



L-R: Outdoor dog run; Safe Haven volunteers; New ARK building; Therapy dog Lulu visits ARK volunteers

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**FIRST STEP OPENS ARK ANIMAL CENTER**

The First Step ARK (Animals Receiving Kindness) building opened on November 15, 2018

The new First Step ARK building will house a program which will allow survivors to bring their pets into the shelter. The building features four dog kennels, four cat kennels, an outdoor dog run, four outdoor dog pens, a cat play area, a family visitation area, a laundry/storage area and a restroom. The other half of the First Step ARK serves as a heated storage area/resource center for the many generous donations First Step receives from the community to distribute to survivors (diapers, clothing, household goods, toys, food, school supplies etc...).

The First Step ARK could not have been built without the tremendous support of many community leaders, donors and talented volunteers. Special thanks to the ARK committee who shared their talents and enthusiasm to make this dream a reality.

First Step held an “unleashing” ceremony (in place of a ribbon cutting...get it? Unleashing?) and since then, we have been welcoming survivor’s pets to their new temporary home. At the time this article was written (early June 2019), First Step was providing safe housing for four cats, two dogs, seventeen adults and twenty four children.



ARK Cat Room (above); Bunnies and pocket pets welcome (right)



**DID YOU KNOW?**

- ⇒ 71% of pet owners entering domestic violence shelters report that their abuser had threatened, injured or killed a family pet.
- ⇒ 40% of domestic violence victims are unable to escape their abusers because they are concerned about what will happen to their pets if they leave.
- ⇒ Only 12% of domestic violence programs can provide shelter for pets.

The ARK will be an important resource to remove the barriers that keep survivors from leaving for fear that their pet will be harmed or killed as a result of the power and control that often occurs in domestic violence situations. Animals also provide a strong source of emotional support and comfort for the families and keeping the pets safe and nearby reduces the worry and trauma children may have had if they were forced to give up their pet(s) to come into shelter.

First Step has established a special fund to support the ARK. Contributions to this fund will help to provide dog and cat food (specific to the needs of the pets in the facility at that time) as well as veterinary care, building cleaning, program supplies, maintenance & utility costs to help heat and cool the ARK building.



**DONATE ONLINE**

[HTTPS://GIVE.CLASSY.ORG/ARK](https://give.classy.org/ark)

# YEAR IN REVIEW: LORI KITCHEN-BUSCHEL, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



Since the founding of First Step in 1978, the impact of this agency, due to the staff, board, volunteers, partners, and donors who have supported it, is infinite. In over 40+ years over 312,000 survivors of domestic and sexual violence have been touched by this work. Many survivors have endured and escaped violence so extreme they are lucky to have survived in the first place, and yet their strength, courage, and resilience prove that there is hope.

Since starting here at First Step in March 2018, one of the biggest things I am consistently amazed by is the profound commitment of our community to this agency. First Step has the most dedicated and truly caring individuals from our county standing up for and ensuring that First Step is here to help survivors of violence and eradicate violence from our community.

To all staff, board members, donors, volunteers, survivors, and partners of the last year, I thank you, for all you have done to ensure the success of this agency in serving our community, and for your bravery. It is an honor to serve with you.

Kindly,



## GENERALLY, VOLUNTEERS AT FIRST STEP FALL INTO TWO CATEGORIES:

**Consistent Volunteers** are volunteers who want to have direct contact with First Step clients and engage with them on an ongoing basis. Consistent Volunteers are asked to make a six (6) month minimum commitment. For most positions, volunteers must be at least 18 years old. For the safety of the clients we serve, we have a rigorous screening process that includes:

- State and Federal criminal background checks
- Driving Records Check (if you will be required to drive for the agency, or on agency time)
- Department of Health and Human Services child abuse and neglect check
- Interviews

First Step will provide you with the foundational training you will need to be successful. You must attend all training dates to be included.

**Project-Based Volunteers** are individuals or groups that will not interact with clients on an ongoing basis. These volunteers tend to do work in and around our offices to help improve the spaces (weed the playground, clean up the ARK animal center, sort donations etc...) or to provide a single event for the agency, such as a family fun night or holiday party for shelter residents.

