



First Step Home
2211 Fulton Ave.
Cincinnati, OH 45206
www.firststephome.com



Annual Report 2022

Development



We are so incredibly grateful to all the foundations, individuals, corporations, and government entities that supported First Step Home in Fiscal Year 2022. Altogether, we raised over \$2.3 million dollars. Our Development Committee, chaired by Sara Breiel, includes Mary Schwaderer, Montroue Miles, Brent Dapper, Margo Spence, and Greg Ebel. They all contributed much for us this year, for which we are grateful. The Gala Committee also worked hard this year. Many thanks to Maureen Heekin, Mary Schwaderer, David Nuscher, Margo Spence, Angie Hater, Sara Breiel, Gina Crowley, and Jenny Reilly for all their support for the First Step Home: Hope, Help, Healing TV special, which aired on June 9th, 2022 garnering over \$105,000 and 23,000 viewers. Special thanks to all who helped.

The foundations and grantors who helped support us so much include:

- The Rosenthal Family Foundation - \$100,000
- The George B. Riley Trust - \$65,000
- The Charlotte R. Schmidlapp Fund - \$50,000
- Interact for Health - \$35,000
- The Williams Family Foundation - \$30,000
- The L&L Nippert Charitable Foundation and the Carol Ann and Ralph V. Haile, Jr. Foundation, and the John A. Schroth Family Charitable Trust of PNC - \$25,000
- The Sauerland Foundation - \$22,000

Other integral foundations who have supported us for many years include: the Andrew Jergens Foundation, the Ed and Joann Hubert Family Foundation, Maureen Heekin, Huntington Bank, the James J. & Joan A. Gardner Family Foundation, the Louise Taft Semple Foundation, the Scripps Howard Foundation, the Sutphin Family Foundation, the Wohlgemuth Herschede Foundation, and the Zent Family Foundation. For gifts from \$10 to \$100,000 we are truly appreciative — Thank you all so very much for your support.

A Letter from the President & Board Chair

Dear Friends of First Step Home,
It is hard to believe that we are still dealing with the ramifications of the pandemic. COVID continues to present challenges to our day-to-day operations, as well as our long-term goals and projects. We are, however, meeting these challenges head-on.

By the end of 2022, we are pleased to report that the renovations will be completed at our Family Unity Center. Many of the program elements have already been available to clients, and we look forward to celebrating the opening of this building, which will offer mothers, children, and families integrated services that will promote healthy social and emotional, and physical development.

Our Recovery Support Center (RSC), which was previously called 3.2 Withdrawal Management, officially opened on November 29, 2021. This program adds a new and much-needed initial level of treatment for the women in our care and reinforces our mission of a continuum of care for each of our clients. We hope the women completing RSC will choose to remain with First Step Home for treatment as they seek sobriety.

We did encounter a slight broadcast delay on June 2, 2022, of our WCPO TV special when we were pre-empted by the President's press conference, but the rescheduled airing of First Step Home: Hope, Help, Healing, on June 9, 2022, received rave reviews and generous donations. The recognition for our three award recipients was included, and it was a wonderful opportunity to share our amazing client stories and explain the numerous programs and services available.

As we mentioned, we are continuing to meet our challenges head-on — including our financial goals. Once again, we raised more than \$2 million in grants/gifts from government sources, private foundations, individuals, and corporations. All monies raised will ensure that First Step Home can provide treatment for clients with a well-trained, professional staff and administration in a safe and nurturing environment.

We would like to acknowledge and thank our dedicated staff, board, donors, corporate partners, and volunteers for their continued commitment to First Step Home! This amazing team provides the solid foundation that makes First Step Home a premier addiction treatment facility, and for that, we are very grateful.

Lastly, we are excited to announce that we will soon be celebrating the 30th anniversary of First Step Home's founding. In 1993, a group of forward-thinking Cincinnatians recognized the need for a women's recovery and treatment facility. Although we have grown through the years by adding many programs and services, our core mission has always stayed the same — to help women recover from addiction and seek sobriety while staying with their children. We believe it is truly something to celebrate!

Sincerely,



Margo Spence
President and CEO



Brent Dapper
Board Chair

Clinical

Leave Your Legacy

You can continue supporting First Step Home in the present – and future. We can help you provide a long-term gift beginning now, through retirement plan assets, your will, life insurance policy and/or other resources.

Contact Rachel Lyon at, Rachel.Lyon@firststephome.org for more information.

Based on reporting from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, numbers of overdose deaths have continued to rise. As reported, more than 107,000 Americans died of drug overdoses last year. By all accounts this sets a disturbing record in the growing opioid epidemic. Further reporting suggests that there is an overdose death every 5 minutes in America.

