



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

Volume 1 Issue 8

Spring 2026

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 facilities can now house up to 57 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

We want to take a moment to say a huge, heartfelt thank you to all of the donors and grantors who have helped us reach this incredible milestone—35 years of service! Thanks to your generosity, we've been able to support so many lives. Special thanks to **Mary Hillman Jennings Foundation** for \$175,000, **McKeesport Hospital Foundation** for 25,000 and grants from the **Charles F. Peters Foundation**, **Staunton Farms Foundation**, **The G. C. Murphy Company Foundation**, **The Pittsburgh Foundations**, **PNC Charitable Trust** and individual donor(s). You are a part of our family, and we couldn't have done this without you! Here's to many more years of making a difference together.

Inside This Issue

- Olive Street Update
- Our Funders /Supporters
- First Step Residents Make Strides
- Primary Care Health Services Update
- Partners & Collaborators
- Director's Message
- Our Board and Consultants

Primary Health Care Services Update (PCHS)

Primary Care Health Services (PCHS) is excited to announce the continued progress of our new three-story health and wellness center, with construction anticipated to be completed in December 2026 and a projected move-in date of February 2027. The new building will house a wide range of services including primary care, family practice, pediatrics, podiatry, dental services, behavioral health, social services, health care for the homeless programs, endoscopy services, and a moderate complexity laboratory. The building will serve as a collaborative community hub by partnering with organizations such as Healthy Start and Homewood Children's Village to support the overall health, wellness, and development of individuals and families.



First Step Residents Make Strides as First Step embarks upon it's 35th year

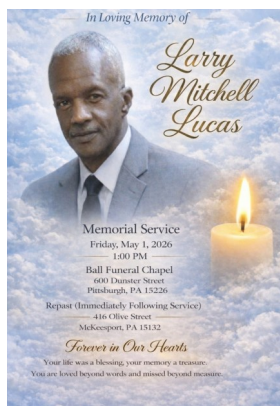
Jamar Hester Clean Since June 2, 2020



First Step taught me to love and respect myself. Affectionately known as “Hess” road to recovery started on June 2, 2020 at the end of the road he was sleeping in hallways, abandoned cars, or just not sleeping at all. Drug of choice -crack cocaine, heroin and anything he could get. He made the phone call that changed his life and entered Pyramid after four months there he became a resident here at First Step, **Hess says coming to First Step is the best thing that has ever happened for him.** In 2022 he became a First Step employee as night monitor and now he’s house manager. **He loves being at First Step,** after being in and out of rehabs and finally not going back to Braddock he has tools to stay clean, but **First Step (Jerry) and staff** taught him how to apply those tools to his life.

Larry Mitchell Lucas Clean Since 9/4/2024

We pause to remember and honor a beloved member of our recovery family, Larry after a long, brave



battle with cancer passed away. He remained steadfast in recovery for 18 months. His courage, strength, and abstinence is an inspiration to all of us. We carry his memory with us as we continue this work, and we are forever grateful for his spirit. **“Gone To Soon “**

Eric Carter Clean Since 5/16/2021

We’re super excited to share that Eric has been



promoted to Senior Case Manager ! Over the last year he’s really gone above and beyond using his own life experience along with his work to really connect with the men in recovery. His genuine care and understanding has made a huge difference, and we’re proud to see him taking on this new role.

He says what First Step does for him was unimaginable until it happened.

Chris Miller, “it’s never too late” Clean Since 6/15/2024

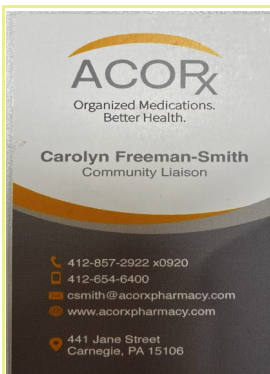
He’d been in Pyramid for 128 days in 2023 before he came here to First Step. He didn’t start using until later in life at 27 years old after divorce, the death of his grandmother who was his best friend during that same year. One night in 1999 at a bar he was introduced to heroin. This one night lead to cocaine, jail and prison. He tried to get clean off and on lasting for 3 or 6 months stretches. By 2022 he was homeless jobless, living on the streets between Philadelphia and Trenton New Jersey, struggles with bipolar, finally a suicide attempt. He was found hanging in an abandoned crack house 911 was called. It seemed like the end of the road **BUT** the miracle of Recovery Programs has led to the a relationship with his two adult sons, a relationship he credits to his recovery at First Step. Currently he is a Certified Alcohol and Drug Counselor and is enrolled in the Bachelor’s Social Work program at CCAC.



First Step Collaborators and Partners



We are proud to partner with First Step Recovery to help individuals successfully transition back into the community after incarceration. Through this partnership, we provide financial literacy education focused on budgeting, saving, credit awareness, and responsible money management. We also assist participants with opening checking and savings accounts to help establish financial stability and independence. In addition, we educate individuals on opportunities for building credit, achieving long-term financial goals, and pathways toward future homeownership. Our goal is to help empower participants with the financial tools and knowledge needed to create a strong foundation for a successful future. We are proud to be a member to the McKeesport community and to become a close partner to the First Step organization.



