



STRONGER THAN EVER

STEP
BY _
STEP

2017 ANNUAL REPORT



MISSION

To improve the lives of young single mothers and their children through healing, encouragement, faith and education.

VISION

A Lexington that heals and empowers young, single mothers to positively impact their family and community.

Message from Board President

Dear Step By Step Allies,

Borne out of a desire to provide young single mothers with guidance and support, the seed of Step By Step was planted in 1996 in the homes of three young women who believed they could make a difference. Fast forward to now, and that "seed" has blossomed into a living, breathing organization that is bearing the very real fruit of lives changed – hearts healed – and chains broken as we walk side by side with young women struggling under the pressures of life. Our strong roots in this community, and the fruit that we bear witness to on a daily basis, will only continue to expand as we head into our 22nd year of ministry. Like "the tree planted by the water, that sends out its roots by the stream, and does not fear when heat comes" (Jer. 17:8), Step By Step has been blessed with a strong support system of volunteers and donors that has sustained and enabled us to continue to thrive. We are growing. We are strong. And we are producing good fruit in the lives of women and children right here in Lexington.

Notably, we are entering the second year of the grant provided by The William R. Kenan, Jr. Charitable Trust, which has enabled us to implement and secure an incredible staff to run the day-to-day operations of our ministry. Tanya Torp, our Executive Director, has brought a new energy to Step By Step and continues to amaze us with her ability to raise awareness, funding, and support for the mission throughout the community. Step By Step has also recently hired Alicia Sims as Program Director and Christina Woodson as Assistant Program Director; both women are prior Step By Step volunteers that know our mission's heart and have hit the ground running. Together, this "dream team" have completely revamped our ministry's program year and reignited a Fervent prayer team. The

reworked program night for our young moms, labeled "Revive," is an apt description for the life that has been breathed back into our ministry.

Further, following the strategic plan we outlined in the summer of 2016, we have increased our board membership, grown our fundraising committee, and advanced our fundraising plan by increasing church partnerships and securing local grants. Our budget has nearly doubled over the past few years and we are strategically positioned to grow further even as we have fully funded reserves in our designated rainy day fund.

None of this would be possible without YOU, our partner and ally. Thanks to your support, the roots of Step By Step have taken hold and strengthened the Lexington community and will continue to bear fruit for hundreds of women and children throughout the years.

Blessings,



Casey M. Keller
President of Board of Directors

Message from Executive Director

Dear Step By Step Partner,

From our inception nearly 22 years ago, Step By Step has been a force in our community partnering with young single mothers and their children, helping to remove barriers to success, while empowering them to set and reach their goals and dreams. We have been unwavering in our resolve to illuminate gaps in community services and provide holistic solutions that keep families intact, foster strong bonds between mother and child, and break destructive cycles.

This year, Step By Step has grown in our capacity to remain relevant and forward thinking. We began teaching a course at an alternative high school for young mothers, offering in-depth training in communication skills, goal setting, personal responsibility, financial literacy, and advocacy. We have strengthened our partnerships throughout the community and added the Cabinet for Health and Family Services, local hospitals, and the Juvenile Detention Center as referral sources and allies in our work.

Our Thursday night programming has also had a face-lift. Now called "Revive," we continue to offer life-skill training, support groups, and discipleship to our clients. Our Mentor Program is expanding and with it we will be able to delve deeper and touch the lives of our moms and their kids in even more impactful ways.

It is such a privilege to watch from this vantage point as young single mothers find their true strength. I was asked to give a commencement speech and watch ten of our clients walk across

the stage and graduate high school this past May. Here are the words I spoke to them. Words that every volunteer wordlessly echoes with the gift of their time and service:

Don't settle.

Don't settle for a future marred by the mistakes of your past. You are not your past. You are not your mistakes. You are not your flaws. You are not your fears. You are more. More than you ever thought you would be and more than you ever thought you were. Hold your head up high. Repeat it to yourself every single day, "I deserve to take my place in this world and I am going to be great."

Thank you for partnering with us to ensure that our clients and their children fulfill that call.

