



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.

Fall 2010

www.ssfw.org

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WE CELEBRATE OUR STARS!

Stepping Stones celebrates our "stars" in different ways



These past few months have been a "whirlwind" of activity at Stepping Stones as we expanded our public relations efforts. The implementation of our job readiness curriculum (which was provided through a grant with TELACU) caused Stepping Stones to be featured in the local community newspaper. Single mothers met at our Covina site to learn about work motivation, career path strategies, overcoming barriers to employment, etc. Our class topics rotate at each site on a weekly basis



Other "stars" were celebrated at our 8th Annual Dinner Benefit "Music & Stars" held on October 15th. Held at Kellogg West in Pomona, California, the evening's activities included music and entertainment, and silent auction opportunities. MC **Eric Smith** (Stadium Announcer for the Los Angeles Dodgers) led the program, and special presentations were made to "stars" Attorney **Greg Benton**, **Marilyn & Janelle Smith** of the Goldsmith Legacy Foundation, Christ Church of the Valley and McCormack Radiographics for their generous financial and services given to the organization. "Star" Stepping Stones resident **Arlene Galdamez** and Board Chair **Ann Dresselhaus**



shared a brief violin duet to showcase the hidden talents of the single mothers we serve. The auction committee led by **Bea Rodriguez**, and volunteers from AT&T Pioneers, Azusa Pacific University and Foothill Christian School provided tremendous energy in making the evening a success. The event raised over \$25,000 this year! You can enjoy more pictures of this event on our Facebook Fan page.

covering a broad range of subjects appealing to single mothers (parenting, job readiness, legal literacy, financial literacy, conflict resolution, etc.) Through this exposure, we have gained volunteers and

new participants in the program. Our Azusa hub site is "busting at the seams" with single mothers and their children. The "stars" are coming out so that they can learn how to be healthy families.

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Up Close with a Single Mother

This issue's spotlight is on Arlene, a mother in the Stepping Stones' residential program, and single mom of Treavor.

Arlene grew up in South Los Angeles in a transient homeless family system. At age 15, she was placed in foster care and completed her high school diploma. After attending college for a year, Arlene wanted to reunite with her family which caused her to become homeless again and stuck in a cycle of hopelessness. She became pregnant and with the help of her former foster parents, she found Stepping Stones.

Arlene applied and was approved for the residential program in November, 2009. She has learned that it is important to have more than one backup plan, and that you have to learn to ask the right questions when you get stuck. She also understands that structure is essential to moving forward in life.

This year, Arlene's goal is to learn how to drive and get into her own car. She is attending Citrus College and plans to continue her life skill development in becoming a strong mother. Arlene was baptized in water last Sunday at Neighborhood Christian Fellowship and continues to grow in her relationship with Jesus Christ. Stepping Stones has provided a safe place where she can learn about herself in a supportive, loving environment. Her main goal is to never return to homelessness and to thrive, not merely survive in her life!



Our last newsletter highlighted Madelyn Trenkler and her children Frederick and Reuben. This last month Madelyn completed Level 1 of the residential program and transitioned into her own apartment in Covina. She will continue onto Level 2 as a Residential Alumni. Congratulations Madelyn!

Vision Track

What's ahead for Stepping Stones for Women and some ways you can help

Stepping Stones is on an exciting strategic path in the San Gabriel Valley. We've never been satisfied to just exist. The need far exceeds the current capacity and we know that we must strive to find ways to serve more single mother families. With that in mind, we have launched an aggressive 5 year plan to significantly increase the scope of our impact. Our goal is to graduate 10 residential families and serve another 250 non-residential families each year!

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

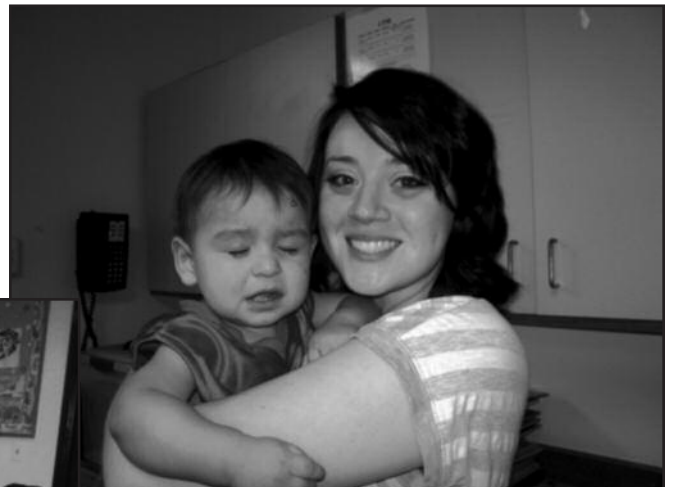
Volunteer Diane Bystrom

In July, Stepping Stones held its first Volunteer Appreciation Lunch at Foothill Community Church. Volunteers ranging from office support staff, childcare workers, event committee members, Life Skill teachers, etc. were in attendance. One such volunteer **Diane Bystrom** was honored receiving the award for having the longest tenure of volunteerism with Stepping Stones. She currently holds the position of Stepping Stones Church Liaison at Cornerstone Bible Church and processes donations in the office on a weekly basis. Diane has a heart for the work Stepping Stones does with women and children. She came to know about us through her church and previously had mentored at another maternity home program. Stepping Stones was a good fit for her interests and previous experience. We appreciate Diane and thank her for her gift of time.



Kids' Time

The Children's program saw expansion with a new Children's Program Coordinator, **Bethany Blanchard**. Bethany began her journey with Stepping Stones as an Azusa Pacific University Intern under a Lily Grant program. She graduated in May 2010, then returned to Stepping Stones



after a summer of short term missions work. Bethany comes with a heart to serve mothers and especially their children. She oversees the program making sure that the children are provided an enjoyable and developmental experience while their mothers are in skills classes. Intern **Meagan Yurk** (also a Lily Grant Intern) works with Bethany in providing a fine arts experience to the children's program. Stepping Stones is very blessed to have both of these fine young women working with the children.





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Upcoming Events:

- **December 8/January 12/February 9**

Volunteer Orientation

Our monthly volunteer orientations are held every 2nd Wednesday of the month at the Azusa office, 777 Alostia Blvd., Azusa. Volunteers are the backbone of our support to single mothers and their children and our hub sites are experiencing tremendous growth. If you are interested, we can find an exciting place for you to serve that best utilizes your gifts. Call 626/804-7800 or email Staff@ssfw.org to register for the orientation.

- **December 11**

Christmas Party for our Families

Charter Oak Lighthouse Church, 11:30 am to 2:30 pm

This is our 2nd Annual Joint Christmas party for all of the families that we serve. We have over 30 mothers now with over 65 children. We need help with the food, and Christmas gifts (gift cards for the mothers and toys for the children). If you can help us by assisting the day of the event decorating, serving food or by providing a gift for a mom or child, please contact our office at 626/804-7800 or email Staff@ssfw.org. food, live jazz music, silent auction, special dancing entertainment. Save the date on your calendar!

Go to 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.