



Stepping Stones

NEWSLETTER

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A COMPREHENSIVE CENTER FOR ALCOHOL AND DRUG REHABILITATION

www.fsos.org



Cheryl's Story

Cheryl McCullough woke up one morning last August and felt desperate. Months earlier, she had walked away from her boyfriend and infant son for a life of stealing, prostitution and manipulation. This was the life she'd chosen; the life that enabled her to smoke crack.

Feeling desperate, she sought help at Sarasota Memorial Hospital's emergency room where she was referred to First Step's Addictions Receiving Facility (ARF). While detoxing at the ARF, Cheryl received counseling and

(Continued)

The ARF in Action...

Under the Marchman Act, individuals picked up by law enforcement or treated by emergency room doctors may be involuntarily admitted to the ARF for detoxification from alcohol or drugs. While the primary focus of the facility is to provide help and services to those who need

(Continued)

Cheryl's Story... (Continued)

case management. Because she was homeless, her case manager secured her a bed in the Voluntary Interim Placement – Enhanced Recovery (VIP-ER) program run at The Salvation Army in conjunction with First Step and other local social service agencies.

Fearing a relapse, Cheryl worked with a case manager to gain admission to First Step's Seasons program, a long-term residential treatment program. Today, she is working on the internal issues and conflicts that led her to seek drugs in the first place.

Since entering Seasons, Cheryl has reunited with her boyfriend and son, now two. With plans to graduate from the Seasons program in May, Cheryl can then transition from a residential recovery program to continued counseling and support through First Step's Outpatient Services program.

As with many First Step clients, Cheryl is benefiting from a progression through several levels of First Step services. When asked what advice she would offer others in her position, she stated, "There is a better way, an easier way to be happy. You need to take help where it is available."

Cheryl is one of more than 500 people who have benefited from First Step's ARF since it opened August 1 with the ability to accept Marchman Act clients from local hospitals and law enforcement.

The ARF in Action... (Continued)



Chief Abbott

them, other advantages for law enforcement officers and emergency room staff members have emerged.

Lloyd Tucker, Emergency Room Director at Venice Regional Hospital, said his staff has sent about 20 people to the ARF since August. He feels that the ARF "is a blessing" because prior to its existence, intoxicated patients often were committed for care under the Baker Act and treated for a mental illness rather than for a substance abuse problem.

Similar sentiments were echoed by members of the Sarasota Police Department. Chief of Police Peter J. Abbott (a First Step Board member) calls the Addictions Receiving Facility a win-win situation. People who need intervention and treatment are receiving it and his officers spend less time transporting the individual to the ARF than they would processing the booking at the County jail.

Prior to the ARF opening, individuals under the influence of drugs or alcohol were jailed for 72 hours. Knowing that treatment is less expensive for the County than incarceration, Chief Abbott said, "Good resources were chasing after bad, especially considering the number of repeat offenders. We hope the ARF curbs the number of repeat jail visits and saves the County money."

Planned and Estate Giving

You can play a part in ensuring a successful tomorrow for First Step and the thousands of individuals we serve each year. By making a planned or estate gift to First Step, you will help to ensure our future as the region's premier provider of substance abuse treatment and recovery services.

Planned or estate giving is a strategy that can help you maximize your personal philanthropic goals while also helping to:

- Reduce your income taxes
- Avoid capital-gains tax
- Increase your spendable income
- Retain payments for life
- Achieve no-cost, worry-free asset management
- Reduce the amount of inheritance tax paid by your heirs

Planned gifts can be made in a variety of ways including bequests, charitable gift annuities, life insurance, various forms of trusts, or gifts of real estate or tangible personal property. Determining the gift form that is right for you is just as important as making the gift. Ultimately, the best plan will balance your wishes with those of your family and your charitable interests. Please discuss your options for planned giving with your financial advisor or contact the First Step Development Office at 552-2476 for more information.

Future issues of Stepping Stone will discuss various forms of planned giving. Look for April's article: "For a Limited Time Only: Use Your IRA as Never Before"

Circle of Hope

First Step has established the Circle of Hope to honor and recognize the generosity and vision of those who chose to leave a legacy through planned or estate gifts. Legacy donors will receive special recognition in First Step publications and invitations to annual Circle of Hope activities (we will honor requests for donor anonymity). Becoming a member of the Circle of Hope will enable us to not only show our appreciation for your generosity, but also to include your support in planning for First Step's future.

Enrollment in the Circle of Hope is simply a matter of advising First Step of the creation of a legacy gift: a bequest in a will, a charitable gift annuity, a trust, or designation as beneficiary of a retirement plan or life insurance policy. If you have already included First Step in your estate plan, you can become a charter member of the Circle of Hope by providing a written statement of your intentions to our Development Office at 1970 Main Street, 5th Floor, Sarasota, FL 34236 or call 552-2476 for information.

Dave's Message



As many of you know, our Residential Center, located in a 1950's era motel on North Washington Boulevard in Sarasota, is in a state of declining repair. Despite our efforts to sustain its use through continued maintenance, age is catching up with us and systems, from plumbing to roofing, are becoming increasingly fragile and difficult to repair.

We have begun work on a plan to replace and expand the facilities of the Residential Center. In November, the First Step Board of Directors adopted a resolution authorizing the creation of a Master Plan that ultimately will provide architects and contractors with a document that will guide our work over the coming years.

First Step owns approximately four acres at the North Washington site, including frontage on Route 301. We envision a project that will result in a holistic and green-built community with double the current number of beds for our residential treatment and recovery programs, support services including clinical offices, a kitchen and dining room, recreation areas, quiet spaces and administrative offices. We also expect the project to include mixed-used transitional sober housing and commercial spaces. When complete, we anticipate this project will be exemplary and a showcase to other substance abuse and human service providers. We will build in phases so our current level of service can be maintained during construction.

