

INSTEP

THE NEWSLETTER
OF STEPPINGSTONE
A PROGRAM OF ECH
EVERY CHILDS HOPE
SUMMER NEWS 2013



At Steppingstone, homeless and at-risk youth are learning important life lessons in the aftermath of the February fire that destroyed several apartments. They are taking safety more seriously, having experienced first-hand how safety planning and training can save lives in dangerous situations. But more than that, Steppingstone youth are learning they can overcome traumatic life events and change their situation. They are realizing that just as Steppingstone repairs the damaged apartments so too can they heal and be made whole and find hope for their future.

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STEPPINGSTONE SAVED MY LIFE

Jaison arrived at Steppingstone in December 2009, lacking very basic skills necessary to live independently. Prior to coming to Steppingstone, he described his life as a "journey of darkness met with hate, scorn, and rejection everywhere. But even through the darkest days, fire for hope burned."

Before Steppingstone, Jaison lived in low-income housing with his parents and siblings, and attended high school. Throughout middle and high school, he was the subject of bullying, which he feels caused his becoming incredibly shy and introverted in social settings. Amidst the stress of school and bullying, Jaison's family also had to deal with losing their home.

His parents recognized that Jaison, more than their other children, was struggling, so they contacted Steppingstone for help.

When he first came to Steppingstone, Jaison seemed very withdrawn and sullen, and he had difficulty communicating with staff. He knew very little about the responsibilities involved in taking care of himself but was open to life skills and referrals to other community resources to help him gain the knowledge he needed. Initially, his progress through the program was slow, making only small steps. Eventually, Jaison obtained a steady job at a local Holiday Inn, working in the kitchen. And in the summer of 2012, he was able to acquire his own apartment in the community.

Since moving to the community, and subsequently having more autonomy, Jaison's confidence has increased drastically and is able to engage in conversation more easily and communicate his needs. He enjoys the independence and requires little guidance or prompting to manage his priorities.

Now, Jaison is extremely independent. He has successfully completed the Steppingstone program, having successfully reached almost all of the goals he set upon arriving. And in the fall, he plans to enroll in a creative writing class to pursue one of his passions, writing.



"The program has done miracles for me. I wouldn't be where I'm at today if it weren't for Steppingstone ...It saved my life."
- Jaison

OUTSTANDING STEPPINGSTONE RESIDENTS



JUSTIN

Justin has maintained his job at Sonic, has saved more than \$2,000 in a savings account, and has moved out of the group home and into a Steppingstone apartment in Raytown.



Susan

After leaving Steppingstone last year, Susan enrolled in her freshman year of college. Not wanting to live out of her truck during the summer, she's returning to Steppingstone to live in a Raytown apartment. When classes resume in the fall she'll leave Steppingstone to move back into her dorm.

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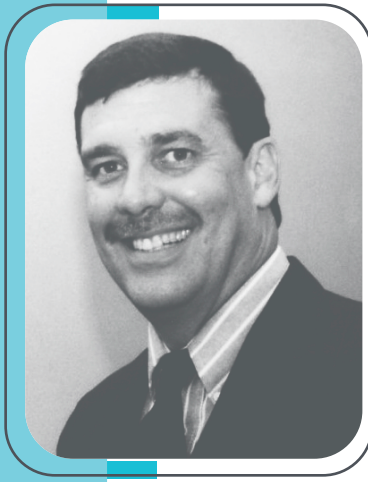
St. Louis (314) 427-3755
www.everychildshope.org
Kansas City (816) 356-0187
www.steppingstonekc.org

ECH Every Child's Hope is a private not-for-profit childcare agency, voluntarily affiliated with the Council for Health and Human Services Ministries related to the United Church of Christ. ECH Every Child's Hope adheres to Federal and State laws which prohibit discrimination in the delivery of services on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, sex, handicap/disability or religious belief.

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ECH EVERY CHILD'S HOPE IS NOT A UNITED WAY AGENCY.

Follow us on:



EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR *Michael P. Brennan*

As the school year drew to a close at ECH many of our older youth participated in prom activities and looked forward to graduation from high school. This is a major milestone for these youth and an important accomplishment for them as they strive to find their life path in the world. As the summer is upon us the staff is busy preparing fun activities for the children to participate in on the campus, and the older youth are being assisted by staff to hopefully find jobs in the community.

I want to share one new service that ECH has added to our Family Connections Program at the 1220 North Lindbergh location. In the last year, through our Family Connections program in conjunction with funding from the St. Louis County Children's Service Fund, ECH has begun to provide child and adolescent out-patient psychiatric services.

Historically, there has been a shortage of board certified child psychiatrists in Missouri. ECH now has two child and adolescent psychiatrists employed that are treating clients on an out-patient basis at our North Lindbergh location. The response and demand has been overwhelming as the need is obviously great for this type of support and assistance.

