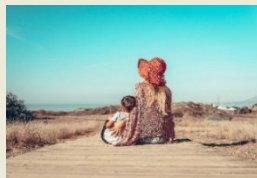


# First Step Florence

## Solutions for Housing Security

### SUMMER 2023 QUARTERLY UPDATE



The First Step Board of Directors and our residents express our most sincere gratitude for your support, continued generosity, and partnership as we assist families in moving towards more stable living situations.

## A First Step Resident Success Story...

Before coming to First Step, her life was a rollercoaster. It was scary, nerve wracking and she didn't know where to go for help. With her two children, she had just left a controlling unhealthy relationship and had nowhere to turn. "You can't just pitch a tent when you have kids" she explained. The children, both teens, had been living with their father. But when he became incarcerated, they came to live with her.

This resident had been in a controlling relationship, and it became more strained when her kids came to live with them. The arguing got worse, and he made unreasonable demands of the children. She began to realize that she had been tolerant to the faults of her partner until the children were there and realized she needed to put their needs first. She arrived in Florence without her partner and she and the children were staying in a hotel. She found First Step through a co-worker. Two weeks passed before a place was available in the First Step program. Soon after, her former partner attempted to sabotage her progress by contacting her social worker accusing her of being abusive. It was another example of how he tried to control her and make her life difficult.

Initially, she and her children came to First Step with nothing more than their clothing. She felt scared and anxious, and very uncertain about her family's future. First Step got right to work by providing furniture, household items and budget counseling to help her understand what expenditures are essential and nonessential. She reports that the budget is working as she is saving money, paying rent and bills on time, and was able to afford maintenance on her vehicle. Now, she has a full-time job at a local store and works side-jobs as she can, including cleaning First Step trailers when residents exit the program. Her children are thriving and doing well in school. Their only complaint is that mom works too much. This family is experiencing stability for the first time.

With newfound hope, and the ability to pay her First Step rent on time, she is working on her credit rating and envisions being able to one day buy her own land to live on. She and her First Step Resident Advocate are compiling her One Year goals which include financial security, saving for education and a future home purchase. She believes the First Step program is especially great for single parents, because she earns just a little too much with her current employment to receive public assistance, which creates an added challenge and pressure while raising teens on a low income. However, with the support of First Step, she is hopeful and looking forward to a stable future!

**First Step Florence**  
**PO Box 1331, Florence, OR 97439**  
**<http://firststepflorence.org>**

## Interested in Helping in Person?



### **VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITY!** **September 9th** **10am- 1:00pm**

**We're a bit behind on our yard work at the First Step Village so we're looking for folks with shears, weed-eaters, rakes, shovels, and gloves to help us clean up our resident's village. If you don't have tools just bring yourself!**

**If you'd like to bring along flowers to plant we'll have some planter box building materials on hand and the Habitat for Humanity tool trailer will be on site too. We'll provide a light pizza lunch so come join us & bring a friend!**

**The First Step Village is tucked away at the Presbyterian Church, 3996 Highway 101 Please RSVP if you plan to attend: Sandy 801-641-9970**

## First Step Welcomes New Staff!

### **Sandy Craft, Community Development Liaison**



When Sandy and her husband relocated from Utah to Florence, she quickly realized the urgent need for affordable housing and quality child care in the area. After expressing her concern within the community and her desire to help with housing and child care issues she was pointed in the direction of First Step Florence.

It was synchronicity that this coincided with First Step's search for the right candidate for the position of Community Development Liaison. Sandy is energized by the prospect of being involved in such a worthwhile cause that includes a compassionate and professional staff and board of directors.

First Step is delighted to welcome such a knowledgeable and professional new member to our team! Sandy comes to us with over 30 years of experience in early childhood education and child advocacy, as well as nonprofit administration and fundraising. Most recently she worked for a child welfare/human services nonprofit for 16 years.

Sandy has an unwavering passion for helping to improve the well-being of children and families. During her own youth, she and her siblings were raised by a single mother. Later, as a single mother herself, she experienced instability firsthand which she struggled to overcome. These life experiences have given her a genuine understanding and sincere empathy for families experiencing life's challenges, particularly housing insecurity, and the lack of available child care. Sandy's expertise will help further introduce First Step as a recognizable presence within our community. She will also guide us toward establishing a much-needed child care facility to support families in the First Step program and other working parents in Florence. Sandy has a big job ahead of her!



## Progress Report from Our Board Chair

We often talk about First Step supporting families to become self-sufficient- really, none of us are truly self-sufficient; rather we are supported by and are supporting a lot of people around us. By our actions we help family, employers, friends, businesses, services, workers... the list goes on and on. We need their help, and they rely on us. Recognizing our interconnectedness leads me to let you know that we are down to crunch time. First Step has been working on a shoestring budget for the past five years, planning is moving forward, and we are working at "maturing" as an organization. By hiring Sandy Clark as our new Community Development Liaison, we've taken a big leap forward. I hope that you noticed the card and return envelope included with this newsletter. Like all nonprofit organizations, we continue to look for partners in our work. Our focus on helping families move into stable, productive, and secure lives is yielding results; but there are more families to help through this journey. With your financial partnership, the consistent leadership and expertise of Sandy, the dedicated work of our Resident Advocate, Melanie, and the continued work of our volunteer Board, First Step is headed toward a stronger presence and a better future for Florence families.

~ Greg Wood

### "In-Kind" Donations

**Yes, First Step accepts in-kind donations** In-kind donations, such as an automobile or other household goods are an excellent way to donate. Household goods are used by the families in our program, and we are always looking for appropriately sized trailers to house them. Reliable used cars are often needed by our clients.

### Donation tax benefits, gifts, etc.

**Interested in making an impact?** First Step has traditionally accepted legacy gifts, real estate, donor advised funds, stocks, personal estates, and IRA gifts as well as in-kind donations. This type of charitable giving can be very beneficial at tax time for you and helps us remain viable into the future. It also aligns your values with our mission. Speak to your financial advisor or tax consultant to learn more about planned giving, or call Greg Wood at: 541-991-8208

### How Your Future Donation Will Help

**First Step's vision is to provide transitional housing for families who need a secure and safe place to live.** First Step Programs are designed to encourage successful living. Participants are coached toward setting and achieving goals appropriate for their family situation. We provide opportunities for families to thrive and successfully achieve those goals. Please help us achieve our vision by planning your donation today by giving to First Step Florence in the near future.

### Please send donations to:

First Step Florence  
C/O Reverend Greg Wood  
PO Box 1331,  
Florence, OR. 97439

Or donate online at <http://firststepflorence.org>

