



"Every long or short journey begins with the First Step"

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Building Capacity for Recovery at First Step

At First Step Recovery Homes, Inc., we are proud to share the progress of our expansion at 416 Olive Street, where our facility can now house up to 40 men. With recent upgrades, we have designed the building to meet participants at every stage of their journey, offering groups and support on three different floors dedicated to beginning, middle, and advanced levels of case management. This transition began on July 1, 2024, when we assumed responsibility for the property—a shell of a building once operated by Family Links. Since then, we have worked tirelessly to secure funding, make renovations, and create a safe, supportive environment. Thanks to the Jefferson Regional Foundation and other supporters, we were able to bring on a consultant who helped us raise essential capital. While much of that support went directly into operations and tangible aid, it allowed us to open our doors and move closer to securing permanent ownership.



Our Funders and Supporters

In this current years' fiscal environment the pool of grants and donations are dwindling and every organization is reeling from taxes and tariffs. We at First Step Recovery Homes Inc have had to pivot and reorganize just as many others have as well. We express our sincerest gratitude for our funders for trusting us to make differences in the lives of men and our community. **The Howard and Neil E. Miller Foundation - G.C. Murphy Company Foundation- The Pittsburgh Foundation - Community Food Bank, Staunton Farms Foundation, Jefferson Regional Foundation and the Charles F. Peters Foundation**

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Primary Health Care Services Update (PCHS) has officially begun construction on a cutting-edge, three-story, \$26 million facility in Homewood Brushton. Executive Director Jerome Glosser shared, *"The foundation has been laid and things are progressing very well."* This expansion will deepen access to medical, dental, and behavioral health services for our community, reinforcing a 32-year partnership with First Step Recovery Homes rooted in healing, equity, and legacy. Founded in 1976, PCHS is one of the region's oldest Federally Qualified Health Centers, offering comprehensive care through locations like the McKeesport Family Health Center. As a key partner in the Bridges to Care initiative, PCHS continues to address social determinants of health—housing, food access, and wellness—with compassion and cultural humility. This new facility is more than infrastructure; it's a sacred investment in Homewood, Braddock, Rankin, Hazelwood, East End, Wilkinsburg and satellite sites.

First Step Residents Make Strides as First Step embarks upon it's 34th year

Kevin Cash - Clean date: 6/11/2024 , 63 years old

Of Founder **Keith Giles**-a tireless advocate and fundraiser who never stops working for the good of human-kind. **Jerry Stradford**-a man dedicated to providing others with a clear amazingly engaging understanding of the multifaceted meaning of addiction, who patiently and therapeutically guided us men through positive and enriching actions that has effectively resulted in a rewarding life renewing recovery. His consistently meaningful intent is both admirable and remarkable. God made certain that I first met Kevin M and Kim at Pyramid, and finally Jerry here at FSRH, Inc in order for me to obtain as much information as possible to ensure my successful recovery. **Nichelle, Judith, Mr. Paxton, Keenon, Kevin M, Keith R, and Garl** were always certain to aid both Keith and Jerry in assuring that I was assisted whenever necessary. It is important that I acknowledge that First Step Recovery Homes, Inc continues to represent a united and well meaning front.

Anthony Reed Clean Date 07/23/1992 It was pain that got me here and pain that keeps me here. He says after 33 years he knows that he will **NEVER PICK UP AGAIN!** His routine 33 years ago was to work, stop at his mom's, the bar, and the phone booth. He would then call the drug dealer. At the end of the road, he knew either the drug would kill him or he'd kill himself. Thinking back 33 years makes him teary eyed thinking of all the things he did gets him emotional. The blessing is that his two daughters never gave up on him. On his last using night he slept in the garage of the home he owned, he heard God speak to him saying there's a better life for you if you want it. He credits the loan shark on his job for taking him to his first NA meeting at the infamous **951 Penn Ave**, downtown Pittsburgh. After the meeting he was to ashamed to go home, and went with the loan shark until First Step was suggested to him. He thanks **Keith Giles**, for First Step at 336 Penny St in McKeesport. He didn't have any money so he bartered his plumbing skills for room and board. Early on First Step was supportive housing, So the blessing is watching First Step grow into the program it is today with all the services being provided. He is ecstatic that First Step is now the treatment program for his own brother.



Dale Paige Clean Date: 02/16/24

He began using alcohol between 11 and 14 years old, more addicted to the lifestyle than the drug considering himself a gangster for most of his life. In his 30's he began to question his drinking behavior, he was doing things out of character, having blackouts and landing in jail repeatedly. In 2022 instead of reincarceration because of a dirty urine violation his Parole Officer suggested Pyramid. He went to Pyramid 3 times and First Step twice. At First Step through **Jerry Stradford** he has gained a far better understanding of the many facets of addiction. Jerry has been the first male figure that he's felt comfortable with enough to be honest and vulnerable. He says Jerry was a God Send. You'll still see Dale at First Step maintaining the relationships he's built there. He's currently in the shelter down the street and working two jobs, at Pyramid and Pennsylvania Train Station. He plans to pursue a Certified Recovery Specialist certificate this September, and wants to work with the youth at Shuman Center or the CISP program. Narcotics Anonymous has given him purpose and clarity of who he is and wants to be each day. Without First Step and Jerry he thinks he'd be dead or in prison.



Roger Macklin Clean date 12-02-20

Roger credits his recovery to the men of First Step Recovery Homes Inc. He is a 63 year old two time resident and admits he didn't take the first residency seriously. He used First Step to stave off homelessness after being released from jail with no where to go. He completed the program and secured housing to only lose it again to active addiction and jail and ultimately back to First Step. He says pandemic money was the worse thing to happen for him. His long time friend and sponsor advised him of one thing upon his return to First step and that was be honest with Jerry S. He says being honest with Jerry rewarded him with Jerry's unwavering support. That support has helped his reintegration into society, a renewed relationship with two beautiful daughters, his own transportation, a pick up truck enabling him to become self employed and feeling a renewed sense of purpose and resolve. Having had this experience at First Step he wholeheartedly recommends it for men seeking help with addiction and homelessness.