If you know a family living in St. Louis County whose child is under the age of 20 and is struggling with mental health issues please refer them to ECH. They can call us at (314) 427-3832 to set up an appointment.

Thanks for all your support to Every Child's Hope.

Michael Brennan, MSW, LCSW
Executive Director
ECH Every Child's Hope

ECH CLIENT BECOMES FOSTER CARE ADVOCATE

TeAsia and her “Mom by Choice” (her foster mother) boarded a plane to Chicago. It was the first time that TeAsia had been on a plane and she wanted to make sure she was comfortable with flying before taking off on the biggest adventure of her life.

TeAsia, a junior in college, was selected as one of twenty young people from across the country who have experienced life in Foster Care to join FosterClub. FosterClub, a part of the National Network for Youth in Foster Care, selects young people who have spent time in Foster Care and are between the ages of 18 to 24 to serve a summer internship with the program.

The young people must show leadership potential and the ability to connect with their peers. Having been selected, TeAsia will fly to Seaside, Oregon, where she will receive training in public speaking, presentation, advocacy, and professional development. She will then travel around the nation, meeting with others to speak about her experiences and help advocate for those in Foster Care. She also plans to teach young people in Foster Care to advocate for themselves.

“I am very excited,” says TeAsia, a former client in the ECH Foster Care Management Program, “I want kids in Foster Care to know that they can speak up, and they can keep fighting for the right fit for them. The importance of having a place where you call home can make a difference in the child’s life.”

And that is just what TeAsia did for herself. After being kicked out of her home, TeAsia lived in her car, continuing to go to school, get good grades, and keep up with her three after school jobs. All that took its toll on her though, and her “Mom by Choice,” who was her former teacher, noticed. TeAsia finally had enough of trying to handle all that was happening by herself and expressed those feelings to her teacher. TeAsia let it all out and her teacher quickly helped her get into Foster Care.

Her first placement was not a good fit. She was in a home with several other kids and poor conditions. Instead of resigning herself to the situation, she spoke up. “I told my case worker this was not working and showed her around.” TeAsia explained. “I deserved a good home and a good place. No child deserves to live in this way.” After three foster home changes that is when she moved in with her “Mom by Choice,” her former teacher.

“I just want everyone to know that there is a good fit for you in Foster Care. You just have to find your voice, speak up, and fight for what you know is right.”

TeAsia, a well-spoken confident young lady, will continue to be a strong advocate for young people



in Foster Care. Currently, she is a public relations major with the emphasis in leadership and hopes to one day open a Center for Girls, that will help girls find their voice and speak out about the things that are happening to them.

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 Gluttons Club
 Gus' Pretzels
 H & H Health Associates, Inc.
 Hazelwood Police Department
 Hubbard Radio St. Louis
 Indigo Massage & Wellness
 Infinity Laser Hair Removal
 Isaac Bruce Foundation
 J.U.G.S., Inc.
 James Avery Jewelry
 Jiffy Lube/Hartland Automotive Services, Inc.
 Kappa Phi Sorority
 Kennelwood Pet Resorts
 Kimaterials, Inc.
 Kirlins Hallmark #133
 Kurt Warner First Things First Foundation
 Ladies Aid, ECH
 LaFarge NA
 Lafayette Area Optimist Club
 Liquor Shack
 Massa's
 Massage Envy - Creve Coeur
 Maya Cafe
 Mercy St. Louis
 Missouri Lottery
 Monsanto Matching Gift Center
 Otterbox
 P & A Drywall Supply
 Parkview Gardens
 Pretzel Boy's
 PRP Wine International, Inc.
 QuikTrip Corp.
 Raging Rivers WaterPark
 Renaissance Plastic Surgery
 Rhythm Music and Performing Arts Studio
 River City Rascals
 Sage Urban American Grill
 Saint Louis Symphony Orchestra
 Schlafly Beer
 Schroeder & Associates, PC
 Senior PGA Championship
 Shane Co.
 Shillington Box Company LLC
 Six Flags St. Louis
 South County Senior Law & Estate Planning Center
 South Seas Data and General Credit Forms, Inc.
 Southtown Sluggers
 Sportsman's Park
 St. Catherine Retirement Community
 St. Louis Blues
 St. Louis Casa Loma Ballroom
 St. Louis Christmas Carols Assoc.
 St. Louis Rams - Community Outreach/Donations
 Stan the Man, Inc.
 Steak 'n Shake
 Steppingstone Auxiliary
 Sutter Plumbing Company, Inc.
 Target
 The Cheesecake Factory Bakery Inc.
 The Fountain On Locust
 The Hairy Elephant
 The Melting Pot Restaurant
 Thies Farm and Greenhouses
 Trio-Educational Opportunity Programs
 Upper Limits Rock Gym
 Valvoline Instant Oil Change
 Viviano's Market
 Vom Fass St. Louis
 Wamhoff Financial Planning & Accounting
 Western Digital Foundation
 Winkelmann Sons Drug Company
 Xtreme Paintball Park
 Zamzow Manufacturing Co., Inc.
 Zarephath Ministries Outreach

STATE OF MISSOURI YOUTH OPPORTUNITIES PROGRAM INCOME TAX CREDITS AVAILABLE

Every Child's Hope has been awarded a grant from the Missouri Department of Economic Development enabling us to offer state tax credits to eligible donors under the Youth Opportunities Program or YOP.

