



IN THE PRESENCE OF HOPE

When I hear economists describe our current economic recession as the worst since the Great Depression, my thoughts turn to Dorothy Day, one of the twentieth century's most inspiring voices for social justice. Between the years 1933 and 1936, Dorothy Day opened 33 Houses of Hospitality serving thousands of people who were homeless. Dorothy was intelligent and resourceful, and never allowed the dire economic situation of the time to prevent her from serving those so much in need of her care.

A residence, which is not time limited, coupled with our supportive services gives a family the tools it needs to break out of homelessness once and for all. One homeless family at a time, we are laying the groundwork for a long-term transformation.

SLH has tripled its capacity in a year. Blessedly, our generous benefactors understand the need to serve this vulnerable population and allow SLH the chance for future growth.



"One homeless family at a time, we are laying the groundwork for a long-term transformation."

Sharon Bieser, Executive Director, VinCare Services



In 1936, when a visiting social worker asked Day how long "clients" were permitted to stay in her "Houses of Hospitality", she answered, "We let them stay forever. Once they are taken in, they become members of the family."

At St. Louise House (SLH), our mission is not much different from Day's mission in the 1930s...we become a supportive "family" for mothers with children experiencing homelessness, and we do so in a time when the number of families facing harsh economic realities is rising.

Our residents have taught us the journey to independence is longer for some families, especially during an economic downturn. Several families living at SLH are headed by a mother completing course work for a diploma or special certification (one former resident just earned her master's degree in social work).

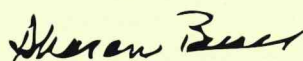
We understand that supporting these families for a longer period of time—more than two years, perhaps—works hand in hand with our mission of serving homeless families in need.

But like Day discovered as she opened door after door to homeless families, there is no amount of growth that could possibly find room for all those in need.

Day's mission, like ours, reaches deeper than simply noticing a growing homeless population and helping those who reach for us. We are not content that the population of homeless families is so large. We are seeking to do more than just provide food and shelter; we are helping families move out of poverty and not simply exist in poverty.

We are also concerned about the social structure that causes homelessness. All of us must do what we can to change it. It may take a very long time, but we continue to faithfully work for that change.

