

2023
ANNUAL
REPORT

UNWAVERING

STEP
BY _
STEP

healing & empowering
young single moms





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OUR MISSION ...

We're here to empower and embolden young single mothers to improve their lives, their families, and their communities through healing, encouragement, faith and education.

OUR VISION ...

We envision a Lexington that fosters belonging and empowers young, single mothers to positively impact their families and communities.

**STEP
BY_
STEP**

healing & empowering
young single moms

A LETTER FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

For nearly 30 years, Step By Step has remained steadfast in our mission to empower young single mothers and their children throughout our community. This year we elevated our commitment by launching new initiatives and deepening our existing programming.

Throughout 2023, our work has looked like:

- Adapting our popular Echo & Resound Leadership Developing program for a high school setting, and partnering with a local alternative high school for teen moms, to launch on their campus.
- Hiring a graduate of that very program, whom we met at that same high school in 2018, to facilitate the program. She is able to incorporate her story of perseverance throughout the modules to center just how accessible it is.
- Launching our third Step Into Freedom Financial Literacy Program class and watching another mom purchase a home.
- Deepening our trauma-informed training by writing, producing and recording 10 hours of content to maintain the integrity, consistency, and accessibility of our volunteer program.
- Purchasing a new van to ensure that every young mother who desires to attend our program can do so through safe and reliable transportation.
- Launching our Step By Step Advisory Committee of community members to think through four major topics affecting our moms and kids: housing insecurity, food insecurity, workforce development, and mental health. Our aim is not to wait for change, but to be the change as an organization. In order to do this, we have assembled business leaders, church leaders, and other professionals from a myriad of backgrounds to provide unique perspectives.

We have chosen the theme “unwavering” for our 2023 annual report to demonstrate our commitment to continue fostering innovative and forward thinking strategies in our work, while remaining true to our foundation. As we grow and change, we maintain a level of fiscal responsibility and rigor to offer the best services efficiently and effectively. At our core, we will continue to exist as a safe and loving environment for young families to grow into their own futures. We create space for young moms to have a voice in the way things are done and tangible influence over programming decisions. We maintain a place for healing, encouragement, truth-telling, and empowerment for some of the most vulnerable in our community.

But, we also aim to call up our supporters into these endeavors. We cannot do this without you... and we wouldn't want to. Our vision of extending a sense of belonging to our young families will not happen in a vacuum.

We are unwavering in our commitment to meet young single moms and their children where they are and create the conditions where they can see themselves thrive.



Thank you for joining us on this journey.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tanya Torp".

Tanya Torp
Executive Director



REVIVE

A SAFE PLACE TO HEAL

Roughly 25% of Step By Step moms are referred to us because they have open cases with the Department of Community Based Services: Division of Protection & Permanency. Judges, social workers, attorneys, victim's advocates and therapists have endorsed our case management and wrap around services throughout court proceedings.

Jashelle was taking a parenting class required by the courts to regain physical custody of her children when she was referred to Step By Step. She was told participating in the program would be beneficial to closing her case.

"Initially it was another thing I felt I had to do for my case like drug testing, weekly therapy, visits with social workers, court appearances ... on and on. I definitely wasn't looking forward to it. I was desperate to bring my babies home and would have done anything. I was already so overwhelmed, but I knew I should at least try it. When I got there, everything just ... changed. When I walked in, I was anxious, nervous, worried about what the other moms would think of me. I was ashamed. I walked into a room of complete strangers and felt so welcomed, loved, and respected."

"I walked into a room of complete strangers and felt so welcomed, loved, and respected."

What Jashelle walked into was an atmosphere of acceptance and ease punctuated by a lot of laughter. Revive is Step By Step's most popular program, boasting energetic weekly gatherings for young single mothers with transportation, children's programming, a family-style hot meal, support groups and programming chosen by our young mom leaders.

"I got permission from my social worker to take my kids with me. I was greeted at the door by people who seemed really excited to meet me. They were smiling and hugging me and asking my kid's names. They helped me find the classrooms to drop off my kids, then I got to have dinner with the other moms served to us by volunteers. I felt really special."