Who is eligible for YOP tax credits?

Anyone with a Missouri Tax liability making a donation of \$500 or more. Gifts of Cash and Stock are eligible. Plenty of YOP credits are currently available.

How much is the tax credit worth? The tax credit is worth 50% of your YOP donation. For example, a donation of \$500 would equal a \$250 tax credit. Plus your regular federal and state tax deductions apply for the entire \$500 donation. Credits can be carried over five years.

How does my donation help ECH? One way your YOP donation helps is by teaching youth in our residential program learn how to find peaceful resolution to conflicts. Recently, Meghan, a 16-year old in the program, learned to assert herself positively in situations of conflict. When she first arrived at ECH, Meghan routinely gave in to others' demands, handing over food and possessions out of fear of confrontation. With the help of staff, Meghan now has a greater sense of self-value and communicates with her peers, has stopped letting others walk over her, and has a goal to return home later this year.

How do I apply? Just designate your donation of \$500 or more when you mail it in as a YOP contribution.

Questions? Contact Sharon Fenoglio at (314) 427-3755 or sfenoglio@echmail.org.

APPRECIATED STOCKS—WIN-WIN TO HELP KIDS!

Gifts of Securities

The best stocks to donate are those that have increased in value, particularly those producing a low yield. In order to optimize tax savings, it is critical that you transfer securities directly to ECH Every Child's Hope, rather than liquidate them and donate the proceeds.

Wire Transfer Instructions

Should you decide to transfer stock to ECH Every Child's Hope, following are wire instructions to the ECH gift processing account at Charles Schwab for your financial institution:

Account Name:	ECH
For Credit to Account #:	2222-2241
DTC Clearing:	0164, Code 40
ECH Tax ID:	43-0654856

Please notify
Sharon Fenoglio
when to expect your
gift to arrive at
(314) 427-3755 or
sfenoglio@echmail.org

The Bank of America Supports Steppingstone St. Louis

In November last year, The Bank of America Charitable Foundation generously awarded Every Child's Hope a \$10,000 Workforce Development and Education grant to support the St. Louis Steppingstone Program.

The Steppingstone Program helps older youth gain self-sufficiency through education, employment, and life skills development. Youth are given a safe place to live in one of our group homes, campus apartments, or in an apartment in the community, and staff helps them develop goals for their time at Steppingstone and for the future. Steppingstone's ultimate goal is assisting youth as they transition from adolescence into adulthood.

The funding from Bank of America Charitable Foundation helps youth like Naomi. In 2010, shortly after her high school graduation and her 18th birthday, Naomi entered the Steppingstone program. Steppingstone staff helped Naomi develop realistic expectations, learn to use the Metro Transit System, build a support system, live on her own, and plan for her future.

Earlier this year, Naomi was accepted into nursing program at the University of Missouri St. Louis where she has been studying since she came to Steppingstone. She works part time for the university and shares an apartment with other UMSL students who have become her friends and family. Naomi plans to graduate from UMSL with a B.S. in Nursing and go on to complete a Nurse Practitioner Program. She is determined to overcome every obstacle in her life and has great hopes and dreams for her future.

We are grateful to the Bank of America Charitable Foundation for supporting this program and helping young men and women like Naomi grow into responsible, self-sufficient adults.

The Bank of American Charitable Foundations supports community initiatives that help create economically vibrant communities that are better places to live and do business. Through workforce development and education grants, the Bank of America Charitable Foundation supports organizations that help small businesses and individuals, including youth, the unemployed, and underserved, obtain training and education that lead to post-secondary completion, employment, and stronger economic growth.



If you know of a foundation or company that offers grants, contact Matt Barker in the Development Office at (314) 427-3755 or mbarker@echmail.org.

ST. LOUIS STEPPINGSTONE STATS

OF YOUTH SEEKING SERVICE: 189

OF NEW YOUTH ADMITTED: 19

OF YOUTH SERVED : 62

OF YOUTH DISCHARGED FROM THE PROGRAM: 18

68% OF INDEPENDENT LIVING CHARACTERISTICS WERE PRESENT AT TIME OF DISCHARGE.

