

NEWSLETTER

April 2026 *First Step Domestic Violence Services*



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www.firststepfostoria.org

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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 April, First Step joins organizations across the country in recognizing Sexual Assault Awareness Month (SAAM). This national observance is dedicated to increasing public understanding of sexual violence, equipping individuals with prevention tools, and advocating for the rights and needs of survivors. SAAM emphasizes that sexual assault is a pervasive issue impacting individuals of all genders, ages, and backgrounds.

Q1 STATISTICS

JANUARY 1 - MARCH 31

117

Crisis Calls Answered

950

Total Bed Nights in
Shelter

19

Total Survivors in
Shelter
(9 adults, 10 children)

945.2

Miles of Survivor
Transportation

10

Outreach Clients

23

Educational
Presentations Given

25

Survivors unable to
house due to limited
shelter availability

SHELTER MOMENTS



STAFF SPOTLIGHT

Joni Spink is a licensed professional counselor, through the state of Ohio. Joni completed her Master of Arts in Clinical Counseling from Winebrenner Theological Seminary, in October of 2019. She began working with clients, in a mental health setting, during her internship in 2018 when she filled her first caseload with Wyandot Counseling Associates, in Upper Sandusky, Ohio. Becoming a counselor was a lifelong goal of Joni's. As life would have it, there were twists and turns along the way. Joni worked in corrections for ten years before she resigned from her position, as Cognitive Skills Specialist at Oriana House, CROSSWAEH, to further her education in the mental health field.



JONI SPINK
LICENSED PROFESSIONAL COUNSELOR

Combining these experiences gives Joni a unique blend of personal and professional experiences. Joni has facilitated cognitive behavioral group therapy, helped people in recovery from substance misuse, counseled in different school settings, private practice, residential treatment and now at the domestic violence shelter. Joni is most passionate about helping people heal from intimate partner violence and trauma. However, Joni has experience working with mood disorders, adjustment disorders, grief, posttraumatic stress disorder, autism, attention deficit disorders, anxiety, depression, obsessive compulsive disorder, personality disorders, schizophrenia, conduct disorders, couples counseling, and family counseling. Last, Joni started counseling part time at First Step in November, 2025 and now she works full time, Monday through Friday; first shift, hours vary. She is grateful for, and excited about, working the team at First Step!

BOARD MEMBER SPOTLIGHT



SUSAN WREN
BOARD PRESIDENT

Susan Wren, President of the Board of First Step, is a Continuum of Care (CoC) Coordinator with the Coalition on Homelessness and Housing in Ohio (COHHIO). She provides training, technical assistance, and support to 80 rural and suburban counties across Ohio, helping communities navigate the Coordinated Entry system. Susan holds a B.A. in Psychology from Bowling Green State University. Outside of work, she enjoys traveling, gardening, and spending time with her family and dogs. She has served on the board since 2018.

SUCCESS STORY

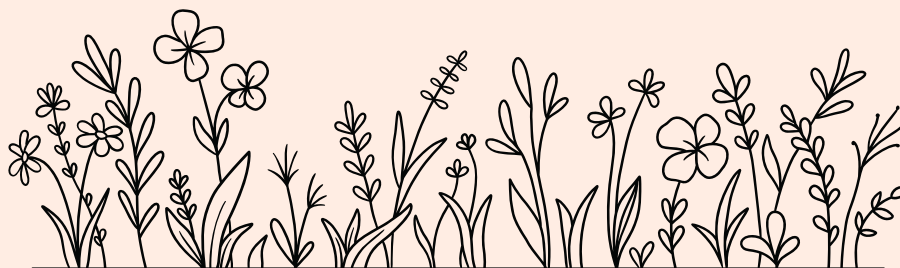
This survivor came to First Step with her young daughter, fleeing an abusive relationship. She had tried to keep her family together so that her daughter could live with both of her parents, but she finally made the tough decision to leave, knowing that this was not the type of relationship that she wanted her daughter to think was “ok”. During the relationship, she suffered physical and emotional abuse. Her daughter’s father had also introduced her to drugs as a way of controlling her.

When she left the relationship, she knew that she needed help in getting and staying clean from drugs for herself and for her daughter. She accomplished that through outpatient treatment which included counseling. During counseling, she uncovered just how bad the domestic violence had become prior to leaving and how unsafe of an environment she and her daughter had been living in.

When she entered our shelter, she did not have a healthy support system. Her entire family had suffered with addiction and/or were still active users. Her siblings had also been in and out of prison for drug related charges. Sadly, losing her brother to troubled addiction.

She relied on First Step to teach her life skills and to guide her through the process of starting over. She gained employment, a car, maintained her sobriety, and housing while at First Step.

To this day, she continues to attend Art Therapy once a week at First Step while her daughter enjoys working with our child advocate.



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	