

The Good Samaritan

“I didn’t want to ask for help, but I’m glad I got it.”

A Snapshot of Some of the Vets at Ozanam Inn

“I didn’t know where to go. I was reaching for every resource I could.” Phillip, a U.S. Air Force veteran, found himself homeless after a long-term relationship ended. On disability due to kidney failure and no less than three dialysis treatments a week, he struggled to find a job that would accommodate his treatment schedule and cover the basics like rent.

That’s when the Veteran’s Administration referred Phillip to St. Vincent de Paul’s VA program at Ozanam Inn, our men’s shelter.

Unfortunately, Phillip’s circumstances are not uncommon. According to the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, approximately 11 percent of the adult homeless population are veterans.

At Ozanam Inn we have 20 beds and a program dedicated to veterans and have housed vets from every war and conflict since World War II. While here, the men are encouraged to address health issues (both physical and mental), continue treatment for alcohol and drug abuse, find employment, and ultimately move on to permanent housing.



Three Veterans in our program at Ozanam Inn. From left, Phillip, U.S. Air Force; Brian, U.S. Marine Corps; Roy, U.S. Army Reserve.

A newcomer to the program, Brian said, “I didn’t want to ask for help, but I’m glad I got it.” After stints in the Marines and the Army National Guard with tours in Kuwait, Iraq and Afghanistan, and fighting wildfires stateside, Brian was struck by a truck while with his inactive unit in Florida. The accident

damaged his right leg, ended his military career and left him on disability. Like Phillip, he found himself without a place to live. His spirit is undeterred, however. Brian said, “Sometimes you’ve got to take a step back like this to reset everything to have a better life down the road. Clear the board. Start from scratch. But keep some principles about being a real human being.”

Roy, a pressman for 24 years, served in the Army Reserve. After a divorce, finding himself on disability, and losing his home, Roy ended up homeless in Bullitt county with limited access to resources. After moving to Louisville and connecting with the VA, he was referred to our program. Roy has struggled with depression for the past 15 years, but while staying at Ozanam he sought treatment and is finding success. “This is the first time since high school that everything feels normal.”

Quick Facts About Our VA Transitional Housing Program at Ozanam Inn*

- We sheltered 59 veterans.
- 49% of veterans were over the age of 55
- 44% of veterans identified as racial or ethnic minorities
- 54% of veterans disclosed that they suffer from a mental health issue
- 46% of veterans disclosed that they suffer from a substance use disorder
- 48% of veterans had a physical disability
- 61% of veterans had multiple disabilities
- 15% of veterans disclosed that they had experienced domestic violence
- 77% of veterans had income when they exited our program
- 12% of veterans were chronically homeless
- 28% of veterans gained or increased their income while in the program, on average by \$690 per month.
- 100% of veterans who exited the program had health insurance
- 54% of veterans exited to a positive housing destination (we helped 22 people move into permanent housing)

*from 10/1/17-9/30/18



St. Vincent
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The Good Samaritan

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Our Mission

St. Vincent de Paul Louisville partners
with individuals and families in crisis and
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VETERANS

Continued from page 1

Help is Available

In addition to treatment for mental and physical health issues, the vets also have access to legal aid, therapeutic supported employment services, and access to life skills classes. The support doesn't stop there.

Cassidy Kennedy, Program Manager at Ozanam Inn, says of the vets, "If your neighbor needs something, you're there helping them. There's some ribbing among the branches, but when it comes down to it, they're all brothers."

Cassidy says that completing the program doesn't mean you can't ask for help. "If they move out and call us and don't have enough money for food or need winter clothes, we'll take care of them. We do whatever we can."

Support also comes from those that have been here before. She adds, "Former clients that have moved on will let current clients know about jobs, donate clothes for interviews, and will take them under their wing."

Thanks to VA grants, the program has seen improvements in the rooms dedicated to our vets. New floors, walls patched and painted, lockers, lamps, and new washers and dryers help to make the vets' stay with us more like home.

Other improvements are on the horizon for Ozanam Inn as we undertake a \$215,000 renovation project. Thanks to donors, St. Vincent de Paul was able to secure a matching grant from Louisville Metro Government to make the much-needed repairs.

The Work Continues

While the Department of Housing and Urban Development's (HUD) 2018 Annual Homeless Assessment Report (AHAR) shows a 5.4 percent decrease in veteran homelessness since 2017, there is still much work to be done. Phillip says, "If you can get up today, you can make something happen. As long as you've got that next day, something can change."



Do You Love to Drive?

We're looking for volunteer van drivers

St. Vincent de Paul is looking for volunteers to drive our vans and take residents to doctor's appointments, grocery shopping and other errands. This is a great opportunity to get to know our residents and provide them with something that many of us take for granted—reliable transportation.

Interested? Call Donna Young at (502) 301-8688 or send an email to dyoung@svdplou.org for more information or to schedule a campus tour and meet our residents.

There's Still Time to Donate to the Santa Shop

Each year our "Gifts from the Heart" program asks for donations of new gifts that will be organized into a mini-mall in the Family Success Center. Last year over 500 families were invited to make their own selections for their children. Parents have expressed joy and gratitude as they leave with their donated gifts.

Parents are invited to attend Santa Shop on December 9, and, accompanied by a volunteer, can shop for clothing and toys for their children. They'll finish out the day with free gift wrapping.

Would you like to volunteer, provide a new gift or make a Donation? Contact Donna Young at (502) 301-8688 or dyoung@svdplou.org.

Shop the Wish List at

<http://bit.ly/SVDPSantaShop>

If you'd like to shop at Amazon and have your gift shipped to us, we've put together a wish list at <http://bit.ly/SVDPSantaShop>. Don't forget to sign up for AmazonSmile and make that gift go even further.

Gifts should be dropped off or delivered by December 9.



It's Time for a Turkey Drive

Every Thanksgiving and Christmas, visitors to the Open Hand Kitchen are treated to traditional holiday meals. Donations of whole turkeys—large and small—would be greatly appreciated and will help make this a holiday to remember.

Turkeys can be dropped off at the Open Hand Kitchen, 1026 S. Jackson St., from 8 am to 6 pm daily.

What's Cooking at the FSC?



Once a week for the past two and a half years, Karen Kummer has been teaching cooking classes at the Family Success Center. The recipes range from smoothies to muffins, but it's always something healthy. There's also a lesson each week about food, such as the way a farm works and how food gets from there to our tables.

The program is provided by the Kentucky Nutrition Education Program (KYNEP) and offered through The University of Kentucky Cooperative Extension Service.

Volunteers like Karen make the programs at the Family Success Center invaluable.

There's No Business Like Show Business



The kids at the Family Success Center wrote, directed and starred in eight plays, performing to a full house. Thanks to Tiffany LaVoie and Drama by George for working with the kids for this production. Here's a list of the plays performed.

- *Macaroni and Peas*
- *Tattoo and a Nose Ring*
- *Daniel*
- *Knock, Knock!*
- *Driver's Ed*
- *Can I Borrow a Pencil?*
- *The Troll*
- *Wanna Grab a Bite?*

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