

HOPE Works!

VOLUME 24, ISSUE 1

A publication of Steps to HOPE

Spring 2021

IN THIS ISSUE

Thrift Store.....	2	Survivor Story.....	5	Going Virtual.....	7
Golf Tournament.....	3	Steps Annual Stats.....	5	Director's Message.....	7
Welcome.....	4	October is.....	6	Our Services.....	8
Ways to Give.....	4	Adopt-A-Family.....	6		

SHELTER UPDATES-COVID CARES ACT

Steps to HOPE received funds from the COVID-19 Cares Act that were used to purchase items for our shelter. New mattresses and bedding was bought for each room in our shelter as well as new furniture for the living area and dining room.

Items such as towels, washcloths and shower curtains were bought to make sanitization easier as well as new appliances for the kitchen.

As a way for us to keep staff and clients safe during the pandemic we also purchased air purifiers which are placed around the shelter and the office areas. Cleaning supplies were also purchased along with a sanitization sprayer that is used after clients leave.



Survivors of domestic violence often flee abuse with nothing more than the clothes on their backs. Traumatized and fearful, they turn to us for refuge from the relentless abuse they faced at the hands of their partner. We provide survivors with what they need while they are in our shelter and to start over on their own.



TAKE WHAT YOU NEED, LEAVE WHAT YOU CAN

This past year has shown us that everyone can go through struggles, whether it be emotional, situational, or even financial. We are here to help the community with struggles related to domestic violence and sexual assault but we noticed a need this past year and decided to do something about it.

We have partnered with local agencies and groups to maintain three HOPE Boxes that will have nonperishable food items, toiletry items, as well as resource information for what we do as an agency. "Take what you need, leave what you can" is a phrase you have probably heard before but it is a privilege for us to be able to create a space for those of us who have

excess to choose to bless someone who at that time may need just a little help.

Think about our blessing boxes the next time you go to Costco or Sam's Club and end up with bulk amounts of food or toiletry items. We would greatly appreciate anything that you can spare!

HOPE BOX LOCATIONS

- Tryon First Baptist Church Fellowship Hall Parking lot
- Steps to HOPE Lower Parking lot
- Green Creek Community Center Parking Lot



The HOPE Box located at Steps to HOPE in the lower parking lot on Wall Street.

CALENDAR

- April is Sexual Assault Awareness Month
- Volunteer Training
- 2021 HOPE Golf Classic November 5
- Volunteer Appreciation Week
- Back to School Bags
- Toy Run November 27
- Second Chance Thrift Store Change-over
- Thanksgiving Coffee Cake Fundraiser Oct 1-28
- Adopt-A-Family
- October is Domestic Violence Awareness Month
- Holiday Coffee Cake Fundraiser Nov 1-30
- Volunteer Holiday Breakfast



Administrative Staff

BJ Bayne
Executive Director

Heather Cash
Communication &
Development Coordinator

Jessica Cashwell
Office Manager & Volunteer
Coordinator

Sandra Halford
Case Manager

Connie Orr
Finance Manager

Kelsey Reedy
Outreach Educator & Program
Coordinator

Shelter Staff

Cindy Thacker
Manager

Libby Chavez
Kitty Edwards
Annette Mucciolo
Cherie Rogers

Second Chance Thrift

Store Staff

Edith Lance
Store Manager

Randy Conklin
Assistant Manager

Elizabeth Lance
Warehouse Assistant

William Miller
Warehouse Assistant

Joyce Neely
Cashier & Retail Assistant

2020-2021

Board of Directors

Patty Otto
President

Karen Mastruserio
V. President

Larry Wassong
Secretary

Chuck Elder
Treasurer

Marion Connor
Mary Duran

Cindy Gramling
Dee McBride James
Charles Lingerfelt, III
Sandra McCormack
Sally McPherson

SECOND CHANCE THRIFT STORE

You may have noticed something a little different when you walk into Second Chance Thrift Store.

Staff and volunteers have been going above and beyond keeping the store sanitized and safe for everyone. We have installed a plexiglass shield around the jewelry cases and register, keeping our volunteers safe as well as our customers.

