

## I MET WITH A DYING WOMAN

Stepping Stone became her life, her support, and her family.



I met with a dying woman recently. Between words I couldn't understand, using letters and numbers to communicate, she noticed that I was tearing up. She asked me, "What's wrong?" I answered as best I could, "It's been my privilege knowing you." Her response, "It's been mine." Followed by, "I'm done. I'm ready."

*"I had Stepping Stone, and I'll always be grateful."*

The woman was Deb\*. She lived at our shelter on two different occasions over the last seven years. Her story involves an immense amount of loss and loneliness. Her world changed for the better when she found Stepping Stone Emergency Housing. We became her life, her support, and her family. Sadly, Deb passed away soon after my visit with her. During a healthier time, she said to me, "I had Stepping Stone, and I'll always be grateful."

Deb worked very hard over the course of her stay with us, and she eventually moved into the Blaine house and became part of our Stepping Home program. Unfortunately, Deb's journey ended here, but we were able to give her hope and joy during her time with us. I've included an article (below) that should give you a good idea of what the Stepping Home/Blaine house program offers some of our higher-barrier residents. This is just one of the ways your donation allows us to offer personalized programming with the goal to remove homelessness once for all.

### STEPPING HOME (BLAINE HOUSE)

#### A Creative Way Your Donation Helps Remove Barriers to Independence



In 2018, Stepping Stone purchased a home in Blaine from Anoka County for \$1 and volunteers did the needed renovations. Since then and today, this three-bedroom home houses three residents and serves as a "stepping stone" for them to transition into an independent life. This note from our Community Based Case Manager really sums up what Stepping Home is all about: "Jane" asked me to pass along her gratitude toward Stepping Stone regarding everything about the Blaine house – from the Long Term Housing (LTH) program to the 'landlord' aspect. She said she really, really appreciates the opportunity she's been given by Stepping Stone as the 'landlord' to live in the Blaine house despite her higher-barrier background, allowing her to build up positive rental history. She said it has

been significant to be able to live in a stable environment, allowing her to focus on sobriety, improving mental health, and increasing her independence. Jane has also expressed her thankfulness for the LTH support program for paying rent and helping her with other resources through the last nine months."

This program gives some the much-needed real life experience as a renter, while building a positive rental history. Stepping Home is another part of our programming that you help fund. Thank you for caring for all our residents and their individual challenges.

## A NEW PLAN IN PLACE

An update from Valerie Jensen, Development Coordinator



You might recall a small article on the front page of our winter edition of *Pathways* letting you know we were in the process of writing a 2022-2025 Strategic Plan. I'm happy to announce that on June 28, our Board of Directors approved the final plan! This was a vital step to ensure that Stepping Stone is a faithful steward of the donations you entrust to us. The graphic to the right includes six goal areas. It might seem a bit wordy, but it all boils down to Stepping Stone being resident-centered, as THEY ARE the reason Stepping Stone exists. If you have questions about any of the six goals or other outcomes in the Strategic Plan, please don't hesitate reaching out to me or any of our board members. A special thank you to consultants GrayHall for all their work in assisting us, and to Stepping Stone's residents, external stakeholders, Board, and staff who participated in activities that made this plan possible.

## STRATEGIC GOALS

2022-2025

Outcomes Stepping Stone aims to achieve over the period of the strategic plan.

1

Ensure programmatic excellence, impact, and relevance.

Maintain transparent reputable governance (i.e., rules, practices, and processes).

2

3

Strengthen outreach and engagement activities.

Expand shelter footprint.

4

5

Develop and track key performance indicators.

Ensure financial sustainability and resources.

6

Strategic goals approved by Stepping Stone's Board of Directors on June 28, 2022.

NOVEMBER 24-27

## Waddle Off YOUR GOBBLE



VIRTUAL FUNDRAISING WALK  
ALL THANKSGIVING WEEKEND



This annual, community-led virtual walk can be waddled anytime over the Thanksgiving holiday.

You can provide nights of shelter while waddling off that extra piece of pie! Go to our website for details and registration.

DECEMBER 5-16

## 12 Days of Community!



Each year we celebrate the season with a new "12 Days" theme. This year's theme is Community. Look for a special mailing right after Thanksgiving on ways to participate in community each of the 12 days.

