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Steppingstone Today
Building a strong foundation for recovery

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What We Are Most Thankful For This Thanksgiving



"Over the river, and through the wood,
To grandfather's house we go;
The horse knows the way
To carry the sleigh
Through the white and drifted snow..."
--Lydia Marie Child, Medford MA 1802-1880

When you wake up on Thanksgiving morning for what will you be most thankful? Will it be the nice home you live in, the good job you have, the family that you love, the faith that sustains you? Will it be the freedom you enjoy as a citizen of this country, the ability to make your own decisions and be your own person?

At Steppingstone, Inc. we are grateful every day for the trust that our residents place in us to assist them in overcoming their addictions, homelessness, health issues and mental health concerns. We are grateful for those who come to us at the lowest points in their lives and believe we can make a difference.

We are grateful for our founders who envisioned the need for addiction treatment in the south coast area and in 1971 Steppingstone, Inc. was born. Since then the agency has grown and offers residential substance abuse treatment, graduate programs, housing programs, outpatient mental health services, assistance for those living with HIV/AIDS, reentry programs and so much more.

We are grateful for our funders who embrace our mission and help us to make it possible to provide the services we do every day of the year.

We are grateful for our staff who work tirelessly for a non-profit not for the salary and the incredible perks but the ability to serve those who need us most.

When you get out of bed on Thanksgiving morning for what will you feel most grateful? Take the time to consider what that is and you might just find you are truly blessed.

Happy Thanksgiving!

This Autumn edition of **Steppingstone Today** is filled with many reasons for us to be truly thankful.

Steppingstone, Inc. Staff Milestones...



Rachel Levesque was recently promoted to the position of **Project Director** at **Project ROAR**. Rachel has worked as a Mental Health Clinician at the agency's Outpatient Clinic since July 2012. She is a graduate of UMass Dartmouth and holds a Master's in Clinical Psychology. She earned her Bachelor's degree from University of New England in Political Science. Rachel is the proud new mom of Hannah who was born on May 22, 2015.



Patrick Russell was recently promoted to the position of **Integration Care Facilitator** at **Project ROAR**. Patrick worked as a full-time Charge Person and Intake Case Manager at the agency's First Step Inn Emergency Shelter. He also worked as a Case Manager at High Point Treatment Center, as a Residential Manager at Better Community Living and DESE Manager at Life Stream, Inc.



Julie DaSilva was recently promoted to **Intake Case Manager** at the **First Step Inn Emergency Shelter**. Julie was originally hired as a Charge Person at the shelter. Julie is actively involved in the agency's Diversity Council as the secretary. Formerly Julie worked as a cook at Prima Café, and a chef at Entourage. Julie holds an Associates degree from City College of San Francisco in Hotel & Restaurant Management and a Certificate in Culinary Arts from the International Institute of Culinary Arts



Jesse Barbosa was recently promoted to **Senior Charge Person** at the **Men's Recovery Home**. Jesse has worked for Steppingstone since July 21, 1987. Jesse earned his Associates degree from Bristol Community College in Clinical Child Care. He formerly worked as an Assistant Teacher at Westall Scholl, St. Vincent's Home, Perkins School for the Blind, John E. Boyd Center at BCC and as a Teacher's Aid at C.E.T.A. When Jesse is not working at Steppingstone he enjoys cooking some of his favorite recipes with his grandson.



Jennifer Medeiros was recently hired as a **Housing Case Manager** at Steppingstone's **First Step Inn Shelter**. Jennifer earned an Associates degree from Bristol Community College in Business and has been working toward a BA in Business Management. Jennifer recently worked at Community Counseling of Bristol County as a Recovery Partnership Counselor, at Crystal Springs as an Assistant House Manager. She has also worked as a Personal Care Attendant.



Anabela Oliveira was recently hired as an **Integrated Care Facilitator** at **Project FAIHR**. Anabela earned an Associates degree from Bristol Community College in Liberal Studies. She worked at the New Bedford Police Department as a Domestic Violence Victim Advocate, at Luzo Autobody as a Sales Manager and most recently at The Immigrants' Assistance Center, Inc. as a Deportation Case Manager & Health Educator.

