

# The Good Samaritan

## High school student has a nonprofit to help those in need



Mercy Academy junior Lily Sumner donated 105 “kits” to St. Vincent de Paul Louisville to help those in need. Through her nonprofit, “Wrapped in God’s Warmth,” each kit included donated water bottles, packaged snacks, blankets, hats, gloves, and scarfs.

On her drive home from school, Lily Sumner started to notice something was off.

A sixth grader at the time, Sumner realized that unlike herself, not everyone had their basic needs met. That the community around her had challenges. She wondered if she could make a difference instead of just driving by.

“We took the same exit home every day,” Sumner said. “We would get stopped by a homeless person holding up cardboard boxes who was asking for money or something to eat. I began to ask my parents, ‘What can I do to help?’”

Sumner wasn’t sure where to start to tackle homelessness, but she started small. She began to share snacks like her granola bar or whatever was in the car. One time, she even tried to clean out her parents’ pantry.

“I wondered how I could be more prepared when I saw someone in need the next time,” Sumner added.

After her mom suggested asking people for donations, Sumner knew she wanted to help people in the winter. She sent out flyers at school and rallied any students or teachers to care about people we often walk by.

**“The homeless are often disregarded, but they’re human. They are people like everyone else. I truly believe everyone is a child of God and should have equal access to basic needs and opportunities in this life. These are people trying to find a way out and I try to put myself in their shoes.”**

Now a junior at Mercy Academy, Sumner has seen her efforts grow and adapt over the years.

“I’m driven to have a passion in this, to care about the issues happening in my

community. It gives me chills just thinking about it. I know this is something I was meant to do and it’s fulfilling for me,” Sumner said.

Sumner’s not done it alone. She created the nonprofit Wrapped in God’s Warmth five years ago, which partners with students and teachers from Mercy Academy, St. Rita Catholic School, Trinity High School, and DeSales High School. Those who desire to help donate water bottles, packaged snacks, blankets, hats, gloves, and scarfs that get turned into what are called “kits.”

“Wrapped in God’s Warmth continues to grow thanks to the loving people in this community. My classmates, especially, have been very supportive and helped me in many aspects when developing Wrapped in God’s Warmth,” Sumner added.

(continued on page 2)



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## The Good Samaritan

The monthly newsletter of  
St. Vincent de Paul Louisville

Send correspondence to PO Box 17126,  
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“It’s amazing to see a community come together. It’s a huge blessing to help those who are struggling. Students realize not just that there’s a sense of urgency to help those in need, but to also grow in their faith.”

This winter, students and teachers alike donated items and Sumner was able to assemble 105 kits. Each care kit came with a Scripture tag attached from Romans 15:13, which says, “May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.” In February, Sumner brought them to St. Vincent de Paul Louisville to distribute to those in need.

“Lily’s work with Wrapped in God’s Warmth is an incredible representation of how our students follow our Mercy Mission,” said Angie Laemmle, Director of Student Life at Mercy Academy. “Through compassion and action, Lily embodies the spirit of our mission. Lily led this drive to support the homeless with such leadership and pride, and through this served our community as she followed the work of our foundress, Catherine McAuley.”

Mercy Academy junior Sydney Grieshaber is very proud of her friend.

“I think it’s really cool that Lily’s taken it upon herself,” Grieshaber said. “I’ve never known anyone else do something like that, especially from a young age. It’s amazing that she realized she had the ability to do something about a problem, not just talk about it.”

Next year, Sumner hopes to involve every local Catholic private school.

## WRAPPED IN GOD’S WARMTH



**DONATE:**

BLANKETS · GLOVES · HATS · SNACKS ·  
BOTTLED WATER

## ♥ Twenty years in the making ♥



Michelle Neuhauser had no idea who she had become. Drugs affected her appearance in drastic ways.

“It was like I was dead inside, and I didn’t really care what happened to me because I had let everyone down. When I looked in the mirror, I didn’t even recognize myself because of the drugs,” Neuhauser said.

Sadly, Neuhauser’s gateway into addiction is all too common. After having two knee surgeries back-to-back, she became addicted to pain pills in her late 20s. This was at a time when she had two toddlers running around.

“I was in a lot of pain all of the time,” Neuhauser added.

