

## I LEFT MY CHILDREN IN LIBERIA... I HAVE NOT SEEN THEM FOR 34 YEARS

A story 35 years in the making: From Africa to Green Card



"I had my bridal shop. Because of war in Africa, the bus stopped bringing things to my shop to sell. I was working before I came to this country. So I wanted to put the same principles here. I was working in a nursing home, in life insurance. I was doing a lot for myself, because I didn't want to put a burden on anyone; to be a liability on somebody. But because the immigration give me so hard time, my Temporary Protected Status expire, I wrote them, then they said they can't give it to me because it expire.

***"When you hurt one person, you hurt a whole generation of that person."***

"I left my children in Liberia for a war. If war had not come, I would have gone back long ago. To...to go and see my children. It breaks my heart. I think about my daughters in Liberia. I have not seen them for 34 years now. I want to see my children before I die. When you hurt one person, you hurt a whole generation of that person.

"I came to Stepping Stone and my case manager enrolled a lawyer for me to helping me with my paper. My case manager followed up on my paper business. She's been helping me. I don't know how to thank her for what she has done for me. I pray abundantly for her, for what she has done for me. She is so kind to me. She's very kind to me."

You may already know Jatu's story. She was brave enough to have us portray her journey at our 2021 Real Stories | One Stage event. Now it's mid-2022 and we pick up with some very exciting news: Jatu received her Green Card! Here's an excerpt from a voicemail Jatu left Julie Jeppson just a few weeks ago: "Hello, Julie. This is Jatu. I just call you to tell you thank you for everything you have been doing for me. The lady and the lawyer brought me a Green Card on Friday, and I wanted to get it caught in my hand before I called you. The lawyer brought it to me on Friday. I want to say thank you for all you have been doing for me. You have helped my life and I will not forget that until the day I die. I just want to let you know I appreciate you very, very highly."

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## SO MANY GOOD THINGS TO COME

*A Word from Julie Jeppson*

It's said that word travels fast. By the time this newsletter is in your hands, you may have heard that I've resigned my position at Stepping Stone in order to campaign full-time for Anoka County Commissioner.

I am filled with mixed emotions. I will deeply miss being part of Stepping Stone's day-to-day struggles and successes. And at the same time, I'm incredibly proud of the work we've done together and excited about the many good things to come for Stepping Stone.

Countless moments stand out over the past 10 years: There was the move from our tiny four-plex into our current location. There was the 2017 legislative session, which resulted in financial stability that allows us to focus more on residents and less on keeping the lights on. There was the opening of the Blaine House, a whole new kind of partnership in affordable housing. There was COVID-19, when the outpouring of support from every corner of the community proved just how valued our work here is. There is the second-story expansion in progress as I write this.

I'm grateful for the ways Stepping Stone has profoundly changed me and made me a better person.

Working side-by-side with our extraordinary staff, board, and residents has taught me how to overcome seemingly insurmountable obstacles, to find hope in what appears hopeless, and to have the courage to get knocked down and stand back up again.

I'm humbled by the lessons imprinted upon me.

I've learned what it really means to struggle and to triumph. I've learned how to build good partnerships and be a good partner to others. But mostly, I'm inspired by our residents, many of whom bravely take "stepping stones" against hardships far beyond what most of us can imagine, to take a few stepping stones of my own in a new direction.

Stepping Stone is firmly on solid ground. Our board and staff are the strongest they've ever been and are poised to get stronger. Each and every one of us can work towards improving someone else's life in ways big and small.

There are so many good things to come.

SEPTEMBER 8TH

## HELP US CHANGE \$10,000 INTO \$20,000

Double your donation, double the impact! Donate to ParTee *fore* A Purpose and Ramsey Lions Club will double your donation. The Lions will match up to \$10,000 on all gifts received before, during, **AND AFTER** our golf tournament. Indicate "golf" on your check or online donation, and we will be sure it's added to the Lions' match.