After a family-style dinner, moms engage with topics such as healthy relationships, SMART goal-setting, and more. Knowing their kids are safe, well fed, and happy in our Revive Kids program, moms have the opportunity to take a breath, build new skills, and grow their community.

"I love the big group, getting time with all my sisters. But I also really enjoy the smaller support group, it's more personal and one-on-one. You get to discuss topics and hear everyone's opinions. It's a safe place and you know that what you say there is going to stay there."

From the very first night she arrived, Jashelle shared her vulnerability and truth with the other moms. In turn, it led them to share more deeply with one another.

"When I left Revive that first night, I felt 10 pounds lighter. I knew I was going to be okay, and I was going to get my babies back. It changed from a task to something I looked forward to."

Jashelle kept returning each week with fiery passion, a great sense of humor, and a readiness to be raw, authentic, and vulnerable with others. And she hasn't stopped.

As she worked her case plan and prepared to bring her children home, Jashelle found more than a program. She found purpose in community and a desire to lead. Shortly afterwards, her kids were returned home!

Today, Jashelle is one of the first moms to volunteer to assist with tasks on Revive nights, like jumping on the mic and leading announcements in front of the entire room or greeting a new mom and sitting with her, making her feel welcome for the evening. Leadership is a natural next step for her.

"I want to work my way up. I want to stick around for a long time. I used to feel so alone, and like no one understood what I was going through. And now I know I'm not alone, I'm not the only one. I want to be able to encourage other moms that there may be bumps in the road but you're going to be okay. We can be bosses!"





FINANCIAL INDEPENDENCE

This fall, we launched our latest round of our financial literacy program, Step Into Freedom. Even though Jessika had only joined Step By Step a few months before, she was eager to sign up and start building better financial habits.

Adding to the intensity of the moment, Jessika had just given birth to her premature son, Christopher, who was still in the NICU. She didn't want to be away from him, but she made the decision to leave the hospital each Tuesday night for 3 hours to participate in the class.

"Because I had a high-risk pregnancy I couldn't work. So, I had to depend on my child's father for all of my financial needs. That is not something I have ever wanted to do. I don't want to be dependent on someone else. I want to be able to stand on my own two feet. I made this commitment for my son and even though things were scary, I wanted to keep it."

Jessika was especially enticed by the matched savings portion of Step Into Freedom. Each participant practices the skills they are learning in Step Into Freedom such as budgeting, how to avoid predatory lenders, and recognizing their own trauma response around spending, especially for those who grew up financially insecure. In conjunction with the course materials, moms are required to save money each month in an Individual Development Account (IDA) towards a specific goal such as buying a car, paying off debt, or establishing

"I don't want to be dependent on someone else. I want to be able to stand on my own two feet."

a rainy day fund. Participants agree not to withdraw from the account, instead opting to watch it grow as their savings habits grow.

"It was really hard, especially when I was not sure how long my baby would be in the hospital. I remember the first night I went to Step Into Freedom. I couldn't even touch him yet. He was so tiny and fragile and I had so many emotions. And, I was still healing physically, myself. But I knew it would be worth it if I could give him a future."

After several months of skill building, Step By Step matches the mom's savings up to \$2 to \$1. This year, we added an additional incentive for moms to build up their IDAs. The first mom to deposit \$100 in her IDA would automatically receive a \$100 match from Step By Step. When Jessika accompanied Program Coordinator, Brittany, to the bank to open her IDA, she came ready with her \$100 deposit to receive the \$100 match!

"I want to create a solid future for my son... I'm learning to think ahead and save for the future I want. The support from the other moms in the group is inspiring. We push each other to achieve our goals. It's like we are all cheerleaders for each other."

Following graduation from the course work, moms are paired with a Financial Advocate who will meet with them weekly to continue skill building and support.

"I am excited to meet my advocate. I'll probably have a million questions. It will be good to have another person who cares about my success checking in on me. I have a lot to learn but I am grateful Step By Step will be there."

HOLISTIC SUPPORT

Our case management program, C.A.R.E., continues to be a vital part of Step By Step. Our program team follows up with moms on a weekly basis, sharing Connections, Affirmation, Resources, and Empowerment.