With love and appreciation,



Tanya Torp
Executive Director

STAFF

Tanya Torp, Executive Director

Alicia Sims, Program Director

Christina Fletcher Woodson, Assistant Program Director

Katie Spradlin Lowe, Children's Ministry Coordinator

Christie Vick, Office Manager

Constance heard about Step By Step through a high school visit from our Executive Director, Tanya Torp in August of 2015. Growing up in Syracuse, New York, Constance recalls being the object of relentless bullying. For two solid years her classmates teased her about her weight and developing body. This not only hurt Constance, but made her angry and sad, as she dealt with feelings of rejection. Due to the severity of the bullying, she and her mother decided it was time to get away for a fresh start in a different place. So, they threw a dart at the map and found themselves headed to Central Kentucky.

At the age of 16, Constance started dating a boy and started skipping school to be with him. Although she is incredibly intelligent, her grades suffered. In the winter of 2015, she discovered she was pregnant. She was terrified to tell her mom. Initially very angry, Constance's mom has become one of her biggest supporters.

About a year ago, her mother got a job offer in Ohio and Constance, her son, and her mother abruptly left Lexington. Step By Step reached out with occasional cards and social media messages to let Constance know we love her. After just a few short months in Ohio, inclement torrential rain created severe flooding and Constance and her family lost everything they owned. They returned to Lexington with all the possessions they had left packed into three suitcases and two small boxes.

Constance returned to Step By Step, re-enrolled in high school, and became focused on completing her education. Constance didn't skip class anymore - she worked hard, persevered and completed all her coursework earlier this year. In May 2017 she officially graduated from high school!

Constance says it was when she moved back to Lexington after the flood in Ohio that Step By Step was the most helpful to her. "I was welcomed back with open arms and it was like I was never away." Constance is happy to be a part of Step By Step - not only does she get to have fun and take a little break from her son, but she also meets and talks to other moms facing some of the same challenges she faces. Constance says some of those moms have become friends too.



To provide the love and guidance a young, single mom needs to not only survive, but thrive, Step By Step provides a robust annual program of services to these mothers and their children.

OUR GOALS FOR OUR CLIENTS ARE:

- Improved health, including physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual
- Improved potential for self-sufficiency

TO ACHIEVE THESE OBJECTIVES, STEP BY STEP PROVIDES THE FOLLOWING PROGRAM INITIATIVES:

Empowerment

- Dare to Dream Sessions (moms explore dreams, set goals, and make plans to achieve them!)
- Career/Education Planning
- Mentor Program
- Support Groups

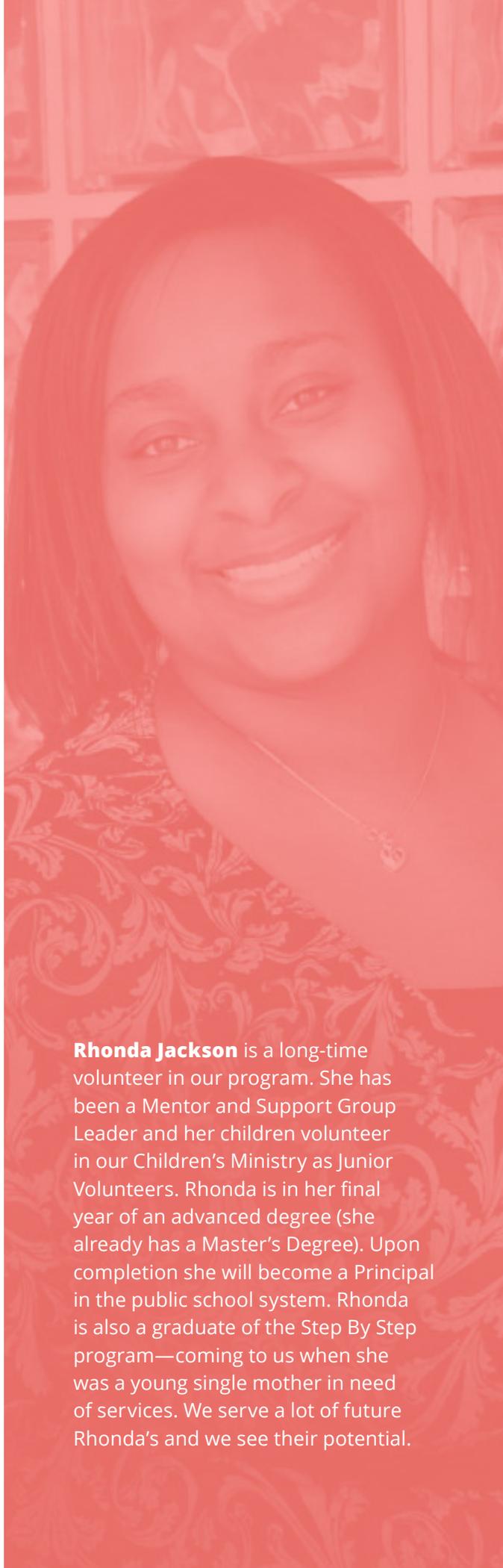
Life-Skills Workshops

- Boundaries
- Financial Literacy
- Healthy Relationships
- Health/Wellness
- Self-Esteem
- Cooking
- Parenting
- Zumba