If not frightful enough, another startling concern is the stigma of addiction; the message that you are a bad person and deserve bad things because of your addiction. It is the thinking, "If I were not an addict, I would be treated better." We know and want all clients to understand that addiction is a disease of the brain, just as asthma is a disease of the lungs. Addiction is considered a highly treatable disease and recovery is attainable.

Our services are designed to meet the needs of clients and families in recovery, including a model of detox in our Recovery Support Center that helps clients entering treatment with withdrawal symptoms to stabilize for ongoing care in recovery. The Maternal Addiction Program provides increased parenting skills, vital education for mothers to gain successful engagement with their infants, medical care for physical development, and nursing care. The Terry Schoenling Home for Mothers and Infants is now five years old. It remains a highlight service for our clients to have an individual space to live in where they can nurture and bond with their newborn infants. The Child Resiliency Program assists mothers in supporting their young children by managing their emotions and utilizing parent interactive therapy.

Parents also understand the impact of Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome (NAS) and the need for supporting their child with self-soothing and other techniques. We also provide Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT), where clients are supported by medication management at all levels of care. We are planning and are in the process of opening our Family Unity Center, which will provide a broad spectrum of therapeutic, evidence-based practices to meet the needs of women, children, and families in one location.

First Step Home is an organization that thrives on relationships with community partners, with whom we engage with and support in our client care. Our many partners include: Child Protective Services, Crossroads, Good Samaritan Hospital's HOPE Program, Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center (CCHMC), and the Addiction Services Council.



Client Story

Nicole has been at First Step Home for six months. She arrived with the clothes on her back and has remained sober during her stay, first in residential and now in campus housing. Her story is heartbreaking – yet filled with new hope.

Prior to coming to FSH, she had been living out of a trailer – doing methamphetamines and alcohol. Her boyfriend introduced her to meth and brought her out to a different county with the youngest two of her four children. She was isolated, had no friends, and frequently ended up in arguments with her boyfriend. These domestic disputes escalated until he set her on fire. Nicole has burn scars on her back to this day. She had been in abusive relationships before, but this time she wanted to show her daughter that enough was enough, so she pressed charges. He only got three months, so concerns about the safety of her family loomed largely.

Seven years prior, Nicole endured struggles with alcoholism and ADHD. Unable to get legal medication for her conditions, she went to the streets. Nicole was extremely depressed and

was also diagnosed with PTSD from the violence in her life. She never felt safe. When she brought charges, Child Protective Services took her two boys to foster care. Nicole didn't want to call her mom or stay with any of her younger siblings considering she had not been in contact with her brothers for three years. She was ashamed of her state and didn't want 'family charity.'

Nicole then decided to move back to Hamilton County and learned that her 18-year-old daughter was pregnant. She stopped using for 45 days but got arrested on an old charge. She went to a drug treatment facility rather than jail. She learned of First Step Home at the facility and explored the program online. She prayed on it and decided to contact us.

On April 21, 2022, Nicole came to FSH and immediately started volunteering in the kitchen. She still uses recipes and skills she learned from her time here. As the oldest of five children, Nicole had always had a lot of family responsibilities. About a month ago, Nicole's mom had a severe stroke. Nicole is glad she stayed sober during this period and is looking to get

certified as an STNA (state tested nursing assistant) to provide care for her mom.

Right now, she's living day by day, hoping to regain custody of her two young children as soon as she gets a job and finds secure housing.

Once she got into First Step Home, Nicole felt like she had a home and family for the first time in years. She sets goals every day, taking small steps. Nicole is taking vocational training and is looking at this time as a resting period in order to recover. She has learned how to be on time for appointments and how to get up and set a schedule. She is learning how to write things down in her own hand in a calendar to jog her memory for appointments and other time-critical events.

Nicole has mended relationships with her brothers and family. She thinks her daughter is a great mom and is proud of her. Nicole credits her therapist with giving her the support and guidance she needs to go for a sober, successful path.



