

## EXPLORING THE MCKINNEY-VENTO ACT:

### *Ensuring Educational Stability for Students Experiencing Homelessness*

*Written by First Step volunteer and Wayne RESA employee May Bamrick, and Sabrina Rudy*

It is imperative that every child, regardless of their circumstances, has access to quality schooling. However, for students living in transition, this fundamental right can become elusive. The McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act assures that these vulnerable students receive the educational support they deserve.

Survivors of intimate partner and sexual violence often find themselves in situations where stable housing and consistent education become precarious. Economic dependence, safety, and other barriers resulting from domestic violence can hinder survivors' ability to secure stable housing, thus impacting their children's access to education. For instance, between 22 and 57% of all homeless women report that domestic violence was the immediate cause of their homelessness, highlighting the intersection of domestic violence and housing instability (NNEDV).

Did you know, until recently, students experiencing homelessness in the U.S. could face denial of enrollment in public schools if they couldn't provide proof of residency or medical records? Fortunately, this has been addressed. Enacted in 1987 and reauthorized in 2001, the McKinney-Vento Act is a federal law designed to address the educational needs of children and youth experiencing homelessness. Families living in the following situations: in a shelter; in a park, campground or on the beach; in a motel or hotel; in a car, abandoned building, or on the street; inadequate living conditions (lack of utilities, unsafe housing); living with others due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or fleeing domestic violence; and unaccompanied youth experiencing any of the situations listed, are eligible for rights under the McKinney-Vento Act.

However, the obstacles confronting students experiencing homelessness are complex, domestic violence or not. Unstable living situations, lack of transportation, financial constraints, and the absence of essential documents like birth certificates and immunization records can hinder the ability to enroll in and attend school regularly. Moreover, the emotional toll of homelessness can lead to feelings of isolation and despair, further impeding academic progress. McKinney-Vento Liaisons play a crucial role in ensuring that students experiencing homelessness receive the support they need.

The McKinney-Vento Act mandates that students experiencing homelessness have the right to:

1. **Immediate Enrollment:** Schools must enroll students experiencing homelessness immediately, even if they lack the necessary documents normally required for enrollment.
2. **Transportation Assistance:** School districts must provide transportation services to ensure that students experiencing homelessness can attend their school of origin, even if they have moved outside the district.
3. **Stability and Support:** Students experiencing homelessness have the right to remain in their school of origin, if it is in their best interest, for the duration of their homelessness and through the end of the school year ensuring continuity in their education despite changes in living situations.
4. **Access to Services:** Schools are required to provide students experiencing homelessness with access to free meals, educational services, and full participation in extracurricular activities.
5. **Designated Liaisons:** Each school district must appoint a liaison for students experiencing homelessness to ensure that they receive the assistance and support they need to succeed academically.

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## MCKINNEY-VENTO ACT (continued)

**"BETWEEN 22 AND 57% OF ALL HOMELESS WOMEN REPORT THAT DOMESTIC VIOLENCE WAS THE IMMEDIATE CAUSE OF THEIR HOMELESSNESS."**

(NNEOV)

Scan to learn more about Wayne RESA



The McKinney-Vento Liaison at each district is able to assist with providing resources to ensure all students experiencing homelessness have access to educational success. Liaisons work closely with families to identify barriers with the knowledge that all situations are contextual and have unique needs, while also prioritizing the protection of privacy and confidentiality throughout the process. To find the homeless liaison at your school district or public school academy please visit this link: [bit.ly/MV-Liaisons](https://bit.ly/MV-Liaisons)

Thus, survivors residing in First Step's shelter are considered homeless, and thanks to the McKinney-Vento Act, families work with First Step advocates, and either the Liaison at the child(ren)'s school of origin or the shelter's local district, to ensure the child has safe and barrier-free enrollment, transportation, and resources to help them successfully attend the school of their choice. This act is crucial for survivors, as it ensures that their children have access to a stable education despite the challenges they face due to homelessness and domestic violence.