AVERAGE AGE : 19

MALE: 45% FEMALE: 55%

STEPPINGSTONE THANKS THE FIRE DEPARTMENT... WITH BBQ



Following February's fire that left three Steppingstone apartments uninhabitable, Steppingstone youth and staff looked for a way to thank the firefighters who prevented the fire from spreading to the other apartments in the building. After coordinating the date a time with Raytown Fire Department Battalion Chief Gary Jones, Steppingstone delivered a thank you lunch from Gates

BBQ to the firefighters who responded to our fire.

Fourteen firefighters from fire Engine #1 and Engine #2 responded to our fire, but when we walked into the fire house with lunch only half were there. Minutes before we arrived, the Engine #1 firefighters left to respond to a natural gas leak. Though we had wanted to thank all the firefighters for putting our apartment fire, we are glad they were out protecting our community, plus the other firefighters promised they would save some BBQ for those on Engine #1. We hope they did!

We are glad for the dedicated firefighters at the Raytown Fire Department who put their own safety in jeopardy to extinguish dangerous fires like ours.



Raytown apartment building after February fire



Building in June after reconstruction work.

Update on the Raytown Apartments

Recently, work began on the Raytown Apartment Building. While it doesn't appear much has changed, important structural work has been done. Workers have replaced the roof and the exterior walls. In the coming weeks, work will shift to the interior to rebuild nearly everything. New plumbing, ducting, and electrical wires will be installed. Work is moving along, and we hope the three apartments will be available for Steppingstone youth later this fall. Thank you to Repairs Unlimited, Inc., for reconstructing our Raytown Apartment Complex.

Call Steppingstone to see how you can help refurnish our apartments, (816) 356-0187.

HELP FOR A NEW MOTHER

Julia was 18 and pregnant when her father told her she could only live at home until she gave birth, after that she'd have to find somewhere else to live. After contacting Steppingstone, Julia was placed on our waiting list, but she was determined to be accepted into the program. We received frequent calls from Julia, asking if we knew when she would be able to come. As her due date approached, we still didn't have an opening, and Julia didn't know what she would do when the baby arrived.

Steppingstone just happened to have an unexpected opening and contacted Julia to see if she would want to come sooner than anticipated. "YES!" was her eager reply. So Julia moved to Steppingstone, and just eight days later gave birth to a baby boy. Ever since, she has been very receptive to the assistance she has received from staff as she learns to be a mom.



STEPPINGSTONE: A PROGRAM OF ECH EVERY CHILD'S HOPE
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WISH LISTS

Household / Cleaning Supplies

- Disinfectant wipes
- Window Cleaner, Multi-Surface Cleaner, etc
- Dish Soap
- Hand Soap
- Paper Towels, Toilet Paper, etc.
- Laundry Detergent
- Hand Sanitizer
- Batteries
- Light Bulbs
- Mops & Brooms
- Plastic Storage Containers
- Trash Bags & Zip Lock Bags
- Towels
- Bed Linens
- Rugs
- Cooking Utensils
- Dishes, Glasses, & Silverware
- Small Appliances (Toaster, Blender, Iron, etc.)
- Baby Proofing items
- Baby Bottles
- Alarm Clocks
- Desk Lamps

Personal Hygiene

- Toothbrushes and Toothpaste
- Shampoo
- Body Wash
- Deodorant
- Feminine Products
- Razors
- African American Hair Products
- Brushes, Combs, etc.
- Hairspray, Gel, etc.
- Lotion
- Baby Care Items (Diapers, wipes, etc.)

School Supplies

- Book Bags
- Binders
- Folders with Pockets
- Highlighter Pens
- Portfolios
- Pencils and Pens
- College Rule Notebooks
- Flash Drives

Contact us for more details (816) 356-0187.

Recreation

- Flat Screen TVs
- DVD Players
- DVD Movies
- Game Systems (Xbox, PS 3, Wii)
- Video Games
- Movie Passes
- Sports Tickets
- Board games
- Portable Exercise Equipment
- Amusement Park Tickets

Gift Cards

- For Gas
- For Clothing (Old Navy, Marshalls, Target, etc)
- For Grocery Stores
- For School Supplies (Office Depot, Staples, etc)
- For Quick Meals (Subway, Quiznos, Wendy's etc)
- For Household supplies (Walmart, Target, etc)



13th Annual Golf Classic

TITLE SPONSOR: Vehicle Assurance
Hosted by Randy Karraker of 101 ESPN Radio
MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 23, 2013
OLD HICKORY GOLF CLUB, ST. PETERS, MO
Noon Shotgun start.

JOIN US AGAIN THIS YEAR FOR THE
13TH ANNUAL GOLF CLASSIC.
Enjoy a beautiful day on a wonderful course with
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For more information or to register, visit
our website at www.everychildshope.org
or call Laura Kilcullin at 314-427-3755