Carolyn Freeman-Smith

has been working with us for awhile. She is committed to improving the overall health, stability, and quality of life for our men by addressing both their medical needs and the social determinants that impact long-term wellness and success.

Carolyn continues to be a trusted community health partner, advocate and liaison for us. She assists with medications, supportive services for stable housing, transportation, referrals to wellness and prevention programs and other health concerns.

Carolyn and co-worker Sarah work diligently to promote dignity, self-sufficiency and long term recovery for our men.



Donny Hayes Field Supervisor

By serving as a community hub and employing our men as flaggers, we create meaningful



opportunities that provide a living wage and support their stabilization and reintegration into housing and the broader community. In alignment with our mission.

Partnerships:

- Zion Baptist Church
- First Step Recovery Home
- The City of McKeesport, Mayor Thomas Maglicco
- St. Paul AME
- Another Shoulder
- Macedonia Family and Community Enrichment Center Inc.
- Lotterman Family Health Center-UPMC/McKeesport

MCKEESPORT PARTNERSHIP FOR

HIV PREVENTION

Rock the Block Day

SATURDAY MAY 16
@ 12 PM - 4 PM

**AT 416 OLIVE STREET
MCKEESPORT PA, 15132**

**HIV TESTING + FOOD
FREE HAIR CUTS**

The end of the AIDS epidemic is in sight with education, testing, treatment and togetherness.

**TAKE CARE OF YOUR MENTAL HEALTH AND PROTECT YOURSELF
TOGETHER WE CAN END HIV/AIDS**



Jamaiyah Abdulrabb: Fiduciary Opportunity

Jamaiyah's mission and vision is closely aligned with ours here at First Step. We are pleased to support her in any way we can.

Alleviation Base is a Sober and supportive living environment for individuals transitioning from treatment, incarceration, or crisis situations.

Providing case coordination and referral partnerships with local agencies, healthcare providers, workforce programs, life skills development, including financial literacy, employment readiness, and relapse prevention.

Through compassionate care, professional oversight, and strategic partnerships, we strive to reduce homelessness, support recovery journeys, and strengthen the overall health of the community.

We're always looking for new partners to collaborate on projects and events. If your organization shares our values and mission, let's work together to make a positive impact.

Climbing The Stairs To Recovery...

Officers' Message

Keenon Mikell-Adewole COO



The journey to long-term sobriety is rarely a leap to the top; it is a deliberate, steady climb. At **First Step Recovery Homes**, we believe that sustainable change is built on the foundation of individual steps—each one representing a victory over the past and a commitment to the future. Whether you are just beginning your ascent or working to maintain your footing, recovery is a process. Recovery thrives on structure. The first "rise" of the stair involves replacing the erratic patterns of addiction with the steady rhythm of daily life. Here is a start.

Consistent Sleep Schedules: Restoring your physical health.

Accountability: Attending house meetings and fulfilling chores.

Self-Care: Prioritizing nutrition and personal hygiene as acts of self-respect.

This is just the beginning. See you next issue with more

Keith Giles CEO

Collaboration Is Paramount



We are more than a recovery housing program—we are community builders dedicated to creating positive change. As we face new challenges in the coming fiscal year, collaboration among community partners has never been more important. More than 80% of our participants have experienced trauma related to homelessness, lack of healthcare, food insecurity, racism, and limited opportunities. No single agency can meet all of these needs alone. By working together and leveraging our collective strengths, we can provide the comprehensive support necessary for individuals to overcome addiction and homelessness and build stable, productive lives.

We are proud of the recovery model First Step has helped establish throughout Allegheny County and remain committed to strengthening partnerships that promote lasting recovery and community well-being.

The Recovery Report

First Step Recovery Homes, Inc.
McKeesport, PA 15132
412-673-2113



336 Penny Street



416 Olive Street

Board & Staff Box

Board of Directors

Keith Giles -Pres. CEO
Gretchen Lowery-Chair
Richard Giles -V. Chair
Dennis Robinson-Secretary
Barbara Williams-Treasurer
James Brown Yvette Giles Erica Maloney
George Jones Mike Farrish

Staff

Garl Germany Keenon Mikell Keith Rosser
Nichelle Rose Jerry Stradford Dorian Page
William Paxton Eric Carter Tracey Smith

Intern: Ryan Preston

Consultants

Diane I. Daniels Robert DeOrio
Annette Tyler Marilyn Williams
Delbert Tyler Kimberly Rosser

Volunteer with First Step Recovery Homes

Join our team of
volunteers and
make a difference
in your community.

Spread the Word

Help us raise
awareness of our
mission and
programs by sharing
our website, social
media pages, and
events with your
friends, family, and
colleagues.