

A newsletter for *Stepping Stones*,  
an organization creating a path  
to safety and empowerment  
for women of domestic  
violence.

# Pathways

Spring 2010

## Mission Statement

*The mission of Stepping Stones, for women of domestic violence, N.F.P., a Christian-based organization, is to empower women who are victims of domestic violence to develop financial and emotional independence by providing them with a safe, nurturing environment.*

## 7th Annual Spring Tea and Fashion Show

On Sunday, April 18, 2010, *Stepping Stones* will hold its 7th Annual Spring Tea and Fashion Show – “Women for Women”. We will be gathering at the Belvedere Banquets in Elk Grove Village. Jenn Sievers and Linda Zerwin are asking attendees to bring a friend and expand this year’s Spring Tea to 450 women. Spring Tea veterans, now is the time to begin inviting your guests. Do you need an invitation for your guests? *Stepping Stones* has a complimentary invitation available for your use. For those of you who are interested in hosting a table, please contact Jenn (630) 873-0291 or Linda (630) 973-9214 or email them at [springtea2009@gmail.com](mailto:springtea2009@gmail.com). Individual seating is available if you would like to attend but cannot host a table.

When hosting a table some previous concerns have been filling the table. Please let us know if you are unable to fill your table and we can pair you with women who would like to attend but have not been invited by a hostess.

The Spring Tea and Fashion Show also includes a “Special Tea Boutique” featuring many local vendors offering jewelry, fashion accessories, candles, soaps, scrapbook items, food items and much more. If you are a vendor and would like to book space within the “Special Tea Boutique” please contact Sue Rezmer-Socha (847) 364-2386 or email her at [srezmer@prodigy.net](mailto:srezmer@prodigy.net) for additional information.

Please join us for an afternoon of “Women for Women” fellowship in support of ladies who are victims of domestic violence.



**Sponsored by HARRIS WE'RE HERE TO HELP**

**Sunday, April 18, 2009 12:00 to 4:00 pm**

**Stepping Stones for Women of Domestic Violence  
Spring Tea and Fashion Show  
"Women for Women"**

**Belvedere Banquets in Elk Grove Village, Illinois**

For more information: [springtea2009@gmail.com](mailto:springtea2009@gmail.com)  
Jenn Sievers 630-873-0291 or Linda Zerwin 630-973-9214

Tickets are \$40 per person, \$35 if paid by April 1

## Retiring Board Members

This year four *Stepping Stones* Board Members are retiring. All four will be sincerely missed and we thank them for their service and dedication.

**Lynn Cieslewicz** has successfully served as Chairperson of the Board for the past two years. Her inspiration and leadership have been greatly appreciated. She also was responsible for starting our annual golf event and has served on that committee for three years.

**Ken Reid** not only has been a devoted board member, but was in charge of the Resource Team. Creating a website and helping to



begin a database, Ken has guided his committee to make the public aware of *Stepping Stones*' mission.

**Jolene Bell** became a mentor for one of our client families. Her passion to help women of abuse led her to serve on the Board. Jolene has also helped with the annual golf event.

**Linda Zerwin** took on the added responsibility of becoming the Development Team chair. In addition, she helped to organize and perfect the Annual Spring Tea.

### *A Hand off of the Pebbles*

*From Lynn Cieslewicz*

Whatever your cross, whatever your pain,  
There will always be sunshine, after the rain . . .  
Perhaps you may stumble, perhaps even fall;  
But God's always ready, to answer your call . . .  
He knows every heartache, sees every tear,  
A word from His lips, can calm every fear . . .  
Your sorrows may linger, throughout the  
night,  
But suddenly vanish, by dawn's early light . . .  
The Savior is waiting, somewhere above,  
To give you His grace, and send you His love.

### SAVE THE DATE Golf Outing

June 22, 2010  
Kline Creek Golf Club  
Winfield, IL  
*More details to come.*



# Stepping Stones Annual Report - 2009

Due to the overwhelming need in DuPage County for transitional housing for women of domestic violence, *Stepping Stones* was formed in 2003. Our intent is to provide emotional healing, financial assistance, and a safe environment for women and their children who

are victims of domestic violence. For almost seven years *Stepping Stones* has been able to reach out to over twenty families, guiding them toward a productive life.

We are privileged to partner with Bridge Communities, a private,

non-profit housing and mentoring program in DuPage County. The Bridge program provides homeless families with basic housing, case management, life skills training, job readiness preparation, and after school tutoring.

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## Executive Director Summary

*Lisa Gallagher, DBA*

Over the past year many activities have taken place within *Stepping Stones*. Interviews were held for five potential 2010 Board members. The dedicated *Stepping Stones* phone line channeled volunteers, answered donation questions and responded to potential client inquiries. There has been volunteer recruiting for civic and church speakers along with community liaisons. New grants have been sought after with proposals written. Grants submitted for 2009 include: Mary Kay Foundation & DuPage County Grant. There is a continuous challenge for members to focus as well as achieve the goals set forth within *Stepping Stones* and within their respective committees. Below you will find 2009 achievement reviews for *Stepping Stones*.

