



Help Reduce Homelessness by Keeping People in Their Homes

St. Vincent de Paul of Seattle King County Article
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In April of 2016, David Bley, senior director with the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, wrote an opinion piece for the Seattle Times that made a compelling observation: He said, "The most effective way to reduce homelessness is to prevent people from becoming homeless in the first place."

Officials at St. Vincent de Paul of Seattle King County say they know what David Bley is talking about. They keep people in their homes by providing rent and utility assistance, food and compassionate services. The agency has been serving King County for 97 years.

"We've made thousands of home visits. We meet people where they are, using active listening and case management through our 53 neighborhood-based home visitation teams (made up of 900 volunteers) to move past crises," said Ned Delmore, Executive Director at St. Vincent de Paul.

Delmore noted, "Our primary callers are mothers with children who have been threatened with eviction notices and are in desperate need of housing solutions. Our mission work at SVdP is about proximity, the capacity to see, hear and respond to the deepest needs of our neighbors."

The St. Vincent Helpline received over 39,000 calls last year, more than any other social service agency in King County. The calls are transferred to their neighborhood visitation teams at 53 Catholic Parishes. These referrals resulted in 12,000 home visits, helping some 40,000 men, women, and children in or near poverty.

Last year, a St. Vincent home visit team met Leah, a young mother and her son Rylan. They had been homeless, living in motels and in their car for several years. St. Vincent helped Leah rebuild her life and her future through case management, housing assistance, and securing a job.

Finally, Delmore noted that "a person experiencing homelessness and living on the streets costs taxpayers upwards of \$40,000 per year. A home visit to prevent an eviction is considerably less expensive than rehousing someone who becomes homeless. Not only is this approach more cost effective; it is more humane."

You can be instrumental in keeping your neighbors in their homes by becoming a supporter of St. Vincent de Paul. About 90 cents of every dollar donated to SVdP goes to programs. For information visit www.svdpsattle.org