



Christmas 2017

Homes for the Holidays & Every Day

A FAMILY REUNITES AT ST. ELIZABETH ANN SETON HOUSE

When Kim moved into her apartment at St. Elizabeth Ann Seton House, it was a quiet home. But Kim had plans to add a little noise back in as she moved ahead on her life goals at St. Vincent de Paul's women's and children's housing program.

Today, it's a little noisier and a lot more playful at Kim's house. Ten-year-old daughter, Skyler, has re-joined her mom and 7-month-old sister, Sterling. There's a happy and boisterous vibe to the busy apartment.

Family is important to Kim, even more so since her mother died in March 2014. "I was raised by my mom and gramma;

we were so close." explains Kim. "As an adult, I returned to my mom's home with my two children when I left an abusive relationship."

Like many victims of trauma, Kim needed a way to relieve her pain. She turned to drugs, then found herself addicted, creating even more pain and harm. She was just starting a treatment program when her mother died and "I just spiraled out of control. I was so sad."

A Madison native, Kim turned to her network of friends for support. A friend moved in to help with the kids in this unsettled period, but it didn't work out. "She turned me in to the police, and I was sent to jail for eight months for drug use. My children were sent to foster care." It was a devastating time for Kim.

Kim was released with little support to return to the community. "I was on my own, without a place to live, and I couldn't get my children back until I had met certain criteria," she explains. Without savings for security deposits and first month's rent, it's especially difficult for people returning from jail to secure a place to live.

Kim was homeless for a time until a family friend she kindly calls aunt, took her in. "I connected to

ARC Community Services in Madison for intensive counseling sessions to help me with recovery, develop my coping abilities and improve my parenting skills. My kids were my motivation to get better," Kim says.

Kim graduated from the program in October and was working her way through the stipulations to regain custody of her eldest daughter and middle son. "We had visits together, but it wasn't the same as being there for them as their mom," Kim remembers. "I had one more step to reunite my family—I needed a place of my own to live."

Finally, there was an open apartment at Seton House. Kim describes Seton House as a place that is "very personalized; it feels comfortable working on what you want to work on. There's no judgment, so I can plan my own path and get help every week from Erin, the director."

Kim moved in and prepared to bring her children home. It began with weekend visits and sleepovers, the children returning to their foster homes, until the court was confident that Kim and her children could thrive together. By summer, Kim's daughter and new baby were building a peaceful and safe family life at Seton House. The middle son continues to work on some issues in foster care, and she looks forward to him coming home.

Today, Kim knows there's no turning back from her path toward success. She's developed greater calm and patience, all things necessary to nurture her children. She's in a job training program and continuing with parenting classes. "I know I can have the life I want for my family."

"Seton House isn't typical of what people think of for sober or transitional living. You don't feel trapped. You feel like you have a home that presents the opportunity to fix your life. It's safe for me and my children. As a mom, that's really important."

- Kim, Seton House resident



"I am very proud of my ability to stay committed to fulfilling all the requirements to get my kids back.

Seton House gave me that chance and the ability to have my family together."

- Kim, Seton House resident

PORT ST. VINCENT HITS A HIGH NOTE FOR JAZZ MAN



Nate, a Port St. Vincent resident, has stories to tell—happy stories and sad stories that he shares through his music all over the nation and at home in Madison.

Nate grew up in Milwaukee, where his family ran a boarding house, an upholstery business and a church. His parents worked hard—and expected the same of their children. “I started preaching at 7 years old and learned

that God is the head of my life and I need Him for everything I do.”

An accident leads to a new way of seeing

Another event at age 7 influenced Nate, and ultimately changed his name. While building a go-kart, a metal chip flew into one eye, turning it a milky blue color and blinding him in that eye. “The injury taught me how to overcome hardship. Sometimes the blind eye is better for seeing the world—I don’t see the color of skin or money,” he muses. Later in life, fellow musicians nicknamed him “Blue Cheese” for his eye color and his Wisconsin roots.

The power of preaching, the interaction of an audience and natural charisma soon led Blue Cheese to pick up drum sticks. “My dad was a

musician and I inherited that gift,” he reveals. Despite no musical training (he can’t read a note), he learned the guitar and formed a band.