Additionally, Step By Step could not be true guides to these young mothers without providing counsel and advice for their daily needs and emergency situations. Our moms face overwhelming challenges and Step By Step's staff is on-call 24/7 to help in times of need.

We provide:

- Resource Referrals: we direct our clients on where to find help providing their families with food, housing, diapers, utilities, tutoring, mental health counseling, and more.
- Crisis Intervention: too frequently our clients face abusive and dangerous situations, hospitalization, homelessness, mental health emergencies, legal issues and so much more, and Step By Step's staff is there any time of the day or night to intervene and provide assistance as crises arise.

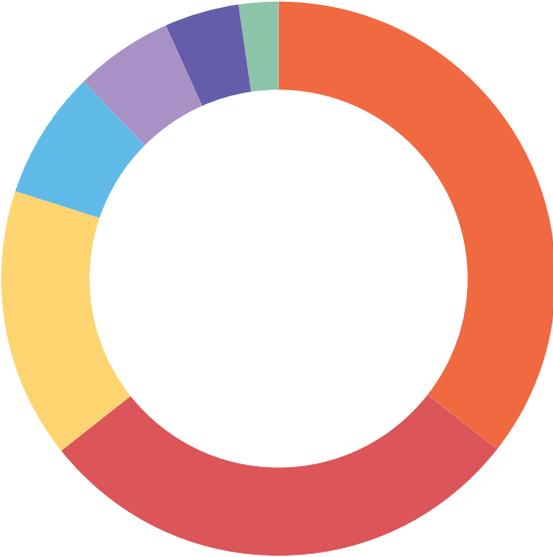


Rhonda Jackson is a long-time volunteer in our program. She has been a Mentor and Support Group Leader and her children volunteer in our Children's Ministry as Junior Volunteers. Rhonda is in her final year of an advanced degree (she already has a Master's Degree). Upon completion she will become a Principal in the public school system. Rhonda is also a graduate of the Step By Step program—coming to us when she was a young single mother in need of services. We serve a lot of future Rhonda's and we see their potential.



On the Path to Success

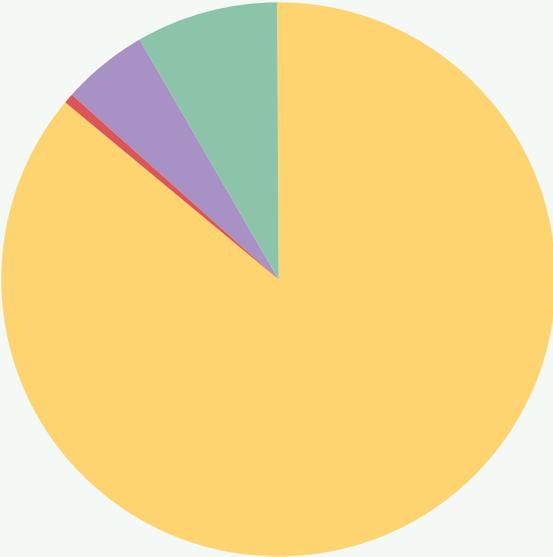
This year we had a total of 174 moms and 78 new moms. Here is a glance at their achievements.



- 48** Found stable housing
- 39** Enrolled in Step By Step led course at Family Care Center
- 21** Obtained employment
- 10** Graduated from high school
- 8** Enrolled in college
- 6** Took on volunteer leadership roles within Step By Step
- 3** Re-enrolled in high school

Program Year

Step By Step moms participated as follows during 2016-2017



- 174** Staff Interactions
- 80** Dare to Dream (Goal setting and planning program)
- 60** Counseling Referrals
- 5** Mentorship (We currently have 5 mentors. Our goal is to have mentors for all moms)

WE'RE STRONGER THAN EVER THANKS TO SUPPORTERS LIKE YOU

and good stewardship of
our resources by Step By
Step's Staff and Board.

