

Saturday evening

FROM THE DESK OF FATHER DAVE

I cannot blame Bradley's mother. She is only 14 years older than he is. I cannot blame his father either; the man's own parents were addicts like him. Yet here is Bradley, unable to learn, because of the cocaine that numbed his brain when he was still in the womb—and unable to love, because no one has taught him how. There is no one to blame, and what good would it do? I can only reach out to this thin, frightened boy and pray that, this time, he will let me touch him.

Dear Friend,

I wish I could say I was shocked by Bradley's story, but I have heard it over and over again.

Thirty years ago, all it took to turn around a boy's life was a hot meal, a warm bed, and a kind smile. Now it takes a lot more.

- These days *at least half* the boys who come to St. Vincent's School for Boys have neurological damage from exposure to drugs in the womb, or from severe neglect, or even from having their little heads beaten again and again.
- *Seventy percent* of our boys have been sexually molested by adult family members.
- We also see a growing number of families who have done everything they know how and still need help for their emotionally troubled sons. Nothing has worked. Nothing can keep these families together.

It's not easy helping any of these boys. It takes more time, patience, love, and professional skill than ever before. The work is expensive. . .and well worth the cost.

In the past you have shown great compassion for boys like Bradley by supporting the CYO and our work at St. Vincent's. Today I am writing to seek your help in changing Bradley's life. *Your gift of any amount will allow us to provide the extra measure of treatment needed by deeply troubled children. It will mean the difference between simple custodial care and real progress.*

With your help, we *can* change Bradley's life. I already see a difference.

Today, Bradley is learning to carry out the normal, everyday tasks we take for granted: to wear socks, brush his teeth, eat his meals sitting down.

He has formed an attachment to one of the counselors in the home where he lives here at St. Vincent's, and this experience is teaching him to feel love and respect for mature adults.

Bradley attends our Timothy Murphy School, where he gets the individual attention he needs. He is learning to meet his responsibilities, cope with his feelings, and find enjoyment in healthy activities (Last week he touched a horse's nose for the first time, and smiled. What a joy that was to see!)

And, his mother comes regularly to St. Vincent's for family therapy. (His father died in a gun battle last year.) We pray for the parents, of course, but we recognize that prayer alone cannot create change for this family. They need expert professional help, and they are getting it here at St. Vincent's.

The government does not cover the full cost of this kind of care. In fact, both federal and state funds are frozen, while costs continue to rise, and the needs of the boys grow more acute every year.

The only remaining possible source of support is people like you.

Our boys need your help more than ever. At St. Vincent's, **we have been changing young lives since 1855, and we have never known the challenge to be so great.** None of the children in our long history have needed so much from us as Bradley does.

Please join me in providing that extra measure of time, patience, love, and skill that can change Bradley's life, and the precious lives of many more like him.

Sincerely,

Father Dave Ghorso
Chaplain

P.S. Imagine a boy like Bradley smiling and laughing as he leads one of our horses around the corral at St. Vincent's! Wouldn't you like to be part of that? All it takes is a small gift. Please send us whatever you can today.