



FIRST STEP
Domestic Violence Services

Annual Report

(419) 435-7300

info@firststepfostoria.org

www.firststepfostoria.org

Letter from the Director

To the Supporters, Community Partners, Donors and Friends of First Step,

As the new Executive Director at First Step, it is my honor and privilege to bring you the 2023 Annual Report. First Step has been a haven of hope, safety and support to survivors of domestic violence in the Seneca, Sandusky, Wood & Wyandot county areas for over 40 years. Since I started serving as Executive Director nine months ago I have had a front row seat to the amazing growth and sustainability First Step has experienced in 2023.

Over the past year, First Step has emerged from a global pandemic even stronger than before. Our financial stability is stronger than ever, and we continue to serve an increasing number of survivors. 2023 has brought numerous physical changes to our shelter from a newly installed playground for children to additional appliances to better serve survivors in shelter. In addition to physical changes, First Step has added three additional full-time employees and two part-time. This enables the shelter to be staffed on a near 24/7 basis providing additional safety and support to survivors.

As First Step moves into the New Year we are looking forward to exploring and implementing new services for our clients. Our dreams for the future include additional space, implementation of the Purple Leash Pet Project, and an upgrade project to our shelter bathrooms and kitchen.

Thank you for joining us in our dream for every individual to live a life free of violence and abuse, where domestic violence is no longer tolerated and everyone is treated with respect and dignity.

With Gratitude,

AMY KINNEY

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR





About Us

First Step is a domestic violence shelter serving Wood, Wyandot, Seneca, Sandusky, and Hancock counties in Northwest Ohio. Since 1980, First Step has provided shelter for victims of domestic violence and their children, 24-hour support line, advocacy, and outreach and support programs for men, women, and children. .



We were the first domestic violence shelter built in the state of Ohio from the ground up 4th in the nation. At First Step, we believe that every individual has the right to live a life free of violence and abuse. We work towards our vision of creating a society where domestic violence is not tolerated, and everyone is treated with respect and dignity.

Our Mission

"To provide safety, shelter and services to victims of domestic violence through community resources and collaboration."

Our Services

- Shelter
- Advocacy
- Court Accompaniment
- Safe at Home Program
- 24/7 Hotline Support
- Life Skills Support
- Therapy Dog



Board of Directors

Our Board of Directors has played a pivotal role in steering our organization towards unprecedented growth this year, their strategic guidance and unwavering commitment have proved to be invaluable assets to our success. This year, we have been excited to welcome new members, as well as continuing to build upon on the relationships formed with our more seasoned members. We could not be more thankful for everything each of them does for First Step.

Susan Wren

President

Marrisa Orzechowski

Vice President

Rebecca Terry

Secretary

Scott Harlow

Treasurer

Jennifer Croy

Board Member

Lydia Bauler

Board Member

Sarah Rochowiak

Board Member

Pam Morral

Board Member

Jill Filiater

Board Member

Dawn Peace

Board Member

2023 Statistics

301

Crisis Calls Answered

374

Support Services Offered

49

Total Survivors in Shelter
(23 adults, 26 children)

