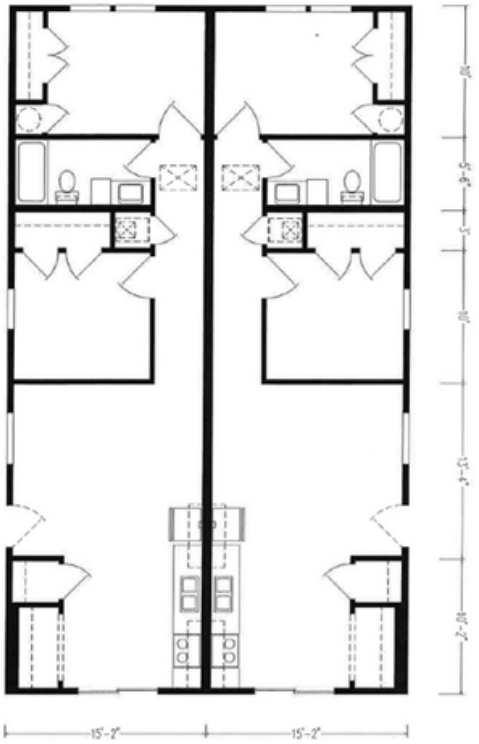
FIRST STEP FLORENCE
Transitional Housing for Families

OCTOBER 2026

HOUSING HAPPENINGS

UPDATE FROM THE BOARD PRESIDENT . . .



Now that we have confirmation of the USDA Grant, in early October Board members met with the City for our Preplanning Meeting. We reviewed the development plans to ensure that we have all the necessary pieces in place. The working site plan will have the addition of sidewalks, parking and landscaping before we can formally meet with the Planning Commission, yet we are excited because we are firmly on our way.

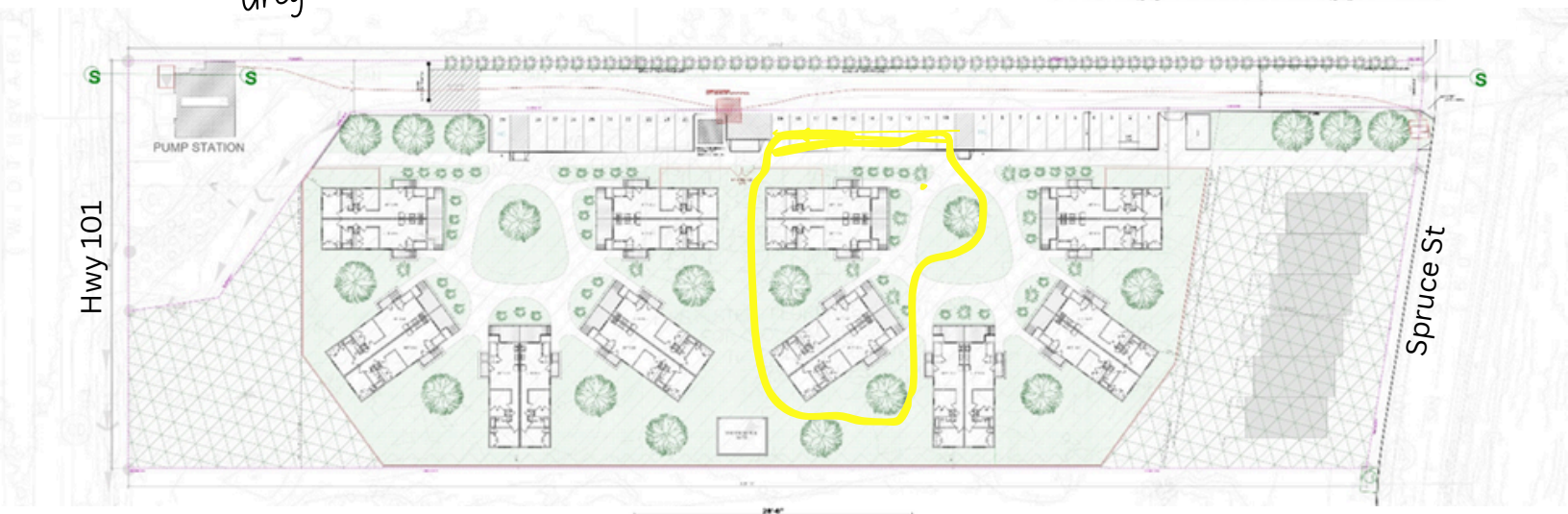
The next task is to complete the city's application for a Conditional Use Permit for the First Step Transitional Housing Program. Our "housing first" model runs solidly in tandem with the support program.