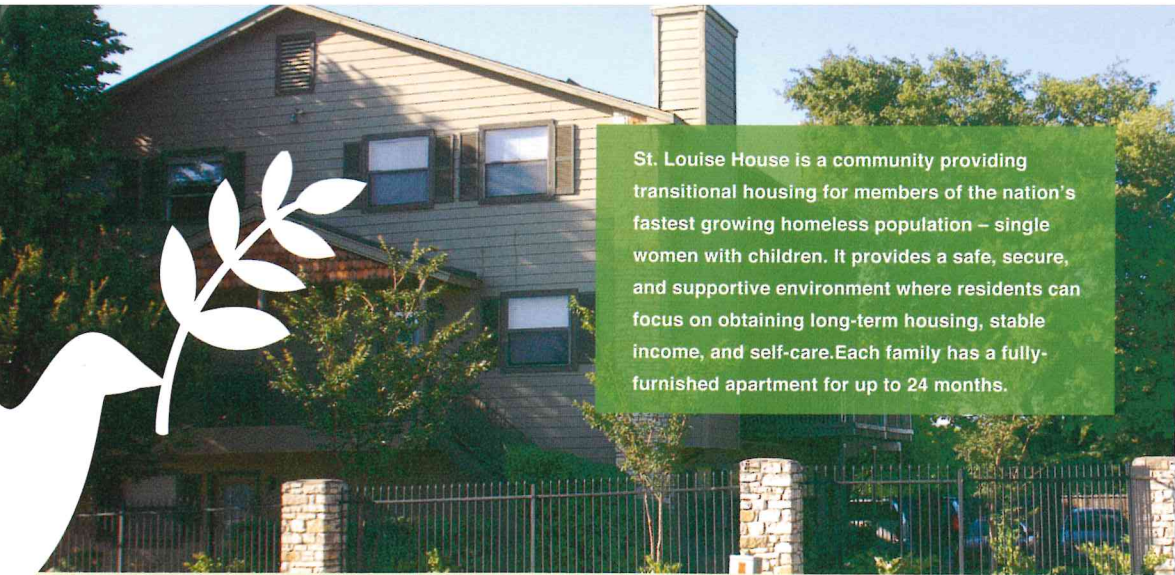
Warmest regards,



Sharon Bieser, Executive Director

Who We Are

Incorporated as a nonprofit organization in September 2000, VinCare Services strives to empower women and children facing homelessness by providing them with affordable housing and on-site intensive supportive services. The heart of VinCare is St. Louise House, which provides apartment style housing that promotes independent living while encouraging community participation. In addition, VinCare operates a satellite program, The Outreach to Street Youth Program. This program serves homeless street youth between the ages of 12 and 22 in collaboration with university-area churches and Lifeworks.



St. Louise House is a community providing transitional housing for members of the nation's fastest growing homeless population – single women with children. It provides a safe, secure, and supportive environment where residents can focus on obtaining long-term housing, stable income, and self-care. Each family has a fully-furnished apartment for up to 24 months.

ALL THE CHILDREN ARE WELL

By Yvonne Turner, St. Louise House Graduate

When it rains it pours, but then the sun comes out again.

I was nine when placed in the Texas foster care system. My mother, who abused drugs and alcohol, as well as her children later went to prison. After ten years in foster care-- I left with a bag full of clothes, a high school diploma, a bus pass, and a job making \$5.25 per hour. The housing plan at the college where I was first accepted did not work out. I did not have another plan. I spent a year couch surfing, in emergency shelters, and a transition center. I was enrolled at the local community college, but slowly stopped showing up for class because my housing needs were not met. By the end of the semester I had dropped all but one class and I had a “D”—it was a subject I excelled in during high school.

Eventually, things seemed to get better. I was accepted into another university. Soon after, I began dating a young man who would turn out to be the most violent creature I had ever met. Before I realized it, I was in a relationship I swore I would never get into because I had witnessed my own mother's abuse. I never wanted to be anything like her. Little did I know, this violent relationship would be the reason I would lose my dignity, hope, and freedom-- sentenced to serve two years in prison.

But it was here I realized, I too, played a role in facilitating the abuse. I promised to make a change, never become involved with another abusive man, and not return to the same city or county. From prison I enrolled in college. Upon my release, I began taking classes and worked in a restaurant making \$2.50/hr. But then, one very short year later, I became homeless and pregnant. I moved back home to Austin without any plans.

I enrolled at Austin Community College and immediately started looking for housing. I became discouraged, depressed, and worried. To many I was another convicted felon. I could not find a job or a place to live. I stumbled upon St. Louise House, and didn't really expect to be called back. Boy was I in for surprise! Staff at St. Louise House had questions about my criminal history, but I never felt judged. They accepted me with open arms, big belly and all.

St. Louise House staff made me feel like I was part of a family. They hosted a baby shower for me in preparation for my little one. I had support from staff during my delivery and afterwards. When I got home with my little bundle of joy, a St. Louise House staff member was there to help me along the way. When I struggled with breastfeeding for my daughter, they found a volunteer who was willing to come in and teach me how to breastfeed. And when I needed assistance with childcare while I went to school, studied, or just needed a moment to myself, St. Louise House staff was eager to babysit. When it was time to leave, St. Louise House staff held my hand, coaxing, and believing I was ready to be on my own. Even though St. Louise House staff has changed, I remain supported. They have helped me grow personally and as a young professional—eager to give personal and professional references, as well as providing for my educational requirements by supporting my graduate internship.

I have read about the mighty Maasai warriors. They are one of the most fabled tribes of Africa; they were considered the most fearsome and intelligent. The traditional greeting passed between the warriors was: “Kasserian ingera” which means, “And how are the children?” It is said even warriors who did not have children expected the response, “all the children are well” — life is good; all is right with the world; the daily struggles for existence do not eclipse the proper care for the village children. Sepati ingera is the response St. Louise House provides every time they open the doors to a new mom and her family— **“all the children are well!”**

VinCare's Impact

96 families (as of Aug. 2009) have called St. Louise House “home” since October of 2001

In 2008, 27 families, including 48 children and 1 grandmother, received housing & supportive services.

95% of families exited St. Louise House and moved into safe & stable housing as a result of receiving services.