Contact Hilary Hitte, 734.713.0659  
[hhitte@firststep-mi.org](mailto:hhitte@firststep-mi.org) for more information about volunteering or visit [firststep-mi.org/volunteer](http://firststep-mi.org/volunteer)

## FIRST STEP FALL 2019 VOLUNTEER TRAINING SCHEDULE

### CORE VOLUNTEER TRAININGS

**SATURDAY SEPT. 7, 2019**  
**9:00AM – 4:00PM**  
 Intro /PreTest  
 Diversity  
 Sexual Assault Overview

**SUNDAY SEPT. 8, 2019**  
**9:00AM – 3:30PM**  
 Empathy  
 Domestic Violence Dynamics

**SATURDAY SEPT. 21, 2019**  
**9:00AM – 3:30PM**  
 Children and Violence  
 Lethality and Safety Planning

**SUNDAY SEPT. 22, 2019**  
**9:00AM – 3:30PM**  
 Problem Solving/Crisis Intervention/  
 Critical Incidents  
 Office & Safety Procedures  
 Wrap up/Post Test

### SPECIALIZED VOLUNTEER TRAININGS

**LEGAL**  
 Monday Sept. 23, 2019  
 5:30 pm - 8:45 pm

**NURTURING**  
 Thursday Sept. 26, 2019  
 5:30 pm- 7:30 pm

**LETHALITY ASSESSMENT PROGRAM**  
 Monday Sept. 30, 2019  
 5:30 pm - 8:30 pm

**ASSAULT RESPONSE**  
 Sunday Sept 29, 2019  
 9:00 am to 4:00 pm

# FIRST STEP PLYMOUTH OFFICE TRANSFORMED



Last year, First Step made significant improvements to the Plymouth office thanks to a generous donation from the Margaret Dunning Foundation.

They funded a new mansard roof, a new asphalt parking lot, an exterior paint job, vinyl siding and trim, new doors and a new heating and cooling system.

This year, The Dunning Foundation donated funds so we could install all new energy-efficient windows, new exterior lighting, directional signage and funds for landscaping.

We are thrilled that the Margaret Dunning Foundation chose to invest in First Step's Plymouth home and we now feel we fit in better with the beautiful homes in our surrounding neighborhood. Thanks to the Margaret Dunning Foundation for supporting First Step!

### About the Margaret Dunning Foundation

The Margaret Dunning Foundation was founded by Ms. Dunning in 1997. She was born in 1910 in Redford Township, Michigan, and moved with her mother to Plymouth, Michigan in the 1920s. During her lifetime, Ms. Dunning was a successful business woman, philanthropist and civic booster. She was a major supporter of many Plymouth nonprofits, including the Plymouth District Library and the Plymouth Historical Society. In addition to her personal philanthropy, Ms. Dunning was a classic car enthusiast and was a regular participant in the Woodward Dream Cruise with her 1930 Packard 740 Roadster.

Ms. Dunning died in 2013 at the age of 104. Her estate provided additional funding for the Margaret Dunning Foundation, which continues to support her charitable interests and legacy. For more information:

[www.margaretdunningfdn.org](http://www.margaretdunningfdn.org)



# LAFAVE AND O'MALLEY FAMILIES CREATE ENDOWMENT FUND FOR FIRST STEP

The LaFave and O'Malley families created the Tillie Fund to benefit First Step.

Philomena "Tillie" LaFave was the matriarch of the LaFave and O'Malley families. She volunteered with First Step for decades and encouraged three generations of her family to become involved in First Step's mission. She was also very active in Resurrection Parish in Canton, the Council of Catholic Women and many other organizations and encouraged them all to get involved in First Step. Tillie passed away on December 12, 2017 at the age of 93.

The LaFave and O'Malley families wanted Tillie's legacy of service to live on so they established The Tillie Fund. This fund is being held for First Step at the Community Foundation for Southeast Michigan and will generate interest that will accumulate and be used to help First Step's mission in perpetuity.

You can donate to the First Step Tillie Fund by sending a check to First Step at 44567 Pinetree Drive, Plymouth, MI 48170 and indicate that it's for the Tillie Fund.