Districts and public-school academies are supported by Wayne RESA, a regional educational service agency that offers a wide range of services to the 33 school districts and 97 public school academies in Wayne County. Our Homeless Education Program works with McKinney-Vento Liaisons to ensure that students living in transition are provided with seamless educational services. The program also provides training for local liaisons, school staff, shelter staff, and the community on the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act. Please visit our website for more information or contact us at [specialpops@resa.net](mailto:specialpops@resa.net). [resa.net/family-and-community/families-living-in-transition](https://resa.net/family-and-community/families-living-in-transition)

## COMMUNITY FINANCIAL CREDIT UNION (CFCU)

Community Financial Credit Union (CFCU) has been a steadfast supporter of First Steps for over 13 years. Recently, they've taken their support to new heights by actively engaging in our volunteer initiatives. Notably, their President and CEO has joined our Board, demonstrating a deep commitment to our mission.

In March 8th, 2023, CFCU hosted a memorable evening for our staff, treating them to a delightful dinner accompanied by cocktails and music, celebrating their hard work and dedication. Additionally, during the 2023 gardening season, CFCU staff enthusiastically participated in our Adopt-A-Garden program, beautifying our surroundings.

Their involvement didn't stop there; in July of 2023, their team actively engaged with our community during our Kids Activity Week, where they organized entertaining and educational games focused on money

management for the children in our shelter. The children thoroughly enjoyed these activities, which provided valuable lessons in a fun and creative manner.

This Spring, CFCU has once again graciously volunteered their time with visits in March and April to assist with various cleaning tasks, ensuring our shelter remains a safe and welcoming space for survivors. Looking ahead, CFCU is preparing a custom banking product launch for First Step survivors to have better access to penalty-free loans and credit building opportunities.

We extend our sincerest gratitude to CFCU for their unwavering support and dedication to our cause over the years.



CFCU Volunteers



*Thank You*

**You Are the Light Gala 2023 Sponsors!**

*Luminescence*  
Karen Wilson Smithbauer

*Brilliance+*  
Bridgewater Interiors

*Brilliance*  
Vonda Grant  
Mace Insurance Company  
CFCU  
Joan Hennessey  
Corewell Health



## ANNOUNCING FIRST STEP'S ONLINE STORE!

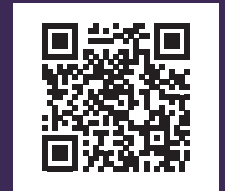
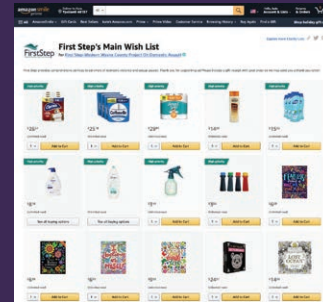


**EXPLORE OUR VIRTUAL AISLES AND  
SUPPORT OUR MISSION TO END  
DOMESTIC AND SEXUAL VIOLENCE.**

[www.firststep-mi.org/store](http://www.firststep-mi.org/store)

Our Wish List contains items that First Step and the families we serve could use the most. You can make contact-free donations using our Amazon Wish List.

**VISIT [BIT.LY/FSMOSTNEEDED](https://bit.ly/FSMOSTNEEDED)  
OR POINT YOUR PHONE CAMERA AT THE CODE**



Visit [firststep-mi.org/donate](http://firststep-mi.org/donate) for more information, including our children's wish lists, or call 734-722-1772.

## CELEBRATING HAILEY ZUREICH: A CHAMPION FOR FIRST STEP

In the heart of our community, radiates a source of hope and laughter, and her name is Hailey Zureich. For years, Hailey has been a dedicated supporter of First Step, dedicating her time, talent, and boundless energy to our cause.



One of Hailey's remarkable contributions is the annual Galentine's Comedy Gala, a night of joy and laughter that not only entertains but also raises crucial funds for First Step every February. This year, we celebrated the Comedy Gala's 5th anniversary, a testament to Hailey's commitment and the community's enduring support.



Over the years, Hailey has raised over \$10,000 for First Step through her fundraising efforts, a remarkable achievement that has made a tangible difference in the lives of survivors.

Beyond her philanthropic efforts for First Step, and many other causes, Hailey is a beacon of light in her own right. As a life coach, she empowers others to overcome obstacles and achieve their dreams. Her comedy brings smiles to faces and warmth to hearts, reminding us all of the healing power of laughter. In addition to her coaching, event planning, and being a stand-up comedian, Hailey also teaches yoga, hosts comedy classes, empowerment-based women's retreats, creates art and content - what can't she do?!

Her unwavering support helps us provide essential services to survivors of intimate partner violence and sexual assault and reach more people to join our mission. First Step sends a heartfelt thanks to Hailey for being a champion for First Step, a beacon of hope, an inclusionary ally, and a source of endless inspiration.