Asha works two jobs and still struggles to make ends meet. Her 3rd shift job at a local fulfillment warehouse and day job cleaning commercial buildings allows her little time to spend with her 4-year-old son.

"I tried college for a while, but I was falling asleep in class trying to keep my grades up. My son started acting out because he never saw me. He was getting confused and sometimes called my friend 'mama' when she babysat him. Then, we both started seeing some behaviors that worried us. When he was diagnosed with autism and needed additional therapies like OT, PT, and speech it just got so overwhelming. Knowing he really needed me now and that it took hours to get from appointment to appointment on public transportation, I just had to withdraw.

"One night at Revive, I let my group know that I was having thoughts about my son being better off without me and that I had started having panic attacks. Immediately, the Step By Step staff stepped in, got me a referral for therapy, helped me find one company that could do all of my son's appointments on the same day, and honestly, just listened to me when I felt

"... it really helps knowing that I am not alone ..."

overwhelmed. I have no one else in my life. I moved here for my son's father two years ago, and he left less than a year later.

"Someone from the Step By Step team calls me every week to check on me. They always ask if they can pray for me and I'm like, 'Girl, yes. I need all the help I can get.' I thank God for Step By Step. They have become like family to me. I am doing the work in therapy, but it really helps knowing that I'm not alone and can bounce things off of them and share my frustrations. The C.A.R.E. program has been a blessing."





BUILDING A FUTURE

“What do you want to be when you grow up?” “What do you want to do with your life?”

For many of our young single moms, these questions can be paralyzing. Living in “survival mode” just trying to make it through the day can be a barrier, keeping them from thinking beyond the now. The Step By Step Dare To Dream program is meant to take some of the anxiety out of thinking about a future goal, setting young moms up to develop some key building blocks for success.

Rachel, a single mother of two, has been attending Step By Step since her Junior year in high school. When we first met her, she was shy and quiet and had grown accustomed to people in her life speaking for her. When it was time for her to set some goals with graduation looming, Rachel could not see a future for herself and wanted someone to just tell her what she should do next. Though high self-esteem and the ability to engage in self-advocacy were not a part of her life, she embraced our programming and remained heavily involved.

The Dare to Dream process takes several sessions and depends on relationship building and centering the voice of our moms. It does not work if we impose our desires for moms onto them. True empowerment happens when they are given an environment and a framework to come to their own conclusions. It begins by asking questions and setting a pace that seems achievable and accessible to our moms.

Before long, Rachel set her first two SMART goals: Obtain a full-time job that would meet her financial needs and move out of her parent’s home into her first apartment.

She was able to achieve both within two years!

But, it did not stop there. She was still having problems believing in herself and advocating for what was best for her and her children.

At Step By Step, we take mental health seriously and when moms are experiencing chronic issues of self esteem or mental health concerns, we always offer to provide referrals to licensed therapists.

Young single mothers experience depression and postpartum depression at twice the rate of women ages 25 and up. Coupled with other risk factors such as living in low-income communities, having a history of experiencing abuse themselves as children or young adults, or living in unstable or chaotic living environments, young single mothers are more likely to experience significant levels of stress that can increase risk for other mental health disorders.* This stress can even lead to an increased risk for child abuse.

We have seen firsthand that having access to the tools therapists provide can lead to increased self-esteem and self-advocacy for moms and their children.

Rachel knew she was doing well paying her bills and taking care of her kids and her home, but she still wanted more for herself.

"I think I'm ready for that therapy referral."

Our team referred her to one of our partners to provide her therapy, and she began to faithfully attend her sessions.

Rachel shared, "Step By Step always says how great therapy is, and I knew that when I was ready, they would help me find the right one."

Soon after starting therapy, Rachel shared about an incident that happened in her workplace where she felt trapped and disrespected by her employer.

"I knew I couldn't be silent anymore."

"I knew I couldn't be silent anymore. My therapist gave me some ways to stand up for myself and talk

to my boss so that I felt heard, and it worked! I am so thankful that Step By Step makes therapy seem normal and not something just for 'crazy people'. It can really help you learn to share your feelings and feel powerful...like you have a say."