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## Development

*Linda Zerwin, Chair*

The Development Team creates and coordinates fundraising events. Fundraisers range from one-time affairs such as a garage sale to an annual event such as a dinner/auction. Three events were held this past year. In addition,

the team works to secure financial support from individuals, churches and corporations. Grants are also an important aspect for obtaining funds.

Our first event was our 6th annual Spring Tea and Fashion Show which was held at Belvedere Banquets in Elk Grove Village. The theme was "Women for Women" and promoted unity and strength for our clients through the support of women within the community. The co-chairs included Jenn Sievers and Linda Zerwin. The tea sponsor was Harris Bank in Roselle.

The second event was our 3rd annual Golf Outing which took place at Bloomingdale Golf Club. The chairperson for the event was Jim Sargis. The golf committee included Mike and Lynn Cieslewicz, Jolene Bell, Joe Irmen, Linda Zerwin, Sue-Rezmer Socha, and Dick Olinger. The sponsor for the outing was Roselle Bank and Trust.

Our final event was "You're One of a Kind" held at Wyatt Austin Jewelers in Schaumburg. The evening provided an opportunity to browse the showroom and shop for a special one of a kind piece. Complimentary wine was provided by Lynfred Winery and Costco provided the Hors d'Oeuvres. The night was concluded with drawing the winning raffle ticket for a quilt that was donated by the Peace Makers.

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## Program Evaluation

*Lois Maschio, Chair*

The Program Evaluation committee has been working on laying the foundation for evaluation the *Stepping Stones* program. Program evaluation identifies a systematic method for collecting, analyzing, and using information to answer basic questions about projects, policies and programs. The committee needs to identify the decisions intended to be the focus of the evaluation.

Over the course of time, the team has collected information and policies that would serve as helpful resources for *Stepping Stones* mentors and clients. This information was used to construct a *Stepping Stones* Mentor Manual. The Mentor Manual is meant to be a guide and reference tool to assist first time *Stepping Stones* mentors, as well as experienced members, as they work with their clients in meeting the various needs that arise.

On February 9, 2009 Jeanine Wartan distributed copies of the Mentor Manual to mentors during her mentor meeting and also to board members during a board meeting. Updating the Mentor Manual will be an ongoing process.

The Client Profile constructed by the team was updated in October, 2009

# Stepping Stones Annual Report - 2009 *(Continued from page 3)*

and distributed to board members.

We are searching for individuals interested in program evaluation for *Stepping Stones* as we have a shortage of committee members.

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## Public Relations

*Linda McDermott, Chair*

The Public Relations Team promotes the activities and fundraisers of *Stepping Stones*. We also help to promote awareness of *Stepping Stones* in surrounding communities. The team has revamped and updated the *Stepping Stones* website with a new look, new information, and has made it more user-friendly.

Our activities over the past year include:

- Non-a-thon fundraising letter
- Thanksgiving thank you letter
- Updated Display Board
- Updated *Stepping Stones* brochures
- Sent Press Release to Churches, municipalities and newspapers
- Issued multiple Pathways newsletters
- Promotion of the Spring Tea, Golf Outing and You're One of a Kind Jewelry Show
- Shop and Share Days at Jewel

Members of the Public Relations team: Linda McDermott, Lynn Cieslewicz, Heidi Kessler, Vivian Thorne and Nicole Vasold

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## Finance

*Deb Baumgart, Chair*

Finance team has the dubious task of making the ends meet!! As in any other

business, our Finance Team prepares the budget, maintains records, monitors our investments, insurance, audit, tax preparation and all other generally accepted accounting practices associated with *Stepping Stones*. These volunteers come with a multitude of accounting degrees and we are fortunate to have members willing to donate their time that would add administrative costs to *Stepping Stones*. Financials are complicated in nature however this team handles their responsibilities with ease. Members of the Finance team: Deb Baumgart, Jennifer Haws, Sue Johnson, Lorean Sneed and Sandy Theis.

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## Set-Up

*Linda Hanson, Chair*

The purpose of our team is to move furniture to and from apartments, arrange for donation pick-ups, and keep inventory of items that we have stored at Harris Bank in Roselle.

Our team was reorganized in October of 2009. When a new client family enters our program it is our responsibility to fully furnish an apartment with furniture and household items according to the needs of the client. Sometimes a woman comes to us with only the clothes on her back. Other times she brings with her furniture that she can't part with. We must do our best to make her feel comfortable in her surroundings.

Since October we have moved in one family.

Members of the Set-Up team: Linda Hanson, Lee Hanson, and Neeru Mago. There are also several helpers

from Trinity Lutheran Church, who are ready to volunteer at a moments notice when a client is ready to move in.

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## Resource

*Ken Reid, Chair*

The Resource Team provided information technology support for the *Stepping Stones* organization. They maintain the website and provide data storage and retrieval. Request for mailing labels, donor lists, event participants and other computerized lists are met by this team.