To learn more about events and services offered by Hailey, or to follow her on your preferred platform, visit [linktr.ee/zhailey](https://linktr.ee/zhailey).



*Did you hear?*

First Step is embarking  
on a new venture!

We're seeking to open a SECOND  
shelter, and this time, in Detroit!

Scan the code to learn more.



YOU ARE THE LIGHT

*Gala*

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 8, 2024  
6:30-11:30PM

*Laurel Manor*

39000 SCHOOLCRAFT RD  
LIVONIA, MICHIGAN

*Plated Dinner*  
*Dancing & Cocktails*  
*Award Ceremony*  
*Live Music by*  
*The Bluewater Kings*  
*Silent Auction*  
*Survivor Speakers*



FIRSTSTEP-MI.ORG/LIGHT





# SPONSORSHIP/TICKET OPPORTUNITIES

## **\$50,000 BEACON OF HOPE SPONSOR** (*Detroit Sponsor*)

- ⇒ Exclusive naming rights for a designated suite in the new Detroit Shelter
- ⇒ VIP Event Experience: Priority seating for 20 guests
- ⇒ VIP Dinner Experience: Cocktail service to table(s) during dinner
- ⇒ Featured recognition during event
- ⇒ Full-page ad with prime placement in the event program
- ⇒ Customized mementos for each of the 20 guests
- ⇒ Amplified Exposure: Five dedicated social media shout-outs
- ⇒ Featured recognition in First Step's newsletter
- ⇒ Premier recognition and profile on First Step's website
- ⇒ Personalized guided tour and informational session of First Step's facilities

## **\$25,000 LUMINESCENCE SPONSOR** (*Title Sponsor*)

- ⇒ VIP Event Experience: Priority seating for 20 guests
- ⇒ VIP Dinner Experience: Cocktail service to table(s) during dinner
- ⇒ Featured recognition during event
- ⇒ Full Page Ad with prominent placement in the event program
- ⇒ Customized mementos for each of the 20 guests
- ⇒ Amplified Exposure: Five social media shout-outs
- ⇒ Acknowledgement in First Step's newsletter
- ⇒ Prominent recognition on First Step's website
- ⇒ Personalized guided tour and informational session of First Step's facilities

## **\$10,000 BRILLIANCE SPONSOR**

- ⇒ VIP Event Experience: Priority seating for 10 guests
- ⇒ VIP Dinner Experience: Wine pour at table during dinner
- ⇒ Featured recognition during event
- ⇒ Full-page ad in event electronic program
- ⇒ Special memento giveaway for each of the 10 guests
- ⇒ Amplified Exposure: Three social media shout-outs
- ⇒ Recognition in First Step's newsletter and on First Step's website
- ⇒ Personalized guided tour and informational session of First Step's facilities

## **\$5,000 ILLUMINATION SPONSOR**

- ⇒ VIP Event Experience: Priority seating for 10 guests
- ⇒ Ad recognition during event
- ⇒ Half page ad in event program
- ⇒ Recognition on First Step's website
- ⇒ Two dedicated social media shout-outs
- ⇒ Choice between personalized First Step info session  
OR guided tour of First Step facilities

## **\$2,500 RADIANCE SPONSOR**

- ⇒ VIP Event Experience: Reserved seating for 10 Guests
- ⇒ Ad recognition during event
- ⇒ Quarter page ad in event program
- ⇒ Listing on First Step's website
- ⇒ One dedicated social media shout-out

## **\$1,750 ULTRAVIOLET SPONSOR**

- ⇒ VIP Event Experience: Reserved seating for 10 guests
- ⇒ Listing recognition during event
- ⇒ Eighth page ad in event program
- ⇒ Listing on First Step's website

## **\$500 GLIMMER SPONSOR**

- ⇒ Two event tickets
- ⇒ Listing recognition during event
- ⇒ Listing in event program and on First Step's website

## **\$150 EVENT TICKET**

- ⇒ One event ticket (includes champagne toast, entrée, dessert, and open bar)

Company/Organization/Individual Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Person: \_\_\_\_\_

Relationship to Company/Organization: \_\_\_\_\_

Sponsorship Level: \_\_\_\_\_

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

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

☐ Check this box if above address is the Company/Organization's

Phone (Cell): \_\_\_\_\_ (Work): \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

If you would like fewer tickets than your sponsorship level offers, please indicate the quantity: \_\_\_\_\_ ☐ I can't attend, but I would like 100% of my sponsorship to be donated to First Step.

