

Local Workshop helps People in Poverty

By: Jordan Betts / ABC2

A workshop at Saint Vincent de Paul is giving to those who want a second chance at life.

It's called "Getting Ahead." This is the first time St. Vincent de Paul held the 16 – 20 week workshop.

For Calvin and Laticia French, they wanted to succeed at more than just the day-to-day life.

They wanted to have safe place to live and learn how to be financially stable. So, they joined the program.

"I thought this would be a good idea because there were some things he was trying to teach me about our life that I really didn't even understand. So, it really helped me," said recent graduate Laticia French.

The couple is two out of the five graduates at Saint Vincent de Paul.

They met in a homeless shelter four years ago and have been married nearly ever since.

For Calvin, this workshop seemed all too familiar.

"I took a class similar to this in prison. So, I've been in and out of prison my whole life," said Calvin.

He said his homelessness was just never ending. "I would get out and then something would happen and then I would get back in. I always felt like I was stuck between a rock and a hard place. What do I do now, I can't do this," said Calvin.

Now the couple has a chance at what they see as a normal life.

"This program helps to teach them that there's something else that could be normal and become normal. And this is a great way for them to move on with life and experience some of the great things that you and I experience," said executive director Bill Gosse.

The graduates get a mentor that encourages them to succeed along with a once-a-week class that covers everyday topics like securing housing or a job.

Even though Calvin had a rough past, he wants to give back to those who gave back to him by hopefully becoming a teacher of the workshop.

"If you ever had an idea of something you wanted to do and you are just unable to get it going because you couldn't figure out a way to make a plan or plan it out, take this class," said Calvin.

For more information: <https://www.svdpusa.org/systemicchange/>

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