*Academy of Pediatrics

MOM'S PANTRY

In March 2020, as the global COVID crisis unfolded, our team sprang into action, immediately recognizing the urgency of providing essential support to mothers. We began by offering vital supplies that were difficult for young mothers to obtain, such as toilet paper, cleaning products, and diapers. What began as a short-term, crisis-driven initiative has since blossomed into one of our most sought-after programs, known as "Mom's Pantry."

Every month, participants enrolled in our program have the opportunity to visit the pantry and obtain crucial items that can significantly strain their budgets, and they would otherwise have to do without. Two of the most frequently requested items in Mom's Pantry are \$25 gas cards and 20-ride Lextran bus passes.

During a heartwarming moment at our Revive gathering, Sarah took the floor and shared during our "What's New and Good" segment—a moment of gratitude we incorporate into our weekly programming when mothers share the good news in their lives.

"Last week, I had an interview for a job I really wanted. Y'all know money is so tight and this job would mean a raise and better hours for me. This week, they called and told me I got the job!" After her Step By Step sisters cheered, Sarah expressed her profound gratitude to Step By Step for the gas card she had received from Mom's Pantry. She acknowledged that, without it, attending the interview would have been an insurmountable challenge.

"I didn't have money to fill my tank, and Uber and Lyft are so expensive. The bus stop is nowhere near the place I am working, so getting to the interview would have been impossible. So, thanks y'all."

EMPOWERING YOUNG LEADERS

Kahlilah was referred to Step By Step by her high school Family Resource Center representative while a Senior in high school in January of 2020. Upon meeting her, we know she was a real go-getter. She had a vision for what she wanted her life to look like, and went after it with confidence and certainty.

Kahlilah applied for community college and an apartment in the same week.

In less than three years, she graduated from high school, was accepted to and enrolled in community college, graduated with an Associates Degree and transferred to a four-year college majoring in Social Work. She has applied for and received more than one scholarship and excels in her work study program.

She calls the Step By Step office every week and we put her on speaker phone to hear her latest accomplishment at school and as a parent, and the whole staff cheers for her. "I always know y'all are gonna hype me up."

We've heard from moms newly enrolled in the program how she was the one to invite them, and from others how she regularly encourages them.

"I was thinking of dropping out of school. Kahlilah called me at home and offered to come over and talk about it. She told me it wasn't an option if I ever wanted to be able to make it in life. She didn't judge me. She just let me know I could do it because she is doing it."

"Kahlilah invited me to Revive night. At first I didn't wanna go. I thought it would be some weird group where I wouldn't make friends. She convinced me to go and even picked me up. That was a year ago and I haven't missed a Revive yet."

Not only is she a good friend and an encourager, but she is also an incredible mother who is attentive and present with her son.

"I love watching him learn and grow!"



((Echos))
& RESOUND

Step By Step began to encourage Kahlilah in her leadership by assigning her tasks and watching her rise to the occasion.

Known for her quick sense of humor, easy smile, and affection for all, Kahlilah is a natural at welcoming new moms into the program. Step By Step asked her to lean into her natural leadership abilities by becoming an official greeter. Next, she began helping with announcements in front of the entire Revive night crowd. We see her share more and more of her personal testimony and even engage in prayer with other moms

When they believe that we truly just desire for them to be themselves as they step into leadership, they begin to take ownership of the program and make it their own. This is the true spirit of empowerment.

Every young single mom that enters the doors of Step By Step has infinite potential. They are the future leaders of our community, our city, our country. Many of these young women have often gone through life being cast as stereotypes and statistics. At Step By Step, we work to squash that lie. We call it “pulling out the gold” in our moms. Sometimes, all it takes is inviting a mom to take on some responsibility for her to begin walking in that potential. We have watched moms come alive when given the opportunity to share feedback about the program and lead in a variety of other ways at Step By Step. When they believe that we truly just desire for them to be themselves as they step into leadership, they begin to take ownership of the program and make it their own. This is the true spirit of empowerment.



SUCCESS STORY

WHAT WE DO WORKS

This year, we were able to hire a familiar face as a full-time member of our staff team when we welcomed Brittany. We met Brittany when she attended our leadership development class we taught at a local high school in 2017. Some of our current staff even attended her 2018 graduation from the school.

