



# Voices of Courage

StepStone Donor Newsletter  
**SPRING 2025**

## Angela's Journey: 18 Years of Hope Holding at StepStone

For nearly two decades, Angela has been a steady presence at StepStone. Her journey to StepStone was shaped by years of experience supporting families in crisis. Before joining the team, she worked at DCCCA Family Preservation and Harbor House, each role deepening her understanding of the unique challenges survivors face. But it was at StepStone that she found the opportunity to provide long-term support, helping survivors not just find safety, but build new lives during their two years at StepStone.

"The most rewarding part of my work as an Advocate is watching the transformation of the participants I have worked with over the years," Angela shares. "Watching them regain the confidence in themselves that was taken from them due to the abuse. Seeing them gain new skills, some for the first time, like writing a check, handling the money they made, or even learning to cook."

Angela has seen StepStone grow significantly since she first joined the team. What was once a small program with a handful of housing units has expanded into a comprehensive support system, including Bluffview Place, which provides 28 units for survivors. Along the way, she has worked with participants to overcome challenges, connect to resources, and achieve their dreams. "I've seen women who came in unsure of their futures work to clean up their credit and build or buy their own forever homes. It was incredible to see the love they poured into their homes."



When asked what survivors need most when they arrive at StepStone, Angela's answer is simple but profound: "A listening ear, a caring heart, material things they had to leave behind, and a hope holder—someone to hold their hope when they feel hopeless." Over the years, she has learned that survivors are incredibly resourceful, often finding solutions and creating support networks within the StepStone community that last for years.

As she looks ahead, Angela hopes for a future where services like StepStone are no longer needed. "I could only hope that the abuse would stop," she reflects. "But until then, I hope StepStone continues to grow, to expand, and to be known for the life-changing services we provide."

Despite the challenges of advocacy work, Angela stays grounded by focusing on self-care. "You can't pour from an empty cup," she says. To ensure she is emotionally prepared to support those who need her, she enjoys short walks, coloring to recharge, or simply taking a few quiet moments to herself.

Angela's dedication, compassion, and commitment have made an immeasurable impact on StepStone and the survivors she has served. After 18 years, one thing remains unchanged—her unwavering belief in the strength and resilience of the women she walks alongside every day.

**Read on for a glimpse into Angela's work as an Advocate at StepStone!**

## This is Advocacy

What does Angela's job as an Advocate look like? Sometimes it's helping a survivor find stable housing or navigate legal challenges. Other times it's something as simple, but life-changing, as planning meals.

Eva is in her first year at StepStone, working with her Advocate, Angela, to build the skills necessary for independent living. As a survivor of domestic violence, she is learning to manage responsibilities she was never allowed to handle before. Her abuser controlled everything—her finances, her transportation, even her ability to go to the grocery store alone. Now, with five young children depending on her, she is learning how to navigate life on her own terms.

One of Eva's biggest challenges has been dinnertime. She works until 6:00 p.m., and by the time she gets home, preparing a meal feels overwhelming. That's where Angela steps in. Every week, she and Eva meet to make a plan, not just for this week's meals, but for the months and years ahead. For now, Angela often prepares a home-cooked meal so Eva's children can eat while they talk and discuss practical solutions to help her family thrive. Together, they're choosing recipes from a crockpot cookbook, finding meals Eva can prepare in advance so that she and her children can sit down to a home-cooked dinner together.

This is advocacy. It's more than offering resources—it's walking alongside survivors as they reclaim their independence, build confidence, and create a future free from abuse.



## A Special Valentine's Dance for Moms and Kids

Mothers and children filled the room with joy as they danced the night away at StepStone's Valentine's Dance. More than just a holiday celebration, the evening was a chance to honor the love, trust, and support that survivors build as they move forward in their healing journeys.

For survivors of domestic violence, community is essential. Events like this allow families to strengthen friendships with others who truly understand their experiences. These connections provide not only comfort in the moment but also long-term support and accountability. As a recent program graduate shared, **"StepStone provided access to advocates when I needed support and connected me with a community of women who were also navigating the transition to independence. Knowing I wasn't alone in this journey gave me strength."**

For children, joyful experiences like this are especially meaningful. Dancing, playing, and celebrating with friends in a safe, loving environment helps them heal from past trauma and build confidence in their future. These moments of fun remind them what it feels like to be carefree, reinforcing that they are safe, supported, and surrounded by people who care.





## Graduate News

In February, we celebrated Joselyn as she graduated from StepStone's program and moved into her new home! Friends and fellow participants gathered with her to honor all she has accomplished over the past two years.

As Joselyn prepared for this next chapter, she faced a few final hurdles. She found a new apartment but still needed furniture and a washer and dryer to settle in. Thanks to your support, we are providing four additional months of rental assistance, giving her the stability she needs to start this new journey with confidence, and the resources to purchase a washer and dryer and furniture to make her new house a home.

## StepStone Joins Wichita Foundation's ImpactICT Program

StepStone is proud to partner with the Wichita Foundation and Fidelity Bank as part of the ImpactICT program. This innovative initiative provides StepStone with a vital operating line of credit, ensuring that services for domestic violence survivors remain uninterrupted, even during delays in government grant reimbursements.

"Our cash flows can be inconsistent, often requiring us to have cash available to pay expenses for which we will be reimbursed at a later date," says Jason West, StepStone's Executive Director. "This partnership allows us to maintain our work uninterrupted and access additional grant funding to meet the Wichita community's growing need for our services."

This partnership is a powerful example of how creative financial solutions can drive meaningful social change.



## Time to Bloom

Spring is a time of renewal, of hope, of possibility. At StepStone, we see this kind of transformation every day as survivors of domestic violence step out of the harsh winter of their past and into a place of safety, healing, and growth.

StepStone is the only freestanding transitional housing program in the state that provides survivors with two full years of support—plenty of time to bloom. With secure housing, counseling, advocacy, and life skills programs, we help survivors regain their confidence, rebuild their lives, and step into a future filled with hope.

But we, too, are ready to bloom. Right now, StepStone is at full capacity—every apartment filled, every resource stretched to its limit. The need for long-term support has never been greater, and we are ready to grow so that more survivors have the chance to heal and rebuild.

To meet this urgent need, we want to expand our rental assistance options, giving more survivors the opportunity to receive two years of support even if they're not in our on-site housing. With this growth, we can ensure that even more survivors have the stability, services, and time they need to truly heal and break the cycle of domestic violence.

But we can't do it without you.



**Will you be part of this season of growth? Your donation provides more than just shelter—it gives survivors the time and resources they need to thrive.**



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