Method of Payment: ☐ Check ☐ Visa ☐ M/C ☐ Invoice us

Name as it appears on card: \_\_\_\_\_

Acct Number: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

EXP: \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_

3 Digit Code: \_\_\_\_

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

I wish to contribute in memory/honor of: \_\_\_\_\_

How did you hear about this event? \_\_\_\_\_

The deadline for recognition in the program is October 1, 2024.

Visit [firststep-mi.org/light](http://firststep-mi.org/light) or scan the code to secure a sponsorship, purchase tickets, or donate online.



You can also mail, email or fax to:

First Step, 44567 Pinetree Drive, Plymouth, MI 48170,

[info@firststep-mi.org](mailto:info@firststep-mi.org), fax: 734-416-5555

Please make checks payable to First Step.

Questions? Call 734-656-0730 or email [tbizoe@firststep-mi.org](mailto:tbizoe@firststep-mi.org).

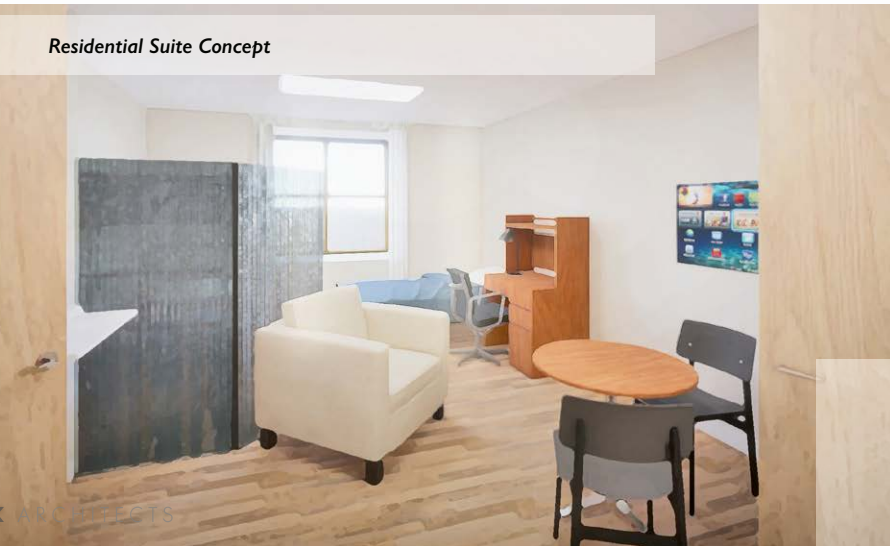


Residential Suite Concept

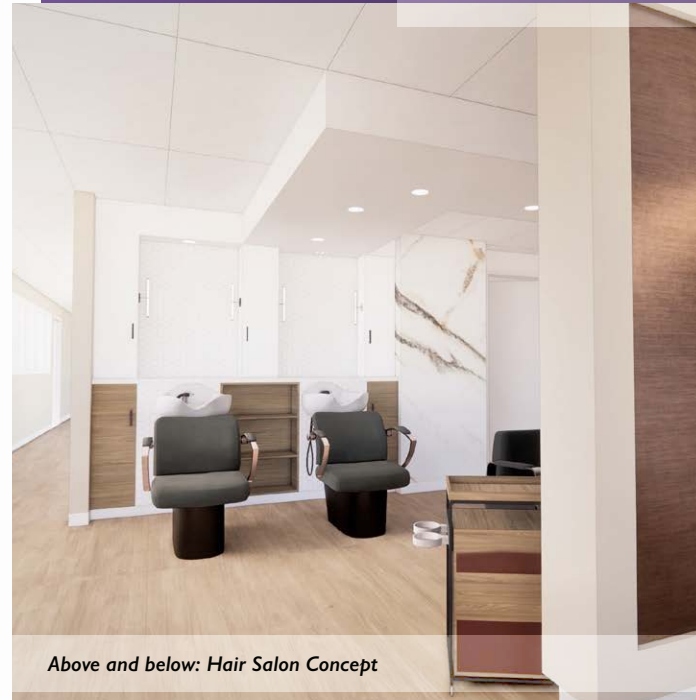
## WHAT'S NEW?

