



# Grace Notes

SPECIAL HOUSING ISSUE



**After a third stay at the Port, Jerome proudly has a home to call his own for the first time in over three years.**

## Finding His Way Home

An unfortunate accident led to his "downward spiral," but Jerome discovered a new lease on life thanks to the support from Port St. Vincent de Paul.

Life is all about perspective; just ask Jerome. Despite this year's difficulties, he will look back on a transformative 2020 as the year he found his way home.

It wasn't easy though. Jerome lost his housing in April, just as the COVID-19 pandemic was beginning to accelerate. In the midst of an "unhealthy" relationship and out of options, he reached out to the Port St. Vincent men's housing program (the Port), a place he had briefly called home twice before.

Following his first two stays, Jerome relied on couch-surfing and worked sporadically at a series of low-paying jobs. "I almost got to the point where I was losing myself," Jerome said. "I was staying at various places, including my son's house, too scared to call the Port because I didn't listen before."

When Peter, Director of the Port, welcomed him back in April, Jerome was determined that things would be different this time around.

"Peter and the staff took me in and taught me things that would help me transition to my own place," Jerome shared. "I was ready and determined to turn things around."

"I listened and learned things like saving money, taking my medication properly, what a healthy meal looks like and being humble enough to accept help. I even started my own bank account to save my money."

Thanks to Peter and the resources at the Port, Jerome put his determination to work and overcame a difficult past.

"I came to Madison in 1986," Jerome said. "I worked as a CNA. Then I had a serious accident that forced me to stop working in health care." The effects and trauma of the injury continue to this day, and the lengthy rehabilitation led to a mental health crisis, including thoughts of suicide. "It put me into a downward spiral," he explained.

Flashing forward to this fall, Jerome proudly moved into his own housing for the first time in more than three years. He credits the Port for his turnaround.

"I am so grateful for the Port," said Jerome. "It has given me the support; physically, mentally and emotionally. It's more than a warm bed and hot, nutritious meals. Peter and the staff genuinely care, and I have the confidence to be on my own and keep the momentum going."

"I'm 55 and there's no turning back. St. Vincent de Paul and its supporters helped me get there," Jerome shared. He is prepared to maintain his housing and his own health. Jerome hopes to become a volunteer mentor to help people overcome challenges the way he has.

"I want to be a force of reckoning as a helpful community member!"

## Port St. Vincent de Paul

is a port in the storm where men such as Jerome are treated like family and have a fresh opportunity to get help and figure out their situations in a safe and caring environment.



**-Peter L., Director of Port St. Vincent**

# Hope Lives Here

**"You did so much for me and my kids." For Kayla, Seton House was the start of something more.**

Kayla, a single mom with two young children, had never lived on her own.

She and her children were staying with a family member, but a house fire forced her to find a new place to live. They moved to Madison to be with her mom, but lease restrictions meant they could stay only a few days. The local shelter for women and children was full, so they referred Kayla to St. Elizabeth Ann Seton House.



"Right away, it was nice having my own area and space for my kids. We got a lot of help," Kayla said. "It was hard at first to go to the weekly case-management meetings. I had to get my kids to my mom's and to school. I got a second job. It was a lot to do the meetings, too."

Soon, though, Kayla began to find those meetings worthwhile. "I love [Seton House Director] Priscilla. It helped me to have someone to help me keep focused on my goals, someone to talk to when things were rough. She helped me keep perspective."

Kayla credits Seton House with assisting her in achieving one dream and beginning to reach for another. "I have my own place now," she explained. "I've never made it on my own before. Priscilla helped me become independent. I learned I can take care of my kids' needs and my own."

**Kayla and her two young children:**  
"I've never made it on my own before.  
...Now I dream of owning a house."

"I have a dream of owning a house, a place that my kids will know the freedom of something that is ours together. Before Seton House, I never dreamed of my own home. Now I have a 10-year plan."

Kayla is excited about the holidays this year. "I love Christmas. This is the first year I can decorate, get my own tree. I'll make cookies with my kids. I'm really excited."



**12**

Seton House provides case management and housing for 12 single women and their families.



**30**

Seton House has been serving women and their families for over 30 years.



## Recycle the Warmth 29th Annual Blanket Drive

**- January 29, 30 & 31, 2021 -**

Donate new or gently used blankets for families in need at any of our seven Dane County St. Vinny's stores.

