

Christmas 2018

A Home for the Holidays

Working It! Patsy Ready to Leave Seton House & Start Anew

Patsy seizes opportunities created at Seton House: prepares for next chapter

Patsy could barely contain her excitement—she was moving out of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton House to her new apartment in Madison! And, she was celebrating her one-year of recovery anniversary.

“I’m ecstatic when women and families are able to move on from the Seton program and get into permanent housing; that is the whole goal of the program, to be that bridge for them,” says Erin Shopofski, director of Seton House. “When they leave here they have a solid foundation to continue to progress and the sky is the limit.”

Madison: A Fresh Start

Patsy’s enthusiasm for her new place is grounded in her appreciation and connection to Shopofski. “I was referred to Seton House by a friend while living in a recovery house in Sun Prairie. I liked Erin’s voice on the phone! When we met, I liked her and the program. I felt comfortable enough to move in right away,” she recalls.

Originally from Kansas City, Missouri, Patsy and her former husband came to Madison in 2006 for a new start. Patsy reveals, “There were nice people in Madison, and we wanted to make a change in our lives. I prayed a lot over the years here, and had some ups and downs.”

When Patsy was down, she found help through a residential treatment program. “I was able to get sober,” she remembers, “and it was time for me to take the next step in my life.” Seton House, located in an active Madison neighborhood, allowed her to grow in self-reliance with support and to enjoy her favorite activities: fishing, bowling and taking long walks in the park.

A deeply spiritual person with rich and fond memories of her deceased father, Patsy seeks meaning and peace in Bible study. “I want to hear God’s message, and will find a church soon,” she notes.

Shopofski has been among Patsy’s blessings this year. “Erin helps me with a good laugh to take the worries in my mind away. I get good advice, especially about budgeting, and help to find my permanent home,” Patsy shares. “The five months here were a joy.”

First Things First

Of the many things Patsy learned at Seton House, learning to caring for herself is among the most important. “I enjoy my independence, cooking things I love to eat (sweet potatoes, cornbread, greens and meatloaf are a favorite dinner), and doing things that are healthy for me. I feel more at peace now.”

As Patsy prepares for her move, she’s ready to advise others who need an effective, supportive housing program to look at Seton House.

As Shopofski helps Patsy assemble the household basics she’ll need for her new

apartment, she says she’ll miss Patsy’s stories. “Patsy’s an important part of our community. She watches the neighborhood and Seton House residents. She’s been supportive of the younger women and her positive strides on her path make her a beloved role model.”



“At Seton House, I enjoy my independence, cooking the things I love to eat and doing things that are healthy for me. I feel more at peace now.”

Patsy
former Seton House resident

“Seton is a good program. It gets you off the street and gets the foolishness out of your head. Being around good people, like the women who live at Seton House and Erin, helps a lot. **You’ve gotta WORK the program** and you’ll be successful—like me!”

Patsy

“Always Part of God’s Plan”: Steve’s journey leads him to the Port

Caught in a tough spot, Port St. Vincent de Paul was there to help Steve Ferris when others couldn’t.

With few resources and a contentious roommate situation, Steve, who has schizoaffective disorder, was in need of affordable housing and a supportive environment. “I was basically looking for housing, but

didn’t have a lot of money. I had heard of the Port and the good it was doing for others. A lady from my church helped me check it out, and I’m grateful it has worked for me,” he reveals.

Steve, who jokes that he may have some far-reaching relation to the creator of the well-known Ferris Wheel, moved into the Port in January 2016, and has been a part of its community and programs ever since.

“My goal is to get stable, independent housing in Madison, and the Port staff are getting me connected to something. It could take a few weeks or it might turn into a couple months, it depends on the application approval

process. There’s not a lot of housing for poorer people,” adds Steve.

Not Just a House, But a Healing Home

In the meantime, the Port provides a furnished place to sleep, do laundry, garden, socialize and dine. The program’s cook and volunteer groups prepare three

meals a day, and there is 24-hour staffing to provide guidance and resources to work toward a job, recovery from substance abuse and financial stability.

Steve, a man of few words, but with a smile that will light the room, earned degrees at UW-Madison in history and Chinese. He then taught English in China for a year. He chuckles, saying he could hold a conversation in Chinese, but would probably not be discussing nuclear physics.

Shortly after returning to the United States, he was diagnosed with schizoaffective disorder in his 20s while working at a local insurance company. Steve’s condition includes aspects of both schizophrenia and mild bipolar disorder, and can affect how he interacts with others.

“I owe God a great deal, because prayer has helped me a great deal with this illness. I feel it was always part of his plan for me to be here at the Port to help get me out of a tough situation. That’s why it’s worked out so well,” Steve notes. Despite some trying times and a divorce, Steve was still able to raise a successful daughter who lives in Missouri with her husband and two kids. Steve is proud to be a grandpa.

Support From the Port

Steve recognizes Peter Lewandowski, the director of the Port, as one of his greatest influences.

“Peter has helped me a lot. He’s written letters for me to support me getting a place, and he’s always ready to listen,” says Steve. “When I leave here, I will miss the people the most. This isn’t a depressing place and for a lot of men, it isn’t the end. It’s kind of a stepping stone for them to find their way.”