Frequently folks ask what we plan to do with our site at the Presbyterian Church. At this point we hope to continue to utilize those housing units as we further develop the site. In this first phase of development, we are adding four housing units (two duplexes) on the First Step property, raising our capacity to seven families.

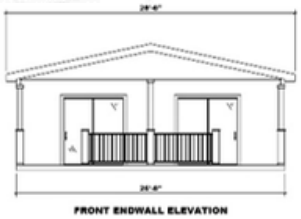
Ultimately, the decision about using the church property will be made in conversation with the church board.

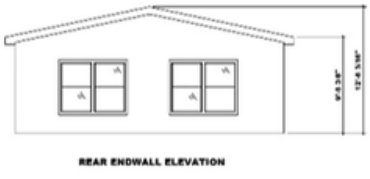
We're excited that the plan is finally coming together and moving forward!

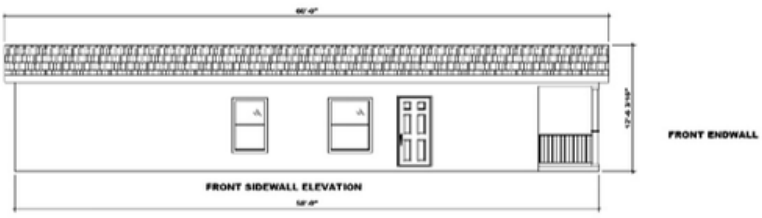
Greg











Program Director Notes

Our annual/year-end giving letter will be mailed in November. It will mark the one-year anniversary of launching our Building With Compassion campaign. The campaign will continue through 2027 as we build on the First Step property, giving our supporters another opportunity to help us, help more unhoused families. Never doubt that you are touching the lives of many through your compassionate giving!

Building with Compassion

Platinum Transparency 2026 Candid.

As you may imagine - receiving the USDA grant is instrumental in our ability to build (bring in modular duplexes). My job is to continue to write grants for operational costs for direct services and administrative support required to do the day in - day out work of FirstStep.

With gratitude for your continued contributions,

Sandy Craft, Program Director



THANK YOU for attending the Pancake Dinner Fundraiser September 18th!
We appreciate your support and incredible Giving with Compassion!
We're so glad you like pancakes as much as we do!!
Every plate sold makes a difference.

Thank you to our gracious supporters
who often connect First Step with the resources needed at just the "right" time !
Not only was a large trailer recently anonymously donated - it originated out of town and the donor provided the delivery.
It is in beautiful condition, expecially
since the Board rolled up their sleeves to get it set up, freshened up,
installed bunk beds and the deck/steps.
Thank you Donor, Delivery Driver and FSF Board



As the Participant Advocate, I am proud to share that First Step is currently operating at full capacity, providing critical shelter and support to three beautiful families. Thanks to our dedicated donors, our current funding allows us to fully maximize our available space to ensure these families have a safe place to land. While operating at full capacity highlights the continuous pressing need for temporary housing in our area, it also underscores the vital impact of your ongoing generosity. This quarter, our community's generosity shined bright with the incredible donation of the newest model trailer our program has ever received. This spacious gift allowed us to accommodate a family who would have otherwise been placed in a unit half its size. The family is profoundly grateful for the comfort, dignity and breathing room the space provides during their transition. We truly cannot do this life changing work without compassionate community members. Your support remains the bedrock of every success story we share!

Melanie

Meet new Florence resident and First Step Board Member - Michelle Maakestad



Michelle brings more than twenty years of experience in business leadership, operations, and strategic planning to the First Step Florence Board of Directors. Throughout her career, she's led teams, managed complex projects, and developed a reputation for bringing people together, improving processes, and getting things done.

After relocating from Utah to the beautiful Oregon coast, Michelle was eager to become involved in her new community. She found First Step Florence's mission of helping families experiencing housing instability build a stronger future was a natural fit.

Michelle believes everyone deserves an opportunity to succeed and that often a little support, encouragement, and teamwork can make all the difference.

When she's not working or volunteering, Michelle enjoys exploring the coast, cherishing time with family, spending time outdoors, and enjoying life with her two very spoiled dogs.

Her philosophy? Life is better when we lift each other up, work together, and continually look for ways to make a positive difference! We welcome Michelle to the team.





Sally, Gail, Melanie, Todd, Paul



Find yourself - far too many FSF Super Heroes to name!



Jennifer, Susan, Rebecca, Rick & John with many other heroes in the background



Nan & Judy

A few of the 9/18 Pancake Dinner guests, donors, and work crew

Tabling to connect with the community and other service providers. FSF engaged in Florence.

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PO Box 1331

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Board Members

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

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

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To make referrals contact:
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541.999.6861

Western Lane Crisis Suicide Prevention Walk and Health Expo 2026

Growing awareness and resources.