Although we won't have a budget for the project until the Master Plan is finalized, we know that it will require a capital campaign to solicit support from generous individual and foundation donors. In addition, we will seek federal, state and local support for components of the project best funded by public dollars. Some of these efforts are already underway; others will begin with the creation of the Master Plan. However, it's not too early to consider how your own gift might make a difference in the success of this project. Please contact me or Donna Wolski, Vice President of Development, if you would like to tour the Residential Center or learn more about our plans.

Changing Lives and Saving Families... a new and expanded residential center will allow First Step to help many more individuals find their way to a life of recovery... and that's what we are all about.

David J. Beesley, MPH
President/CEO

Keeping Kids off Drugs



First Step's **Strengthening Families Program** is an intervention effort designed to reduce juvenile substance abuse and other problem behaviors in young people ages 10-14. Based on a national model, the program uses a combination of parent, youth and family sessions designed to improve parenting skills and build the life skills of young people. The program helps parents improve their relationships with their children and decreases the likelihood of family conflict and risky adolescent behaviors. For information, call 366-5333.

Talk to Your Kids About Drugs

More than half of all American kids will try drugs at least once between first and 12th grade. You can influence your child's decision. Here are some tips to help you steer your child in the right direction.

- 1. Recognize that this is your job.** You have the greatest influence on your kids. Don't leave drug prevention to the school.
- 2. Start early.** Help your kids form attitudes toward drugs early. If they know drugs are bad long before they're offered any, it will be easier for them to say no when that time comes.
- 3. Keep it simple.** Be firm and clear about what you believe and the behavior you expect from your kids.
- 4. Encourage personal responsibility.** Self-reliance begins when kids take on some degree of responsibility. Responsible



kids make wise choices about drug use.

5. Be a good role model. No matter what you tell your children, behavior speaks volumes.

6. Know how to handle your own substance abuse history. While it may be tempting, avoid talking about your own experimentation with alcohol or drugs.

Your child may take this as evidence that such behavior is acceptable or harmless. However, if you are in recovery yourself, you may want to share your experience and describe how you were able to overcome addiction.

7. Reason with your kids. As your children grow up, rules won't be enough. They need information about the use of alcohol, tobacco and drugs. Talk with them, not just to them.

8. Listen. Listen to your child; encourage them to tell you what they think.

9. Know your kids' friends. Are the friends likely to try whatever is offered to them?

10. Don't worry. Taking a firm stand against drug use will not damage your relationship with your child. Many kids are looking for a good reason to avoid trying drugs, so it helps if they can explain, "My folks would kill me, if I did."



First Step Extends a Warm Thank You to Sponsors

First Step is pleased to announce that **Fifth Third Bank** is the platinum sponsor of the 2007 Caring Hearts Luncheon and **Manasota Flooring** has signed on as the presenting sponsor of the Third Annual Golf Classic.

First Step is grateful for the support of our corporate partners. Additional sponsorship opportunities are available – call Kelly French at 552-2065.

Recent Grants

First Step has received grants from the following:

- Harold C. and Jacqueline F. Bladel Foundation
- Designing Women Grant Program
- Bernard and Mildred Doyle Charitable Trust
- The GTR Foundation
- Annette J. Hagens Memorial Foundation

OUR MISSION

First Step of Sarasota prevents and treats alcohol and drug addictions and associated disorders. We foster fully functioning, productive individuals by offering a full array of services in partnership with our community.

First Step Welcomes New Board Member

First Step is pleased to announce that **Richard Carlson** has joined its Board of Directors. With a background in engineering, Richard retired in 1995 as Vice President and General Manager of the Siemens Power Corporation - Fossil Power Division. Richard, who is currently the principal

in a family-owned real estate investment company, brings his expertise to First Step's Building Committee where he will be significantly involved in planning the construction of our new Residential Center on North Washington Boulevard in Sarasota (*see Dave's Message elsewhere in this issue*).

Upcoming Events

Caring Hearts Luncheon Presented by Fifth Third Bank

Celebrate the success of the Mothers & Infants program, highlighted by grateful moms and smiling babies, at 11:30 AM, Thursday, February 15 at Michael's on East. Individual tickets are \$90, or you can host a table of 8 for \$750. For more information, please call Kelly French at 552-2065.



Third Annual Golf Classic Presented by Manasota Flooring

Join us Monday, April 30 at TPC Prestancia for First Step's Third Annual Golf Classic, presented by Manasota Flooring! Registration fees are \$150 and include green fees, carts, a box lunch and dinner at the fabulous TPC Prestancia clubhouse! For more information, call Kelly French at 552-2065.



The Sandy Seidman Second Step Fund

This year's Caring Hearts Luncheon marks the launch of the Sandy Seidman Second Step Fund. Named in honor of Sandy Seidman, a former First Step Board member and founding chair of the Caring Hearts luncheon, the Fund will provide graduating clients with a stipend to be used for rental or utility deposits, tuition, books, or child care costs.

Your contribution to the Fund is welcome and can be mailed in the enclosed donation envelope. Please indicate that your gift is for the Sandy Seidman Second Step Fund.



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**Family Emergency
Treatment Center**
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BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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First Step provides its services without regard to race, color, national origin, age, sex or disability. Treatment programs and materials are sponsored by First Step of Sarasota, Inc., the Florida Department of Children and Families, Sarasota, Manatee and DeSoto Counties, and the United Way of Sarasota County.



First Step is a CARF accredited organization.