"The Kenan Charitable Trust is a proud partner of Step By Step. Step By Step's theory of change is two-fold: change the lives of mothers who, in turn, will change the lives of their children. This is critical work and the positive pan-generational outcomes are very inspiring!"

Doug Zinn, Executive Director

The William R. Kenan, Jr. Charitable Trust

JOSEPH FUND

As Step By Step has grown in size and sophistication, we have striven to make sure we adhere to common best practices for nonprofits. One such practice is keeping at least three months worth of operating expenses in a "rainy day" or reserve fund in case of unforeseen emergency circumstances. We have been blessed again this year (as well as in the two previous years) that our "Joseph Fund" is fully funded—even as the number of moms we serve and operating expenses associated with the added costs of serving more moms has increased.

ENDOWMENT

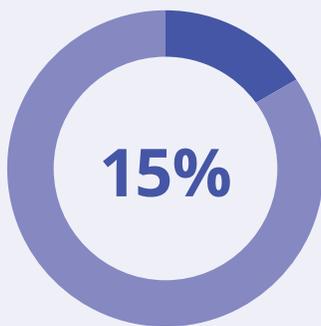
Thanks to the large number of donors and donations Step By Step received during the Blue Grass Community Foundation's 2016 Good Giving Challenge, a community-wide online fundraising initiative, Step By Step won an endowment prize of \$5,000 from BGCF. This prize is the seed money for our new endowment—a permanent nest-egg for Step By Step. The formation of our endowment has already inspired other donors to contribute to this fund and has grown to \$50,000! Like a savings account, our endowment fund will produce interest the organization can use toward operations in future years. Gifts to Step By Step's endowment are a great way to make a permanent and lasting effect on the financial stability of the organization.



