

FAMILY AND HOME; IT'S NOT ALWAYS ABOUT BLOOD

Your support gives a family and home to Sophie, when her “real” family would not.



Meet Sophie. Her story was a featured REEL at our gala.

For me, a place to actually go is mind-boggling. Some people say, “why don’t you just go to your friends”, but your friends aren’t your friends or you don’t have nowhere to go. That is a hard time...and it’s cold, and you don’t have a car, you don’t have a place, and I don’t even know. I slept outside in the summer, but this whole winter I’ve been covered, but it’s cold.

(Stepping Stone) is like a second family-like a first family! Like, your family is your family and they can tell you to leave... and then you can’t go home. But this place took me in and they didn’t tell me I had to leave. And these people were all supportive, they were like a family, like your brother or your sister, people that care about what happened to you, what you’re going through, because they see who else has been going through it, a lot of hard stories. A lot of hard things happen to people in life and it ain’t always their fault, you know, it’s more like circumstances are hard and it’s good to have places like this. You need to have a place to go.



So it’s not like a shelter, because a shelter is like you’re only spending a night there. This is “get your life back on track because you’re having an emergency,” you know. But they are here to help you. I like it here. I like it here because you can stay and take care. They’re

here to help you. One of the first days I came, there are rocks out front and somebody’s painted on them and there was a message on one of them, something about “family is the people we choose”. It is. You don’t necessarily count people family that are family by blood. These are my sisters, you know. And that’s what some of these girls that I met are.

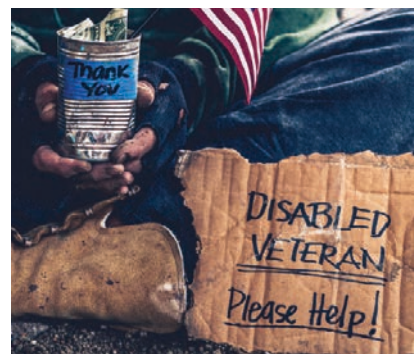
“...your family is your family and they can tell you to leave...and then you can’t go home. But this place took me in and they didn’t tell me I had to leave.”

Conscience Healing, they come right here, and so you can get counseling if you need it. That’s like a walk-in thing on a certain day. She’s a very good, supportive person to have in your corner. And she’s a social worker so she can help you with certain things that social workers can help you with. Cuz people need help... they just want to have somewhere to keep what I’m going to say and feel like they’re going to have some hope to get to the next step. And that’s the stepping stone, you know. A very good program, because you can’t get that anywhere. And I’m trying to get somewhere so that somebody else can be here, too. I’m not just trying to stay forever. But I would like to.

DID YOU KNOW THAT WHEN YOU DONATE TO STEPPING STONE...?

Stepping Stone prioritizes helping our Veterans. Here’s a note from one of our case managers on a Veteran who’d been living in the woods:

“We had a gentleman come here who had been living in the woods for several years. As a U.S. Veteran, he was already connected to resources and housing, so he only needed to stay with us for a short time. He was very appreciative to Stepping Stone and all we provide, and shared that he’d never seen a shelter so clean and put together. He said the staff were very helpful, and he would like to go back to school to help people experiencing homelessness.”





EMPOWERING RESIDENTS FOR SUCCESS BY KEEPING OUR FOCUS

A Message from Steve Griffiths

We have finished up the spring-cleaning and spruced up the landscaping, now it would be an easy time for us sit back and enjoy the summer, but we are not going to do that. We are in the process of getting back to full capacity here at Stepping Stone. With our renovation complete, it will be the first time in more than 15 months that we have been able to have 66 residents call Stepping Stone home as they look for long-term housing. It is an exciting time...from

hearing from a resident about how much better the lighting is and that helps her manage her anxiety, to a resident coming back from Federal after securing a full-time job, to implementing new programs that will help residents focus on their path to securing housing.

Our staff is focused on empowering residents as they chart a path to permanent housing. We do that by making sure we meet people where they are in their journey and provide the tools they need to find success. Our staff works diligently to develop a relationship with residents where trust is found, and residents know we are here to support them, champion them, and celebrate them throughout this process. With the knowledge that residents have someone standing in their corner and encouraging them, they are able to create a plan, ask for assistance, and have a community they can rely on in the process.

As success comes for residents, whether it be a new job, qualifying for programming, or finding a new home, everyone (residents and staff) celebrates the success. It helps spur on others to find their success, and I look forward to sharing more success stories in the coming weeks.

