



CHRISTIAN AND MUSLIM WOMEN COME TOGETHER TO SUPPORT VICTIMS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

ON APRIL 29TH AND 30TH, FIRST STEP WAS THE RECIPIENT OF A 16 HOUR VOLUNTEER SERVICE MISSION BRINGING TOGETHER COMMUNITIES OF FAITH CALLED THE COMMON GROUND GROUP.

The Common Ground Group began last Fall as part of what Ayesha Joz from the Muslim Community of Western Suburbs in Canton said is part of their “neighborly call to (other communities of faith) to open doors, bridge gaps, foster communication and build those relationships.” Ailsa Blunk, the moderator for the Women’s group at the First Presbyterian Church of Plymouth answered their outreach with an eagerness to learn from one another saying “the enthusiasm is really alive.”



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FIRST STEP DOMESTIC VIOLENCE HIGH RISK TEAM EXPANDS FROM CANTON TO DEARBORN & TAYLOR

Due to its high success rate, First Step will be expanding the Lethality Assessment Program to Dearborn and Taylor.

Police Officers in these cities who respond to domestic violence calls will ask a series of researched based and specifically scripted questions in order to assess the victim’s danger. Responding officers will also perform a safety audit of the victim’s home. The questions asked will help officers identify how lethal the situation is and what the likelihood is that the victim will be injured or killed should the situation escalate. As the victim answers each question, their results are scored. If their answers lead to a high score they are immediately connected with a First Step advocate on the scene.

SINCE THE ROLLOUT OF THE FIRST STEP DOMESTIC VIOLENCE HIGH RISK TEAM (DVHRT) ON JUNE 1, 2016, RESPONDING OFFICERS IN THE CANTON POLICE DEPARTMENT HAVE IDENTIFIED 16 HIGH LETHALITY CASES. OF THESE 16 CASES, 75% OF THE VICTIMS HAVE COME TO FIRST STEP FOR SERVICES.

These intervention services have been implemented to prevent cases from escalation, hold batterers accountable for their actions and to surround victims with the support, services and options they need to keep themselves and their families safe. The lethality and safety information gathered on the

scene will also be given to prosecutors and judges to help survivors stay safe in the arraignment process. First Step and the Domestic Violence High Risk Team could not be more proud of the program’s success.

The replication of this program in Dearborn and Taylor will save additional lives and connect survivors with the resources they need. It is our hope that with additional funding we will be able bring the Lethality Assessment Program to other cities in First Step’s Wayne County. Special thanks to the McGregor Fund for providing a grant for this important program.

For more information about the DVHRT program, please contact Jill Popovich at jpopovich@firststep-mi.org or 734.713.0683.

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CHRISTIAN AND MUSLIM WOMEN COME TOGETHER TO SUPPORT VICTIMS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE (CONT.)

The Presbyterian Church of Plymouth and the Muslim Community of Western Suburbs took turns hosting one another to learn from each other and discover things they have in common. Forty women attended the first meeting and the groups success continued to grow.



At their meetings, the women participated in icebreaker activities to learn about one another personally, professionally and spiritually. As a result of their new found friendship and understanding they decided to come together and make a difference through a service mission. Ayesha Joz explained that she believes “people are looking for something to connect with” and the Common Ground Gathering project was born.

A planning meeting was held in March of this year and 6 different teams were formed to take on the project of revamping, redecorating and deep cleaning the residential dining room and kitchen at First Step’s Karen Wilson Smithbauer Center.



For two days, 50 women donated a total of 16 hours to this project. There were four shifts in total and they spent their time painting walls, fixing and cleaning cabinets, creating center pieces and a special bottle cap artwork piece, buffing the floors and tile as well as hanging window treatments. They also brought additional crafts for the residents and their families, coffees, teas and spices for the residents to enjoy during their stay at First Step.

Ailsa Blunk said “being ambassadors of love is the motivation for both of (our groups.)” What started out as a neighborly gesture, lead to a conversation which brought understanding, insight and a service project that will bring the small comforts of home to the families who come to First Step for help.

✓ COUNT ME IN!

I would like to help FIRST STEP, Western & Downriver Wayne County's only comprehensive Domestic & Sexual Assault program.

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

Credit Cards: VISA / MC (circle one)

Account#: _____

Exp. ____/____ 3 Digit Security Code: _____

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/firststep-mi>

or scan this code with your smartphone. To scan the code, you'll need a free app like QR Scanner or ShopSavvy.



ARK ANIMALS RECEIVING KINDNESS

Families facing domestic violence often have pets that experience abuse as well. Concern for their pet’s safety can prevent survivors from leaving an abusive situation because they are afraid their animals would be injured or even killed.