Later, she became a leader in our Echo & Resound Leadership Develop Program, engaging in a two-year intensive skill-building journey preparing her not only to lead other moms at Step By Step, but to also enhance her professional skills and sense of civic responsibility. Leaders in our program learn that they have a responsibility to themselves, their children, and our community to learn to love themselves fully, learn skills it takes to set and achieve goals, and learn that they are worthy of those goals.

"I've been where they are and I know how hard finishing high school can be. I didn't think I could do it. I even dropped out at one point. Step By Step was a big part of me returning to finish high school. I knew I wanted more."

About 50% of single mothers drop out of high school and less than 2% earn a college degree by age 30.*

Brittany has the unique vantage point of literally having sat where these young moms are sitting, facing some of the same challenges and triumphs.

"The pressure often seems too overwhelming. But I can tell them that if I did it, they can too."

Brittany works directly with young moms on our Program Team. She is responsible for facilitating our Level Up Skill Development Series, which includes our nine-week Step Into Freedom financial literacy program. She carries a C.A.R.E. caseload of moms she checks in with regularly, and is a frequent speaker and workshop leader in our outreach program.



"I can tell them that if I did it, they can too."

After becoming a full-time staff member, Brittany was able to purchase her first home, providing housing stability for her two sons.

The sky's the limit for this dedicated and passionate young woman. There are so many more Brittany's out there and we can't wait to support their dreams.

**National Institute of Health*

SUPPORT FOR NEW VOLUNTEERS

At Step By Step we rely heavily on volunteers and greatly value those who choose to spend their time investing in young families alongside us. That means providing high quality, thorough training that fully equips each volunteer for their chosen role. For volunteers who work directly with Step By Step moms as Revive Leaders and Mentors we provide extensive online and in-person training that is both trauma-informed and healing-centered. This year our team created updated volunteer training with the help of our friends at Studio46 Media, recording professional content on topics such as trauma, boundaries, active listening, group dynamics, and more.



This fall new volunteer Lindsay Bell had the opportunity to participate in the training as a Revive Leader. After discovering Step By Step through our annual signature event, Step Into Beautiful, in 2020, she has been faithfully following our work and has consistently donated towards our mission. With a Master's Degree in Social Work, Lindsay has extensive experience in trauma-informed spaces and shared with us how helpful and informative she found the training to be.

"I was really impressed with SBS's volunteer training and level of reflective preparation that was evident. I have worked in ministry and social service for more than 15 years and am a licensed social worker. The material is better than much of what I have seen in the social work world. Step By Step's volunteer training is built on the deep work that this organization has

done for many years, and their commitment toward ongoing reflection and feedback to keep doing the best work possible. The volunteer training is extensive but I believe really helps prepare us for our work with SBS families. I am so excited to be a regular part of this wonderful work."

We are confident that many of you who have been supporting our work are ready to jump in as volunteers in 2024. We can't wait to have those discussions with you!

"Step By Step's volunteer training is built on the deep work that this organization has done for many years, and their commitment toward ongoing reflection and feedback to keep doing the best work possible."

A man in a grey jacket and blue jeans stands next to a white van with its driver-side door open. The van is parked in front of a brick building. The text "PAVE THE WAY: OUR NEW RIDE" is overlaid in large, bold, white letters on the lower left of the image. Three small white dots are visible on the right side of the image.

PAVE THE WAY: OUR NEW RIDE

One of the greatest barriers our moms face in their daily lives is transportation. More than 60% of Step By Step families do not have reliable transportation, meaning they rely on friends, family, or public transportation to get where they need to go. Therefore, providing transportation is crucial to the success of our program. That's why this year we launched Pave the Way, a campaign to raise funds to purchase a van to meet this need. Thanks to our generous supporters, we successfully raised \$28,000 to purchase a van.

Long time supporters, Sonny and his wife Michelle, have seen first-hand how vital the vans are to Step By Step programming as regular volunteer drivers. "I drove the first night and was hooked," shares Sonny. Michelle has come into Revive many nights telling us about the engaging conversations she's overheard between moms and kids during the ride.

"We see the work that is happening here as valuable ..."

