

St Vincent de Paul: Small Miracles

In our SVDP ministry, our help often begins with a request for assistance and a home visit. Recently our team received a request from a young mother for help with rent, food and utilities. Our neighbor in need had just moved into housing after months in a shelter, escaping domestic violence with her two young children. Though she now had a roof over her head, safety still felt fragile, and the weight of starting over was heavy.

We listened.

Our neighbor in need shared her story with quiet strength. Her son, who is autistic, was homeschooled because of all the overwhelming transitions in his young life. Her daughter, who is younger and full of imagination, was trying to make sense of the changes around her and acting out. Rent was due, the fridge was nearly empty, and the apartment still echoed with the absence of furniture.

We were able to help with rent, food, beds, bedding and a table and chairs assisting them to make a new start. But before we left, we asked, “is there anything else - something small - that would make life a little easier?”

Our neighbor hesitated, then smiled gently. “My daughter...she keeps talking about a play kitchen. There was one at one of the shelters we stayed in. She loved it but hardly got to play in it because the bigger children pushed her away. She wishes she could have one of her own.”

Her daughter made her own specific request after hearing her mom tell us about the play kitchen. “I want a pink one, please!

After lots of searching, prayers and dead ends a miracle happened. We found one—a PINK kitchenette, just her size. Not just a toy, but a symbol of stability, joy and the beginning of healing. When it arrived, her daughter squealed with delight and immediately began cooking and making us tea and snacks. In that moment, their new apartment felt a lot more like home.

A few days later, we received a note from our neighbor thanking us for making a difference.

“Your SVdP team has not just made a small difference in our lives but a HUGE difference. You offered warmth and acceptance and love in a way my children and I have never received before. In addition, the things you brought us were small in comparison to the biggest gift you gave us: your presence. In just your presence I am more healed and more confident for it.

My kids have seen what true kindness and love should look like from others and that’s a gift I have no words for, nor can ever repay. You perhaps were angels in

your own right; you are beautiful and definitely doing God's work and that is something I have truly never witnessed before.

All the items your group provided for us are invaluable to our new start. But the true gift of healing came in the form of a pink wooden play kitchenette with play food and dishes. My daughter has been so excited and tells me 'It's my kitchen and I can play without others hitting and pushing me.'

That is a huge gift, because I know my daughter is healing and starting to feel safe and truly at home as is her big brother. As a mother it made me weep inside for joy because my kids are honestly starting to feel what it means to have a home that's ours and is truly safe. So my gratitude is deep and layered and vast. Thank you for helping us."

That's what our ministry is about. Not just meeting needs, but meeting people—right where they are. Whether it's a tank of gas, a warm meal, or a listening ear, we believe the small acts of kindness can ripple into lasting change. We strive to meet not just the urgent needs, but to listen for the quiet wishes that can bring light into dark places. Thanks to everyone who supports our ministry work. Whether it is through your monetary donations, needed items left in the basket in the Narthex, gift cards at Christmas or through your prayers, your generosity helps us be the hands and feet of Christ in our neighborhood, one encounter at a time.

You can donate to St. Vincent de Paul online using the QR code and clicking fund 118-St. Vincent de Paul. If you wish to join our team of Vincentians, please contact Diane Murphy via email: svdp@stjude-redmond.org

