

Beginning a New Life After Homelessness and Addiction

You offered Deborah safety, security, and well-being.



Scared and without a home, Deborah Schafer reached out for help from the only person she trusted: the mother of her deceased husband, who passed from Covid in March of 2020.

“I didn’t know who else I could trust besides my mother-in-law. She told me she took another lady to the St. Vincent’s shelter a few years ago, and they helped her. She asked me if I wanted to go now, and I said yes.”

Deborah’s life had not been easy. She dealt with abuse from a family member while growing up and began using cocaine as an escape. She also struggled with mental health issues, including severe depression. After nine years of use, she finally was able to get help and got clean.

However, in October 2019, she began using meth. “I thought I could do it and quit. Meth takes you over and turns you into a completely different person.”

Things continued to spiral for her. She states, “I didn’t want to live anymore. I didn’t have any hope.” She was living in a trailer for a time until she could no longer maintain it. Deborah stayed temporarily with friends, hopping from couch to couch throughout the summer, finally deciding to reach out to her mother-in-law for help to end her homelessness and her addiction.

She was nervous about coming to the shelter. With no phone and only the clothes on her back, Deborah reached out to St. Vincent de Paul for assistance and credits her experience at the shelter with reshaping her future.

With the help of staff and other guests, she began to have hope again. She began to reflect on her life and knew she could change. Deborah saw that God still had plans for her. When asked how St. Vincent de Paul helped, she states, “I learned to get a positive experience in life, you must realize you are in control of your situation. I have been clean since November 20, 2021. I quit cold turkey, and that is because St. Vincent’s showed me that life is worth living.”

Deborah Schafer has been able to turn her life around and she thanks St. Vincent. She is now in a sober living program to continue working on the sobriety goals she started at St. Vincent.

“This place offers safety, security, and well-being for those most in need. This place really gives people hope.”



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 Friend of St. Vincent de Paul,

Happy Spring! 2021 brought us another great challenge to serve our neighbors in need in the Miami Valley, with the COVID-19 pandemic layered on top of the “ordinary needs” in our neighborhoods and emergency shelters. The work strained our financial and human resources, but also gave us many new opportunities to embrace our neighbors with love and mercy that God provides in such abundance!

In this issue you'll meet Deborah, Jillian, Rylan, and Gabriel, our neighbors in need who benefit from your generosity. You will also see that you provided for a simple need for our families in shelter – age-appropriate places to sit.

When you place your confidence in us, you are providing a refuge for the homeless, but also encouragement, a listening ear, and practical help for rejoining the community in a stable home. If you are able, this year please consider joining our committed group of volunteers who work right alongside our staff, and who govern our shared work with a heightened sense of responsibility to our community and to God.

I invite you to recommit yourself to our life-affirming mission in 2022, and once again experience the joy of accompanying your neighbors in need. Thank you!

Yours in Christ,

Michael

Michael E. Vanderburgh,
Executive Director

Giving Tuesday Report: You Are Inspiring!

You help keep our shelter guests safe and comfortable.

With your generosity, we received over \$18,000 for Giving Tuesday!

We are now able to provide our guests with ten sturdy picnic tables to benefit from social distancing and fresh air. You helped us give peace of mind provided by an outdoor escape from community living and a comfortable spot for parents to watch their children play. As your donations far exceeded our Giving Tuesday goal, you helped provide preschool activity tables and chairs, highchairs, and park benches.

Your kindness makes our accommodations for shelter guests something they can rely on, at a time when so much in their lives is unreliable. Thank you for your kindness that allows us to meet our guests needs.



A Mother's Determination for a Better Life Leads to New Housing

You helped reunite a family who longed to live together.

Jillian Newsome was living in poor conditions and could not take it anymore. She and her family, which included four children, were living in a two-bedroom, pest-ridden apartment. They alerted the landlord about the pests when they moved in, but the landlord refused to treat the apartment. She states, "It was horrible. When the landlord gave notice of raising the rent this past spring, we gave our 30-day notice and left with nowhere to go."

After leaving their apartment, they stayed briefly with their in-laws. Her son Rylan was asked to leave for behavioral issues. Jillian, understanding her in-law's point of view, left with Rylan for the Women and Families Shelter, leaving three of her kids and husband with the in-laws.



The area shortage of safe and affordable housing and family size made their time on the housing waitlist a long one, but Jillian was able to locate a new home and is now preparing to leave the shelter. She is grateful to her case manager for her perseverance and guidance through seven long months of searching. She states, "I hate being away from my family. I'm most excited to have everyone under the same roof and to be with my family again."

You Helped Gabriel Find a More Productive and Happier Life

"It felt like I was at the bottom of society."



Gabriel Hancock knows how easy it is to be homeless.

He first came to St. Vincent's Men's shelter a few years ago, after losing his apartment when he lost his job. His poor health (eventually diagnosed as Irritable bowel syndrome) complicated by a long commute by bus, made it impossible to maintain his position. He was able to obtain housing after a short shelter stay, but while his new home was affordable, it was not in a safe neighborhood. After dealing with the neighborhood crime for two years, he left his apartment after suffering a break-in while he was at work and found himself without a home again.

"I don't want to say being homeless felt hopeless," he reflects. "But it felt like I was at the bottom of society. It was a shot to my self-worth."

Gabriel returned to St. Vincent's shelter to find suitable housing, but this stay was longer due to the current shortage of safe and affordable housing. However, he did not give up, and knows his rehousing success was the result of his focus on his goals and the assistance of his case manager. "My case manager put in a lot of work calling places. We tag-teamed calling places to look for openings. It was hard finding housing."

Now settled in his new home for three months, Gabriel reflects on the best things about having his own place. "The main thing is peace. I can eat what I want, shower when I want, and come and go as I please. Having that peace is healthy for you mentally and spiritually." Today Gabriel has improved health, a job, and a car, and now a place of his own. With your help, and his tenacity, finally Gabriel is ready to enjoy a productive and happier life.



St. Vincent de Paul

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DRIVE DAYTON FORWARD

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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 PICKUP

Please call 937.425.0592.



**Please remember
St. Vincent de Paul
Society in your will.**

**Please call
Michael Vanderburgh
at (513) 257-6266 if
you need assistance.**

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