First Step has signed the lease to the 22,000 square foot space within the Samaritan Center to start renovating the rooms and various healing spaces we are eager to provide Detroit survivors. First Step has been working to inhabit this space to add an additional 21 shelter rooms along with eight other client centered spaces to assist in supporting survivors healing.

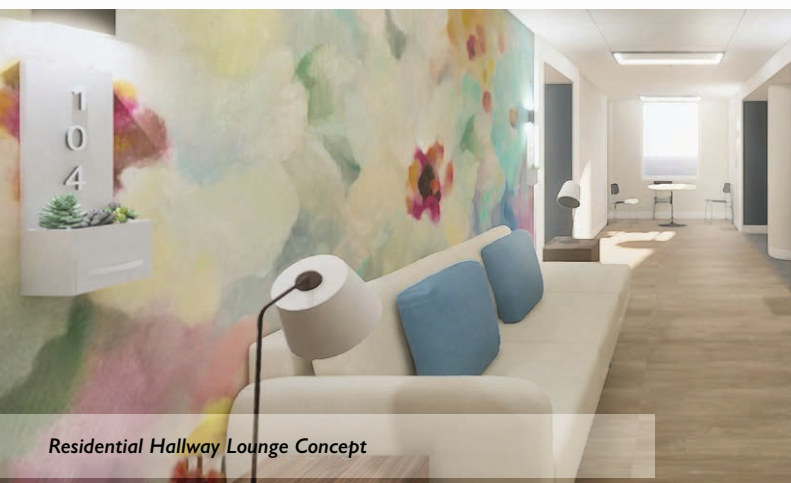
Residential Suite Concept



Above and below: Hair Salon Concept



Residential Hallway Lounge Concept



Residential Suite Concept



## ABOUT THE PROBLEM



At any given time, survivors from Detroit make up 30-50% of our Wayne-based shelter residents.



Each month, approximately 200 families call for shelter from our county and are told we are full.



2021 crime data from Detroit reports 829 rapes, 11,943 assaults, and 305 murders.

Many of these crimes can be attributed to Intimate Partner Violence.

Private Residential Bathroom Concept



Residential Hallway Lounge Concept

## CURRENT NEEDS

We are currently seeking individuals and organizations who are willing to help us **spread the word**, and put us into contact with individuals and organizations who see the vision and want to be a part of the impact. We have various opportunities to assist in some way.

Reach out to Tanesha Weems, [tweems@firststep-mi.org](mailto:tweems@firststep-mi.org), to see how you could be a part of this brighter future for Detroit survivors.

*Photos renderings courtesy of Hobbs + Black Associates, Inc. © 2023*

## WHY DETROIT?

First Step is the domestic violence and sexual assault free, comprehensive service provider for all of Wayne County, including Detroit, and has been providing services to survivors in Detroit for decades. Even with this, Detroit has been historically underserved when it comes to resources and support for survivors of domestic and sexual violence. Despite being a vibrant and resilient city, Detroit has faced numerous economic challenges and social disparities over the years. These factors, coupled with the high prevalence of intimate partner and sexual violence, have created a pressing need for comprehensive services within the city. Existing resources, including shelter beds, have been scarce, leaving survivors without a safe haven in their own communities.

Establishing a second shelter in Detroit sends a powerful message of empowerment and resilience to the community. It demonstrates that no survivor should be left without the vital resources needed to escape violence and rebuild their lives. By increasing the availability of shelter beds, First Step can extend its reach and impact, ultimately helping to break the cycle of violence that has plagued many individuals and families in the Detroit area.







44567 Pinetree Drive  
Plymouth, MI 48170



## ABOUT FIRST STEP

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

First Step offers temporary emergency housing, counseling, advocacy, transitional housing, crisis response, 24-hour helpline 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 734.722.1772 for more information.

First Step  
44567 Pinetree Drive  
Plymouth, MI 48170  
734.416.1111

24-Hour Helpline  
734.722.6800

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

 [firststep-mi.org](http://firststep-mi.org)  
 [firststepmi](https://www.facebook.com/firststepmi)  
 [firststepwaynecountymi](https://www.instagram.com/firststepwaynecountymi)

## 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 [bit.ly/donatetoFS](http://bit.ly/donatetoFS)  
(or scan the  
code with your  
smartphone) to  
make a secure  
donation to  
First Step.



For information about the newsletter or to unsubscribe, contact Theresa Bizoe: 734.656.0730, [tbizoe@firststep-mi.org](mailto:tbizoe@firststep-mi.org)

**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.



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