Pictured below you can see one of our staff, William Miller, spraying sanitizing solution around the store. Every evening after the store is closed our staff goes around and wipes down all surfaces, sprays the sanitizing solution and sets off a cleaning bomb. We also have air purifiers around the thrift store continually cleaning the air during business hours.



COLUMBUS' FAVORITE THRIFT STORE NEEDS YOUR GENTLY USED, QUALITY DONATIONS MORE THAN EVER!

Even when items are donated that are not in sellable condition, a salvage company buys loads by the pound so nothing goes to waste! Unfortunately, there are certain items we cannot take. Some examples are larger, older television sets, computers, mattresses and box springs. These items are not for resale and cost us money to process and to dispose of them.

If you have items you wish to pass on to a new home, we cheerfully accept donations at our Blanton Street door during business hours, which are 10 AM - 2 PM Monday - Saturday. Ring the bell if the door is down and our warehouse staff will unload or help you unload. Larger furniture donations may be scheduled for pick up by calling Edith Lance, our store manager, at 828-894-2373. Outside of Thrift Store hours donations of smaller items such as clothing, small appliances, toys, etc. may be dropped off at Steps to HOPE's upstairs administrative offices located at 60 Ward St., Columbus. Our office is staffed around the clock.

Many thanks to our generous community for donating great items to keep our shelves and racks well stocked. We appreciate you very much!

THANK YOU TO PARSEC FINANCIAL

We want to say a big thank you to Parsec Financial for donating the volunteer gifts this year! Our volunteers are what keep us running and we always want them to know how much they mean to Steps to HOPE and Second Chance Thrift Store!



We need YOU to STEP UP and become a volunteer today!

For more information contact Jessica at 828-894-2340 or office@stepstohope.org

THE 17TH ANNUAL HOPE GOLF CLASSIC WAS A HOLE-IN-ONE

Congratulations Bill Miller!

This year we were able to finally award a golfer with the prize for making a hole-in-one at the Putting Contest! Incredibly enough it was the very first swing of the competition that won Bill Miller the contest. The prize for winning is \$5,000.00. Being the generous man that he is Mr. Miller decided to pay it forward and donate the winnings to local agencies including Steps to HOPE.



Executive Director B.J. Bayne and William "Bill" Miller holding the check for winning the Hole-in-One Putting Competition.



The 17th Annual HOPE Golf Classic occurred at the end of a tough year for everyone. Months before the tournament we were worried that because of everything going on with COVID-19 we may not be able to host our biggest annual fundraiser. This would have been a devastating loss for us financially as a non-profit.

We were able to go ahead with plans, tweaking some here and there for our staff, players, and volunteer's safety. It turned out to be a beautiful day for golf and we were able to have the best tournament to date!

Talking to some of the players and volunteers it was evident that everyone was excited to be out of the house, safely be around friends and family, and to even steal away some normalcy.



The HOPE Golf Classic will return to Links O'Tryon on November 5th, 2021.

Call today to register and save your spot in this year's tournament.



Steps to HOPE would like to thank the following major sponsors of our 17th Annual Golf Tournament held Friday, November 6th at Links O'Tryon.

Lois Barrick



Karl Small



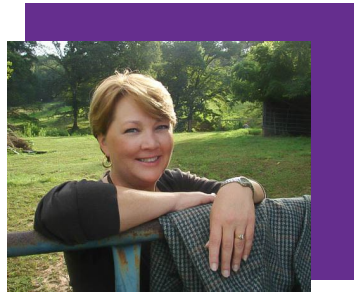
HomeTrust Bank

LINGERFELT LANDSCAPE



STEPS WOULD LIKE TO WELCOME SOME NEW FACES!

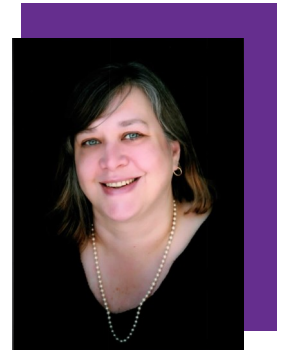
Laura Weicker is a native of Polk County and an active member of the community. She is a former president of the Foothills Chamber of Commerce and board member for Polk County Travel and Tourism. She worked for the Tryon Riding & Hunt Club for 15 years as assistant director and eventually as executive director. Currently, Laura is a Realtor with RE/MAX Advantage Realty in Tryon.