PLUS!

## Santa Comes to Stepping Stone

This year, Santa's helpers are making plans so our residents have a merry Christmas! Whether gifts or meals, we are the only celebration most of our residents will have. If you'd like to learn how you can help bring joy to a resident, contact Valerie Jensen, Development Coordinator, at (763) 277-8313 or [valerie.jensen@steppingstoneeh.org](mailto:valerie.jensen@steppingstoneeh.org).





# COMMUNITY PARTNERS

## *Businesses That Help Build Pathways: Faith Partners*



ST. JOSEPH OF THE LAKES  
CATHOLIC CHURCH  
TOGETHER IN SPIRIT

### St. Joseph of the Lakes Catholic Church, Lino Lakes

We could not do what we do without our volunteers, and especially the ladies at St. Joe's. This small group of dynamic women have logged hundreds of hours making Stepping Stone's events a success. They make our table decorations, create baskets out of the donations we receive, put together prizes for games, donate many of their own items, and fill in all the gaps. They come early and stay late, and they work hard so we can continue to do what we do. Their investment of time and talent in our mission to help the homeless is priceless.



ST. STEPHEN'S  
CATHOLIC COMMUNITY

### St. Stephen's Catholic Church, Anoka

We recently went to our mailbox to find an envelope from St. Stephen's Catholic Church. Imagine our surprise and joy, when inside were several checks totaling \$7,660.46! These donations from St. Stephen's caring parishioners will go a long way in helping residents as they work through their struggles and barriers that caused their homelessness. Many thanks to St. Stephen's support of our mission.



St. Philip's  
LUTHERAN CHURCH

### St. Phillip's Lutheran Church, Fridley

St. Philip's has donated numerous quilts to our residents over the years, and we can't express how much a handmade quilt means to each resident. The hours of labor and love stay with each resident, as they take their quilt with them when they leave Stepping Stone. In existence for more than five decades, the St. Philip's quilting ministry continues to provide handmade quilts to those in need. Thank you St. Philip's for meeting this need of our residents by keeping them warm and loved during the winter months.



## HOW WILL YOU BE REMEMBERED?

Would you like to leave a lasting impact that will help us in our fight against homelessness even after you're gone? You may want to consider a legacy gift (or planned giving) to Stepping Stone. Leaving a gift in your will or by beneficiary designation are great ways to make a lasting difference in the lives of future residents seeking to end their homelessness.



How you benefit:

- You decide how much to give; no gift is too small.
- Your gift costs you nothing.
- You retain control of your assets during your lifetime and, if your circumstances change, you can modify the gift.
- You may choose to keep your gift anonymous.
- You can leave a gift in honor or memory of someone who inspired your commitment to ending homelessness.
- You will be remembered as someone who made a difference in your community today and for future generations.

To learn how easy it is to leave a legacy gift to Stepping Stone or have questions, contact Steve Griffiths, Executive Director, at [steve.griffiths@steppingstoneeh.org](mailto:steve.griffiths@steppingstoneeh.org) or (763) 323-7006.

# ALL THE PIECES FELL INTO PLACE FOR BOB\*

We received a donation in the mail, and along with a generous check was a picture of a table and chairs and a note asking if anyone could use the table and chairs. Our Executive Director reached out to staff to see if there might be a need. Here was a reply from one of our Case Managers:

*"I have a client, Bob, that would love to have that table set in his new home. He has a van and is willing to pick it up anytime, if it's still available."*

We passed along Bob's information to the donor and he was able to pick up the furniture and use it to furnish his new home!

We don't typically take furniture donations as we have nowhere to store them, but the timing was just right. Bob moved out to his own apartment with a beautiful table and chairs set. We are so proud of Bob and all his hard work to get to this step. Thank you for ALL you do for Stepping Stone. Moving residents on to independent living is always our goal, and you are the reason why all the pieces fell into place for Bob.



\*Names throughout *Pathways* changed to ensure resident privacy.

## KEYSTONE SPONSORS

*Because of YOU, we can do more!*



*Pathways* is a publication of Stepping Stone Emergency Housing.  
Contact us at (763) 323-7006 or [info@steppingstoneeh.org](mailto:info@steppingstoneeh.org).

CONNECT WITH US!