Tillie LaFave



The First Step 2019 You are the Light Gala was held on Friday, May 17 in Plymouth. The event celebrated the work of all who shine a light on the problem of violence in our community, including survivors, donors, volunteers, staff and community partners. This year's event was chaired by Elaine C. Tingle and emceed by WXYZ TV's Carolyn Clifford.



Elaine Tingle (Event Chair) and Ron Hall Jr, from Bridgewater Interiors



Jennifer Hartke and Karen Wilson Smithbauer, First Step board members

First Step formally recognized five outstanding volunteer/groups at the event:



Jennifer Hartke



Donica Lopez



Ford Motor Company  
Thirty under 30 program



Catherine Stratford



Chief Ryan Strong

- \* The Karen Wilson Smithbauer Legacy Award was presented to Jennifer Hartke
- \* The First Step Tillie Award was presented to Donica Lopez
- \* The First Step Corporate Award was presented to Ford Motor Company-2018 Thirty under 30 program
- \* The First Step Hope Award was presented to Catherine Stratford
- \* The First Step Community Leadership Award was presented to the Wayne Police Department-Chief Ryan Strong

The event netted over \$110,000 for First Step. Thanks to our event planning committee and all of our sponsors, volunteers and attendees.

*Thank you to our major sponsors*



Beaumont Health  
Blue Cross Blue Shield  
Ford Motor Company Fund



Rich Lyons, LYONSCG  
Carla O'Malley  
MASCO Corporation

Thank you to all who support our work! We are grateful for your investment in the safety and peace of our community and in hope for the survivors who reach out to First Step for help.



If you attended the event, please fill out the survey at this link and provide your feedback so we can make an even better event next year.  
[surveymonkey.com/r/LRBQRHT](https://surveymonkey.com/r/LRBQRHT)

**CONSIDER DONATING  
A VEHICLE TO FIRST STEP**



To learn more about the donation process or to get started please call 855.500.RIDE (7433) or visit First Step's car donation site at: <http://bit.ly/FSDonateCar>



# FIRST STEP PROGRAMS & SERVICES

Since 1978, First Step has been working for peaceful families and safe communities in Wayne County, Michigan. First Step is the only non-profit in Wayne County providing comprehensive services for victims of domestic and sexual violence.

First Step provides free and confidential programs designed to help survivors of violence overcome the lack of intervention and support, the feelings of powerlessness, isolation, physical danger and fear, and the financial, emotional and cultural barriers that victims of violence often face when seeking help.



## WHAT MAKES FIRST STEP STAND OUT FROM OTHER COUNSELING PROGRAMS AND SHELTERS?

First Step staff members and volunteers are specially trained to assist and empower survivors of domestic violence, dating violence and sexual assault. First Step staff and volunteers are skilled experts in domestic violence, sexual assault, and trauma. They know the laws, have knowledge and experience with the dynamics of these crimes and understand the effects they have on the human spirit.



## TEMPORARY EMERGENCY HOUSING (SHELTER)

When home is no longer a safe option, First Step provides emergency, short-term housing for victims of domestic and/or sexual violence and their children. Survivor Advocates work with residents to assist them in meeting their goals. Residents have the opportunity to participate in vital services, such as individual and group counseling, safety planning, medical attention, housing referrals, and educational and recreational activities for children.



## OTHER

First Step provides food, toys, clothing, birthday gifts, gift cards, books, school supplies, diapers, household goods, transportation and many of the other basic needs to help survivors in transition.

## TRANSITIONAL HOUSING

The Transitional Housing Program provides full rent subsidy and support while helping survivors build a credit history and skills to obtain and maintain permanent housing.

## INFORMATION AND REFERRALS

Providing critical information and referrals regarding housing, legal assistance, counseling, temporary emergency housing, transportation, and health care is a large part of First Step's work.

## CHILDREN'S ADVOCACY AND PREVENTION PROGRAMS

Children ages 3 through 18 are provided individual, family, and group counseling sessions to overcome the effects of witnessing violence in the home and, in some cases, the trauma of being physically or sexually abused themselves. First Step also recognizes the need for fun and recreation. Through volunteers and staff, First Step provides recreational activities such as field trips, craft activities, holiday celebrations, birthday parties and more for the children and adults in our program.