To alleviate this barrier for families, the First Step ARK program will provide an on-site safe haven for pets. This service will enable our clients to leave their abusive environment and begin the emotional healing process with the loving support of their pets close by. It will give our clients peace of mind knowing their treasured animal companions are also safely removed from the abusive environment.

The Ark will be a spacious, heated building with an indoor and outdoor play area. This will allow our residential families to spend time with their pets and begin the healing process.

To learn about how you can get involved or to join the Ark Committee, please reach out to Theresa Bizoe at 734.656.0730 or tbizoe@firststep-mi.org.

FIRST STEP LAUNCHES VEHICLE DONATION PROGRAM

At First Step we are always looking for new and creative ways to expand our footprint and inspire new supporters with our mission to eliminate domestic and sexual violence. It is our hope that the addition of our vehicle donation program will not only help us reach new donors but will also supply us with a strong new funding source.



PLEASE JOIN US IN SPREADING THE WORD OR CONSIDER DONATING AN UNWANTED 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>

Earlier this year, First Step partnered with another non-profit agency, CARS Inc., who specializes in helping agencies launch, maintain and promote their car donation programs. This new program will handle everything our donors and potential donors could ask for! From the pick up and sale of the vehicle, to answering questions, walking them step by step through the donation process and sending out tax information within 5 business days of the sale. CARS, Inc. handles everything for

donors and for First Step. Vehicle donations are not limited to just cars, if a donor would like to donate boat, camper, motorcycle or even farm equipment – we can convert these items into cash to help survivors of domestic and sexual violence.

First Step will receive 80% of the donated vehicle's selling price, with no out of pocket costs for the agency or our donors.



THANK YOU, VERIZON

We would like to thank Verizon for sponsoring the publication and distribution of First Step's 2016 newsletters, and for being our partners in ending domestic violence and sexual assault.

Verizon's HopeLine provides ways for individuals to take action against violence by donating used wireless phones and accessories

(chargers, cases, earbuds, etc) in any condition from any service provider.

HOPELINE
from Verizon

These phones are then turned into resources to support domestic violence organizations and programs nationwide.

Verizon is a global leader delivering innovative communications and technology solutions that improve the way their customers live, work and play.

A CHOCOLATE AFFAIR SUNDAY, OCTOBER 2, 2016, NORTHVILLE

The Ladies Ancient Order of Hibernians Elizabeth Fagan Division will host the 12th annual "A Chocolate Affair" benefit for First Step at the Meadowbrook Country Club on Eight Mile Rd in Northville. The event will be from 2 - 5 pm, tickets are \$30.00 and will include hot and cold hors d'oeuvres, a wonderful array of chocolate items from southeast Michigan's finest bakeries, caterers, restaurants and chocolate makers, a chocolate fountain, cash bar, valet parking, entertainment by the Sweet Adelines, and a marvelous raffle with over 50 items to choose from!

For tickets or more information, contact Barb Weir at 734-453-1459, or Pat Burba at 734-981-1702 or at laohelizabethfagan@hotmail.com.



2015 CHOCOLATE AFFAIR



REV. DIANE SMALLEY'S BUCKET LIST

What would you do with your time left on earth if you were given a serious cancer diagnosis and had no health insurance? Reverend Diane Smalley, an ordained Presbyterian Minister, First Step volunteer and an outspoken advocate for women and girls suffering from domestic violence, answered this challenge with faith and a serious commitment to getting important things done.

Rev. Diane Smalley, passed away on July 4, 2016, surrounded by friends and family. Her doctors called her a miracle worker and we did too. Diane's volunteer bucket list had been long and focused, even more so since she was diagnosed with stage four cancer in May of 2011. In addition to undergoing aggressive medical treatment Diane made a significant impact on the world and on the mission to end domestic violence. **Listed below were some of her accomplishments since her diagnosis in May of 2011:**



- In 2011, she completed four units of Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE). Her CPE training included a residency at First Step through the Spiritual Care and Education Center. Rev. Smalley provided counseling, advocacy and support to the survivors at First Step's shelter and transitional housing programs.
- Reverend Smalley worked with colleagues to develop the SWAGG Project, a violence prevention initiative targeting secondary school aged boys.
- Co-hosted support groups for First Step survivors such as "Women in Sacred Texts" to help victims use their own faith/spirituality as a resource (2012-2016).
- She traveled to Alaska to work with Religious leaders and with the Rev. Marie Fortune, a domestic violence advocate from the Faith Trust Institute on engaging clergy against domestic violence.
- She represented the United States and the Presbyterian Women at the United Nations Global Violence against Women Summit in 2011, 2012, 2014 and 2015.
- She presented at the MCEDSV Women of Color Institute on using faith and spirituality to help heal survivors.
- She worked with church leaders in Botswana to deliver violence prevention messages to girls using sports and education curriculums.
- Worked with St Joseph Mercy Hospital to minister to and to be a voice for patients with no health insurance.
- Worked with University of Michigan on the Patient Ethics Committee.
- Was involved in the Diva Communication's films; I Believe You, Faith's Response to Domestic Violence and Divine Prescription about patients with terminal diagnosis and no health care insurance.