SOME NEEDS ARE HIGH ALL SUMMER LONG



DONATE A MEAL

Whether a group, family, or individual, you can bring in a meal and serve it to our residents, or you can simply drop off a meal and we will do the serving. Either way, our residents appreciate and truly enjoy all donated meals. (Sign up is required to bring in a meal.)

If you need more information or want to sign up to donate a meal, you can visit our website at SteppingStoneEH.org and click "Get Involved", or reach out to Jeff Conner, our Development Officer, at jeff.conner@steppingstoneeh.org or (763) 370-5744.

PILLOWS & PODS

We always need laundry detergent pods (not powder or liquid) and new and unused bed pillows, but right now, we have an immediate need for both. You can drop off new pillows and pods anytime at the shelter.



Pillows

&

Pods

Community Partners

Businesses That Help Build Pathways

CONNEXUS ENERGY CREATES A BEAUTIFUL OUTDOOR SPACE



We are beyond words! In mid-May, Connexus Energy brought their heavy equipment and nearly 30 volunteers to beautify our campus. This one-day project would have taken us all summer to accomplish (or longer). Our residents now have lovely yards to enjoy year-round. Thank you, Connexus Energy for all your hard work, and thanks to the Connexus Energy Foundation for providing the funds to purchase and donate the mulch and plants.



UNEXPECTED AND LARGE FOOD DONATION DELIVERED



Stepping Stone residents were blessed with a large food donation from a local warehouse. The warehouse asked us not to use their name or logo because their motivation to donate is not to be recognized. We still wanted to include this anonymous donation in this newsletter, so you can see how our community shows love to our residents. And WOW, did our residents feel loved with all the wonderful food to enjoy.

CHAIN OF LAKES CHURCH HOSTS A WALK FOR HOMELESS YOUTH AND YOUNG ADULTS



Stepping Up 4 HOPE says it all! Chain of Lakes Church in Lino Lakes held its second annual walk to raise funds for Stepping Stone and Hope 4 Youth. With over 800 homeless youth and nearly 1,000 homeless young adults in Anoka County, this important walk helped provide funds for both organizations to continue their work in our community. Thank you, Chain of Lakes Church for creating this walk to raise awareness and money for these two necessary organizations.

To see more pictures of the Connexus campus makeover and the Chain of Lakes Church walk, see our blog page on our website at SteppingStoneEH.org.

WHAT A NIGHT! YOU ARE THE REASON WE ARE HOME TO SO MANY.

REEL Stories-Stepping Into Hope gala was a success because YOU stepped in and made sure it was successful! Thank you for sponsoring, attending, donating to our silent auction (and bidding on items), creating baskets, giving of your time, talent, and resources to ensure that our residents will continue to call Stepping Stone home. The importance of our shelter is summed up in a quote from Kevin, one of the residents featured in a REEL:

"If it weren't for Stepping Stone, I probably wouldn't be here today. I'm an addict in recovery. They are saving my life because without Stepping Stone, I'd be back to smoking crack cocaine again and this place is wonderful. They care about you, they care what you're going through. Staff and all my friends here-we are family. They are all family to me. I love them all and wouldn't change it for the world."



Photo courtesy of Auden Photography.

MY LEASE WAS UP AND THEY WOULDN'T RENEW

AN INTERVIEW WITH A RESIDENT.

What program did you participate in here that helped you?

Case management...working with my case manager. She was always so helpful. Talking with her, being listened to, her keeping me focused...she was always there congratulating me, telling me "good job" on my applications.

What is the biggest lesson you have learned about yourself while staying here?

Not doing it again! Not being homeless again. Pay your bills. Stay on track. Show up to your appointments; don't be late, always be early, never be late. Stay focused.

Anything else you learned while you were here? Did you make many friends and connections?

I made a lot of new friends. I learned from old friends. I learned that you can't trust everyone. But I made a lot of friends, and the friends here keep you sane. They keep you sane while you're going through all of this. The staff is wonderful - each one of them is so wonderful, that's why I wrote them each thank you notes before I'm leaving. They always listen, and if they're busy, they say, "we'll talk soon".

So it sounds like getting a job and the new apartment were your biggest achievements while staying here? Did you have a job before you came here?

I lost my job before I came here because I was pregnant. I was really big. They said they didn't know when I was going to go into labor. They said I looked like I would pop any day. So I lost my job. But I got a new job and have been working there. And now I've got my new apartment.



You and our family of donors are the reason we are able to hire qualified and caring staff that help guide our residents forward toward success. You've become one of the "stepping stones" in a resident's path to independence.

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.

CONNECT WITH US!