## 24-HOUR HELP LINE (734-722-6800)

The 24-hour help line is a core service at First Step. For many, it is literally a lifeline. Specially trained First Step staff and volunteers provide crisis intervention, support, information, and safety planning to survivors who call our 24-hour help line.

## ASSAULT RESPONSE

First Step staff and volunteers, on-call 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, respond to victims of domestic and sexual violence at local emergency rooms, police stations, and schools. Survivors receive immediate crisis intervention, clothing, support, safety planning, and links to First Step and other vital services.



## COMMUNITY EDUCATION

First Step believes that prevention is a key component to ending violence in our communities. First Step volunteers and staff members present to schools, businesses, religious organizations, medical personnel, police officers, and civic groups. Topics range from the effects of violence on children, to dating violence, date rape drugs, domestic/sexual assault myths and facts, and community resources.



## COMMUNITY LEGAL RESPONSE/LETHALITY ASSESSMENT PROGRAM

First Step Community Response Project Survivor Advocates help victims who are identified through police departments and courts throughout Wayne County. In several communities, Survivor Advocates work with a designated domestic violence prosecutor and detective to respond to the crimes of domestic and sexual violence. Survivor Advocates contact the victims of these crimes just after the police report is filed. They focus on assessing lethality, making safety plans, and explaining the criminal justice process and the dynamics of domestic and sexual violence to support adults and children involved throughout the prosecution process. Referrals are also made to other First Step programs, as well as pertinent outside resources. In addition, First Step provides in-court victim advocacy and support through free legal clinics.



## DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND SEXUAL ASSAULT ADVOCACY PROGRAMS

Through individual and group sessions, survivors of domestic and sexual violence learn about the dynamics of abuse and how to advocate for their own resources and needs. They are given the space to discuss the emotional impact of their situations. Groups allow survivors to share their stories and find strength in connecting with others, who sometimes become life-long friends. Nonresidential sessions are available in three sites: Plymouth, Wayne and Lincoln Park.

**FIRST STEP  
TOUCHED THE LIVES  
OF 8,467 PEOPLE  
IN 2017-2018**

Total number of survivors served  
**7,961 ADULTS  
506 CHILDREN**

Lethality Assessment Program Screenings  
**954 SCREENINGS  
477 HIGH DANGER**

**131 CLIENTS**  
had help obtaining Personal Protection Orders



**PROGRAMS & SERVICE STATISTICS  
2017-2018 FISCAL YEAR**

Counseling / Advocacy for adults & children  
**6,608 SURVIVORS  
10,918 HOURS**

**SUPPORT GROUPS  
1,046 HOURS**

Community Response Program in police/courts  
**3,652 SURVIVORS  
7,288 HOURS**

**TRANSPORTATION**  
First Step provided 501 rides for 96 survivors

**TRANSITIONAL SUPPORTIVE HOUSING**  
26 survivors and 57 children received subsidized safe housing (13,991 nights) & support services

**3,000 PEOPLE**  
participated in First Step's OUTREACH AND EDUCATION SESSIONS

**EMERGENCY HOUSING**  
15,177 NIGHTS OF SAFE SHELTER  
115 ADULTS  
172 CHILDREN

In-Court Victim Advocacy / Legal Information / Clinics  
**3,295 SURVIVORS  
1,634 HOURS**

24-hour Crisis Line  
**4,971 SURVIVORS  
12,928 CALLS**

Violence Prevention Programs in schools  
Date rape awareness and education  
Coalition Building