One of the most impactful programs Rev. Smalley brought to First Step was called Empty Chairs. Diane was providing counseling and spiritual support to women at Huron Valley Correctional Facility who were serving life sentences for killing their abusers. According to the National Clearinghouse for the Defense of Battered Women, studies show that the majority of women incarcerated for killing significant others had been abused by them. Some women are in prison for defending themselves against an abuser. Others are incarcerated because they engaged in criminal activity to survive or because they took action at the behest of an abuser out of fear and threat of harm.

Rev. Smalley, as part of her ministry, asked the inmates to write a letter to survivors at First Step describing the domestic violence experience that ultimately brought them to prison. The women at Huron Valley shared their personal stories of pain, loss and survival. The message was "Don't let this happen to you! Get out of your situation before you end up murdered or in prison." The residents at First Step were so moved that they wrote back to the women in prison thanking them for sharing their personal stories. "The prisoners treasured these letters because they felt they helped someone and make a difference", said Rev. Smalley.

We at First Step are grateful for Rev. Smalley's contribution to First Step's mission to end violence. We send our thoughts and prayers out to her and her family, friends and caregivers and we give thanks for all the time and talent she shared with our staff, volunteers and survivors through the years. May she rest in peace.

VOLUNTEERING IS FUN!

CHECK OUT THE SMILES ON THESE GENEROUS VOLUNTEERS FROM GE AVIATION!



THANK YOU



ZONTA CLUB OF FARMINGTON NOVI SUPPORTS SURVIVORS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE



(L to R) Debbie Godfrey, President, Zonta Club of Farmington/Novi; Carla Boyes, Vice-President and Co-Chair, Steppin' Out in Style; Theresa Bizoe from First Step and Ramona McDonald, Co-Chair, Steppin' Out in Style.

Thank you to Zonta Club of Farmington Novi for hosting the 22nd Annual Steppin' Out in Style event in support of First Step. Their continued partnership has directly touched the lives of domestic violence and sexual assault survivors in our community. This year Zonta Club raised an amazing \$18,000 in support of First Step's mission to eliminate domestic and sexual violence in our communities.

Thank you to Steppin' Out in Style 2016 major sponsors, UAW Region I-A, Marathon Petroleum Company and Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan, and Michael Hartke, XFER Communications. We would also like to thank Carson's for hosting this terrific event!

firststep-mi.org

SUPPORT FIRST STEP AT THE SOROPTIMIST INTERNATIONAL OF TRENTON AREA GOLF OUTING

**SATURDAY, AUGUST 6, 2016 AT WOODSIDE MEADOWS
20820 INKSTER ROAD, ROMULUS, MI**

Proceeds from this event will help to support First Step and ensure we can continue to offer our comprehensive services to victims of domestic and sexual violence free of charge.

Cost to participate will be \$75 for the golf outing or \$20 if you would like to join us for dinner only. Registration begins at 1:00pm followed by a Shotgun Start at 2:00pm.

The \$75 entry fee includes an 18 hole round of golf with use of a cart, as well as participation in the longest drive and closest to the pin contests. A hot dog and beverage will also be provided at the turn along with dinner following the event. A cash bar, drawings, raffles and silent auctions will be offered in the clubhouse after golf.

We would also like to invite your company help to support First Step through a \$100 hole sponsorship! Your company will receive recognition for their contribution with signage at the sponsored hole as well as receive mention on our hole sponsorship board in the clubhouse.

We hope to see you there!

If you are interested in sponsoring a hole please visit: <http://bit.ly/sponsorhole>

You can also register for the event online by visiting <http://www.formsmarts.com/form/lqb6>

For more information please contact our Event Chair, Cindi Ames at 734.755.7175 or cindiames@gmail.com

Many women. One goal



A Message from a First Step Client and Domestic Violence Survivor:



May 23, 2016

First Step
Western Wayne County
44567 Pinetree Drive
Plymouth, MI 48170

I would like to convey my sincerest thanks to First Step for the care and assistance that was given to me by (my advocate).

(My advocate) helped me from day one of a domestic violence occurrence until the final court date. She navigated for me at the District courthouse, which was not an easy task given that the abuser is a defense attorney. A special prosecutor was brought in and (my advocates) let me know what was happening every step of the way.

When I had any questions (my advocate) always got back to me with answers if she did not have them immediately. She is a very special person and her kindness and knowledge gave me a voice in the judicial system of which I really needed.

My advocates stayed with me at the final court date from 8:30am until 1:00pm. As there were many hours of wait time, I told them they could leave by they insisted they were with me until the end of court. How wonderful and cared for I left!

