,000 goal

To learn more, visit
www.svdplou.org/rainy-day-fund/.

