A close-up photograph of an older man with grey hair, wearing a dark jacket over a grey sweater, holding a small, fluffy, light-brown dog. He has a surprised or questioning expression on his face. A white speech bubble points to his mouth.

Why are we going to the
**Presbyterian
Community Church**
at 4 PM
Friday afternoon?

A white speech bubble with a tail pointing towards the bottom left of the image.

Because it is
GROUNDHOG DAY
and we are gonna get
BREAKFAST FOR DINNER
to support
FIRST STEP FLORENCE
Transitional Housing

- GROUNDHOG DAY FRIDAY FEBRUARY 2, 2024
- 4:00 - 6:00 PM
- PRESBYTERIAN COMMUNITY CHURCH
- 3996 HWY 101 • FLORENCE
- CLASSIC PANCAKES, EGGS, CRISP BACON, SAVORY SAUSAGE, ORANGE JUICE, COFFEE & TEA
- SINGLE PERSON TICKET \$10 / FAMILY \$25





Solutions for Housing Security FALL & WINTER 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.

First Step Village News



It was a busy **Autumn in the First Step Village!** In September we had a volunteer work day to beautify and improve the Village grounds. We borrowed the Habitat for Humanity Florence work trailer with tools for community projects, 25 community volunteers contributed their time and skills, and some of our resident parents and their kids built planter boxes and planted flowers. After all the weeding and pruning was done, we enjoyed a pizza lunch together. Our residents were grateful for the support and had a renewed sense of pride in their village!



The First Step Pancake Breakfast and Art Sale in October was well attended and raised some much-needed funding to help provide resident services. Thanks again to our breakfast guests, to the First Step Board, staff, community volunteers and guests who joined us for dining, purchased donated art, cooked the food, served the guests, and decorated the room- it was fun and delicious!

Ways to Give:

Mail: First Step Florence PO Box 1331, Florence, OR 97439

Donate button on our website: <http://firststepflorence.org>.

Donate button on our **Facebook page:** [Facebook.com/FirstStepFlorence](https://www.facebook.com/FirstStepFlorence)

In Kind Donations: We accept in kind donations such as automobiles and some household items.

Legacy Gifts: Real estate, donor advised funds, stocks, personal estates, and IRA gifts. This type of charitable giving can be very beneficial at tax time for you and helps us remain viable into the future. Speak to your financial advisor or tax consultant to learn more about planned giving, or call Greg Wood at: 541-991-8208



From the First Step Board President

2023 has been a good year for us. In our village, we have worked with six different families. Of the six, five of the families have moved into permanent housing. Our one remaining family is working towards participation in a first-time home buyer program. This is something to truly celebrate!

Melanie Green, our Resident Services Advocate, continues to amaze the board with her creativity and dedication to our client families. She meets with each family weekly helping them set and achieve the goals. She is the key to our successes over the past two years. We are so excited that she remains committed to the important work she is doing.

Sandy Craft, our Community Development Liaison, joined our team this year, and is already making a big difference. With her extensive background in nonprofit work, her first task is helping us revamp our financial processes and procedures. These changes and tweaks to our systems are necessary for foundations and other granting organizations to fund our projects. We are thankful for her knowledge, experience, and patience in moving us forward.

Our Board reluctantly said goodbye to Ken Gaylord and Priscilla Washington who recently resigned from the board. Ken served First Step as an employee and as a board member. For the past three years he has written and tracked grants and helped set up and maintain our trailers. Priscilla served as our Vice President and community liaison with several different groups in the area. She was a steady voice on our team and coordinator of our website. We are thankful for Ken and Priscilla for their dedication and work with us.

We have also welcomed three new members to our board. Donna Gregg, Paul Pearson, and Graham Ross. They bring a new sense of excitement and enthusiasm to our organization, along with a variety of needed experience in Florence. We continue to search for a couple more board members to help us as we grow into an exciting future.

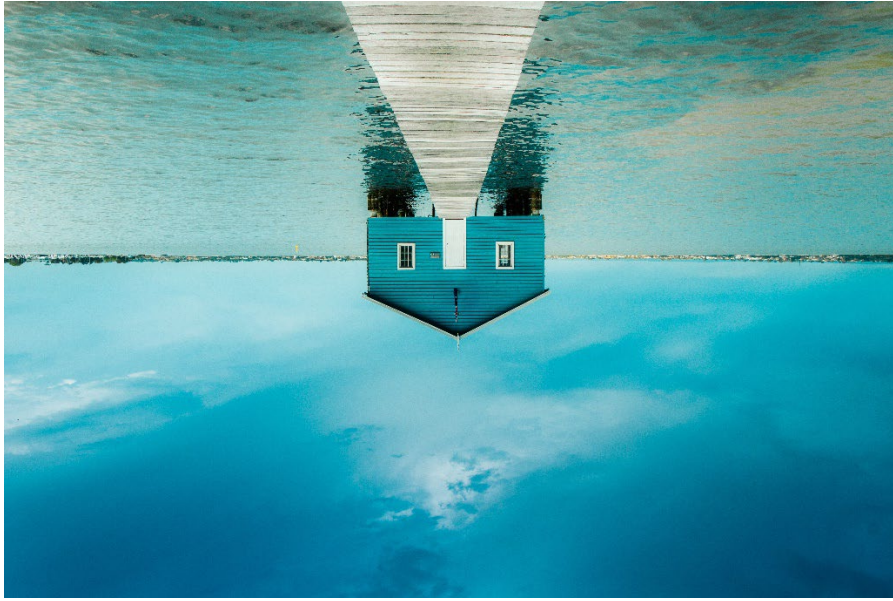
One of the major decisions made by the board this year was to lease a portion of our Highway 101 property to the Florence Emergency Cold Weather Shelter Board and their partner The Deveraux Center from Coos Bay. For the next year they will operate a year-round homeless shelter on our future building site. They are utilizing the Pallet Shelters that were used the last two winters for the Cold Shelter program. They are clearing a central portion of the lot and have installed water and a sewer connections. These improvements will reduce our costs when we begin our building program. We are confident that with the experience and processes in place from The Deveraux Center, they will safely and professionally provide a much-needed service to our area.

Finally, I would like to thank all of you who support the important work that we do. Beyond the physical work, we are grateful for your generous financial support that has sustained us. This past year 12 children and their parents engaged in normal family life: home cooked meals, school and homework, playing in the yard, watching TV, playing games, riding bikes, and even being glued to their phones, because you saw the value of supporting our work. Thank you!

Before our next families move in, the trailers need some repair and refurbishing. We are gathering a list of volunteers to help with trailer maintenance. If you'd like to join us, please let me know.

Sincerely,

Greg Wood
First Step Florence, Board President



PO Box 1331
Florence, OR 87439