



## News Release

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### **StepStone Receives Justice Department Grant to Serve Survivors of Domestic Violence**

StepStone has been awarded a \$338,150 grant from the Office of Violence Against Women. Program Director Dung Kimble, LMSW said, "This funding will allow us to continue to serve women and children in ways that will do more than just remove them from danger. We will be able to prepare women in area shelters to transition from crisis to a steady track of security and stability."

The award will support new efforts to connect women with employment opportunities that offer more than an existence job. StepStone will seek and develop relationships with community educational and job development resources to better serve each woman. The funding will also allow StepStone to serve additional families beyond the 15 homes in their inventory. Kimble said, "We are developing relationships with owners of rental properties who recognize the benefit of participating in our program."

StepStone's transitional housing and supportive services takes a long term approach to helping families. "While a short 30 day stay in an emergency shelter is critical for many women, they need more time and support to regain their own confidence and trust in others" says Kimble. "The women we serve can live in our homes for two years, now we will also be able to offer them other financial support when they are ready to leave our program. This approach better prepares the women for a life free from abuse and helps break the repeat cycle of violence seen with children who have experienced family violence."

Kimble says, "We don't stop after their time in housing with StepStone concludes, families are encouraged to continue in outreach services which include advocacy, therapeutic counseling, support groups, household items, furniture and food boxes or other personal needs as they come up. StepStone has families who have been in outreach for eight years as they continue to attend support groups for the camaraderie and support."

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**Background:** StepStone was founded as New Hope in 1995 by the Sisters of St. Joseph and the Adorers of the Blood of Christ. Since that time some 675 woman and children have been served in transitional housing and supportive services. Women and their children can live in one of 15 homes for up to two years while they gain the skills to become self-sufficient. StepStone provides free therapeutic counseling for women and children.