Inside and Outside First Step



Welcome Eric Carter Clean 06/16/2021 Our example of Relapse and Recovery

First Step Recovery Homes, Inc welcomes Eric as Case Manager/Life Skills Coordinator. After a long history battling addiction his story is perfect for his position supporting the men seeking recovery here. A prior resident of First Step completing seventeen months in 2004. He relapsed after 39 months of active recovery, used for the next 5 years, then surrendered again in 2021. After having fallen asleep at the wheel of his car, experiencing a near fatal car accident he knew the time had come to surrender and face some harsh realities and learn to live and practice the program again. Eric fondly remembers his time at First Step 21 years ago and says other than the new building here at Olive Street, First Step is continuing its practices of Life Skills, Education, Safe Housing and Case management enabling men to establish their places at home and community.



First Step Recovery Homes Inc has been sending 3 – 4 men to volunteer at **St. Paul AME Church** in McKeesport for about a year to unload the food bank truck for **Rev. Paul Waite**. The church has a food bank distribution **every other Saturday** and beginning **August 2, 2025**, Call **412-896-3679** for information. **Connie Portis, Clark Memorial Homestead, Park Place AME, and Praise in the Park**, 6 churches in Homestead, says the men of First Step are my go to when I need heavy lifting and dedicated workers, they are ready to help, pleasant and I have recommended them to several churches and nonprofit organizations.



McKeesport's Good Neighbor Day, 2025 A Celebration of Unity, Healing, and Community Power

On June 11, 2025, Fifth Avenue in downtown McKeesport transformed into a vibrant tapestry of music, food, laughter, and connection for the 61st annual **Good Neighbor Day**—a beloved tradition that honors the spirit of togetherness and resilience in the Mon Valley.



First Step Recovery Homes committed to



showed up healing and transformation. Our booth

served up soul food and smiles, but behind every plate was a deeper message: **Recovery is possible, and community is the medicine.**



Staff, volunteers, and alumni of the program engaged with neighbors, shared resources, and offered stories of hope. **A living altar to the power of second chances.**



Board & Staff Box

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Keenon Mikell COO

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Climbing The Stairs To Recovery...

A Community of Strength and Service

Kennon Mikell COO Though we're currently is already fulfilling its purpose: providing care with our second site at 336 Penny Street, which house 57 individuals in total. This is a significant responsibility. The cost of challenging, yet it also ensures continuity of service. With more than 34 years of collective to meet this challenge head-on, continuing to men rebuilding their lives. **We believe that these investments in space and service are also investments in the wider recovery community.**



renting the Olive Street building, the facility and housing for men in recovery. Along serves 17 men, we now have the potential to growth represents both a great opportunity makes the path to ownership more service and a stable home for those we experience, our dedicated staff is prepared provide quality care, structure, and hope to

Keith Giles CEO As we continue on this road to recovery, our major concern is referrals are beginning to get younger. This is causing us to expand our role of transformation or assisting in converting boys to men. Breaking the cycle of addiction is deeply rooted into our family trees. The deterioration of our households as well as our communities is not just demographic or socioeconomic, but the stronghold mind and mood altering chemicals has not only affected the fathers but the mothers also. Our family re-unification program is attempting to address this distressful issue. Our major and primary focus for the men and fathers at First step is to assist in locating permanent housing, obtaining decent living wage employment but also assuring they have the necessary tools to remain drug/alcohol free once they leave our facility.

The greatest good we can do for one another is not just share our riches, but to reveal them to their own.



Healing, and HIV Prevention in McKeesport

On Saturday, April 12, 2025, the **McKeesport Partnership for HIV Prevention** hosted its **25th Annual Red Ribbon Jubilee** at the Jacob Woll Main Pavilion in Renzie Park. This milestone event celebrated a quarter century of service, education, and community collaboration dedicated to the prevention and awareness of HIV and AIDS.

Over the past 25 years, the McKeesport Partnership for HIV Prevention has provided vital services to the community — including pre- and post-test counseling, HIV/AIDS education, and peer fellowship — helping individuals and families understand, prevent, and live beyond the stigma of HIV and AIDS. The Partnership continues to serve as a bridge between generations, bringing together youth and elders under one roof to promote open dialogue, compassion, and healthy living practices.

Under the leadership of **Barbara Williams**, the coordinator of the McKeesport Partnership for HIV Prevention, the program has thrived through the dedication of volunteers and community members who give their time, energy, and hearts to a cause that saves lives. Although not a paid staff, these individuals work tirelessly from a place of genuine care and commitment to eradicating a preventable disease. Their efforts have shown that hope and education remain the most powerful tools in the fight against HIV.

The Red Ribbon Jubilee served not only as a celebration of past achievements but also as a reminder that the work continues. It was a day filled with fellowship, music, and messages of resilience — honoring those who have fought the battle, supporting those still on the journey, and inspiring the next generation to stay informed and empowered.

As the McKeesport Partnership moves forward, it remains rooted in its mission: to ensure that every person, regardless of age or background, has access to the knowledge, support, and compassion needed to live a healthy and fulfilling life.

Red Ribbon Jubilee: 25 Years of Hope

The Recovery Report

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First Step Recovery Homes Inc. provides supervised, temporary, safe drug and alcohol free structured housing for persons recovering from the disease of addiction and trying to stay out of the criminal justice system.