Mothers entering the program have ranged in age from 18-52.

Children living at St. Louise House range in age from newborn to 17 years.

Recent lengths of stay averaged 11 months with a range of 2-20 months.

More than 800 meals were served to homeless youth through the Outreach to Street Youth program.

Homeless youth were sheltered and fed on 9 freezing nights in Austin.



In-kind design by Stephanie Malone (Design) — smalonedesign.com

2008 DONATIONS

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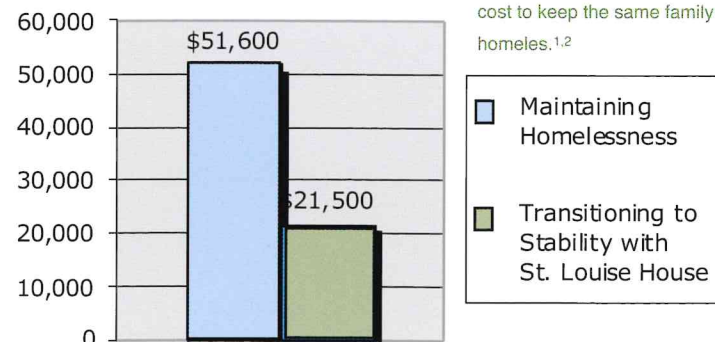
Sharon Bieser, MSN, Executive Director
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 Helen Eisert, LMSW, Director of Programs
 Jim Boyle, Facilities Maintenance Manager
 Pilar Halgunseth, MSSW, Case Manager
 Jack Hooper, Facilities Maintenance Worker
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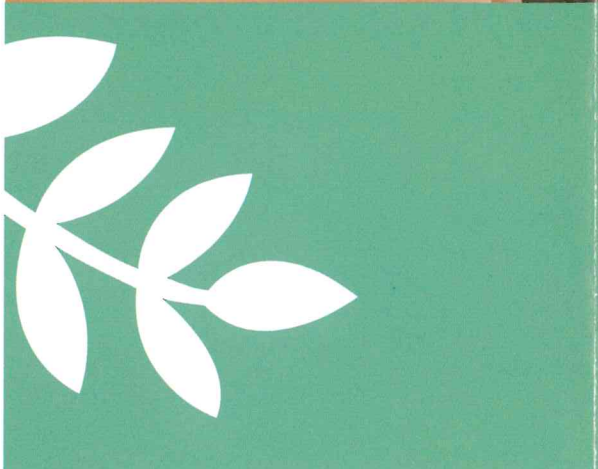
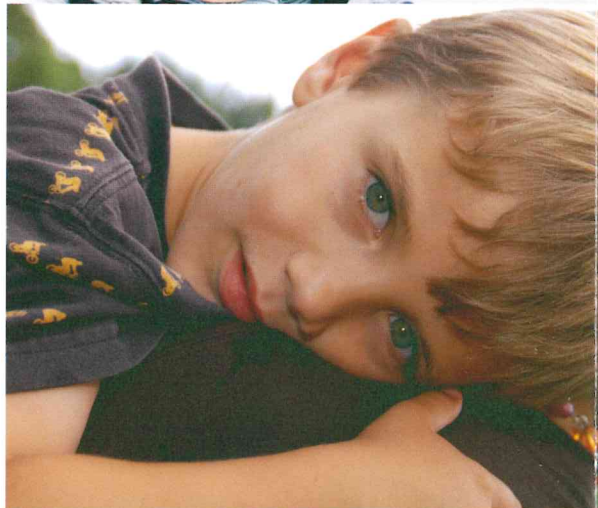
Comparing Annual Costs



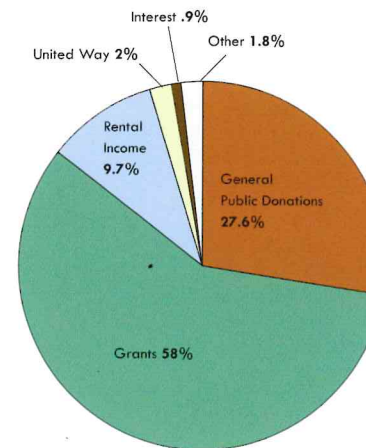
In 2008, a \$21,500 investment in St. Louise House provided one family with housing and supportive services for an entire year – 42% of what it would cost to keep the same family homeless.^{1,2}