We have updated and upgraded our database to effectively serve the needs of *Stepping Stones*. We continue to use custom software designed for small not-for-profit organizations. This software has served our needs well in the current year.

The *Stepping Stones* website received a complete overhaul in coordination with the Public Relations Team. This improved the visual appeal and provided more up to date information. The website links to the "Network for Good." This network receives donations through credit cards, and directs these funds back to *Stepping Stones*. Members of the Resource Team: Jenn Sievers, Ken Reid

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## Mentor

*Jeanine Wartan, Chair*

The Mentor Committee is responsible for meeting weekly with our families to discuss all objectives that will reach our clients short and long term goals. Two mentors are assigned to each family working towards the common goal of

## *Stepping Stones* Annual Report - 2009 (Continued from page 4)

securing stable housing and learning financial responsibility through budgeting.

In 2009 we received nine families with a total of fifteen children into the *Stepping Stones* Program. As of January 1, 2010 we have four families with six children ranging in ages from 2 years to 12 years old. Five families have left this past year with very successful accomplishments. Four of the women have secured full time employment and one is continuing her education. Two of the women have paid off substantial

debt and have also saved over \$5,000.00 each towards their futures. One of our clients has been accepted at Northern Illinois University in pursuit of her Master's Degree in Education. We have a current client who has begun her new future with Cosmetology School and will complete the program in 2010.

Thank you to Karen Stewart and Molly Howelison, our Case Managers from Bridge Communities. Without your dedication, guidance, resources and hard work we would not be able to

properly help these families.

Thank you to all our mentors, especially those of 2009 who personally helped our families: Renee Lange, Carla Tonk, Suzi Briggs, Judy Fanslow, Christina Griffin, Molly Olson, Robin Samec, Pat Olinger, Peg Hartnett, Linda Geysler, Mary Montovan, Bobi Siembieda, and Janet Monahan. These mentors saw their assigned families weekly, giving them support, comfort and guidance

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## How you can help *Stepping Stones* – Be a Mentor

Mentoring does not require extensive training or professional expertise. You do not need to be an expert or a professional to be a mentor.

Mentoring is simply the presence of a caring individual who provides support, advice, friendship, reinforcement and a constructive example. You may remember someone from your own life who served as a mentor, someone you could trust and turn to for support and encouragement, someone who made you feel special.

Mentors can fill any number of different roles, but all *Stepping Stones* mentors have one thing in common; they care about helping their clients achieve her potential and discover her strengths.

Some basic principles that characterize effective mentoring relationships:

- The mentor trusts the client to do things on her own so that she will “learn by doing.”
- The mentor protects the client

from things she cannot handle, providing some degree of safety acting as a safety net to ensure that the client has a positive experience.

- The mentor does not take all the risk because the client will learn through risk. But the mentor will stand with the client in risk or a time of trouble while giving her strength, encouragement and support.
- The mentor treats the client as an equal, without condescending or criticizing.
- The mentor will build up the client in the presence of others whenever possible. This will give the client an important basis for strengthening self-esteem.

*Stepping Stones* mentors help their clients:

- Set goals and start taking steps to realize them
- Make healthy choices about day-to-day living

- Think through problems at home or at work
- Stay motivated and focused while facing daily obstacles
- *Stepping Stones*' mentors are not disciplinarians or decision makers.

The mentor's main purpose is to help the client define and achieve her own goals. Those goals will vary, depending on the client's circumstances by developing a flexible relationship that takes into consideration the mentor's skills and the client's needs. *Stepping Stones* mentor's help their clients succeed, no matter what the circumstances. By sharing experiences mentors encourage positive choices, promote high self-esteem, support achievement and introduce their clients to new ideas.

For more information on being a *Stepping Stones* mentor please call Pat Olinger at 630-440-4784 or Jeanine Wartan at 630-417-0062.

*Immediately He spoke to them and said, "Take courage! It is I. Don't be afraid." Then He climbed into the boat with them, and the wind died down. They were completely amazed.*

*Mark 6:51*

**Want to Help? Consider Being a Mentor.**

*Mentor Training offered by our Program Partner, Bridge Communities.*

Bridge Communities schedules mentor training two times per year – once in the spring and again in the fall.

**Dates:** Saturdays

**Time:** 8:45 a.m. Registration, 9:00 a.m. -3:00 p.m. Training

**Location:** 1st Presbyterian Church, Glen Ellyn  
550 N. Main Street (corner of Main and Anthony)  
*Please call 630-545-0610 for more information and to register for the classes.*

**Multiply Your Gift**

Your gift to *Stepping Stones* could be doubled... even tripled! Many employers match employee donations to not-for-profits through their matching gift program. Check with your human resources department today and see if you can take advantage of a matching gift program. The impact is tremendous!



P.O. Box 721156  
Roselle, IL 60172  
630-687-7837

**The Board**

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