Neuhauser and her children moved in with her ex-boyfriend. He also struggled with drugs, and they would fight over who would get what.

“I decided to try the needle, which I never thought I would, but I did,” she said. “We had two, so I hid the second one between the mattresses. My three-year-old daughter found it the next morning and squirted it in the air. My first thought was not, is my daughter OK, but that she wasted the dope. That’s when I knew I had a problem.”

In her early 30s, Neuhauser and her boyfriend were evicted and became homeless for a couple of years. They were on the streets or sleeping in motels. Meanwhile, her mom gained custody of her children.

**“Everything that I had loved, I lost.”**

Neuhauser also dealt with domestic violence.

“I didn’t leave the relationship sooner because of shame, loneliness, and hope

that it would eventually stop,” Neuhauser added. “I was ashamed because I thought I deserved it. A lot of times I was terrified ... I was his victim. I was his captive.”

Neuhauser was in and out of treatment for the next couple of years. She arrived at St. Jude in March 2003, where she stayed for about a year. St. Jude was a program focused on helping women with substance use recovery. (This program is no longer a part of our present services, as we have shifted our resources).

“All I had was a Kroger bag, but I was away from all the drama,” she said. “It made me feel very safe to know where I was coming home to every night and that I was loved no matter what. It was a great feeling, and I didn’t want to lose that feeling. There was no abuse. It wasn’t conditional. It was unconditional. It filled my heart with joy. It helped me to get through the temptations because they were everywhere.”

The St. Jude staff helped her secure an apartment, furniture, and her driver’s license. After two years without seeing her daughters, she was able to start spending time with them on the weekends. She has now been sober for 21 years.

“It was just uplifting. There was just love there. So many things in life I forgot how to do,” she said. “We did life together. The dinners. The meetings. The support systems. They taught me a lot about discipline ... It had been a long time since I experienced genuine relationships without drugs.”

Neuhauser has been married for 11 years now, owns a home in southern Indiana, and enjoys seeing her grandchildren.

## Save the Date

UPCOMING EVENTS AT  
ST. VINCENT DE PAUL LOUISVILLE



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### Clubs & Cocktails

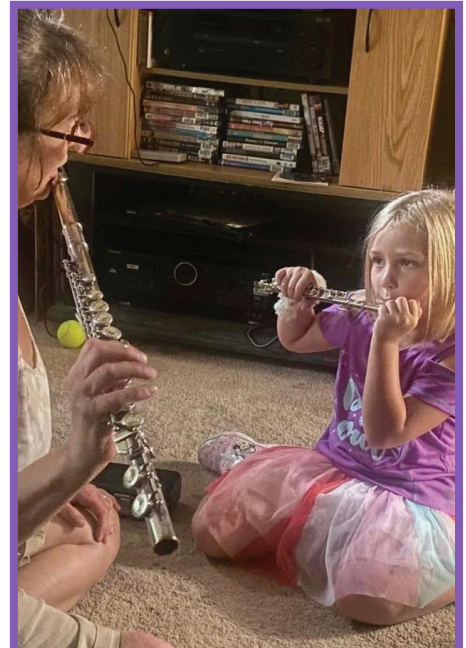
Dinner: Sunday, September 22

Scramble: Tuesday, September 24

## Clubs & Cocktails

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

Our thanks to  
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# A lovely time at Roses & Rosé

We want to thank the 270 guests who attended the sixth annual Roses & Rosé on Sunday, April 28, at The Olmsted. The event highlights were a celebration of the women in one's life, enjoying rosé wine and mimosas, a silent auction, Vendor Village, wine pull, guest speakers, and more.

"I've seen it grow from what it was three years ago to now, which has just been amazing," said Makenzie Greenwell, Senior Development & Events Coordinator. "It grows and grows. We have incredible community support."

All proceeds from Roses & Rosé benefit our Domestic Violence Transitional Housing Program for those fleeing domestic violence, sexual assault, or human trafficking. This secure site offers 18 rooms with up to 37 beds, and has been at full capacity for women, men, and their households. With your support, 31 meals were purchased for those currently in the program. The dinner was held on April 29.

We are thankful for all who attended this event, including the following sponsors for helping make this possible:

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