



FRESH off the *STEPS*

2020 ANNUAL REPORT

*A place for help, a place for hope,
a place for healing...*

A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

We could never have imagined when our fiscal year started in July 2019 that when it ended in July 2020 our world would have been turned upside-down. This worldwide pandemic is proving to be difficult for everyone, and especially for our women who are seeking a sober life. Following the COVID 19 guidelines while maintaining the needed continuity is a challenge for our entire agency. We are proud that First Step Home (FSH) has been able to stay open and is continuing to seamlessly provide our wraparound programs and services for our residents and their families.

When we opened the renovated apartment building at 2160 Fulton in May 2019, we recognized the crucial need of an affordable and safe housing option for our women and their families. This important addition to our FSH campus has been near capacity throughout this past year and we hope to fill those remaining vacancies from our waiting list very soon.

Our year-old Child Resiliency Program (CRP) fills a much-needed service for the children of our residents — as they often suffer with their own trauma due to the nature of substance abuse disorder. Since CRP launched, we have seen powerful and positive results. We are grateful to Interact for Health and the City of Cincinnati for their major funding, which has allowed First Step Home to provide services to 74 children and 50 mothers during this past year.

As we build on our past year's successful results, we look forward to and are excited about a new renovation on our campus – a professionally outfitted space called the Family Unity Center that will house the programs and services of our growing Child Resiliency Program. We are in the process of seeking funding and other approvals for the rehabilitation of 2215 Fulton Avenue.

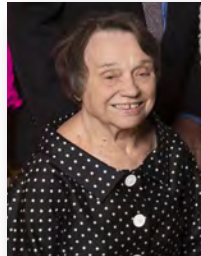
As you review this year's Annual Report, First Step Home hopes you will recognize our appreciation for all of our partnerships, donors, as well as for the vast community support we receive each and every day. Please stay safe and stay well.

Sincerely,



MARGO SPENCE

President & CEO



MARY SCHWADERER

Board Chair

MAJOR DONORS \$500+

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HOUSING

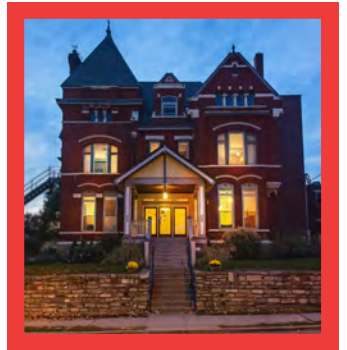
Our Campus currently consists of twelve buildings, and we are always busy making modifications and improvements to them! 2160 Fulton is a 23-unit apartment building which opened in May, 2019. The rental units are subsidized through Cincinnati Metropolitan Housing Authority and continue to have a waiting list. Women who have completed their treatment and are leading productive lives need permanent supportive housing. 2160 Fulton provides independent residences and allows them access to our fully integrated services, right across the street.

In April, we purchased a home located at 2232 Fulton. The building is currently occupied by tenants through the fall but will eventually provide additional housing for our clients.

We have seen rapid growth in our Child Resiliency Program during its first year. This growth together with our need for additional office and therapy spaces has led us to rehabilitate 2215 Fulton into a Family Unity Center, where all of these needs will be met in one location. We have selected a construction company and significant funding has been raised. Construction is expected to begin in the fall of 2020, with completion during the winter.

Renovations are in full swing at the Residential Treatment Facility at 2203 Fulton. The funds have been made possible by OHMAS (Ohio Mental Health and Addiction Services) and the Spaulding Foundation. A new roof was completed last fall. COVID 19 caused many delays with the remodeling of the elevator and we look forward to the updating of the reception desk and other areas of the building soon.

COVID 19 has had a direct impact on the clients residing in our Campus and Sober Living houses. We have had to constantly adjust our model of service to offer more activities on campus and offer more computer facilities for the residents, all while educating the women about the importance of the CDC Guidelines and the “new normal” of doing things.



CLIENT STORY

I lost three of my four boys to addiction. They've all been adopted now. When I was making the decision to get sober I wanted God to give me a second chance – I thought that meant giving me back my three children. But God had something else in mind for me.