**494 PEOPLE**  
stepped up and volunteered for First Step, giving 6,586 hours of service

Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Awareness Month activities

**SAFETY PLANNING**  
All adult and child survivors who work with First Step develop a safety plan

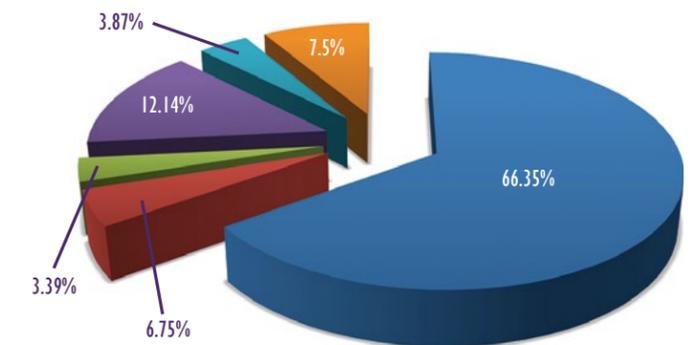
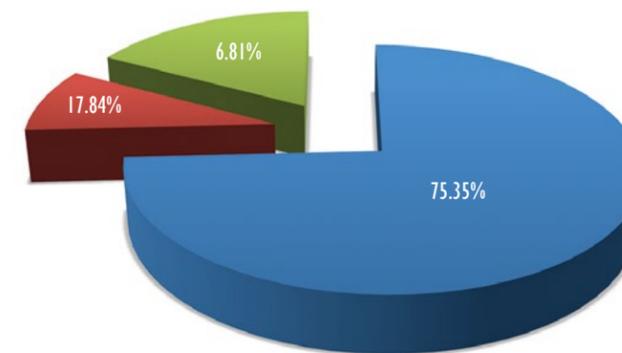
24-hour on-call Assault Response Team responded to  
**35 PRIMARY AND 8 SECONDARY VICTIMS**

**FOOD, CLOTHING, HOUSEHOLD GOODS**  
provided to families as necessary

**EXPENSES**

**REVENUE**

FOR FISCAL YEAR ENDING SEPTEMBER 30, 2018. PROGRAM ENDORSEMENTS AND DETAILS ABOUT FIRST STEP'S FINANCIAL REPORTS CAN BE FOUND AT [HTTP://FIRSTSTEP-MI.ORG/GUIDESTAR](http://firststep-mi.org/guidestar)



DOMESTIC VIOLENCE PROGRAMMING	\$2,620,285
SEXUAL ASSAULT PROGRAMMING	\$236,919
SUPPORTING SERVICES General & Administrative	\$620,529
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>\$3,477,733</b>

FEDERAL	\$2,388,510
STATE & OTHER	\$121,606
FOUNDATIONS	\$243,304
CONTRIBUTIONS	\$437,072
UNITED WAY	\$139,500
CONTRIBUTED SERVICES	\$269,922
<b>TOTAL REVENUE</b>	<b>\$3,599,914</b>

**2017-2019 FIRST STEP BOARD OF DIRECTORS**







44567 Pinetree Drive  
Plymouth, MI 48170

2-5PM, SUNDAY,  
OCTOBER 6<sup>th</sup>

## *A Chocolate Affair*

LAOH Fundraiser to benefit First Step  
Hellenic Cultural Center, Westland - \$30



SAVE THE DATE

### ABOUT FIRST STEP

First Step is an organization in Wayne County, Michigan that provides comprehensive services to support survivors of domestic and sexual violence.

First Step offers temporary emergency housing, counseling, advocacy, transitional housing, assault response, 24-hour help line services, children's services, training and education to survivors and to the community.

Help work to make your community violence-free by becoming involved with First Step; volunteer, donate, and stand up for peace and safety in your community.

Call 734.416.1111 for more information.

First Step  
44567 Pinetree Drive  
Plymouth, MI 48170  
734.416.1111

First Step  
Karen Wilson  
Smithbauer Center  
4400 South Venoy Road  
Wayne, MI 48184

24-Hour Help Line  
734.722.6800

firststep-mi.org  
facebook.com/firststepmi

### ✔ COUNT ME IN!

I would like to help FIRST STEP, Wayne County's comprehensive domestic & sexual assault program.

I wish to support First Step with a donation of \$\_\_\_\_\_

Credit Card: VISA / MC (circle one)

Account#: \_\_\_\_\_ Exp. \_\_\_/\_\_\_ CSV: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City/State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

(Checks payable to First Step)  
Please fill out this form completely and mail to:  
First Step, 44567 Pinetree Drive, Plymouth, MI 48170

### ✔ DONATE ONLINE

Visit <http://bit.ly/donate-fs> (or scan the code with your smartphone) to make a secure donation to First Step.



**THE MISSION OF FIRST STEP IS TO ELIMINATE BOTH DOMESTIC AND SEXUAL VIOLENCE AND TO PROVIDE COMPREHENSIVE SERVICES TO INDIVIDUALS AND FAMILIES IMPACTED BY THESE CRIMES.**