"When we pick them up we hear their conversations and they share how much they need to come to Revive. They talk about how much it means to them to hang out with other moms who know exactly what they're talking about when they share their struggles, and don't judge but provide support."

Seeing moms and kids transform through participating in Step By Step, Sonny and Michelle decided to increase their commitment and support.

"We see the work that is happening here as valuable and we want to make sure we're spending even more time driving and making sure these families can participate."



STRENGTHENING OUR COMMUNITY

Toa Green is a force of nature. A successful serial entrepreneur, speaker, and leader, sought after for her savvy marketing skills and the ability to create innovative products, she is beloved as the owner of the famous Crank & Boom Craft Ice Cream. Toa's award-winning Kentucky-based ice cream brand is quickly taking the stage as a national favorite.

Since 2020, Crank & Boom has partnered with Step By Step, encouraging our Staff, providing meeting space for volunteer appreciation events, and supporting us financially.

"I love Step By Step and I value their mission to serve young single moms in our community. It is a unique and very special community that really benefits from support and encouragement. They don't just support the mom, but the entire family. As SBS walks alongside the moms they are also supporting the kids and putting them in a better place to succeed into the future.

"... it is important for businesses to support this mission because these families are our future."

"I believe it is important for businesses to support this mission because these families are our future. We are building up our community, we are building a stronger community."

At Step By Step, we have a "come and see" philosophy. We can tell you what we do and what it is like, but when you actually come and witness it, your perspective deepens. Toa did just that one Revive night where our Echo & Resound Leadership Development moms were teaching a workshop on protective factors and keeping their children safe from predators. When the moms shared their research on the fact that child abuse is 40 times more likely to occur when single parents introduce new partners into their children's lives, Toa was blown away.

"I have always been in love with SBS and its mission, but it really hit home for me when I attended Revive night. I was able to witness moms in leadership practicing the skills they learned in the program, and using those skills to empower other moms. I think it's a testament to SBS that they are focused on building them up with services and training. Being able to see moms that have graduated who are now leading the program and engaged in training their peers, and being paid a stipend for their contributions is revolutionary. These young women are learning and practicing skills in real time that are going to lead to their success in the future."

ADVISORY COMMITTEE

This year, Step By Step launched an extension of our Mom Advisory Committee with a Community Advisory Committee. SBS is committed to community-wide voices and making systemic impact. Board Member, Dr. Tiffany Wheeler agreed to Chair the committee. In addition to being a Board member with Step By Step, Dr. Wheeler is the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs; and the Associate Professor of Education at Transylvania University.

Dr. Wheeler began volunteering with Step By Step as a Mentor in 2018. Paired with a young mom she met with one hour per week for a whole year, she saw first hand our impact.

"I have witnessed amazing transformations of the SBS moms who have participated in the program. I have been so impressed by the moms who might have been reluctant to connect with other moms and intimidated by public speaking when they first started coming to Revive, but over time, they have become more confident in leading, speaking in front of large crowds at SBS events, and providing support to new moms who join SBS. Additionally, some of our moms have been able to escape abusive living situations to start new lives because of the empowerment, resources, and mentoring they received from participating in SBS."

She transitioned to board service two years ago and has seen the organization through many big decisions such as taking a leap of faith to expand our staff, moving to a new location to expand our program offerings, and the launch of programs

such as Life After Loss, addressing gun violence in our city and the victims left behind.

When asked what she is excited about for the future of Step By Step, she has clear aspirations.

"I'm excited to see how SBS continues to evolve. SBS has a dynamic team of visionary staff members who are well connected to the community. SBS recently formed an Advisory Committee which is comprised of individuals with unique knowledge and skill sets who represent different businesses, organizations, and agencies. As a committee, we will meet quarterly to discuss issues that are impacting our moms and the community at large, including housing insecurity, food insecurity/hunger, workforce development, and mental health. I think the Advisory Committee discussions will lead to

increased collaborations with SBS and other community partners to create programs which will ultimately benefit SBS moms and children."

