

Thanks to You: A Young Mother Is Staying Strong

You gave Justine safety when her family was in danger.

When asked about how she deals with everything that has happened to her, Justine calmly responds, "I'll be alright, I'll stay strong."

Justine did not have a stable childhood. Her family relationships were harmful. "My stepmom was abusive and neglected me. My real mom just wasn't there. My dad was working all the time because there were six of us in the household."

She lived with her mom in high school, but her mom struggled with drug addiction. Bills often went unpaid. When Justine had her first child at age 19, her mom kicked her out.

Justine lived with her child's father for several years and they had another child together. Unfortunately, their relationship was troubled. His behavior was abusive and unpredictable. He became increasingly violent, and his threats to harm her and their kids caused her to flee.

It took incredible strength to leave her abusive partner to save herself and her kids. "That was my proudest moment," she says. "It was a lot of weight off my shoulders." However, she did not have any family to turn to in her time of need. That's when she and her children came to St. Vincent de Paul for help.

They spent eight months in shelter before she found another place for them to go. They were safe for a few years, until her ex found where they were living. He threatened her family's safety again, and she turned once more to St. Vincent for help.

This time she found a home in St. Vincent de Paul's supportive housing ministry. Thanks to you, Justine has the freedom of her own place and receives the ongoing support she needs.

Her recent experiences have taken a toll on her mental and physical health. Her case manager is helping her connect with the health services she needs to find healing. She is grateful for all the support she receives. "They have a food pantry here. They offer transportation to appointments, and staff are available if you need someone to talk to."

Thank you for helping give Justine and her family the safety and support they need to heal and find peace.



Residents at St. Vincent de Paul's supportive housing ministries have access to food pantries and enriching activities like arts and crafts.



The Vincentian

Special Edition - Thankuary

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Building Blocks for a Brighter Future

You gave a mother and son a wonderful gift in a difficult season of life.

A chorus of happy little voices rises from a corner of St. Vincent de Paul's Shelter for Women and Families each weekday morning. Here in Imagination Station, some of our youngest shelter guests find opportunities to flourish – and find their voices.

"I love it," Stephanie says, as her son participates in this early childhood development program. She explains that her son had a significant speech delay. "You could understand what he was communicating, but he often didn't use words. Now that he has been going to the Imagination Station, he is able to say 'Mom.'"

You helped make this milestone possible for a mother and son while they look for a new home. When we reported last year on the record-high numbers of children in our shelter, you responded with care and support. Thanks to you, we were able to focus resources on providing greater support for families while they are in our care.



Reading is one of the children's favorite activities in the Imagination Station.

Imagination Station has become a bright spot in the shelter. It gives children ages three to five the freedom to play and create, both in group activities and one-on-one interactions with staff and volunteers. These interactions help the children learn important language and cooperation skills.

"It helps build my confidence in him," Stephanie says. "He can communicate with others without me telling him what to do. He is able to interact with other kids around his age. He can be independent."

The program also fosters a supportive family environment. Parents like Stephanie can see their children's progress firsthand. They also gain tools to help their children continue to grow and flourish when they leave the shelter.

Thank you for your care and compassion to help support families experiencing homelessness. You give them building blocks for a brighter future where they can continue to grow and thrive.



In the Imagination Station, children have the opportunity to play and learn.

From the Executive Director

Dear Friend of St. Vincent de Paul,

You are remarkable!

In 2024, you assisted 4,202 Dayton neighbors who had nowhere else to turn for food, clothing, and shelter. Your help opened a whole network of support to families in great need. Your compassion means so much to those who find the safety and support they need through St. Vincent de Paul's ministries. Thanks to your generosity we met our match goal of \$150,000 when we requested your help at the end of last year. Thank you!



In fact, we are so grateful for your help that instead of calling this month January, we're calling it Thankuary! A special edition of the Vincentian is enclosed—it is special because it was created for St. Vincent de Paul's most committed donors like **you**.

I hope you will enjoy seeing how much you've made a difference in the lives of those who are homeless or who are struggling to stay in their homes. I hope this newsletter gives you a deep understanding of how important you really are, and why families are so very grateful for your help. I am too! **You are the wind in our sails.**

I'm looking forward to what we can accomplish together in 2025. I will continue to keep you in my prayers and ask that you pray for those we accompany in our ministries.

With my deepest thanks,

Michael

Michael Vanderburgh, Executive Director
St. Vincent de Paul Society, Dayton District

*Here's who you helped shelter,
feed, and clothe in 2024*



2056

Single Men



1112

Single Women



375

Family Adults



659

Children

You Helped Your Neighbors Keep Their Homes

Your generous support helps our neighborhood ministries - or conferences - to respond to our neighbors at risk of homelessness. More than 600 St. Vincent neighborhood volunteers, known as Vincentians, work with their fellow parishioners, to help people stay in their homes. Much of the needed funding is provided by parishioners, and under-resourced conferences receive support from the Dayton District Council. Your support is essential to helping Vincentians make a difference in thousands of lives! Here are a few stories of neighbors helping neighbors:



The St. Charles Christmas distribution was a huge success! Members gathered food for families in need during the holiday season. Each bag included everything needed for a Christmas dinner.

"No act of charity is foreign to the society." - Blessed Frederic Ozanam

The St. Mary of the Assumption conference lived out the words of Blessed Frederic Ozanam with one of their neighbors this year. A neighbor reached out to the conference for assistance with a utility. When conference members completed their home visit, the neighbor noted he could no longer push his vacuum cleaner due to his medical issues. Conference members stepped up, coming back several times to vacuum his apartment, until a family member stepped in to take up the task.

See the Face of Christ. Be the Face of Christ.

For the St. Peter conference, their ongoing relationship with Jason has given them a wonderful opportunity to see and reflect the face of Christ. The St. Peter conference has been assisting Jason on and off since 1999. He is in a wheelchair, has a minor speech impediment and receives Supplemental Security Income (SSI).

For the past few years, Jason has worked at Walmart as a greeter. During one pay period, he earned a little too much pay to qualify for his SSI benefit. His landlord thought Jason was earning more income, so they raised his rent to a rate he could not afford. To complicate matters, Jason was victimized by people he thought were his friends - and they stole what little money he earned. He reached out to the conference when he found himself facing eviction.

Thanks to the help of his friends at the St. Peter's Conference and other local agencies, Jason avoided eviction and was linked with supportive services he needs.