I just wanted to share with you the invaluable services (my advocate) provided to me and my thanks. I could never repay her or First Step for the support freely given to me when I needed it.

Thank you again,

Domestic Violence Survivor

**Please note that names were left out for confidentiality purposes, and for the protection of this survivor.





FIRST STEP WISHLIST

Here's how you can help

Donations accepted Monday-Friday, 9am- 4pm at both Plymouth and Wayne locations.

Please consider donating gift cards or the cash value of an item you would like to donate. First Step leverages suppliers to get discounts on food and supplies and your monetary gift may help us cover essential operational expenses such as phone, electricity, heat and counseling. All donations, whether monetary or in-kind, help First Step in our mission to create peaceful families and safe communities. Thank you. Your support is appreciated.

GIFT CARD NEEDS

Kroger, Walmart, Meijer, Target
MasterCard/Visa
Gas cards
Drug stores

PERSONAL CARE ITEMS (FULL SIZE)

Hair care products (shampoo/conditioner)
Hair care products for women of color
Hair brushes
Wide tooth combs
Body wash
Hand and body lotion
Deodorant
Hand sanitizer
Feminine hygiene products

CLOTHING ITEMS (NEW)

Sweats
Underwear/bras
Socks (women & children)
Gloves/hats/outerwear

BABY ITEMS

Baby bottles (standard size 8 & larger)
Diapers (sizes 4, 5 & 6)
Pull ups
Baby wipes
New clothes
Diaper rash cream

FOOD & DRINKS

Food storage containers/bags
Cold cereals
Canned goods (soups, vegetables, etc.)
Juice
Hot chocolate
Coffee

KITCHEN SUPPLIES

Liquid dish soap
Garbage bags
Disinfectant wipes
Laundry soap
Aluminum foil
Dishes, pots, pans & skillet

BEDROOM ITEMS (NEW)

Bath and hand towels
Wash cloths
Twin blankets
Twin sheet sets
Pillows

BATHROOM ITEMS

Toilet paper
Bath mats
Toilet bowl cleaner
Shower curtains & liners/hooks
Cleaning supplies

PAPER PRODUCTS

Paper towel
Paper plates & bowls
Plastic silverware & cups
Kleenex

MISCELLANEOUS

Laundry baskets
Storage containers w/lids
Batteries

PROVIDE FINANCIAL SUPPORT

Cash donations of any amount are always the most efficient way to support the free services offered by First Step to families affected by violence.

Download our complete Wish List at firststep-mi.org

Please note: We are unable to accept used toys or clothing due to lack of storage. We will be happy to refer you to the clothing banks we use to donate these items. Thank you for your understanding!

First Step is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization. Your donation may be tax deductible to the extent allowable by law. Your contribution may qualify for a federal tax deduction.

For more info, or to discuss donating larger items, call 734-713-0652 or email info@firststep-mi.org

HELP US CONTINUE A LIFETIME OF SUPPORT AND LEAVE A LASTING LEGACY TO FIRST STEP



Planned Giving is a great way to express your commitment to First Step's mission while strengthening and protecting the services we provide to survivors of domestic and sexual violence.

For example, a bequest in your living will or trust will allow you to take care of your loved ones first, and make a remarkable difference at First Step. You can name First Step among your beneficiaries, assisting your heirs, while also sharing your generosity with others. Or you may want to consider a gift of life insurance which can transform a modest investment into a much larger tax benefit for you and the families we serve.

There are many different ways to give in a substantial way. Planned Giving can often help you make a more significant gift without sacrificing income or security for your family.

ANY SIZED PLANNED GIFT CAN MAKE AN ENORMOUS DIFFERENCE!

For further information or to receive our planned giving brochure, please contact Theresa Bizoe at tbizoe@firststep-mi.org.



44567 Pinetree Drive
Plymouth, MI 48170

ABOUT FIRST STEP

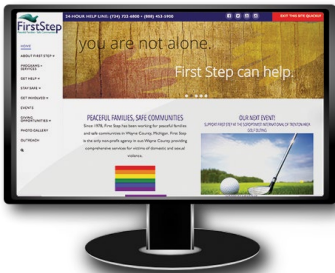
First Step is an agency in Wayne County, Michigan that provides comprehensive services to support victims of domestic and sexual violence.

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 against violence in your community.

Call 734.416.1111 for more information.

CHECK OUT OUR NEW WEBSITE! www.firststep-mi.org



Special thank you to Kate Peterson for donating this beautiful and functional new website design! See more of her work at pleasantlyprogressivedesign.com



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Plymouth, MI 48170

First Step
Karen Wilson Smithbauer Center
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Wayne, MI 48184

Phone
734.416.1111

24-Hour Help Line
734.722.6800

Toll Free Help Line
888.453.5900

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734.416.5555

Online
firststep-mi.org
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