



HOUSING HAPPENINGS



FIRST STEP'S FIRST FOLDING HOUSE !

Shoveling a bit of sand might not look like a “ground breaking” but for the Board of First Step - it certainly felt like one! Preparing space at the Presbyterian Community Church for installation of a Foldable House is just one step to scaling up the First Step program.

On the following pages, we ask that you follow along on this journey in pictures and feel the joy that the Board, Staff and current participants are experiencing.





After purchasing the Suntop s2019 at auction in Chehalis, WA on Friday September 27, Paul Pearson arranged for transport on the foldable house with a local delivery contractor here in Florence for Friday, October 4. There was some heavy traffic and a 4:00pm delivery turned into 6:45. The tilt trailer was an amazing solution for the 6,000 lb house.

In Addition - - -

In addition to all the hubbub around getting ready for the folding house - the past couple months have been a whirl wind for the Board and Staff in other ways:

We held a clean up of the Village, cleaned and repaired a donated 5th wheel trailer for a current participant family, installed a screen over the fence that Northwest Housing Alternatives erected. We presented at the October Lion's Club meeting and a couple people attended the Oregon Nonprofit Association conference here in town. We continue to work toward growing the Board and working more effectively.



And we are on our way: roof, floor, sides and a surprise porch are being set up and secured!!
We could not have done any of this without our faithful donors (of money & muscle)!
THANK YOU!!



Upcoming Events

You are Invited

Drop -In Open House at the Folding House
3996 Hwy 101 N - Presbyterian Community Church
November 10th from 2:00 - 4:00pm

Come tour the house and share in the excitement!

~ ~ ~ *The First Step Board & Staff*



**Chamber Holiday Festival for NonProfits on
Bay Street December 7th**



Pancake Dinner Fundraiser
February 2nd
4:00 - 7:00 pm
3996 Hwy 101 N

As a special thank you to Chef Anthony and because we were so impressed with his hospitality hosting and helping with our very successful gala in June, we wanted others to know of his great spirit and integrity. Here is a bit of his personal story. May you visit him and enjoy his talents at Eatwell Organic Noodle. Maybe he can help you with your community project.

GETTING TO KNOW CHEF ANTHONY VELARDE

Chef Anthony is originally from the Philippine Islands. When he came to America he landed in Los Angeles in 1999 and “Y2K” was a big topic and concern. Anthony pursued a computer science degree and opened a computer repair and video shop. Big competitors like Blockbuster threatened to put him out of business, so he pivoted and went to Culinary Arts College at a Cordon Bleu program.

Then he started opening restaurants. He spent many years opening and operating restaurants in California and got the attention of some big investors who wanted him to come to work for them and make some serious cash with “healthy food” restaurants catering to the fitness and yoga crowd. He ended up on the Oregon Coast helping someone refurbish and re-open the old Howard Johnson’s in Waldport. Yet Anthony didn’t feel confident in a five year plan with that arrangement. He had a different perspective based on his experiences, and he decided to focus on a simple formula for a happy life instead.



Anthony wanted to manufacture a product that would be valuable to the restaurant and food service industry, sort of a passive income model compared to the hustle of opening, owning or working for the owner, and operating, a busy restaurant or chain of restaurants.

His business model included the active income from a restaurant that was fun and healthy, but one that would not wring the joy of life from him. He came to Florence and focused on growing a wholesale noodle manufacturing business. With his simple Organic Noodle restaurant, he can pay the bills, and develop the noodle business, and give back to the community when the opportunity presents itself. He added pop up menu nights to feed his interest in different cuisines, spice up his routine, and develop new relationships. [First Step is just one of those relationships]. Anthony’s multi-pronged approach is bringing the rewards he imagined were possible.

Anthony is planning a Thanksgiving holiday event at the Organic Noodle to celebrate abundance and joy with the Florence Community. He says, “I want to give back.”

[Article and Photo credit: Ivy Meadow]

Watch for upcoming news about our 2025 Gala
ALOHA!

HELPER
HEROES

First Step Florence has discovered a number of **Helper Heros** over the past several months. In addition to Chef Anthony, we highlight **GARY ROSE with Leisure Excavating, BRIAN COONTZ for his concrete finishing expertise, and SEAN GRAHAM, delivery service.** Sean and his mom made a round trip excursion to Chehalis, picked up the Folding House, secured the glass front windows and doors, and turned right around to make same day delivery a reality. Then they worked carefully and with enthusiasm to get the house off the trailer and onto the slab safely and accurately - in the dark!

WELCOME NEW BOARD MEMBER, LINDA YODER

Linda Yoder is a Chicago native and retired development professional who moved to Florence in 2011. Since then, she has written grants for Habitat and CROW and is currently treasurer for two volunteer organizations in Florence. She has been a newspaper reporter, corporate communications manager, and university professor, most recently at Illinois State University in the College of Business. She sought endowment-level gifts for the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences at Bradley University and was development director of Peoria Ballet, both in Peoria, Illinois. She is married to Jonathan Yoder, also a retired professor and corporate management professional. They have three grown children who live in the Portland area.



Board President Insights

We bought a house - A folding house from China! It is a great upgrade from the travel and park model trailers we have been using. It is bigger (280 sq ft) and more functional as well. The metal and foam walls of our new housing unit have a higher R-Value (a measure of insulation) than the trailers, and the interior surfaces are easier to clean between program participants. And it is our first two-bedroom option.

Our gratitude continues to grow for the donors and the support that we received from our Gala. Please come to our open house on November 10th and see the results of your generosity.

As we look forward into the new year, we are excited about the plans we are working on. In September 2025, the Bridges program will be moving off our property north of town. While they have been on our property, they installed water and electricity lines, and tapped into the sewer that runs under the easement road. With much of the infrastructure in place, we hope to add at least three additional program units. In the interim we are adding a fourth housing unit on private property. It can seem like such a small addition, but to the families that will benefit it is a new start and another chance at a productive life.

That's why we continue, and we are thankful that you choose to walk with us and support the First Step program.

- Greg Wood

Current Board Members:

Greg Wood, President
Paul Pearson, Vice President
Rebecca McMinn, Secretary
Donna Gregg, Treasurer
Ivy Medow, Member
Norma Wood, Member
Linda Yoder, Member



Ways to contact First Step for information
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