



## NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### **AT A GLANCE**

**WHAT:** First Step celebrates Grand Opening of newly expanded Addictions Receiving Facility Center  
**WHEN:** Thursday, September 14, 2006  
**WHERE:** 1726 18th Street, Sarasota  
**WHO:** First Step - Addiction Recovery Programs

### **First Step Celebrates Opening of Addictions Receiving Facility**

With over 130 guests present, First Step celebrated the opening of its newly expanded 30-bed Addictions Receiving on Thursday, September 14. Bill Janes, Director of Florida's Office of Drug Control, First Step Board President and City Commissioner Mary Anne Servian, and The Honorable Robert Bennett of the 12th Circuit Court joined David Beesley, President and CEO of First Step in the afternoon program.

Built in part with support from Sarasota County, the facility, which officially opened August 1, accepts substance abusing offenders under the State's Marchment Act which permits substance abusing offenders to be held involuntarily for detox and assessment. The program will continue to treat non-offenders on a voluntary referral basis. The new jail diversion program is expected save the County Corrections Department an estimated \$350,000 annually.

Providing safe and medically supervised detox and assessment services is an important change from the way substance abusing offenders have been cared for previously. In years past, as many as 800 offenders annually have been jailed, charged and released without treatment. Now, these individuals are transported directly to the new facility where, once detoxed, they are referred to one of First Step's treatment options or to other programs in the community. Elaine Charyn, Director of Detox and Nursing stated, "The first involuntary client told me that he's been to several other facilities; however his stay at First Step has changed his life." She continued to state that the man was touched by the caring, dedicated staff, and that their compassion gave him the determination to make a commitment to additional treatment. Since the August 1 opening, over 180 clients have been treated at the Addictions Receiving Facility.

The renovations cost approximately \$900,000 and funding for the project came from Sarasota County, the William G. and Marie Selby Foundation, Roberta Leventhal Sudakoff Foundation and First Step.

For more information about First Step and ARF, or to schedule an interview with First Step please contact Angela Massaro-Fain at 941-351-0024 or email [amassarofain@grapeinc.com](mailto:amassarofain@grapeinc.com). Grapevine Communications is an award-winning advertising, marketing, and public relations firm based in Sarasota and serving clients nationwide.



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