

Saving Lives, One Bite at a Time

You made him feel safe and cared for while grace went to work.



With a simple hot meal on a cold February morning, Chris was given a taste of grace that would feed his desire to turn his life around, away from his addiction and on a path toward God and healing.

Drugs had taken hold of Chris when he was only 14 years old. As a child he suffered abuse from his alcoholic stepfather, and he turned to drugs and alcohol to cope. Addiction then ruled his life for decades. He was estranged from his family and had been in and out of prison before he first entered the St. Vincent Gettysburg men's shelter in 2018.

For years he dropped in and out of the shelter while struggling with addiction and its resulting health issues. He felt safe and knew people

cared, but his time at the shelter was never long enough for the case managers to help him. "I knew I would screw it up," he confessed. "I didn't want to be comfortable. I forced myself to be uncomfortable."

A few days before Valentine's Day of 2021, Chris was panhandling at a highway exit when a stranger offered to pay for him to have a room so he wouldn't be out in the cold. She took him to breakfast the next morning and spoke to him about God. He argued back and forth with her. He didn't believe it could be so easy. She listened to what he had to say, made him feel valued, and said, "You've got a plate full of food in front of you. Just take it one bite at a time."

Months later when he was in jail again, grace took hold and he began to understand what the woman had been trying to tell him about God. "That's when God laid into me heavy," he said. "God wouldn't stop showing me signs."

When he was released, Chris returned to St. Vincent's clean and a new person. He was ready to receive the help he needed to get his life back on track. His case manager helped him apply for housing and find his own apartment. After two months in shelter, he was able to get his own place.

At his treatment group, there was a note on the wall that said, 'One bite at a time.' "No one knew when it was put up there," he said, "but you can't tell me that's not God."

He continues to rebuild his relationships with his family members and is working on his goal of helping people overcome homelessness and addiction. "I work for Domino's and after each shift I drive around bringing pizza to people on the streets. I bring breakfast pizzas to my church every Sunday." He lets God's grace work through him to change lives, one bite at a time.



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,

As I write this, I'm visiting family – my original community members whom I have known and loved my entire life. We've been mostly separated throughout the pandemic, and it sure feels good to reconnect in person.

My family members and I have counted on each other for decades, and we have always been there for each other. Throughout many challenges over the years, our family bond has made a tremendous difference in our quality of life and our experience of authentic love.

Most of us take family for granted. For some of our neighbors with already fragile family and community bonds, any additional hurdle frustrates the path away from loneliness, chemical dependency, and homelessness.

In this issue you will read stories of ruptured relationships and addiction, and how Josh and Vicky – and many other friends like you – help love persevere through it all with monthly financial support for our ministries.

The Society of St. Vincent de Paul is built upon a radical faith in Love itself – God who dwells among us, who teaches us to tenderly accompany each other through every pain and suffering. We were made for Love, and our neighbors in need help us grow our faith in Love.

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

Yours in Christ,

Michael

Michael E. Vanderburgh,
Executive Director

Determination to Succeed Through Trials

You gave Steve the support he needed to change.

“I came to Dayton to stay with my son. He picked me up from Salvation Army in Cincinnati. Unfortunately, I relapsed. I had a few drinks and he lost it. I was kicked out and came to the shelter in Dayton.”

Steve was one of four kids and had a rough upbringing. His father was abusive and he often took the brunt of the abuse. He coped with the abuse through drugs and alcohol. He started drinking at 12 years old and it quickly spiraled out of control. He spent most of his life trying to drink his problems away, eventually becoming homeless in Cincinnati. A former co-worker found him on the street and took him to the Salvation Army, where he stayed for a year achieving long term sobriety. When his son offered him a place in Dayton, he took the opportunity, but unfortunately relapsed and came to St. Vincent's Men's Shelter.

Steve struggled being homeless again. He states, “There wasn't much bus transportation, so it was hard to get around and find a job.” Even through all the struggles, Steve stopped drinking again and with the help of his case worker, he got a job at Mahle and housing at the DePaul Center.

Steve is thankful for St. Vincent's for their assistance. He states about having his own place “The staff helps me out here at the DePaul Center. It's made a difference. It feels really good. ”



Will You Join Josh and Vicky as a Steadfast Friend?

For \$38 you can provide food, shelter, and clothing for a guest for one day.



“It’s been intensely rewarding because you know exactly where the money is going,” explains Josh Rauch. In giving to St. Vincent’s, Josh and his wife Vicky knew that their money would have a direct impact on their neighbors in need, and they wanted to give in a way that would help the most. They know that by becoming Steadfast Friends—donors who are committed to making monthly gifts—they provide a consistent cashflow on which St. Vincent can rely.

Choosing to donate to St. Vincent de Paul was easy for Josh and Vicky. Josh’s grandfather, Frank Heider, was a devoted Catholic and Vincentian—a member of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul who is a neighborhood volunteer. His example of sharing time and resources to help his neighbors in need inspired the couple to do the same.

They also recognized the important need to help those in their own community who are particularly underserved or under-supported by other nonprofits, agencies, or government programs. “It is a way to continue a family tradition in a way that has a significant impact on our community and that aligns with our values.”

We are so thankful for our Steadfast Friends! With a gift of \$38 a month, you can provide one of your neighbors with one day of food, clothing, and shelter—giving them the stability and assistance they need and your dedication to regular giving provides us with stability of income as well!

Will you become a Steadfast Friend? Please know that any amount is welcome and appreciated. Please go to stvincentdayton.org and “How to Donate” to sign up today!

Providing A Young Mother With Stability and Support

You gave her confidence while she found a home for her son.

“I felt like a failure as a mom,” Shama recounts when reflecting on the fear of bringing her young son to the St. Vincent’s Women & Families shelter. Alone and lacking the support of her family, Shama and her son Kison came to the shelter when they had no one else to turn to for help.

Stability was not something that she had experienced while growing up. Her mother passed away when she was nine, and she didn’t meet her father until she was 16. She spent most of her youth in foster care, moving from home to home. By the time she was 18, she was desperate to escape the place where she had experienced so much hurt. She moved to Florida, giving herself a fresh start in a new place.

While there, she met her son’s father, and they were together for six years. When he was sent to jail, she moved back to Ohio with her son to be closer with family, especially her dad and sister. However, after a short time of staying with them, tensions flared. She needed to find a safer place to stay, and left her father’s house.

She was afraid and hesitant to expose Kison to the shelter environment, but made the difficult decision to bring him to the shelter. “The hardest part of it all is your child struggling with you,” she said. They stayed for three months while working with her case manager to find a place of their own. “St. Vincent gave me the tools to help me get where I am now. They had my back while I was doing the footwork.”

Shama and Kison were able to move to Kettering Commons supportive housing before Kison’s first birthday. Since there, she has already accomplished half the goals on her list. “It feels amazing. It makes me feel safe. It makes me feel proud of myself.”





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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 PICK UP

Please call 937.425.0592.



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

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

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The Dayton District Council of St. Vincent de Paul, growing in spirituality and friendship, provides Christ inspired, person-to-person support in an empowering effort to improve the lives of those in personal, spiritual, or material need.