**ParTee *fore* A Purpose, Thursday, September 8, at The Refuge Golf Club in Oak Grove.**



PARTEE *fore* A PURPOSE

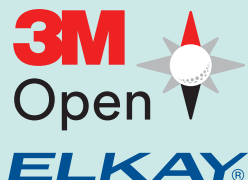




# Community Partners

*Businesses That Help Build Pathways*

## TWO BRAND NEW WATER FILTRATION STATIONS COMING TO STEPPING STONE



3M and Elkay teamed up to provide complimentary refillable water bottles and filtered water for attendees at the 3M Open PGA Tour on July 18-24. Following the PGA Tour, 3M and Elkay reinforced their Golf That Matters community support theme and chose to donate both award-winning ezH2O water bottle filling stations to Stepping Stone. However, they were concerned that the units may have gotten damaged during the storms we had, so they made a “game day” decision and decided to just send Stepping Stone two brand new ones!

## CONSTANCE FREE CHURCH’S GENEROSITY HELPS STEPPING STONE



Constance Free Church in Andover held their annual Sportsman’s Banquet and awarded Stepping Stone with a check for \$6,793.39! Various prizes are awarded throughout the evening, and we were honored by their generosity. The Sportsman’s Banquet is a gathering to enjoy an evening centered on the theme of outdoor sports with various samples of unique foods. Thank you Constance Free for partnering with us in our mission *so everyone has a place to call home.*



## HOFFMAN WEBER WORKS TO MAKE AN IMPACT, AND YOU CAN HELP



Hoffman Weber Construction president Mike Sample reached out to Stepping Stone asking for a list of personal items needed at the shelter. As Hoffman Weber’s staff go knocking on doors this summer marketing their business, they will be asking for donations to Stepping Stone. Mike also made the following generous offer: Anyone who books an appointment through their website link and has them do the work, Hoffman Weber will donate three percent of the project proceeds to Stepping Stone. Your remodel or restoration project can directly impact our residents!

## YOUR GIFT HELPS UNLOCK THE DOOR TO GLEN’S\* FUTURE

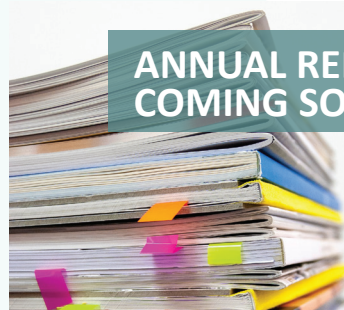
On July 13, a staff member received a phone call from Glen. He called to thank Stepping Stone for all the help and to share that he was moving into his own place on Saturday! This is a big success for Glen as he has been with Stepping Stone for quite some time. We can also add to this success story that we assisted him in paying for his storage unit in the winter so he would not lose all of his belongings. We thank you on behalf of Glen, and for the others that your donations help empower to break the cycle of homelessness.

Congratulations, Glen!



\*Named changed to respect resident’s privacy.

## ANNUAL REPORT COMING SOON!



We’ve finished our annual audit, and now we start the task of putting together our 2021 Annual Report.

We want you to see we use the funds you entrust to us wisely. Details shared soon.

# YOUR DONATION ALLOWED US TO HONOR THE PASSING OF A RESIDENT

When you donated to Stepping Stone, you may not have realized that you were bringing comfort to someone's last days on earth. Sent to us by one of our staff who helped this resident, your donation allows us the privilege to hire a compassionate team that brings care and respect, and sometimes to a resident's final days.

"We all provided her with the humanity, dignity, and grace she would allow for us to give to her throughout this last chapter. She provided us the honor to walk alongside her during this small part of her journey and for that I will always have great gratitude and humility. She did not pass alone, she did not pass outside in the cold. For her last couple of hours we were able to provide her with safety, warmth, and most of all a caring team that has allowed her the peace she needed to no longer have to battle her demons. She was an incredible human that persevered, touched many, and passed through this world leaving an impression on us all."



## Keystone Sponsors

*Because of YOU, we can do more!*



**Mark. M. Welter Foundation**  
A FAMILY FOUNDATION

*We make a living by what we get,  
but we make a life by what we give.*  
Winston Churchill



Pathways is a publication of Stepping Stone Emergency Housing.  
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