



A Ministry Update from *Stepping Stones for Women*

# Stepping **Up**

*Our mission is to transform the lives of single mothers and their children, leading them from the cycle of hopelessness to the joy of faith and stability.*

Spring 2011

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

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## A YEAR OF TRANSFORMATION

### **Stepping Stones and our families are being transformed**

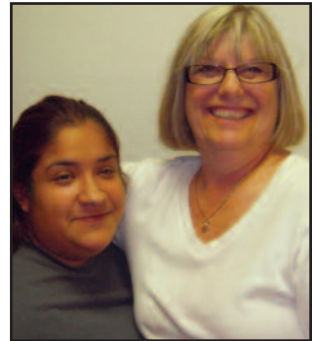
**D**o not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind . . . (Romans 12:2). Over this last year, Stepping Stones for Women has been on a journey of transformation – not only as an organization, but within the hearts of each mother and child it serves. Each mother who comes to Stepping Stones seeks transformation in her life. She faces a lot of challenges as a single parent—sole responsibility for the livelihood of her family, emotional trauma that has resulted from her past, lack of vision for her future, negative relationships, etc. Many times other addictions are part of her struggles. As a result, she is left in a whirlpool of dysfunction and weakness and her children are caught in the middle. Whether it is in unsafe relationships, alcohol, drugs, Internet addiction, or anything that has a hold on her, addiction

can feel like a trap. Even the journey of recovery can feel like it will never end. But the Bible doesn't leave her

in despair. It reveals a plan for recovery and the source of the power to accomplish it. It provides her (and us) with the only pathway to wholeness—God's program for reconciliation and healing. It is through this process that our minds are renewed and change happens.

Stepping Stones has also been through a transformation season over this past year. With the guidance of a team of committed board members and advisory council, the organization launched its outreach program to help more mothers and children. With two sites now operating (Covina and Azusa), more families are being served than ever before. Mothers and their children come to weekly classes or quarterly parenting seminars to receive support, education and resources. The volunteers are finding a place to serve and the children are excited to attend their class. The alumni program is running well and those who have moved to this level are engaged in a new season of independent living with a new mindset for life. As the staff and mentors become acquainted with the families, we use the tools and resources in a "wrap around" approach so that each family knows they are part of a caring community. Ultimately we cannot do it in

our own strength. It's through dependence on God's help that the programs continue to grow and flow in a direction that is the most effective. Stepping Stones for Women is not the same program it started out to be back in 2002. Even in times of economic uncertainty, it has stayed true to its roots in moral values, expanded its outreach to the local community and embraced a more diverse population of single mother families. Our programs and mothers are thriving together in a "renewed mind."



**Celia and Family Advocate Deb**



**Tanya**



**Greeters at our first parenting seminar**

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# Up Close with a Single Mother

*This issue we focus on Veronica, a mother who is part of our Azusa hub site program.*

**V**eronica came to learn about Stepping Stones through another local non-profit in Azusa, Neighborhood Homework House.

Ashley, Veronica's 10-year-old daughter, attends the tutoring

program and as a newly divorced woman, Veronica was seeking resources to help her with this new season in life. She was referred to Stepping Stones. Veronica loves the Stepping Stones program because

it's a Christian environment and incorporates the principles of God into the program structure. She says that the Parenting Seminars have been extremely helpful and the best thing about them is that she is learning practical application of parenting and how to create fun. Not engage in a battle with her daughter. Stepping Stones has helped her to feel empowered and confident. She says the program has equipped her through education and emotional support. Her goals are to acquire employment and a stable living environment for her family. She has a high school diploma but would like to obtain a college degree and perhaps be an owner of a business that "would bring comfort and relaxation to others where it would refresh and relax them."