3,341

Total Bed Nights in Shelter

110

Warm Coats Given Away

18

Medical Referrals

20

Financial Referrals

111

Legal Referrals

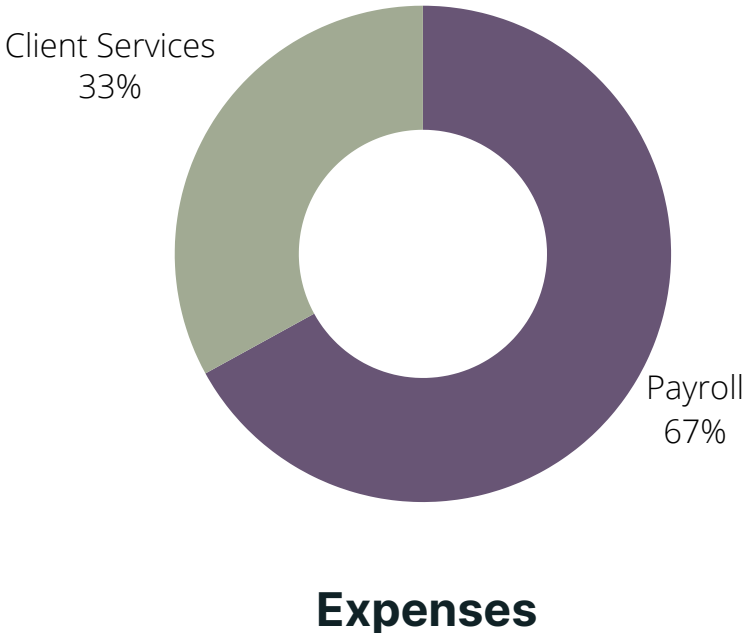
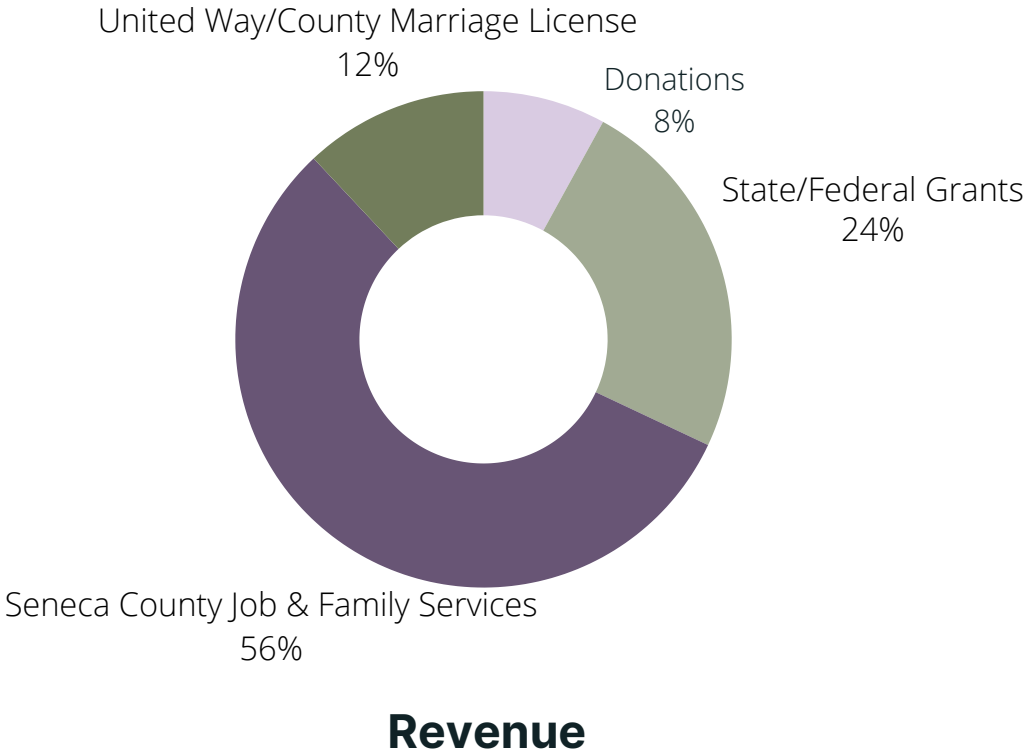
Survivor Statements

“Without First Step and having a safe place to go, I would not be alive today.”

“Thanks to First Step, I am finally getting my life back!”

“Without First Step, I would have never been able to get back on my feet.”

Revenue & Expenses



Community Engagement

Events:

- Red Carpet Affair Sponsored by St. Francis Ministries
- Spill the Tea Event at Downtown ReEvented
- Fostoria Farmer's Market
- Tiffin Heritage Festival Parade
- Domestic Violence Awareness Month Project Wayne Public Library
- Domestic Violence Awareness Open House Java's Enchanted Bean
- Justice 4 Migrant Women Tent at Sandusky County Fair
- Tiffin-Seneca United Way booth at Seneca County Fair
- Spread the Warmth Coat Giveaway

At First Step, we are constantly trying to make new connections, these events were just a few ways that we were able to engage with our community this year.

Over 700 community members were reached through our involvement in local events



Community Presentations

- Fostoria Rotary Club
- Wayne Public Library
- Wayne Senior Center
- Ohio Child Conservation League Fostoria
- Domestic Violence Awareness Open House
- Java's Enchanted Bean



Meet Gracie



Our Therapy Dog

Gracie is a one year old yellow lab who is in training to become a Certified Therapy Dog. Her handler is our Executive Director, Amy Kinney. Gracie brings joy throughout our shelter, and is not just for our clients, but also for our staff. The staff of DV shelters are often exposed to vicarious trauma and Gracie seems to know when to seek out staff who are struggling.