But the duties of adulthood came soon. “I married young and we had children to support, so I worked and put music on hold. I pushed myself to leave a legacy for my kids.” He continued preaching, enjoyed his work with people who had disabilities, played guitar in church, and traveled a little to play on the road. He was famous as a preacher and musician in Milwaukee, performing on a local Christian television show in the late ‘70s.

Depression strikes a flat note

Then he experienced an episode of depression. “A musician’s life means travel, late nights, parties and alcohol. I was lonesome and depressed and started to use alcohol. I couldn’t understand what was wrong. I hated my home and work. My marriage ended and I lost touch with my kids because I wanted to hide my depression from them.”

So he moved on with the blues, playing Detroit, Los Angeles, Memphis, Detroit, Minneapolis, Milwaukee and Madison. “The music industry always offered bigger and better things, and I didn’t know how to ask for help from my friends and family, so I hit the road. But I never stayed in one place more than a year,” Blue Cheese confesses. “I just couldn’t get rooted.”

The siren song of home

In early 2017, while living in Memphis, Blue Cheese got a strong spiritual feeling that he needed to reunite with his children. “I learned about the Port in 1990 when I played Madison, and found it again with my new computer skills,” he says. “I like Madison because it’s a clean place and I prosper here.” Madison is also close to his kids, who live in Milwaukee.

The Port has been a place for Blue Cheese to restore himself. “Every day I have a new vision for myself. My health is better and I’m sober. It’s clean, comfortable and safe here. People respect each other and we have privacy when we need it.”

Blue Cheese also enjoyed performing regularly at Madison jazz clubs and music venues—more jazz than blues since he’s found a home at the Port.

Update: Blue Cheese has successfully relocated to Milwaukee to connect with this family and bring his music back home.

“Staff don’t treat me like an inmate. They treat me like a client.

This is a place to find a purpose, complete the purpose and move on.”

“Blue Cheese,”
jazz man &
Port St. Vincent
resident

Recycle the Warmth BLANKET DRIVE

January 26, 27 & 28, 2018

Donate new or gently used blankets 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.



CAN YOU HELP MAKE A HOME AT THE PORT AND SETON HOUSE?

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 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.

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 \$288,000 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."

We count on you to help make housing a home.

Home at Port St. Vincent

The Port (for men) provides a furnished place to sleep, recreate, do laundry, garden, socialize and dine. The resident cook and volunteer groups prepare three meals a day with 24-hour staffing to provide guidance and resources to work toward a job, better health, recovery from substance abuse, and financial stability.

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 Seton

St. Elizabeth Ann Seton House serves women, and women and their children who are transitioning from homelessness or shelter to permanent, affordable housing.

Seton House residents manage their own apartments and meals, supported by the director who helps them develop and work on budgeting, credit repair, educational achievement and work skills. Through these activities, they are prepared to take the next step in their lives.

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

The Port wish list

food

bus passes

laundry detergent

personal care products

Bed, Bath & Beyond gift cards

Seton House wish list

diapers sizes 3, 4, and 5

baby wipes

bus passes (adult only)

gas cards

laundry detergent (pods)

dryer sheets

feminine hygiene products

cleaning supplies

non-perishable food items



Aprilaire HR Director Bill Herman presents a \$25,000 check to SVdP Executive Director & CEO Ernie Stetenfeld.

Upgrades and Improvements at the Port & Seton House

Thanks to support from generous donor Research Products Aprilaire, the Port Annex (a free-standing building for four men) will have new siding and windows, and bathroom and kitchen renovations. A new Port deck is also being constructed. Aprilaire is a long term supporter of St. Vincent de Paul, both as a company and through its employees, who raise money and volunteer.



Thanks to a \$25,000 grant from a local family foundation, apartments in one of the Seton House buildings will have new fixtures in renovated bathrooms and kitchens. Other improvements this year include energy-efficient air conditioning, replacing outdated window units.

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 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 about this giving opportunity and the services you can support through the Society of St. Vincent de Paul.



One Size Fits All

Pick up a stack of St. Vinny's store gift cards for little thank yous, stocking stuffers or treats for the eclectic on your list.



Get yours at one of seven Dane County St. Vinny's stores in Madison, Stoughton, Sun Prairie, Verona and Waunakee.