When asked why she makes the commitment to serve at SBS a priority when she has

"SBS ... inspires moms to recognize their own agency in creating a better future for their families."

such a busy life with incredible responsibility, she replied, "I strongly believe in the mission of SBS. I love how SBS is committed to empowering young moms to improve their lives and their children's lives, and they do so in a number of ways. SBS does not just provide resources, but the organization also inspires moms to recognize their own agency in creating a better future for their families."



WHY OUR WORK MATTERS:

Prior to the pandemic, life was challenging for young single mothers in Kentucky. Now, it's even worse.

POVERTY

- **73% are below the poverty line**
- **7% have absolutely no income**
- **9 out of 10 are at or below 200% of the poverty level**

STEP BY STEP'S RESPONSE:



EDUCATION

- **55% have a high school or high school equivalent degree or less**
- **38% have a semester or more of college**
- **Only 2% have a bachelors degree**
- **74% had not attended any school in the past three months** when they were surveyed

STEP BY STEP'S RESPONSE:



REVIVE
REVIVE

HOUSING

- **Only 9% own** their home, while **80% rent** and 11% are living in housing they don't own without paying any rent
- **7 in 10** who live in rental housing **are paying unaffordable rents** (gross rent is 30% or more of household income)
- Nearly half of young single mom renters are **paying 50% or more of their income on rent**
- **1 in 4** young single mom renters **pay rents that exceed their whole household income**

STEP BY STEP'S RESPONSE:



Community
Advisory
Committee

EMPLOYMENT

- **29% unemployment rate** (looking for a job, but not currently employed)
- **Only 54% are working**
- **24% are out of the workforce** altogether
- The industries they are most likely to work in are **restaurants, child care centers and hospitals**
- The occupations they are most likely to work are **cashiers and nursing assistants**

STEP BY STEP'S RESPONSE:



((Echos))
& RESOUND

Data obtained from the Kentucky Center for Economic Policy with special thanks to Dustin Pugel, Policy Director.

OUR IMPACT



1,580

Basic Needs
Items Delivered

268

Moms and Kids
Served

158

Active Volunteers

5,195

Volunteer Hours Completed

1,115

Interactions with Young Single Moms
624 phone calls / 361 texts and Facebook messages /
72 in-person meetings / 58 other interactions

OUR PROGRAMS



REVIVE
REVIVE KIDS

REVIVE
REVIVE

((Echo))
& RESOUND

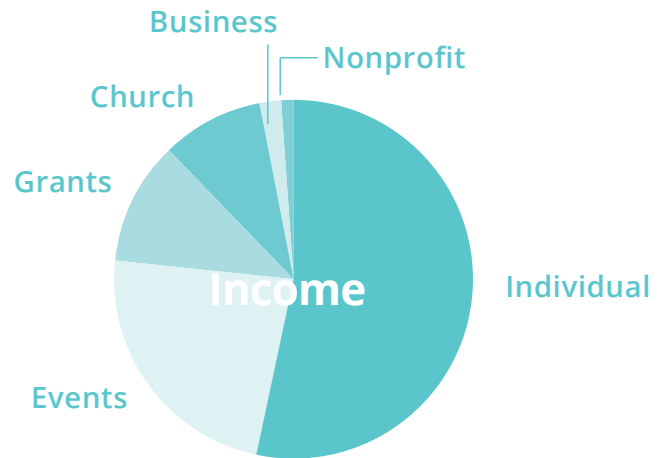


Rooted



THE NUMBERS

Data taken from the end of September 2023



Income Distribution Raised to Date

57%

\$305,241

Total Funds Raised to Date

\$537,704.52

Operating Budget

\$97,318.98

Endowment Balance

\$190,241.57

Joseph Fund Balance*

**This fund includes at least three months of operating expenses held in reserve in case of unforeseen emergency circumstances.*

FOCUS FOR 2024

STRATEGIC PLANNING

Step By Step has been on a year-long journey of focused visioning. We:

1. Began a Strategic Planning process encompassing the next five years, to be revealed in 2024.
2. Conducted research surveys and interviews with partner agencies, community stakeholders, program alumni, and young single moms currently enrolled in our programming.
3. Re-evaluated roles and responsibilities and realigned our current staff into their strengths and passions.