Laura Weicker, Board Member

She has been married to Jim Weicker for 26 years. They have 2 boys, Dylan & Garrett and enjoys spending time with her first granddaughter, Jessie Nicole.

Margy Thompson was born in Rochester, NY, but has spent most of her adolescence and young adulthood in Chapel Hill and Durham, NC. She has lived in Polk County for almost 25 years, and loves the beauty of the area as well as the amazing people she has met. She is excited about being a part of such a worthy organization as Steps To HOPE. In her spare time, Margy likes to cook, read, craft (although she never seems to finish anything!) and hang out with her dogs, Luke and Maizy.



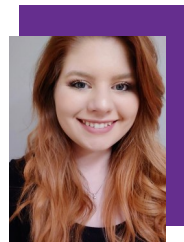
Margy Thompson, Board Member



Heather Cash, Communications & Development

Welcome back to Heather Cash! Heather is a native of Landrum, SC (GO CARDINALS!) Heather comes to us after working at The Project HOPE Foundation as an ABA Therapist and before that she worked at the Landrum Library. She just can't stay away from Steps to HOPE!

When not at work you can find Heather at home working in her yard with her 3 fur babies Rebel, Pippin, and Roscoe.



Kelsey Reedy, Outreach Educator & Program Coordinator

Kelsey Reedy is from Polk County NC. She graduated from Polk County Early College where she received her high school diploma and an Associates of Arts degree from Isothermal Community College. She continued her education at Mars Hill University and graduated with a Bachelors of Social Work Degree. Kelsey comes from a family with many social workers who she aspires to be like. After graduating from Mars Hill University, Kelsey started her first job using her Social Work degree at Polk County DSS as a Foster Care Case Worker. Kelsey loved the job and coworkers but decided to take a different career path within the social work field.

WAYS TO GIVE

VOLUNTEERING

Pictured below: On the left is Denise Hofmann, a Thrift Store Volunteer & on the right Norma Pruitt and Robyne Wellborn, volunteers from the 2020 Golf Tournament.



Volunteers are the heart of our organization!
For more information contact Jessica at office@stepstohope.org

MONETARY DONATION

This type of donation goes to support the daily operations of our organization.

DONATE TO SECOND CHANCE THRIFT STORE

Donations of gently used items are greatly appreciated.

ENDOWMENTS

When you contribute to our endowment fund, you are giving to something that will continue in perpetuity and, in turn, you will gain a sense of satisfaction knowing that you have made a lasting impact.

BEQUESTS

The easiest way to include Steps to HOPE in your financial/estate planning is through your will. If you already have a will you can make an addition to it called a codicil without rewriting your will.

SHOP AT SECOND CHANCE THRIFT STORE

Pictured below: Some of our lovely shoppers complying with our COVID-19 restrictions.



A STORY OF SURVIVAL

The following is a story from a survivor. This is a real, raw, and honest example of abuse. We want everyone to know that if you or someone you know is experiencing any type of domestic violence or sexual assault that we are here to help!

This is a story of pain. A story of fear, darkness and loss. But this is also a story of change, strength and being made new.

I first met my abuser when I was 17 years old. We grew closer as the years went on and became the type of friends that could confide in one another.

I was living with my sister when I had my first child. This was when my abuser, Billy, started to work his way into our lives. He would offer to help fix things at the apartment, he would come over for dinner and we enjoyed spending more and more time together.

After about six months I was first introduced to Billy's other friend, meth. One night while out with Billy we stopped at a gas station and as I was walking into the ladies' room Billy followed me in and offered me a line of cocaine. It was in fact meth. I immediately became addicted.

The first time Billy hit me we were sitting on the couch doing meth and I accidentally dropped a \$20 amount of meth on the floor. I was in shock. I couldn't believe this was who I had become. I went from being a strong independent woman to being a drug addict being abused.