2023 Rebrand

NEW LOGO:



FIRST STEP
Domestic Violence Services

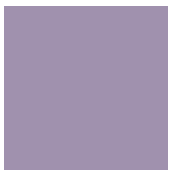
NEW SLOGAN:

*"EMPOWERING SURVIVORS,
ONE STEP AT A TIME"*

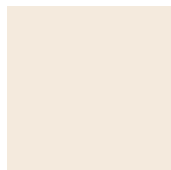
NEW WEBSITE:

WWW.FIRSTSTEPFOSTORIA.ORG

NEW COLOR PALETTE:



HEX #A091AE



HEX #727D5B



HEX #A1AA93



HEX #685575



HEX #D9CBE2



HEX #727D5B

In a strategic move aimed at amplifying our impact, First Step decided to rebrand our organization. Recognizing the need for a more cohesive, compelling, and recognizable identity, the decision to rebrand was rooted in our commitment to better serve survivors across all fronts. Through extensive collaboration with our consultant, Leah Cordy, and thoughtful consideration, we crafted a brand that not only reflects our unwavering dedication to empowering survivors but also resonates with a broader audience. This rebranding initiative serves as our commitment to continuous growth and innovation, ensuring that First Step remains at the forefront of advocacy, support, and awareness for those affected by domestic violence.

New Playground



The playground was made possible in part through donors, and a Serve Ohio Grant. Many volunteers gathered to lay the base of the playground in June; the equipment had previously been on the playground of the old St. Wendelin Elementary School in Fostoria and has been upcycled to provide a safe place for our children.





Grants

- Meijer Store Findlay OH (linens for survivors)
- Walmart Tiffin OH (linens for survivors)
- Greater Fostoria Community Foundation (Asphalt Driveway)
- FVPSA (Federal Grant) Family Violence Protection and Services Act)
- Attorney General Baseline Domestic Violence Grant (State of Ohio)
- United Way of Fostoria
- Tiffin-Seneca United Way
- United Way of North Central Ohio





Donors & Supporters



Geary Family YMCA
Hope Lutheran Church Fostoria OH
First Presbyterian Church Tiffin OH
Fostoria Rotary Club
AmVets Post 69 Fostoria OH
Stearns Financial Group
Joe & Brenda Stearns
Union United Methodist Church Fostoria
St. Johns United Church of Christ Women's Guild Fostoria
St. Francis Senior Ministries Tiffin
AmVets Post 69 Ladies Auxillary Fostoria
Danielle Smith Insurance
Alpha Delta Kappa Teacher's Sorority BGSU
St. John's United Church of Christ Fostoria
Women of the ELCA Central Conference
Risingsun First Church of God Women's Breakfast Club
KT Ohio
Ohio Child Conservation League Fostoria Club
All Saints Parish New Riegel OH
Carey High School Teen Leadership Corp
Old Fort Banking Co Fostoria
Fostoria Lions Club
Tiell Properties
Traded Treasures
Nancy Rubenstein
Firelands Association of Realtors
Hopewell Church of God Tiffin
Arcadia United Methodist Church
Dr. Ryan Kinn
Jane Stearns
Jules Cavey
Gail Sherwood
PC Net Techs
Body Fit by Lisa
Linda Lopez-Fouts

Event Sponsors

- Baumann Auto Group
- Beerco
- 5 Star Maintenance
- H&E Janitorial
- Ohio Logistics
- Tiell Financial
- Clouse Construction
- Mennel Milling
- The Beach House
- Hope's Landing
- American Table
- Reineke Ford
- Dr. Ryan Kinn
- Wolph Chiropractic
- Thrivent Financial
- Terra Community College
- Dunkin Donuts
- Ballreichs
- Autozone
- Ace Hardware
- Marcos Fostoria



To Learn More...

Thank you so much for reading our 2023 Annual Report. If you know someone in need of assistance or would like to get involved with our organization, please reach out via phone, email, or the contact form on our website.



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Website

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