When I got to First Step Home on May 2nd, 2018, I was pregnant with my fourth baby – my second chance. First, I went to the New Foundation and they suggested I go to First Step Home. They warned me that it would be hard, and I might not want to do everything that was suggested. But my whole family had died during my addiction, including my husband, mother and father. I had no one to rely on. So, I got there three months sober, pregnant with no one on the bench to help me. But the women helped me – the clients and my counselor.

I had an SSI diagnosis of being schizophrenic, so I had the funds and the sobriety to go into campus housing. My son Meechi was born – now he's two years old. I feel safe at First Step Home – I live in the apartments and there are women who look up to me because I have time. My counselor was down to earth and easy to talk to. I haven't started college yet but I want to go.

I wouldn't trade my time at First Step Home for anything. In my opinion, I was valued, did well, was popular, didn't get into fights with other clients and felt safe. Still do. I know I have people to talk to if I feel like relapsing but talking to the new girls helps me to feel strong. They just need someone to teach them how to laugh at themselves. And how to sit down, shut up and pay attention. Be patient and get your families to attend an Al-Anon meeting or an AA meeting.

Everybody needs a second chance. I'd tell new women to be brave – that you could come back from anything – to do things in spite of your fear. First Step Home is trying to keep you safe from negative influences. Girls leave for a lot of reasons: they miss their boyfriends, they want control of their own money, they want to use. I quit cold turkey and didn't do Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT). You can do it, too. Right here at First Step Home.



DEVELOPMENT

Fiscal year 2020 was our most successful year in Development by a significant amount. We raised \$1,225,301 in total gifts this year through grants, individual donations and corporations, even during the struggles of the first few months of the COVID 19 pandemic. We worked as a team with Sara Breiel leading the Development Committee, which includes Brent Dapper, Greg Ebel, M. Maureen Heekin, Carole Montroue Miles, Mary Schwaderer and Dee Stone. Many thanks also to the Benefit Committee for their help making the very best of our “no-show celebration” due to the coronavirus epidemic.

Our major grants came from a star-studded group of foundations including the George B. Riley Trust who gave \$100,000; \$85,000 from the Rosenthal Family Foundation; \$65,000 from the Greater Cincinnati Foundation; \$50,000 from Interact for Health; \$25,000 from the L & L Nippert Charitable Foundation; \$25,000 from the John A Schroth Family Charitable Fund/PNC; \$25,000 from the Deaconess Association Foundation; \$25,000 from the Carol Ann and Ralph V. Haile, Jr./US Bank Foundation; \$25,000 from the Wohlgemuth Herschede Foundation; \$20,000 from the Scripps Howard Foundation and \$20,000 from the Daniel & Susan Pfau Foundation. We were also delighted to have several foundations continue to support us over multiple years, such as the Ed and Joann Hubert Family Foundation, the Andrew Jergens Foundation, the Marge and Charles J. Schott Foundation, the Elsa Heisel Sule Foundation and the Williams Foundation.

We were also awarded major grants through the State Opiate Response (SOR) funding, totaling \$463,764 from the Ohio Mental Health and Addiction Services. Additionally, we raised \$60,000 from the City of Cincinnati for our Child Resiliency Program. Most important of all were the many donations by individuals, corporations and family foundations totaling \$127,931 including the First Step Home Celebration funds. Thank you to all who donated – every gift counts so much.



Consider a legacy gift to First Step Home

For more information contact Rachel Lyon. Rachel.lyon@firststephome.org (513) 961-4663 Ext. 107

FINANCIAL

What an amazing year we have experienced at First Step Home. The Pre-Audit June 2020 financials look like another very good year. It appears that we will meet or even exceed the prior year's excellent results. The COVID 19 pandemic has certainly affected our Residential and Campus census but primarily in the months of May and June in FY2020. We continue to seek various grants and funding to assist us in offsetting these losses in Medicaid and other funding due to attendance and census issues.