¹According to the Community Action Network's April 2005 Frequently Asked Questions About Basic Needs: Food, Clothing, Rent & Utilities, "the cost of being homeless is as much as \$4,300 (tax payer dollars) per month for a family of three"

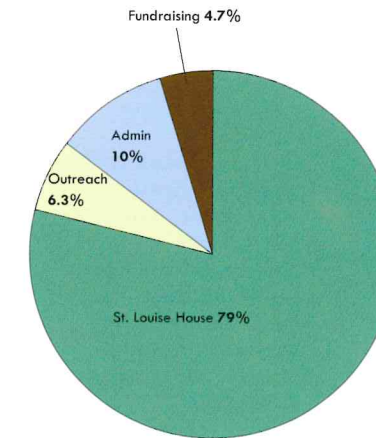
²St. Louise House was designed to relieve the burden of local crisis care providers, thereby extending resources to more families in need. Accessing state and federally-funded programs (TANF, childcare vouchers, Medicaid, Section 8, Food Stamps) for which families are eligible, but not enrolled, is an important part of the St. Louise House program.



Revenue



Expenses



VinCare's 2008 Financials

Revenue

General Public Donations	\$234,07
Grants	\$490,46
Rental Income	\$82,256
United Way	\$17,680
Interest	\$7,593
Other	\$15,883
Total	\$844,9

Expenses Program Services

St. Louise House	\$469,37
Outreach	\$37,416
Administrative	\$59,836
Fundraising	\$27,312
Total	\$593,9

2008 DONATIONS

Businesses

3M
 AAA Storage
 Abbott Laboratories Fund
 ABE Charitable Foundation, Inc
 AIG Matchings Grants Program
 Bank of America
 Blazier, Christiansen, and Bigelow PC
 Boldin Insurance
 Culver Franchising Sys., Inc
 Dell
 Fidelity Charitable Gift Fund
 George Trading Co, Inc
 Guaranty Bank
 KB Homes
 Palmer Todd, Inc
 Procopio, Cory, Hargreaves & Savitch LLP
 Seton Healthcare Network
 United Heritage Charity Foundation

Religious & Congregational Support

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 Knights of Columbus Council 8156
 Ladies of Charity Lake Travis
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 Manchaca United Methodist
 St. Austin Catholic Parish
 St. Austin Paulist Fathers
 St. Catherine of Siena Parish
 St. John Neumann
 St. Teresa Catholic School Girl Scouts
 St. Thomas More
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Foundations & Community Giving

Anonymous Foundations
 City of Austin
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A NATURAL FIT

By Maria Kiehn

The staff and volunteers of St. Louise House work closely with all residents so that families have all the tools needed to become self-sufficient. So far, all residents have increased their education or employment status upon exiting the program. The overwhelming majority have established positive rental histories enabling the families to move into permanent or stable housing.

Austin lacks housing for the population served by St. Louise House. Few resources exist for families who cannot remain in emergency shelters, but have not obtained permanent housing. St. Louise House is working to fill in that gap.

I was first introduced to VinCare when my moms' group chose it for our annual service project. Admittedly, we chose to work with St. Louise House primarily because it seemed a natural fit; we "Mothers of Young Children" at a Catholic church would help homeless mothers with children in a Catholic setting. For my family and me, however, the fit only got better as we learned more about VinCare.

St. Louise House focuses not on just housing the homeless, but giving them the tools to house themselves. Our family values this focus on self-sufficiency at St. Louise House and the fact that it extends to the VinCare team itself. We admire the founders of VinCare for not just praying for an end to homelessness or lobbying others to do something about it. Instead, they committed themselves to the task. VinCare continues to receive the majority of its contributions from private donors and grants. And although it may seem a contradiction, this commitment to self-sufficiency has created a community of staff, volunteers, and residents inspired to a cause and a path greater than themselves.

Most importantly, VinCare and St. Louise House are imbued with the spirits of St. Vincent and St. Louise. The staff and volunteers are role models for bringing spirituality out of the church and our own hearts, and into the world. **On a personal level, I have to admit that when I volunteer at VinCare, I find a respite and a healing place for myself.**