

## HEALING COMES THROUGH YOUR SUPPORT

### A downward spiral causes a grandma to lose all hope.



Stepping Stone was a last resort. Everything had been ok in my life. I had a normal life with an apartment, a twelve-month lease, a job. But with my baby granddaughter's death, my whole life changed. And it changed very quickly. I sunk into a very deep grief very quickly.

I had buried a grandbaby and her mother, my daughter, had begun using again, and so she lost her other daughter to child protective services. So I lost another granddaughter after just having buried one. I entered this downward spiral and couldn't believe how fast things changed. My lease was up and I lost my apartment.

Then I lost my job. I just couldn't focus - there was so much going on in my life. But rock bottom was when I stopped eating, stopped sleeping, just stopped functioning for 30 days. My doctor asked me if I had done any of the things he told me I needed to do, and I said no, I hadn't. He said I needed grief support. And he said to call Stepping Stone.

I called Stepping Stone, and they had a bed. I didn't want to, but I didn't want to be sleeping in my car. It was just so different here. There is such an array of different personalities and different people, and it was scary. I wanted to run.

But the light here, my hope here came from my case manager. She helped me set goals and begin to move forward. I started a new job and started making progress. I had to learn boundaries. I learned that you can be kind but don't have to be friends.

And it would have been easy to just sit in my bed all day and be lethargic. But if you have a mind and a body and ability, it may seem hopeless, but it is worth it to keep moving forward.

*"But rock bottom was when I stopped eating, stopped sleeping, just stopped functioning for 30 days."*

My case manager made sure I took responsibility for my actions. The suggestions were always there, "maybe you could do this," or "maybe this is a good next step". But I always had to do it for myself. The support has always been here and available.

I really did find healing, true honest healing. My mind, body, and spirit were finally given the time to grieve, to think things through, to let things go.

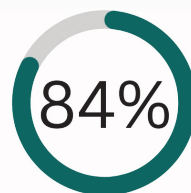
The biggest lesson I learned while staying at Stepping Stone was that not one person is more important than the next. We are all deserving - people deserving of dignity, honor, respect; especially dignity. No matter your family of origin, your race, your background, we are all worthy of dignity.

### Did you know?

Eighty-four percent of your donation goes directly into the programming that gives our residents the chance they need to win their personal fight against homelessness. Programming includes a warm, safe place to sleep with basic needs met, working one-on-one with each individual to identify the cause of their homelessness, and helping them develop a personalized plan to move toward self-reliance. Thank you for your part in this life-changing work!

#### Programming

84% of every dollar you donate goes directly into our programming.



## THERE IS A LOT NEW HERE AT STEPPING STONE!

*A Message from Steve Griffiths*



As the new Executive Director, I want to share what a privilege it is for me to help guide Stepping Stone as we help residents find a place to find their footing and move onward to success. As a life-long resident of the northwest suburbs, I looking forward to helping make our community a wonderful place for everyone.

As I said, there is a lot of “newness” at Stepping Stone. There has been a lot of activity on the second floor of the shelter, as the second floor renovation has been going on since November. We are seeing the light at the end of the tunnel. We anticipate having all the renovations done in the spring, and I invite you to come and see the renovation when it is complete. Look for more information in the coming months.

With the renovations soon to be completed, we are hoping to get more people in to the shelter to volunteer and help our residents. We have a new Volunteer Coordinator starting in the middle of February, and we will be sharing opportunities for you to engage and help us provide hope to our residents.

Please mark April 14th on your calendar for our gala event, Reel Stories-Stepping Into Hope. You will hear stories from our residents about the help they have found at Stepping Stone. We will be at Bunker Hills for the evening and you can purchase tickets on our website. You can also find a list of auction items on the website, as well.

I am excited to be the new guy at Stepping Stone, and I look forward to meeting you in the coming weeks and months as we make a difference for individuals finding themselves homeless in our community.

**STEPPING  
Stone**  
ending homelessness

Register online at [SteppingStoneEH.org](https://SteppingStoneEH.org), email  
[valerie.jensen@steppingstoneeh.org](mailto:valerie.jensen@steppingstoneeh.org) or  
call (763) 277-8313.



**REELSTORIES**  
STEPPING INTO HOPE

Register or sponsor  
today! Come hear the  
real stories and see our  
exciting changes.

**REEL  
STORIES**

**14** | APRIL  
2023



**STEPPING INTO HOPE**  
**REGISTER NOW!**



**BUNKER HILLS EVENT CENTER**  
12800 Bunker Prairie Road  
Coon Rapids  
5:30pm-8:30pm



## DREAMS DON'T DIE JUST BECAUSE YOU'RE HOMELESS

“I won't forget everything you all did to help me grow and get to the next stage of my life! I'll be back to show you my success when I make it in the Ultimate Fighting Championship. I'll never forget where I came from. Blessed and grateful for the amazing staff and resources. I've been settled in my studio for the past three weeks and it's been amazing.” You helped this resident move on to pursue his dream and we can't wait to see all he does.



# COMMUNITY PARTNERS

*Businesses That Help Build Pathways: Our Heroes*



Walman Optical held a second annual employee drive for food and personal items. These items filled immediate needs at the shelter.



## HOLIDAY HEROES...

Thank you to our community of donors who used their time, talents, and money, to make sure our residents had a joyful and abundant holiday season. Starting with Thanksgiving and going through New Year's Day, our residents felt the love that was poured out by our community. For most of our residents, we are the only family they have, and that "we" includes YOU!



Coon Rapids Chrysler Dodge Jeep Ram held a second annual internal fundraiser reaching \$2,500 for special meals throughout the holidays.



Dozens of community members were involved in our holiday gift bag celebration where each resident received a hand sewn gift bag filled with personal gifts and gift cards. You sacrificed your time and resources to ensure that each resident felt loved and appreciated during the holidays.



## ...AND EVERYDAY HEROES

Do you have any idea how important you are to the work we do? If you receive this newsletter, that means that in 2022 you gave a donation. It doesn't matter to us what size the donation was, because every gift matters. Every gift allows us to do more. Our residents are grateful for what you've done for them by supporting the shelter and programming that Stepping Stone offers them. We really can't do this without you.

# COMMUNITY PARTNERS HELP FILL A NEED (AND BELLIES!)

Stepping Stone has had an exciting fall and winter! We acquired the second floor of our building and have been under renovations for several months. We were informed by our contractor, that during the week between Christmas and New Year, the water would be turned off due to plumbing upgrades. We knew we could move all our residents to a nearby hotel during this week, but we would not have access to our kitchen, which created a problem.

With three meals a day for each resident and no kitchen to do meal prep, we reached out to catering companies and Unique Dining was in a position and ready to help. Two hot meals a day would be provided. Our next step was to cover this unplanned expense.



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Coon Rapids Chrysler Dodge Jeep Ram had already held an in-house fundraiser and given Stepping Stone a very generous check mid-November for holiday meals. Their donation was so bountiful, that we had extra funds left over, and they were happy to let us use what was left toward the catered meals. Unique Dining donated two of the meals,

while Wold Architects and Morcon Construction happily picked up the rest of the tab. If you've ever eaten at Courtyards of Andover (Unique Dining is their parent company), then you know our residents had a scrumptious week of meals!

Stepping Stone is always grateful for the outpouring and unselfish care our community gives to the residents. You are our community and we would not be able to fulfill our vision to, "provide a safe and inclusive community response to ending homelessness for all" without you.

## 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!

