

A Long Journey to Find a Home

A mother and her two daughters patiently wait and prepare for a home of their own.



“Please bear with me if I cry, because it is amazing what they have offered here.”

On the eve of her move to her new apartment, these are the first words shared by Deborah Leon to describe her time at the St. Vincent Shelter for Women and Families. She and her two teenaged daughters lived at the shelter for four months until they were rehoused.

After having open-heart surgery in 2012, she moved with her daughters and their father to Mexico to have the additional help of his family. Ten years later, after the collapse of their relationship, she was desperate to return to the U.S. “We got here in June 2021 with nothing.”

The 53-year-old remembers that first night arriving at the shelter. “I was trying to keep it together, but when I walked in the door, I just lost it. I still remember the St. Vincent worker who gave me a big hug and just kept saying, ‘It is going to be okay.’ I was just in shock. A real bed — with sheets and a blanket! I thought I was going to be sleeping on the floor. And the showers. It made you feel like you could do it. And when we met with a case manager we found out we qualified for rapid rehousing.”

Normal rapid rehousing might take a few weeks, but the process can take longer for families. And rehousing these days is much more difficult as the typical area shortage of affordable, safe housing was worsened by the effects of COVID. Deborah was also wary of moving before they were truly ready. “This was my first time in a shelter, and I didn’t want to come back. I wanted to be on my own feet. If it weren’t for this program, I wouldn’t have been able to do that.”

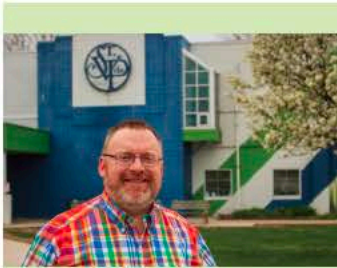
On most days of their four-month stay, the family would go to the public library. “We’d apply for jobs, update our resumes, research the things we needed to do, call and email our case manager, and search for a place to live.”

That preparation paid off. Today, she and her daughters have moved into an apartment. Her oldest has a job at Tim Hortons; her youngest has a job at McDonald’s; and Deborah, finally with a home and her daughters in school, is looking for a job herself.

“If it weren’t for St. Vincent, we wouldn’t be where we are today. I’m just so grateful. God bless every single one of you.”



From the Executive Director



Through our ministries of St. Vincent de Paul, our very humanity is celebrated every time we reach out to a hurting neighbor, a stranger with nowhere else to turn, or a child without clothing, food, or safe shelter. Together we show God's love through our care and accompaniment of over 100,000 people in the Miami Valley each year.

Dear Friends of St. Vincent,

In a few short weeks, just after the beautiful reflection of gratitude that Thanksgiving brings, we in the Christian tradition will begin the season of Advent. It is a time of waiting in expectation – hope for God's Word made flesh, dwelling among us in our anxieties, fears, weaknesses, and poor choices. We prepare to welcome Love itself into the manger of our hearts at Christmas, through our own rich choices of vulnerability and generosity toward one another – particularly the stranger and powerless.

God is Love. We were made for Love, and our neighbors in need help us grow our faith in Love – even more through the many challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic.

We need you now more than ever – in prayer and in deed. Thanksgiving and Advent always inspire me to try loving more deeply and giving more freely; I hope the same for you! Come pray in our beautiful St. Vincent de Paul Chapel at our Apple Street Shelter for Women and Families, Monday through Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Thanks for making it all possible through your prayers, financial support, material support, volunteering, and by sharing the good news of St. Vincent de Paul Society with your family and friends!

Have a great Thanksgiving, Advent, and Christmas.

Yours in Christ,

Michael

Michael E. Vanderburgh
Executive Director

Our Women and Children Guests Could Use New Tables

On Giving Tuesday you can ensure women and children have a place to work, play, and enjoy the outdoors.

This year, Giving Tuesday is November 30. Our goal is to raise \$10,000 for children's indoor activity tables and picnic tables for our Women & Families Shelter. There are nine wooden picnic tables in our family outdoor play area and in the women's area in poor condition.



These tables were built in 2006 when the shelter opened and are past repair. We hope to replace them with durable metal picnic tables. There is one child-size table remaining from a group purchased long ago. Four new tables are needed by the little ones for homework, coloring, and other activities.

Our guests are encouraged to spend time outdoors when the weather is fair to benefit from the sunshine, fresh air, and greater social distancing. With your help on Giving Tuesday, we can provide our women guests and families a place to play, work, and enjoy the outdoors.

Follow us on Facebook and sign up for our email newsletter (stvincentdayton.org/signup) to learn more and track our progress on November 30!