## Vision Track

### ***Vision for Stepping Stones for Women and ways you can help***

**S**tepping Stones' desire is to be an effective community for single mothers and their children. We've never been satisfied to just exist. The need far exceeds the capacity and we will continue to find ways to serve more single mother families. With that in mind, we desire to expand our service in a greater way and range to the San Gabriel Valley. Our vision is to graduate 10 families from the residential services and work with another 250 in support services each. As a result, we have many opportunities for you to help with:

- Financial Gifts – these investments of \$25, \$50, \$75 or \$100 will allow us to continue to be “transformation agents” in the lives of moms and their children.
- Service partners – these are the backbone of the organization. We need individuals or businesses that will provide free or discounted services (childcare, office assistance, mentors, facility maintenance, board leadership, graphic design, apartment property owners, auto repair, etc.) to the organization and ultimately to our families.
- Gifts in Kind – special items help keep our overhead down so that more can be poured into “direct services” to our families. Items for home upkeep (paper goods, cleaning products, toiletries, etc.) or operations (laptop computers, software, etc.) will help us to meet the current needs along with future expansion.



# People Like You

***Pictured – Single mom Veronica, Family Advocate Deb, Mentors Roxanne and Sharon***

Azusa hub meeting. Roxanne receives her greatest joy in the opportunities of getting to know the women. She thinks they are amazing, courageous and applauds their energy in moving forward even when they face struggles. She believes that it is important for others to volunteer at Stepping Stones because anyone can make a difference and each person needs to try and do their part. She also believes that volunteering at Stepping Stones is important in having a successful environment and community. “It’s obvious that Stepping Stones really cares and their heart is in it. That’s important, and that’s where success comes when your heart drives your passion.”

**Volunteer Orientations are held each 2nd Wednesday of the month at the Azusa office for 1 hour. Call 626/804-7800 for more information.**

**M**entor **Roxanne Grizzle** found out about Stepping Stones through her friend Laura who attends Cornerstone Bible Church. Roxanne has much experience in giving of herself to others such as delivering food to the homeless at holiday time or leading a Girl Scout troop. As a mother of two children, she is an example of leadership and currently mentors on a weekly basis at the

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## Kids’ Time



**Volunteer and baby Zion**

**T**he children’s program continues to grow with the addition of new “little lives” each week. Our Covina site saw the addition of babies and children and recently had 11 in attendance (that’s up from three!). Our Azusa site serves a diverse age

range of infants to junior high school ages. During their program time, they do crafts, read stories, get tutoring with homework and develop a place of community. Right now the kids are gearing up to present a song at our Annual Spring Tea which will be held on March 26th (see back page for more information). This will be the first time that our children will make such a presentation to the community. This is an exciting time for the Kids’ Time program as we serve children in their own steps of growth and development.



**Elexus and Program Director Miriam**



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## Upcoming Events:

- **March 26 – Annual Spring Tea and Fashion Show**  
*“Beauty and Transformation”*  
1 to 3 pm Azusa Pacific University Heritage Café  
Tickets required - \$15/person;  
Reservations can be made by calling 626/804-7800
- **April 2 – Rummage Sale, 8 am to 2 pm**  
Location – Azusa Hub/Foothill Community Church,  
777 E. Alostia Blvd., Azusa  
Clean and gently used donations may be dropped off on Friday, April 1 beginning at 7 am. No electronics or mattresses please. Donations are tax deductible.
- **April 9 – Mentor Training – 9 am to 12 noon**  
Azusa Hub – 777 E. Alostia Blvd, Azusa.  
To reserve your spot, call 626/804-7800.
- **April 30 – Quarterly Parenting Seminar – 9 am to 4 pm**  
Azusa Hub. Special topics focusing on the joys and challenges of parenting. Open to the public – all are invited. Seats are limited, so best to reserve your spot by calling 626/804-7800
- **June 4 – Wellness Walk and Health Fair**  
Location – to be announced  
A fun family time with businesses walking to support Stepping Stones and health industry representatives sharing information.

**Go to [www.ssfw.org](http://www.ssfw.org) for additional details**

SSFW is a private non-profit 501C3 organization.

All contributions are tax deductible to the fullest extent of the law. SSFW is not affiliated with Stepping Stones Recovery Home located in Covina, CA.