As directors and managers, we meet weekly to focus on our "Dashboard" of key indicators for First Step Home. We are constantly seeking new ways to attract and importantly "retain" clients. We strive very hard to provide health and safety factors into a client's treatment experience but sometimes that is viewed as too restrictive.

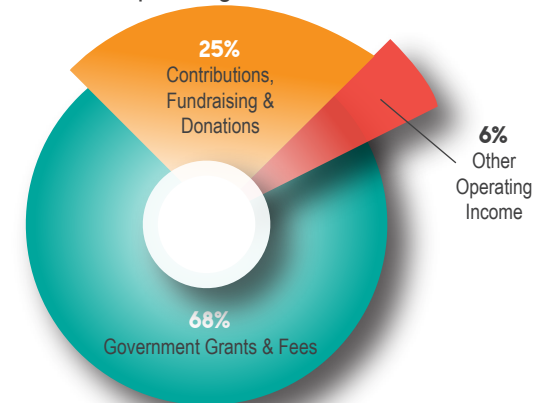
The 2160 Apartments project (LLC) has been very successful. The 23-bed apartments were essentially at capacity two months after we opened our doors! The estimated Revenue and Profit from the LLC for Fiscal Year 2020 is \$174,775 in revenues and \$86,856 in profit. The profit line does include a refund of nearly \$48,000 in past property tax that was refunded due to our non-profit status.

In summary, our Medicaid funding has been strong during FY20 aside from the last few months effected by COVID 19. The Development Department continues to be very successful with grant writing. Grants and donations continue to be an important part of our revenue stream brining in approximately \$1,225,301 as a result of the efforts of the Development Team.

Expenses continue to be watched carefully but all of our aging facilities require constant repair and maintenance. As we have grown as an organization over the past several years, we are also increasing our staff levels to address the increasing program needs of First Step Home.

FY 2020 REVENUES (PRE-AUDIT)

- Government Grants & Fees - \$3,338,787
- Contributions, Fundraising & Donations - \$1,225,301
- Other Operating Income - \$323,737

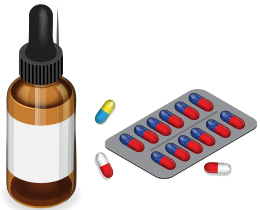


CLINICAL SERVICES

Coupled with COVID 19 pandemic, it is reported that individuals with substance use disorders have a significant risk of compromised physical conditions, such as diabetes, heart disease, a weakened immune system and respiratory changes caused by substance use. All of these increase susceptibility to COVID 19 and its complications for our clients. As we strive to confront the major challenges of opioid addiction and other drug overdoses, we remain hopeful and continue to build strategies to confront the ongoing epidemic, head on. Clearly, there has been a devastating effect on the lives of women and children without housing. As homelessness increases, their safety net is greatly diminished. We are honing our support skills for outreach and our clinical skills to identify and address social isolation, which is a key factor in recovery that can increase stress and susceptibility to substance misuse, addiction and relapse. We continue our emphasis on client engagement, educational supports and services that provide safety, client awareness, and building skills for a strong path to recovery. Additionally, we have begun to use telehealth to meet the person-centered plans for clients. Our commitment to our clients has never been greater and meeting their needs is our primary goal. Our staff has been outstanding.

Our core services have remained effective in meeting the developmental needs of children and recovery of mothers. The **Maternal Addiction Program** supports the care of moms and infants. Clients who are pregnant receive medical and educational services on their pregnancy and recovery. The **Child Resiliency Program** is focused on the specialized care of children, who experience Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome and ongoing developmental symptoms as a result of the mother's substance use disorder. These services provide engagement for children who benefit from the **Terry Schoenling Home for Mothers and Infants** and provide a safe environment for parent/infant bonding and is celebrating its third anniversary. We have added Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT) as part of our service delivery and client care.

We work from a collaborative team approach with community partnerships, where the needs of our clients are met by multiple providers, including Good Samaritan Hospital's HOPE Program, Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center (CCHMC), Child Protective Services, Crossroads and the Addiction Services Council. We are proud of our partnerships and the holistic client care we provide with their support.



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