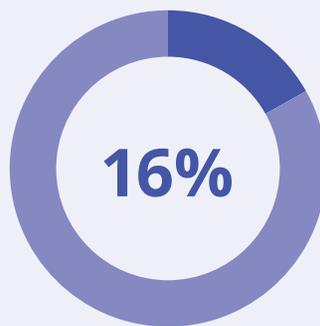
Financial Overview

July 1, 2016 to June 30, 2017

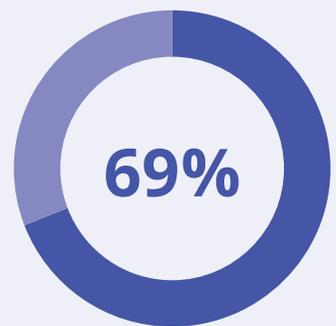
EXPENSES



Fundraising
\$27,657.40

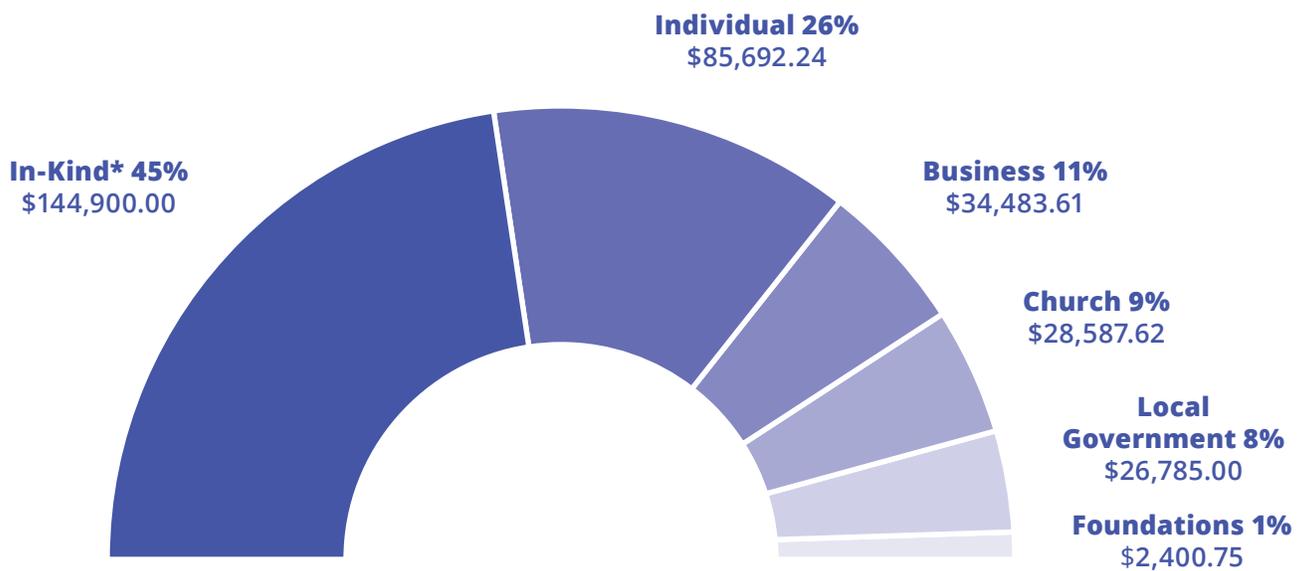


Administrative
\$31,295.43



Program Services
\$129,170.37

INCOME BY DONOR



*This includes donations of goods and services that would otherwise have had to be purchased by Step By Step.

New Initiatives

The following Step By Step initiatives were created or refreshed this year in order to grow the number of moms we serve while also continuing to improve how we minister to these young mothers and their children.

“Being a single parent is hard, especially when you’re young, but my daughter is the most important thing in my life. Besides my family, Step By Step is my biggest support.”

-Esmerelda,
Step By Step Mom, recent high school graduate and currently enrolled at BCTC

REVIVE

Our bi-monthly program nights have been revamped into a high-energy night of worship, discipleship, life-skill training, and intimate support groups. We’ve got a new name and a new attitude.

FERVENT PRAYER MINISTRY

We desire to place an even greater focus on the importance of prayer over this ministry as we walk alongside our young single moms and their children towards healing. We believe this is one of the most important initiatives in our ministry, therefore, we have created a way to engage with our partners to be even more intentional through quarterly in-person prayer nights and weekly contact.

TALENTS TEAM

Young single moms rarely have time to explore their gifts and talents outside of working, going to school, and caring for little ones. We wanted to provide an opportunity for young mothers to use their gift of song, drama, and other artistic abilities. Moms will be able to explore their creative side as they grow, learn, and heal.

FAMILY CARE CENTER CLASS

We were invited to teach a semester long course to young single mothers at the Family Care Center, an alternative high school for young mothers. The course topics include: communication skills, healthy relationships, self-esteem, and goal setting. They see these young women not as statistics, but as future leaders! We had a blast with these brilliant and resilient students and are looking forward to continuing the partnership.

MENTOR PROGRAM EXPANSION

In 2015 we began a pilot Mentor Program for our moms. Community volunteers became mentors and were required to meet twice per month for an hour with our young single moms. Our mentors are an encouraging force and are used to expand the support network of our moms and their children. We had two women willing to work with our moms and saw a lot of success. This year, we expanded the program to 5 mentors and moms. Mentors are now required to meet once per week with their mentees and Step By Step will host quarterly opportunities for mentors and mentees to spend time together having a good time. Our goal for 2018 is for every young mother to have a mentor.

Friend and Fundraising Events

In 2017, Step By Step's volunteers and staff hosted three amazing fundraising events in Lexington raising more than \$30,000 towards this ministry. Special thanks to all those who sponsored, volunteered, and attended!

STEP INTO BEAUTIFUL

Our annual tea and fashion show draws more than 280 women in our community to a fun-filled afternoon of fellowship and learning about Step By Step. Both our moms and volunteers are featured as models during the fashion show so that our guests can learn how Step By Step helps to heal and empower these young women throughout the year.

FUNKY FUN PROM RUN

The Funky Fun Prom Run is the only prom-themed 5K of its kind. This year, serious and amateur runners alike dressed in their favorite prom attire and raced the night away to benefit Step By Step.

LEX GO HUNTIN'

Now in its second year, Lex Go Huntin' is a scavenger hunt for fun-loving teams who raced through downtown Lexington snapping photos of their adventures and antics along the way. More than 100 Lex Go "hunters" started off the evening at Belle's Cocktail house to get their "clues" for the hunt and ended the evening with an after party and concert at The Burl. This high-spirited event raised many friends and funds to support our work.

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Sheila Sekela, Treasurer
Brittany MacGregor Roethemeier, Secretary
Cheryl Grieb
Anne Sabatino Hardy
Christy Hiler
Ana Maldonado-Coomer
Joanne Underwood

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Charlotte Cornett
Rebekah Gray Henley
Cheryl Grieb
Anne Sabatino Hardy
Christy Hiler
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