“Port St. Vincent has provided a safe and caring home where Steve can get the hands-on help that he needs to connect with an array of services—from case management to having his health needs met and a fighting chance to obtain lasting housing,” says Lewandowski. “It’s a joy to work with men like Steve who are motivated to get help and move forward with their lives.”

Steve patiently waits and is optimistic his new housing will help lead to more visits from his favorite people. An appreciative Steve continues, “It’ll especially be a great joy to see my daughter and my two grandkids more. Through it all, my daughter is my greatest success.”



“When I leave here, I will miss the people the most. This isn’t a depressing place and for a lot of men, it isn’t the end. It’s kind of a stepping stone for them to find their way.”

Steve Ferris, Port resident

Recycle the Warmth Blanket Drive

January 25, 26 & 27, 2019



Donate new or gently used blankets for households in need at any Madison-area Shopko or Dane County St. Vinny’s store.

New blankets for sale at a special price at Madison-area Shopko stores during the drive.

“The Port has made this possible and all I can say is ‘xiexie.’” (Thank you in Chinese)

Providing a Hopeful Home

When new residents move into the Port or Seton House, they always come with hope, determination and a commitment to improving their lives. But they need a few more things. They arrive with little more than the clothes on their backs, and maybe a duffle bag stuffed with some important documents, mementos and other clothing.

Because they come from shelter, temporary living at a friend's place or even just the car, they don't come with bottles of shampoo or dish soap, a favorite pillow or blanket, bleach or even a stock of diapers if there are babies in tow.

We count on you to help make housing a home.

Home at Port St. Vincent de Paul for Men

Helps: Men prepare to transition to permanent, affordable housing. Seventy-six men lived at Port St. Vincent in 2018.

Provides: A furnished place to sleep, do laundry, garden, socialize and dine. The staff cook and volunteer groups prepare three meals a day. Staff are present 24 hours a day to provide guidance and resources to work toward a job, better health, recovery from substance abuse and financial stability.

Needs: With the basic needs met through the Port, the men appreciate bus passes to get to work and appointments, laundry soap, and personal care items like soap, razors and toothbrushes. They can also use items to make their rooms more functional and homey.

Home at St. Elizabeth Ann Seton House for Women and Children

Helps: Single women and women with children who are transitioning from homelessness or shelter to permanent, affordable housing.

Provides: Furnished apartments with support by the director who helps residents develop and work on budgeting, credit repair, educational achievement and work skills. Through these activities, they are prepared to take the next life step.

Needs: Because the units are individual apartments, the women need all the typical things for housekeeping. Cleaning supplies are especially useful and expensive! They also need the basic cleaning tools—brooms, mops, sponges and dish towels. Moms use gift cards for children's activities, toys and school supplies.

Seton House Renovations

Four Seton House apartments were updated with new kitchens and bathrooms and the largest building now has central air conditioning.

Seton House

115 women &
20 children lived in
Seton House in 2018

Before



After



YOU make the difference!

Financial gifts to St. Vincent de Paul are crucial to keep resident program fees low and affordable, and allow routine upgrades to the facilities, explains Ernie Stetenfeld, St. Vincent de Paul CEO & Executive Director. "Last year, we invested about **\$167,000** in the housing programs to provide services and safe, affordable environments."

The generosity of community members who care about those who are homeless helps ensure that when people are ready to change their lives, the Port and Seton House are available to help them do that with dignity.

Ernie Stetenfeld
CEO & Executive Director

Housing Wishlists

Port St. Vincent

- Non-perishable food items
- Bus passes
- Laundry detergent
- Personal care products

Seton House

- Diaper sizes 3, 4 and 5
- Baby wipes
- Adult bus passes
- Gas cards
- Laundry detergent pods
- Dryer sheets
- Feminine hygiene products
- Cleaning supplies
- Non-perishable food items

District Council of Madison, Inc.
Society of St. Vincent de Paul
PO BOX 259686
MADISON WI 53725-9686

Address Service Requested



Special Housing Issue

Helping Our Neighbors in Need

a welcome home



Another Way to Help Your Neighbors in Need:

the IRA Qualified Charitable Distribution

If you've reached the age of 70½, you have a special opportunity to support the services of your local St. Vincent de Paul Society with a gift from your IRA or individual retirement annuity and claim a charitable income tax deduction with a gift called a *qualified charitable distribution*.

1. To make a contribution, work directly with your IRA trustee or custodian to determine that you have the right type of retirement account to make this gift. Direct them to write the check to District Council of Madison, Inc., Society of St. Vincent de Paul (EIN 39-0824876).
2. Make a transfer from the IRA directly to charity. Many trustees and custodians have forms and procedures in place for this transfer. It won't qualify if the trustee or custodian mistakenly puts the IRA money in a non-IRA account of yours as an intermediate step or if the check is made out to you. And, the law doesn't provide a way to correct mistakes!
3. Make sure the check is written and sent to:
District Council of Madison, Inc., Society of St. Vincent de Paul
PO Box 259686
Madison, WI 53725-9686

Please contact **Nancy Hansis, St. Vincent de Paul development director**, at 608-442-7200 x405 or nhansis@svdpmadison.org to learn more.



*Care
Café*



Become a SPONSOR today!

Support your community

Increase your visibility

Attended by 400+ guests

Please contact **Nancy Hansis**
nhansis@svdpmadison.org
608-442-7200 x405