Time to “Wake Up” Steppingstone Holds Successful Recovery Day Event



Steppingstone’s message is a simple one. It’s time to “Wake Up”. We all need to wake up because addiction is the most ignored health crisis in America and more people are impacted by it than cancer. In

addition, 90% of those in need of treatment don’t receive it and as a result one life is lost to addiction every 4 minutes.

To bring attention to this message on Wednesday September 30, 2015 Steppingstone, Inc. presented “Wake Up”, a recovery day event focused on addiction and the opiate crisis in the city of Fall River and the State. The event remembered those who lost their lives to addiction and celebrated those in Recovery.

The event began with the Department of Public Health Commissioner Monica Bharel, M.D. who has spearheaded the state’s response to the opioid crisis since taking office in February. During Dr. Bharel’s speech she clearly stated “as commissioner, I can tell you right now we’re in the middle of a crisis in Massachusetts related to addiction, and we all need to do our part together. We need your support and partnership to fight this.” Dr. Bharel is widely known for her work with vulnerable, underserved populations and for her efforts to eliminate health disparities.

Fall River’s Mayor Sam Sutter also participated in the event and followed Dr. Bharel to the podium. The Mayor spoke of the problems of addiction and went on to say that “my personal goal on behalf of the City is to cut the addicted population in the city of Fall River in half over the next two years.”

Following the Mayor, Linda from Learn to Cope spoke about how her organization provides support, education and resources to parents and family members coping with loved ones addicted to substances. Joan P., a mother, spoke emotionally about her daughter’s battle with addiction and how she lost her daughter, unborn grandchild and her daughter’s boyfriend to addiction over the course of 11 days.

John T. and Brooke C. both shared their stories of recovery and inspired the crowd to be hopeful that the journey to recovery was very possible.

The event concluded with Rosa Medeiros, Steppingstone Director of Homeless Services, leading the group in the release of a 100 purple balloons. The balloons were released in memory of everyone who has lost their life to addiction and those who are still battling.



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Get Steppin' Run & Walk Another Huge Success



On Saturday August 8, 2015, Steppingstone held its Thirteenth annual Get Steppin'

5K walk and run. Get Steppin' was once again a huge success raising over \$60,000 from both our many supportive sponsors and from all who participated in the race/walk. The event could not have been successful without the hard work of Steppingstone staff and the support of volunteers from both Bay Coast Bank and the Southcoast Leadership program.

This year's event was bigger and better than ever. It was held in a new location at the parking lot of BK's Beacon Restaurant on Airport Road with a route that wound through the industrial park. In addition to the new venue, a 5K race was also added this year with the help of Olympian Judi St. Hilaire. Ms. St. Hilaire, an eight (8th) place finisher of the 10,000 meter race at the 1992 Barcelona Olympics, was on hand to champion the race that included 44 runners along with dozens of walkers on the 3.6 mile course.

Get Steppin' raises money for the First Step Inn, Fall River's only homeless shelter operated by Steppingstone. The funds raised help to provide the homeless with educational opportunities, counseling, healthy warm meals and shelter, and other services aimed at keeping them clean, sober and safe.

"The funds we raise with our run/walk goes directly into the operation of our shelter and helps those in need find the treatment or services that will assist them in becoming contributing members of our society once again" said Kathleen Schedler-Clark, Executive Director. "The funds will also help keep our doors open 24 hours a day during the cold winter months." In addition, Steppingstone has a new building on Durfee Street that will be rehabbed very shortly and will accommodate even more of the homeless during the winter as well.

Rosa Medeiros, Director of the First Step Inn and Stone Residence knows firsthand what good comes from Get Steppin'. "At times I wish the good people of Fall River could actually see what good comes from their participation in this event. I have seen individuals who have come in from the street with no food or clothes, no goals or hope only to see them walk out several months later with a job, healthcare and an attitude that they can once again function as a participating member of society."

As a result of another very successful Get Steppin' event, the homeless in Fall River will continue to get the help that they need. And we have many of our employees to thank. Without your efforts, Get Steppin' would not nearly be as successful.

And remember, the Fourteenth Annual Get Steppin Run & Walk will be held on August 13, 2016 at the same location. We hope to see you all there!