New blankets for donation will be for sale at a special price at our seven thrift stores during the drive  
**You can donate blanket online at [svdpmadison.org](http://svdpmadison.org).**

## Vaccination Station

Free flu shots to our patients now, possibility of future COVID-19 vaccinations later

Flu shots (and the upcoming vaccine) have become more important than ever due to COVID-19.

“Some patients may mistrust the healthcare system,” said **Managing Pharmacist, Yolanda Tolson-Eveans, RPh.** “But they trust us because of our caring relationship with them. We help educate them on the importance of a flu shot and the knowledge to make an informed decision about their health.”

Tolson-Eveans maximizes the pharmacy’s ability to deliver quality medical care through community partnerships and UW-Madison School of Pharmacy volunteers.

The pharmacy is also preparing to become a state partner for distributing the COVID-19 vaccine, when it becomes available. Tolson-Eveans serves as a member of the SDMAC (State Disaster Medical Advisory Committee).

SDMAC provides guidance to Governor Evers and Wisconsin’s Department of Health Services on the future strategy to distribute the coming vaccine in Wisconsin. “This committee expects equitable distribution for COVID-19 vaccines,” she says.



A patient receives a flu shot inside their vehicle.



Managing Pharmacist Yolanda Tolson-Eveans, RPh



# 125

Free flu shots available for our uninsured pharmacy patients.

“It is part of our role to be a public health partner to ensure the community is safe.”

## Becoming a Sustaining Samaritan

**You are the missing ingredient! Five reasons to become a Sustaining Samaritan monthly giver this holiday season:**

*You can help* clients like Jerome and Kayla **all year round.**

*By making* **automatic, convenient monthly payments,** you won’t have to remember when you last gave.

*To build* **stable, long-term impact.** You allow us to take a planned, long-term approach to helping our community, no matter what pandemic or crisis comes along.

*To foster* **community.** Join a loyal group of 150+ supporters, including Sarah and Ryan, who are committed to our mission.

*To keep* **focus on the mission.** Monthly giving means lower costs (they add up!) and more money toward our mission.



Sarah and Ryan Fowler

**“Being a Sustaining Samaritan is easy!** Plus, St. Vincent de Paul fulfills practical needs in the community. At the heart of it all is that they care for people and foster expressions of love every day.”

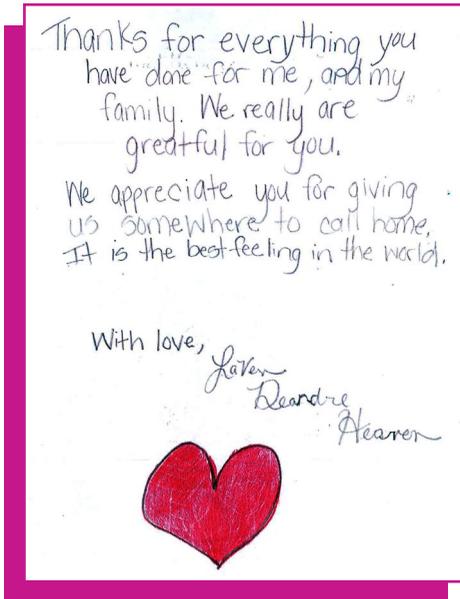


District Council of Madison, Inc.  
Society of St. Vincent de Paul  
PO BOX 259686 • Madison, WI 53725-9686

Helping Our Neighbors in Need  
svdpmadison.org  
608-442-7200



Address Service Requested



*Generous gifts = grateful hearts*

## What Will Your Legacy Be?

**For 95 years**, St. Vincent de Paul–Madison has responded to the pleas of our Dane County neighbors in need. With your support, we offer programs to feed, heal, house and clothe local people coping with poverty – regardless of race, religion, social background or gender.

The COVID-19 crisis has changed lives among our clients, volunteers and staff. It has led many of us to consider our own mortality. Maybe that's true for you, too. ***How would you like to be remembered? What will your legacy be?***

**Would you consider including us in your will? You will be creating a legacy of love and kindness for you and your family.**

**Legal Name: District Council of Madison, Inc.,  
Society of St. Vincent de Paul  
Tax ID #: 39-0824876  
Questions? Call Nancy Hansis at 608-442-7200 x34**



## Helping Our Neighbors in Need