Your Gift Can Minister to Those in Need for Years to Come

Rich and Marlene chose St. Vincent to receive a gift in their will, providing a larger amount through gift planning than through yearly giving.

By leaving a gift to St. Vincent de Paul in your will, your gift ensures the work you consider important—feeding, clothing, and sheltering your neighbors—continues throughout the years. It is a simple way to show you care without affecting your current finances.

You can leave a gift in your will of a specific amount or a percentage of your estate, a gift of securities, or by designating St. Vincent as the beneficiary of an account or policy.

Rich and Marlene decided to leave a percentage of their estate to a local charity when gift planning in 2012.

“We chose St. Vincent de Paul at that time because of what they do for those in need in many different ways. And we can give a larger amount through estate planning than through yearly giving.”

“We continue to give because the more you get involved, the more you see the need and the more you hear the personal stories of the people served.”

If you, like Rich and Marlene, are interested in gift planning to provide for those served through our St. Vincent’s ministries, you can call Michael at (513) 257-6266 or email michael@stvincentdayton.org.



Having Lost Everything, Leslie Got "Back on Track" at St. Vincent

“I couldn’t function until somebody came into my life and told me ‘You are somebody. You are a person, and you can do this.’”

Leslie Hart recalls when things started turning badly for him: shortly after his wife, Denise, died. “We’d been together for twelve years and married for seven. After she passed, it just overwhelmed me. I spiraled down—using drugs and alcohol.”

Prior to his wife’s death, he had a great life. He played semi-pro football, had a B.S. in industrial technology, worked as a draftsman, and was married to the love of his life.

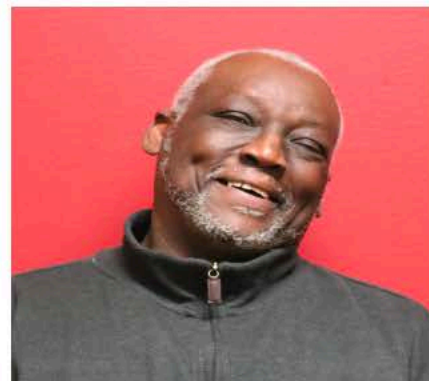
After her death, and feeling hopeless and alone, Leslie lost everything. For four months he lived on the street. “Being homeless, people treat you like you are nothing. People don’t want to be bothered with you. Fear-filled. I felt hopeless.”

The turning point came after he made his way to St. Vincent’s Shelter for Men. “I wanted to get out of this situation, and the shelter was the shock I needed. There were people there who cared. I couldn’t function until somebody came into my life and told me ‘You are somebody. You are a person, and you can do this.’”

He lived at the shelter for two months, with his case manager helping him get into drug treatment at Nova House. After recovery, his case manager again helped him get housing at St. Vincent’s DePaul Center. “At the DePaul Center I had a key! It is a wonderful thing to just have a place where you can open the door, lock up, have food. Those necessities of life—you need them to feel safe and get back on track.” While there, Hart went to support groups and took art classes.

Today, thanks to supporters like you, the 64-year-old has come full circle. After a year at the DePaul Center, he now has his own secure housing and a job as a Peer Support Specialist within SVdP. “St. Vincent was there for me then, and they are still there for me now.”

Thank you for believing in the hope for a better life, and helping Leslie get back on track. You are making a difference in so many lives!





St. Vincent de Paul
ASSISTANCE • SHELTER • HOPE

St. Vincent de Paul Social Services, Inc.
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DRIVE DAYTON FORWARD

The Vincentian Newsletter - Fall 2021



WHAT HAPPENS TO YOUR GIFT OF GOODS?

We regularly use the household items you donate to help the people we serve. Shelter guests receive donated clothes and toiletries, and families moving into their new homes need furniture and appliances. Would you please make sure your furniture, appliances and household items are in clean and usable condition before donating? Thank you!

DONATION DROP-OFF

Donation of goods can be made any time to our 24/7 donations dock at 120 W. Apple Street. If you or your organization would like to host a collection drive, please visit stvincentdayton.org

FURNITURE PICK UP

Please call 937.425.0592.

Urgent Needs

Our neighbors need a place to sit, eat, and sleep. We are in great need of furniture donations to satisfy these needs. Donations of beds, mattresses, sofas, living room chairs, end tables, and dining tables and chairs are much appreciated. For furniture pickup, please call 937.425.0592.

PERSONAL ITEMS NEEDED:

- Deodorant
- Soap – liquid or bar
- Sheets and sheet sets – all sizes, new or gently used
- Blankets – all sizes, new or gently used
- Bath towels and wash cloths – new or gently used

For the most up-to-date information on the items needed to serve our guests and neighbors, visit stvincentdayton.org and "Donate Goods".

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