Over the course of two years I lost my job, my sister moved out and I lost my apartment. Looking back I can see the hand being with Billy had in all of this. He would show up where I worked and hang out. He would get angry when I talked to anyone and stalked my every move.

Billy sabotaged my job by making me stay out late partying resulting in me missing work. I can see now that he was slowly isolating me from my family and friends. He was stripping away all of my resources so that I could not make it without him.

At this point my daughter and I had moved in with Billy. One day Billy wanted me to go pick up drugs for him. He would only let me leave the house if my daughter stayed to make sure that I would come back.

I did what Billy asked and brought back the drugs to him. I then went in to the kitchen to wash dishes and he came up behind me and hit me in the kidney with the handle of a large kitchen knife. He started threatening to kill me with the knife because he said his bag of drugs was short. Billy told me to go back and to get the rest of the drugs and still wouldn't let me leave with my daughter.

On the way to get the drugs I was in so much pain I pulled over my car. A girl I knew drove by and I flagged her down and asked her for help. She called the police to go get my daughter. I went to the hospital, my daughter went to live with her father, and Billy went to jail.

I went from the hospital to a drug rehab where I found out I was pregnant with Billy's baby. This pregnancy was one of the most terrifying times of my life. At one point Billy held a gun to my stomach to stop me from leaving him.

About 28 weeks into my pregnancy I found out that my baby was not alive. When I told Billy our baby was no longer alive and I would be delivering her the next day he drew back and hit me and then pushed me out of the car.

Our baby was born the next day, 11lb 15oz. red headed baby girl. She was buried on a Friday. The next week I found out that Billy had gotten another girl pregnant while I was in rehab. When I confronted him about it he became enraged. He beat me, drug me around the house by me hair, broke three of my ribs, busted my nose and

mouth. He made me lay beside him until he fell asleep at which time I escaped and went to the hospital.

There have been three times I thought Billy would kill me and this was one of them. I was done with Billy. Unfortunately, over the next several years Billy and I were on and off. The only constant was the physical, sexual, financial, and emotional abuse.

January 1, 2017 I found out I was pregnant again. This time I was really done. I put down the drugs and left Billy. I went to live with a friend and Billy continued to stalk me. One day I came home to find Billy in my friend's house. He wanted me to go with him so I told him I needed to go pack some clothes. I went to the bathroom, locked the door and called 911. Billy kicked in the bathroom door and came after me not knowing I had 911 on the line.

911 heard everything and sent the police. When they arrived Billy was arrested and sent to prison.

After Billy got out of prison he got his hooks into me again. He came out clean, he looked great, and sounded great. Everything was picture perfect, until it wasn't.

Billy started using drugs again, lost his job, and started hanging out with all his old friends. The abuse was different this time. He didn't beat me where friends and family could see it, he began forcing himself on me even though the doctor had placed restrictions on sexual activity from being pregnant.

After ten years of the abuse I knew I needed get out for the sake of my kids. The only way I was able to do that was with the help of my sister and brother-in-law. I stayed with them for a year and a half, they were my strongest support.

With the help of his sister and her family I had the support I needed to break free once and for all. My sister was so supportive, always helping but not enabling.

Soon after, my sister-in-law encouraged me to join a support group at Steps to HOPE, that gave me a connection to people who had went through the same thing. The group allowed me to open up and draw on others to share without judgement. Empowering me to go on.



10 years of abuse and 3 years of happiness can make such a difference. You are an encouragement for anyone who finds themselves in an abusive relationship. There is HOPE!

OCTOBER IS DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AWARENESS MONTH



Sadly, this year we were unable to do our 4th Annual Purple Party. However, we were able to have a display at Sterns Park located in Columbus, NC. We displayed a banner at the entrance of the park letting people know that October was Domestic Violence Awareness Month.

Ribbons with victim's names and ages were displayed showing every person in North Carolina who lost their lives due to Domestic Violence in the last year. On the back of the ribbons we added each person's story. It is important for us all to see these victims as more than a name, more than a statistic, they are mothers, sisters, brothers, children, fathers. They are younger than us, older than us, and maybe even the same age as us. Going around and reading all of the victim's stories you will see entire families that were destroyed by domestic violence.

