

NEWSLETTER

January 2026 First Step Domestic Violence Services



Website:

www.firststepfostoria.org

Phone:

(419) 435-7300

Email:

info@firststepfostoria.org

Address:

PO Box 1103
Fostoria, OH 44830

Follow us on Facebook!



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

This January, First Step joins the nation in raising awareness during Human Trafficking Awareness Month. At First Step, we stand firm in our commitment to supporting survivors, educating our community, and working to prevent exploitation in all its forms. Together, we can bring visibility to this issue and fight for the freedom and dignity every person deserves.

2025 STATISTICS

595

Crisis Calls Answered

24

Clinical Counseling
Clients

49

Total Survivors in
Shelter
(27 adults, 22 children)

3,847

Total Bed Nights in
Shelter

250

Warm Coats Given
Away

4,767

Miles of Survivor
Transportation

16

Outreach Clients

0

Volunteers

18

Educational
Presentations Given

0

Individuals Turned
Away for Shelter

SHELTER MOMENTS



STAFF SPOTLIGHT



Kelly has been with First Step for over 5 years. She has served as shelter monitor, advocate, and now serves as Shelter Care Coordinator. Kelly also has a background in healthcare as a medical assistant for 12 years. She is a mother of three and a grandmother of eight. As a member of Fostoria Baptist Church, she volunteers her time as a teachers' assistant and bus ministry. Kelly's hobbies include reading, gardening, going to flea markets, and spending time with her family.

**KELLY SMITH – SHELTER CARE
COORDINATOR**

BOARD MEMBER SPOTLIGHT



SCOTT HARLOW – TREASURER

Scott has served on the Board of Trustees as Treasurer of First Step since 2011. He has assisted in various Finance and Management capacities and has taken a more active role in some areas of daily operations in recent years. Scott received his Bachelor of Science in Business Administration from Bowling Green State University. He became a Certified Public Accountant in 1984 and practiced in Public Accounting for eight years. Since 1992, he has served as Chief Financial Officer for a distributing company in Fostoria.

SHELTER NEEDS LIST

Donations to:

First Step Domestic
Violence Services

1099 Columbus Ave.
Fostoria, OH 44830

419-435-7300

Email:
info@firststepfostoria.org

Website:
www.firststepfostoria.org

***Ask how your donations
can go twice as far with the
In-Kind Donations form!**

Our shelter is able to continue serving survivors thanks to the generosity and support of our community. Donations play a vital role in helping us provide a safe, comfortable, and healing environment for those in need. Every contribution makes a meaningful difference in the lives of the individuals and families we serve. Below is a list of items our shelter can always use to help our daily operations run more smoothly

Adult Tylenol	Mattress Protectors -
Bird Seed	Twin
Baby Body Wash	Paper Towels
Baby Lotion	Plastic Cups, Bowls,
Baby Powder	Plates
Bath Towels	Pillows
Brooms & Dust	Pillowcases
Pans	Shampoo
Cereal	Sheets - Twin Size
Canned Food	Stamps
Conditioner	Swifter Wet Jet Solution
Dishwasher Soap	Swifter Wet Pads
Disinfectant	Toddler Booster Seat
Wipes	Toddler Potty Seat
Fabuloso	Toilet Paper
Fabric Softener	Trash Bags (13 or 30 GAL)
Laundry	
Detergent	

SUCCESS STORY

After six years in a relationship marked by emotional abuse, control, and manipulation, one mother made the courageous decision to leave when the violence escalated to physical harm. She and her four-year-old son sought safety, beginning their journey in emergency shelter. While she took important first steps toward independence, limited time and resources made it difficult to secure stable employment and housing before her stay ended.

When she entered First Step's shelter program, she shared how the abuse had deeply affected her mental health, leaving her feeling overwhelmed, discouraged, and unsure how to move forward. Through consistent support, advocacy, and encouragement, she began to rebuild her confidence and sense of self-worth.

During her time at First Step, she secured employment—an achievement that significantly boosted her confidence and sense of independence. With additional support, her son was enrolled in preschool, where he thrived socially and emotionally. After five months in our program, she successfully transitioned into permanent housing with assistance from GLCAP.

Thanks to the generosity of long-time First Step community partners, she was able to furnish her new home, creating a safe and welcoming space for herself and her child. Watching her grow, regain stability, and achieve her goals has been a powerful reminder of the impact of trauma-informed services and community support.

Today, she remains connected to First Step and continues to participate in family events alongside her son. Her journey reflects the resilience of survivors and the importance of comprehensive support in creating lasting change.

“I am extremely grateful for the support and guidance I have received as a resident of the shelter. It has allowed me to grow and become a more emotionally stable parent and has been a steppingstone to independent living.”

UPCOMING EVENTS

Contact Us

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In recognition of Teen Dating Violence Awareness Month this February, we invite all teens to join us at the Teen Center at the Kaubisch Library in Fostoria.

Teens will have the opportunity to learn about First Step's services, win cool prizes, and explore what healthy, meaningful relationships look like in a fun and engaging environment.

We hope to see you there as we work together to promote respect, safety, and healthy connections for teens in our community.

Wednesday, February 11, 2026 |
3 p.m. - 5 p.m.
Kaubisch Library