First Step Inn Capital Campaign Receives \$2M CEDAC Grant



As you may be aware, Steppingstone is undertaking a capital campaign to relocate the First Step Inn Emergency Shelter to a large 50-bed facility. Last December, Steppingstone was awarded \$500,000 in Affordable Housing Program funding from the Federal Home Loan Bank of Boston for the First Step Inn Initiative, which moved the campaign closer to its total goal and invigorated fundraising efforts.

Since then, the Development Team at Steppingstone has worked diligently to secure the remaining funds needed to renovate the new shelter site on Durfee Street and complete the First Step Inn relocation project. Although various structural and mechanical issues with the building necessitated raising the Project's development budget to over \$4 million, the Development Team persevered and continued to seek funding to reach this much larger campaign goal.

After many months of continuing to work together with the Mayor's Task Force on Homelessness and BayCoast Bank, Steppingstone submitted an application to the Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development and CEDAC (Community Economic Development Assistance Corporation) for over \$2 million in state affordable housing grant funds for the First Step Initiative. The application consisted of hundreds of pages and months of work, with many Steppingstone staff members contributing to the effort.

In September, Steppingstone received notification that the Initiative received the full \$2 million requested. Although the campaign has received many generous contributions from private foundations, corporate foundations, and individual donors, this award from CEDAC is the single largest funding source to date, putting the First Step Inn Initiative within striking distance of its \$4 million fundraising goal. Renovation of the new shelter site is slated to begin in January of 2016 and will take approximately 10 months to complete.

New Bedford Women's Program Clients Assist Unresponsive Woman

As reported in SouthCoast Today, in late September clients at the New Bedford Women's Program found an unresponsive 30 year old woman as they were walking on Pleasant Street. They administered Narcan and she was then transported to St. Luke's Hospital for medical help. It is an ever-present reminder of the Opioid crisis in our midst and the importance of knowing how to administer Narcan or Naloxone.

Happenings at the Welcome Home & Medical Case Management Program

Steppingstone's Medical Case Management (MCM) and Welcome Home Program can be found at 5 Dover St. off a quaint cobblestoned lane in the heart of New Bedford's Historic District. This team of eight dedicated individuals work together to meet the diverse needs of the clients they serve. The program offers medical case management, housing advocacy, peer support, scattered site permanent housing and so much more.

Program participants take part in a quarterly CAB meeting that helps to guide and improve our services. Monthly support groups are offered in New Bedford and Fall River to community members who are living with HIV/AIDS. Monthly educational groups to help empower the clients in daily living are held throughout the year. With the recent epidemic of overdoses clients have been giving the opportunity to be trained in Narcan and Harm Reduction.

A yearly holiday party is planned for all the pro-

gram participants where a meal is provided, gifts are given to clients and their children, with holiday music and festivity for all who attend.

Our services are not just limited to working with our clients. We represent Steppingstone in numerous ways within the community. A member of our staff educates the women at the New Bedford Women's Program monthly about HIV, Hepatitis C, STIs and safer sex practices.

Dedicated staff members serve on several committees within the community of New Bedford such as the Homeless Network Service Providers, Recovery Day, World AIDS Day and Point in Time Counts. Additionally this year we provided a resource table at the Women and HIV conference in Acushnet, one of our esteemed peer advocates was a panel speaker, sharing her story of recovery and living with HIV. As you can see we are a small staff who do some big things down here on the N.B. waterfront.

From Struggle to Self-Sufficiency

Early one hot July morning as I was coming into work I found a young man sitting on the sidewalk in front of the shelter with his bags. He was very pleasant and polite so we talked for a moment. This young man did not let the fact that he was homeless discourage him in any way. He was hopeful about an upcoming job interview he had at Walmart. Unfortunately I was unable to offer him a bed due to the fact that we were at capacity. I stressed to him to keep checking in 2 or 3 times per day. The next morning I came into work to find that he had been admitted to the shelter. While here he did-

n't waste any time, he went on his interview and was hired and we applied for Mass Health and food stamps. I did a referral for him to Francis House, he interviewed and was accepted. Now he is working and has all services in place and will be moving into Francis House. This young man is a great example of when a person stays positive, persistent, is hard working and keeps the faith things can change. This young man is only 21 years of age. I am proud to say I had the pleasure of being his case manager and watched him as he transitioned from struggle to self-sufficiency. -- Terri Wilbur