SYSTEMIC ISSUES TO TACKLE

As we look towards 2024, we aim to explore:

- Affordable housing options for our young single mothers who live housing insecure with their children.
- Workforce development solutions in a job market that is volatile for young single moms as an often unskilled labor force who desire to work but cannot find jobs that pay living wages or offer schedules that allow them to support their families.
- Solutions for mental health and coping skills that provide young families with options for care.

AUDACIOUS PRAYERS

Recently, we embarked on a retreat with our leadership team of volunteers and spent time in prayer and conversation about 2024. Our prayers were for:

- **New Echo & Resound Leaders:** We desire to see more young moms like those you have met in this annual report, healing, equipped for leadership, and thriving as moms and engaged citizens throughout our community.
- **Abundance:** We long to dream “what if” without lack or limitations in the following areas:
 - **Board Service:** Our Board of Directors are the group of people who are responsible for the governance and financial health of our organization. We want to see more people ready to dive into ensuring the sustainability of our organization.
 - **Volunteers:** We have strong and well-trained leadership for our moms, but we seek to replicate the same commitment for the Revive Kids ministry. We desire leaders who share our long-term vision to build an even deeper program for our children that includes social-emotional skill development and leadership tracks for our littles.
 - **Funding:** We desire to meet the needs of the flood of new moms and kids entering SBS.
 - **Impact:** Our young moms and kids face insurmountable systemic issues such as housing insecurity, domestic violence and more. We long to create solutions with our population that include deep partnerships with others and centering the voices of our young families.

BE UNWAVERING IN YOUR COMMITMENT TO OUR MISSION!



STEP *into* Beautiful

Step Into Beautiful early bird registration is now open. Our signature event features a tea and a table decorating contest, increases in popularity every single year. Our 13th annual event takes place at Keeneland on March 9, 2024 at 1 p.m. and features emcee Renee Shaw. With nearly 400 guests in attendance, we have the opportunity to share our mission through reflections from our graduates.

Support Step By Step by sponsoring a table and attending with your friends.

Reserve your table today at sbslex.org/sib2024

WAYS TO SUPP

MAKE AN IMPACT TODAY



Get started by scanning the QR code, visiting sbslex.org/donate, or using the enclosed donation card and envelope to invest in our mission.

MAKE AN ONGOING IMPACT

Monthly giving plants the seeds for organizational growth while providing young families lasting support. Thank you for considering making a lasting impact. Join by scanning the QR code or visit sbslex.org/donate/donatemonthly.



LEVEL 1: COMMUNITY CHAMPION \$30/month (\$1/day)

Provides transportation to and from Step By Step programming for three families.

LEVEL 2: STEADFAST SUSTAINER \$60/month (\$2/day)

Covers the cost of one month of case management for one young mom through our C.A.R.E. program and Dare to Dream goal setting program.

LEVEL 3: INSPIRED INNOVATOR \$150/month (\$5/day)

Empowers three moms in our Echo & Resound Leadership program to develop soft skills like communication and leadership for one month.

THANK YOU TO OUR CURRENT MONTHLY GIVERS!

Michelle Howell
Mary King
Roger Grigsby
Noa Gimelli
Lauren McDowell

Josh Sims
Susan Sabatino
Daniel Cooper

Sheila Sekela
Christy Hiler
Amy and Dan Pecaro
Lindsay Bell
Nicole Washburn

PORT SBS:

GIVE WITH THE GREATEST IMPACT

(AND RECEIVE THE BEST TAX BENEFIT!)

Visit sbslex.org/donate/taxsmartgiving for more info!

- STOCKS OR APPRECIATED ASSETS
- QUALIFIED CHARITABLE DISTRIBUTIONS (QCDS)
- DONOR-ADVISED FUNDS (DAFS)
- LEGACY GIVING

Step By Step's Entity Identification Number/Tax Identification Number is 61-1313872

VOLUNTEER

To learn more about volunteer opportunities to find out which might be the best fit for you, visit sbslex.org/volunteer.



Special thanks to the following service providers:

S. Wright Creative • Studio46 • CMW Photography • Bekah W Photography



THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT!

From the Step By Step Team

**STEP
BY_
STEP**

healing & empowering
young single moms