Nicole G.
CLIENT

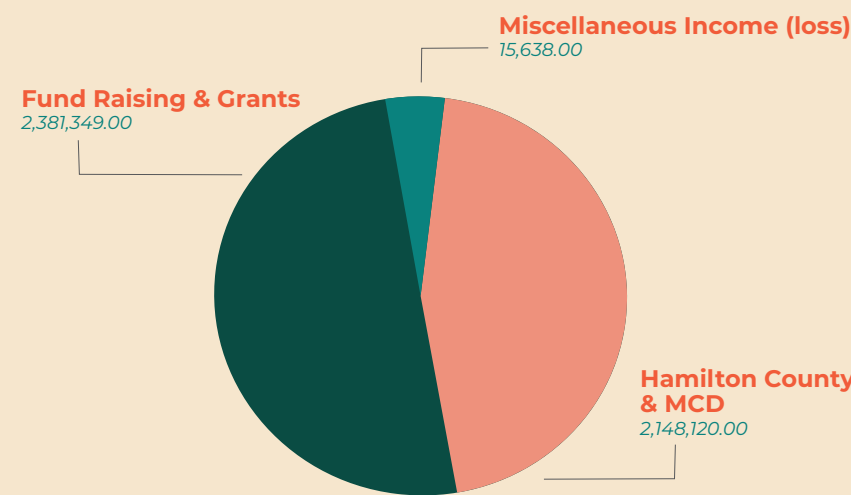
Finance

Much like Ohio weather, you don't have to wait long for things to change in the substance abuse treatment field. Although FY2022 continued to have the COVID-19 pandemic to deal with, the citizens of Ohio were ready to claim a level of victory over the virus. Along with reductions in the number of Ohioans testing positive for COVID-19, the grant funding we saw in FY2021 also slowed down. There were significant reductions in the State Opiate Response (SOR) grants, elimination of the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) Grant in addition to cuts to several other smaller COVID-19 grants. Even with some grants slowing down, we were able to raise our highest amount ever totaling \$2,381,349.

On the Residential and Intensive Outpatient Program (IOP) offerings of FSH programs, our client census has been down 20-30% per month. Program regulations/rules to protect our clients as much as possible from contracting COVID-19 have also been viewed by many current and prospective clients as too restrictive and that has not helped our client census. As most of these services are paid for by Medicaid or Hamilton County Board, we have seen reductions in these funding categories as well. Reductions in billing to these two sources is 10% or more, bringing our revenue from these sources down to \$2,148,120 from the previous year. We continue to examine ways to make our treatment programs effective and safe, but also reasonably flexible.

On the program side, we are excited about starting our new Recovery Support Center (RSC) to address the detox needs of the clients that come to us for services. This much-needed addition to the First Step Home treatment services is growing slowly but less than projected. The program started in November 2021. Overall resistance to residential treatment during COVID-19 times has negatively affected our census with most programs down 20% or more, and this new program has not been spared. Maintaining a core staff level in this new program is expensive, but like any new program or service, it takes time to market and build the program. In addition, there has been significant competition in the past year from other programs, especially "for profit" outpatient programs that offer detox services.

Last on the revenue reduction review are the "Book" losses on our investments. We are required to show the loss in value on our books but effectively there is no loss unless we sell the investments, which is not planned at this time. This book loss on our investments also has contributed to an overall loss for the year as the value of the investment account fell by approximately \$90,000. Our cash flow is still good at present as a result of prior years' profitability.



Housing

First Step Home (FSH) currently consists of twelve buildings, some of which underwent major renovations this past year. The 23-unit apartment building located at 2160 Fulton, which opened three years ago, has been near full capacity. The rental units are subsidized through Cincinnati Metropolitan Housing Authority (CMHA), which allows tenants to pay a reduced rent based on 30% of their income. We continue to have a long waiting list for the units. 2160 provides a second chance for women who would not normally be able to afford a market rate apartment or would be denied due to legal issues in their backgrounds. Living at 2160 allows the tenant to establish good rental history while living in safe, permanent, and supportive housing. The caveat is, if they are in need of services, FSH offers fully integrated, person-centered treatment right across the street.

In April of 2020, FSH purchased a multi-unit building located at 2232 Fulton. This building is occupied by a long-time tenant. FSH is exploring the possibility of turning it into another Project Based Voucher (PBV) for single women with multiple children who would have access to our services including the Family Unity Center.

We are delighted to report that the many renovations at 2203 are complete. The Recovery Support Center was completed in September 2021, which included a wing in the main treatment center. Former bedrooms received new lighting, paint, and furniture that met the needs of women going through detoxification.

The service model approach will improve the delivery of services for women who enter treatment into the Residential Program.

Renovations for the elevator have been completed after much anticipation. It is modern and spacious enough for mothers and their strollers and allows for staff to quickly travel from the first to the third floor with ease. The funds have been made possible by Ohio Mental Health and Addiction Services (OHMHAS) and the Spaulding Foundation. In addition, the front lobby at the Main House was completely renovated. The main entrance is now bright, welcoming, and has a more modern feel. The parlor was also updated.

In April 2022, renovations began for 2215 Fulton, known as The Family Unity Center. This house will offer services in our Child Resiliency Program and family therapy, and provide much needed additional office space. Much of the work and renovation has been completed. The anticipated opening date will be in the Fall of 2022.

