

Rhody Parade - May



**With gratitude we acknowledge our
amazing 2026 GALA SPONSORS !**



Florence Elks
Lodge#1858



Block Party - July



*We send a huge shout out of appreciation
and recognition to the many
business contributors for our Silent Auction
and individual donors for the Live Auction*



**Hard Hats
& Heels
GALA
June**



Grants



From the desk of Sandy Craft, Program Director . . .

In a letter received July 14th, the U.S Department of Agriculture has officially approved First Step Florence **eligible** for funding for a \$400,000 grant. We have been told that the money will be provided in the current fiscal year, which ends September 31st, 2026 - and we are hoping to be approved for the grant and be funded by year's end. Additional large capital grant proposals have been submitted and will continue to be. As we move into fall grant cycles and continue to raise funds for building and ongoing program costs. All grantors need and appreciate seeing that First Step has many funding streams. Community Giving is important and we **THANK YOU!**



Life Changes in the First Step Transitional Housing Program

In June, our village celebrated a major milestone as all three participant families successfully transitioned into permanent housing. It was a meaningful and rewarding month, and I had the privilege of supporting each family through their move into stable homes.

Since then, we have welcomed two new families into the village, and by the end of July, we expect all our units will be full once again. This ongoing cycle of transition and new beginnings reflects the heart of our mission-helping families move forward into lasting stability while continuing to serve those in need

- Melanie, FSF Participant Advocate



UPDATES FROM THE BOARD PRESIDENT . . .

We have made many new friends through our outreach into the community in 2026 - with an entry in the Rhody Parade, success in our **Building with Compassion** Fund Raising at the GALA and hosting a game at the Block Party - it has been a great summer!

Meeting with the Band of Brothers, The Elks' Club, The VFW, one of the local PEO Groups; sharing on KCST and KXCR and in the Siuslaw News has let the word out about First Step's mission and good work.

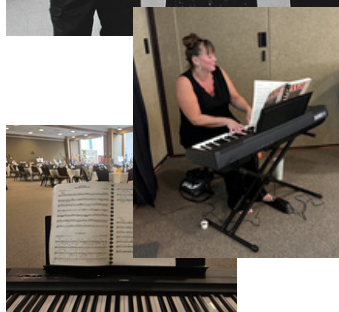
Our staff and volunteers deserve heartfelt kudos and recognition for their hard work and dedication. As we heard at the Gala, Melanie Moreno, our Participant Advocate fills many roles for our program participants. We were well aware of her shepherding them through job interviews, financial planning, and child care finding - but we didn't know that she invests time in house cleaning, emotional support and culinary excellence. Sandy Craft, our Program Director, has widened our circle of volunteers while presiding over our highly successful Gala. She has been working hard procuring major funding engaging the Board in other fund raising activities. She continues to help us grow forward into the organization we need to be to better serve families in Florence.

Several new faces joined the planning team for our Gala: Richard and Jackie Earnest and Karen Twitchell. We were also joined by 12 other volunteers who helped with preparing, serving, check-in and out, piano entertainment and a multitude of other jobs. Thank you to Justin Ludwig for a last minute publicity video and photos of the Gala. We are thankful for the hospitality and flexibility of the Florence Events Center and their staff. Donna Gregg helped create the wonderful atmosphere with the decorations and table pieces. Paul Pearson's giant tool box set the perfect tone, greeting guests as they arrived.

In the coming months, we turn our attention to building. We are gathering bids for the work needed to place two duplexes on the First Step property. Paving, electrical work, plumbing, foundations, and landscaping all have to have particular permits and contractors organized. We hope you trust that we are diligently working on it - we are.

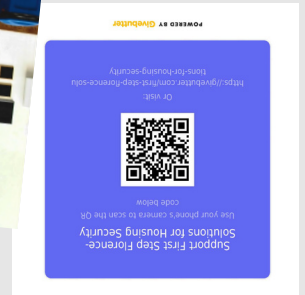
And through all - we are **especially thankful for each of you for partnering with us,**

Greg.



Thank you!





Florence, OR 97439
PO Box 1331



Board Members

Greg Wood, President
Paul Pearson, Vice Pres.
Norma Wood, Sec.
Brooke Golen
Donna Gregg
Gail Kilgore
Michelle Maakestad
Todd Ruby

For General Information about First Step contact:

Sandy Craft, Program Director
sandy@firststepflorence.org 541.590.2325

To make referrals contact:

Melanie Moreno, Participant Advocate
m.morenofirststepflorence@gmail.com
541.999.6861

Follow us on fb @ firststepflorence
and on instagram @ fsfhousing
www.florencefirststep.org



**WATCH for an announcement
about our Back to School
Pancake Dinner**