



October 2023

DAYLIGHT

Happenings at St. John Center



HUNGER AND HOMELESSNESS AWARENESS WEEK

Hunger and Homelessness Awareness Week is coming up next month beginning November 11. This incredible annual program, first held at Villanova University in 1975, reminds the nation to reflect and act on these large-scale social issues. Over the last year, over 750 community groups, faith-based groups, colleges, and high schools came together to raise awareness about unsheltered and underfed populations in the United States. We will observe this week November 11-18.



No one should have to worry about whether they'll have food on their plate or a roof

over their head. Yet, the reality remains that hunger and homelessness are widespread problems. At St. John Center (SJC), we're on a mission to help people experiencing homelessness address the barriers to housing and achieve self-sufficiency so that they can leave homelessness for good.

With the support of the Louisville community, we've been providing resources and services to local homeless populations since 1986. Our vision is a city where all people experiencing homelessness have access to the resources and support they need on an individual level.



How You Can Bring Awareness and Advocacy During This Week and Year-Round

- **Become a volunteer** at SJC or other Housing First agencies
- **Host a drive** to collect items needed for guests in the day shelter at SJC
- **Make a donation** of any amount to support Street Outreach and Permanent Supportive Housing at SJC
- **Write to your elected officials** asking for their support in reform that supports Housing First for people experiencing homelessness



On Thursday, September 14, this community showed up in a big way on Give for Good Louisville. Thanks to you, St. John Center more than *doubled* its \$20,000 goal! That means more support for street outreach, day shelter services like I.D.'s, housing counseling, legal aid, mail and more, and permanent supportive housing. This community continues to step up and support those who find hope and home at St. John Center. **Thank you!**



Thank You



When Destiny, a Housing Navigator at St John Center, told me that DJ received his keys, both my feet and heart danced. DJ, one of our clients in the Day Shelter and Social Service Center, is on our highest utilizer list, a testament to the time and effort we've invested in helping him.

Everyone- staff, volunteers, partners, knew DJ by name. He took up a lot of space with his big smile, voluminous laugh, and big emotions. Whatever DJ was feeling, we could all feel it.

DJ has been working with the housing team for over a year and received a voucher in May. In July, he thought he had found his new home, but as many affordable units do, the apartment failed the inspection. The property management company was in no hurry to bring it to compliance. When he learned he would not be moving home, we felt DJ's heartbreak.

We understand firsthand the unfortunate consequences of homelessness on health - witnessing the physical toll it takes on our clients, from foot sores to deteriorating mental health. During his time without housing, DJ suffered from worsening back pains, injuries from physical altercations caused by trauma, head trauma, and loneliness.

The social implications of homelessness are as significant as the physical ones. Many of our clients experience isolation due to strained family relationships or the absence of family altogether. Authentic friendships are hard to find for all of us, but particularly when we are living to survive. DJ, who slept in his car parked outside our center, confided in us. We *were* his social support, and he may even say we were his friends.

Brian, our street outreach manager, sent us a picture of DJ holding a set of keys, and he was wearing that big smile and had tears in his eyes. We all cried and he was happy to move home, but he was going to miss us, and we will miss him too.

What we do at St John Center is essential, but it is also beautiful thanks to your unwavering support. Together, we provide hope and homes to individuals like DJ, transforming their lives in profound ways.

Keep Shining!

Ra'Shann Martin
Executive Director



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Jay's Story

Jay came to St. John Center's Day Shelter and Social Services Center looking for assistance with obtaining housing. His past incarceration presented challenges in finding suitable housing and employment. After shelter staff assisted Jay with food stamps and other immediate needs, he met with SJC's housing team. While many landlords would not accept his voucher from the Louisville Metro Housing Authority, the shelter team worked tirelessly to help Jay move into his own apartment. He recently began a new job and was able to purchase a car to get to and from work.

St. John Center Wish List

- Paper towels
- Winter gloves (multipacks)
- Toothbrushes
- Winter hats/toboggans

For more information,
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