



St. Patrick Center
Building Permanent, Positive, Change.

OUR mission

St. Patrick Center provides opportunities for self-sufficiency and dignity to persons who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless. Individuals achieve permanent, positive changes in their lives through affordable housing, sound mental health, employment and financial stability.



Independent Living Skills

A St. Patrick Center Housing Program

INDEPENDENT LIVING SKILLS/ABE & GED A St. Patrick Center Housing Program

In 1986, St. Patrick Center initiated our Independent Living Skills Program to educate parents of families who reside in St. Louis emergency shelters, transitional housing or on city streets. In fact, due to its rate of success, the National Alliance to End Homelessness uses Living Skills as a national model.

Through the Living Skills Program, more than 200 individuals a year gain essential skills necessary for successful independent living. For one year after program graduation, case managers reinforce program content and supply options when problems threaten family stability.

Certified by Missouri's Division of Family Services, the Living Skills Program is provided onsite at the Partnership Center, and instructors tailor the program to meet specific needs. St. Patrick Center also offers Study Buddy, a Living Skills correspondence course for people who are employed.

Program brochures and promotional materials are made available to caseworkers in shelters and homeless service agencies. They are also distributed by St. Patrick Center's Mobile Outreach Team who canvass city streets to engage the homeless. Referrals come from partnering agencies housed within the Partnership Center and from agencies within the Homeless Services Network.

Clients who attend Living Skills classes do so for various reasons which can include a court order to get parental training or an individual concern about their children and parenting ability. Occasionally, when multiple needs are present, clients may require scheduling in Living Skills and another agency program, such as the Shamrock Club Day Treatment Program for a substance-abuse problem.

The classroom phase of Living Skills lasts for five weeks and clients may miss up to three classes within the full phase of the program. The curriculum is divided into two components: parenting and life skills. Topics include: family roles; characteristics of strong families; child stress management; balancing work and family; child development; appropriate discipline; effective communication; child-abuse prevention; kids and their self-esteem; parenting values; homelessness prevention through money management; good nutrition on a budget; career-readiness; goal-setting; decision-making and securing permanent housing. Peer-support groups are also an important element of this program. Graduation follows the class-work phase with a 65 percent graduation rate.

In the next phase, counselors assess clients' short-term and long-term goals and collaborate to create plans that outline steps needed to meet their goals. There are three primary goals that clients must meet: employment, housing and education. Additional goals may include participating in other programs, applying for entitlement funds, undergoing vocational rehab training, etc. In-home case management gives participants the extra support needed to reach their goals and remain on the path to self-sufficiency.

page 1



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As an incentive to participate, St. Patrick Center supplies a financial assistance award to homeless graduates of the Living Skills Program. The housing department maintains a list of preferred landlords who have worked with St. Patrick Center and understand client needs. While clients are not restricted to the preferred list, Living Skills case managers must approve all properties before housing assistance is granted. Case managers willingly assist clients who need help in housing searches or negotiations. These case managers can also arrange for move-in kits as long as funding is available.

St. Patrick Center provides in-home case management for a year after graduation. Case managers help clients update their goals and act as resources for ongoing needs, including employment referrals, housing issues, child behavior problems and utility assistance. Managers assist clients in accessing mainstream service providers for various forms of assistance and services. Additionally, case managers counsel clients to help them cope with stress.

Independent Living Skills has also added an ABE/GED component to further enhance the future goals of those we serve. The Adult Basic Education (ABE) and General Education Development (GED) programs coincide with St. Patrick Center's one-stop design, which allows clients to access all the services they need to become financially stable and permanently housed. In fact, St. Louis Public School District certified instructors provide ABE and GED classes on-site at the Partnership Center.

Class days and times include:

- Wednesday, Thursday and Friday from 8:30am - 12:00pm
- Wednesday and Thursday from 1:00pm - 4:00pm

Clients are referred to the education program either by St. Patrick Center's Intake Counselors who interview new clients to determine their most immediate needs, or by other program staff. The program is also offered in the summer if there is sufficient need.

Through ABE and GED classes, clients improve reading, writing and math skills. St. Patrick Center's volunteer coordinator finds tutors to assist program participants. However, clients in crisis or those in need of other services require more than academic instruction.

In Fiscal Year 2010, 215 graduates learned parenting and living skills that support their move to permanent housing and self-sufficiency. In addition, we taught reading, writing and math skills, and tutored 47 clients in Adult Basic Education (ABE) and General Education Development (GED).

Other St. Patrick Center Housing Programs: Neighborhood Support; Project Protect; Rosati Apartments & Rosati Assertive Community Treatment (ACT); Rosati Group Home.

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