Along the main sidewalk at Sterns Park we placed signs reading a poem called "Remember My Name" by: Kimberley A. Collins. As a pedestrian walks down the path they are able to read and progress through the poem which Ms. Collins hopes will makes its readers never forget the names of those lost to domestic violence.

"My story must be told, must remain in conscious memory, So my daughters won't cry my tears, or follow my tortured legacy...Let me know, my living was not in vain."

'Remember My Name' By: Kimberly A. Collins

HELP US SHARE THE JOY OF CHRISTMAS!



Each year, members of our community come together at Christmastime to share their blessings with families struggling just to make ends meet.

Individuals, groups and businesses are invited to help us purchase and wrap gifts for local children in need.

If you would like to participate in anyway this holiday season, please email info@stepstohope.org or call 828-894-2340.

Accepting Applications

From October 1st to

November 19th.



During 2020 we were able to help 26 families and give 72 children a special holiday season in our Adopt-A-Family program!

GOING VIRTUAL

This year we have gotten creative with how our programs are ran. With COVID-19 restrictions we are unable to meet in person for our classes as well as speaking engagements. To combat this we have gone virtual!

We are able to still have our Domestic Violence Intervention Program (DVIP) by having it over the computer through Zoom. Our attendees are able to safely learn the techniques they need to complete the program at a distance.

Our staff has had the opportunity to attend a multitude of trainings that we otherwise wouldn't of had the opportunity to attend due to scheduling or location. The ability for staff to complete a training virtually has been a game changer for us as an agency.

Much of our outreach as an agency is going out and talking with people face to face. Since we are unable to do so we have moved to social media as a way to engage with our community. Weekly we have posted to Instagram and Facebook giving information, explaining what we do, or even just asking silly questions to lighten everyone's day. We have found that even though we cannot go out and be with the community there are still opportunities to reach someone and let them know that we are still here!



STEPS TO HOPE ANNUAL STATISTICS FOR 2020

Shelter was provided to 36 women and 38 children.

Shelter was also provided to 1 man.

Steps to HOPE provided support to 1,140 callers on the crisis line.

There were 588 outreach opportunities.

4,758.5 volunteer hours were worked at *Second Chance Thrift Store*.

461 volunteer hours were worked at the offices at Steps to HOPE.

136 additional clients were provided service, to include court accompaniment, advocacy, transportation, information and referral.

A REFLECTION FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

There is only one word to describe 2020 at Steps to HOPE.

Challenging! As a new Executive Director with only eight months on the job, 2020 was a year of learning and adapting. Steps to HOPE was very fortunate to have had a solid foundation laid by previous board members and directors, who knew one day the rainy day would come around.

We started out 2020 with a great opportunity to expand our Second Chance Thrift Store, because of growth and needed funding. As many of you know our thrift store funds approximately 35% of our operating budget, that ensures we can offer shelter and services to people in need. We were in the process of purchasing the building behind our thrift store when COVID-19 pandemic brought about the stay at home order, which closed our thrift store for two months. Further information on the expansion of our thrift store, will be forth coming at a later time. To date we are still operating with limited hours because of a lack of volunteers. We are hoping to see our regular volunteers returning, along with new volunteers signing up after the distribution of vaccines.

With the pandemic in full swing at the end of March, Steps to HOPE redirected its focus from strategic planning to safety precautions and new guidelines for how we were going to assist survivors needing our resources. The Steps to HOPE staff (team) came together with a strong sense of pride and determination, and have gone the extra mile to not interrupt services for our clients. During the stay at home order, our staff cross trained on resources to assist clients, adapted to virtual technology and planned for our future.

The impact of COVID-19 was seen across the state in domestic violence shelters. The number of victims needing assistance doubled, and with the requirements for COVID limiting space and cancelling our events, put a strain on everyone. We all learned to think outside the box in a hurry, to meet the rising number of clients that needed shelter and services due to the stay at home order. State restrictions and guidelines assisted us in protecting our clients and our staff but it limited the number of clients we could shelter and extended the length of time clients stayed with us. The transition of going virtual with our support groups, counseling, journaling classes and Domestic Violence Intervention Programs was a challenge for both our facilitators and our clients, but like all new programs they became the new normal.

As the year progressed, we strived to partner with other non-profits and community organizations to work together to build our resource tool box for our clients. Together we are stronger and are able to assist families in rebuilding their lives. We applied for numerous grants that allowed us to purchase new beds, appliances, and computers. With the higher demand of our services, our shelter sustained a lot of wear and tear. With the help of these grants, we updated and repaired as needed, including adding new plumbing and hot water heaters.

During the holidays our staff worked with community members to give clients families holiday joy through our Adopt-A-Family program. Normally we would have volunteers wrap presents for the 72 children we served, but this year staff had to step up and do all of the wrapping. It reaffirmed our appreciation and realization of how important our volunteers are.

Steps to HOPE is so thankful to our community members and partners that kept us in their thoughts and gave during this unprecedented time, without your support we would not have had the ability to serve our clients. We are truly blessed to live in a community that sees a need and meets that need. If we have to go through a pandemic Polk County is the ideal place to be.

The staff at Step of HOPE are extraordinary! I have truly been blessed to work with such caring individuals. The staff know our services are needed and they provide clients with the utmost compassion, care and healing environment I have ever encountered. If there is one thing 2020 has taught everyone here at Steps to HOPE it is how needed our volunteers are to us. This pandemic has opened our eyes to the fact of how essential volunteers are to our success. We look forward to the return of our wonderful volunteers and welcome any new volunteers wishing to get involved.

Be kind to one another and have a safe and healthy year!

BJ BAYNE



Support Steps to HOPE when you shop! **amazon**smile
You Shop. Amazon Gives.



Look for us on social media!

NONPROFIT ORG
US POSTAGE
PAID
Columbus, NC
Permit No. 25

Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Shelter and Advocacy Program Serving Polk County, NC and Upstate SC for over 35 years!

For victims of domestic violence or sexual assault in this community, there is:

Help Order Protection Encouragement

"The mission of Steps to HOPE is to create a community free from the violence of domestic and sexual abuse through education, advocacy and victim assistance."

Did you receive our Mass Mailer sent out during the month of October outlining our resources?



If you have any questions call us at 828-894-2340.

Steps to HOPE, Inc.

Ward Street · PO Box 518
Columbus, NC 28722

info@stepstohope.org

828-894-2340

www.stepstohope.org

facebook.com/stepstohopepolk

Instagram: @stepstohopepolk

501(c)3 Non-profit Organization

Many thanks to generous donors who make printing and mailing this newsletter possible!

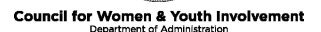
HOPE Works!

A Semi-annual Newsletter of Steps to HOPE, Inc.

Heather Cash, Editor

OUR SERVICES

- **Adolescent Skill-building Karate Program (ASK)** - character building for adolescent girls and boys.
- **Annual Assistance Programs** – such as Adopt-a-Family and on going case management.
- **Basic Need Resources** - such as food, clothing and hygiene.
- **Case Management** – ongoing guidance through resources and referrals.
- **Community Outreach** – working with schools, organizations and civic groups to educate and bring awareness to domestic violence and sexual assault.
- **Confidentiality** - all services are guaranteed confidential.
- **Court Advocacy** – trained volunteers accompany and support clients through the judicial process.
- **Crisis Intervention** - immediate emergency assistance to identify, assess and intervene to lessen the impact of the crisis.
- **Domestic Violence Intervention Program (DVIP)** – 26-week program facilitated by a trained professional.
- **Public Awareness** – providing informational programs when requested by the public.
- **Referrals** – hospital: staff will transport and assist; court: free legal aid may be provided through Pisgah Legal Services; counseling: for individual counseling services.
- **Resource Library** – we have resources available such as videos, pamphlets, books and brochures.
- **Supportive Services** – directional guidance for medical, job and judiciary processes.
- **Shelter** – emergency safe shelter for victims of domestic violence and/or sexual assault.
- **Women's Self Defense Classes** – facilitated by a trained professional.



Thanks to the Family Violence Prevention Services Program, US DHHS, and NC Council for Women & Youth Involvement for financial support.