

Those whom we serve...

Stepping Stones of Rockford, Inc. is a private, nonprofit (501) (c) (3) behavioral healthcare organization dedicated to providing housing and rehabilitation services for adults with emotional disturbances and mental illnesses.

The organization is: licensed by the Illinois Department of Health and Human Services Office of Mental Health; funded primarily through participation in the Medicaid Program; partially funded by the Department of Children and Family Services and is accredited by the Commission on the Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF).

All facilities are located in Rockford. Individuals are served from the greater Rockford and northern Illinois area.

Referrals may be received from a variety of sources including but not limited to area hospitals, private mental health providers, social workers, families, local and area mental health centers, the criminal justice system, nursing homes and other medical and social service organizations.

Acceptance is based on each individual's assessed need for services. Admission to residential and other programs is subject to space limitations.

To learn more about our programs, please contact us at: 706 N. Main St. in Rockford, IL 61103, by telephone at 815-963-0683, via Fax at 815-963-6018, or on-line at <https://steppingstonesrockford.org>

Northern Illinois' leading provider of residential programs designed to meet the recovery needs of adults with mental illnesses.



“Because of Stepping Stones, I have learned how to manage my illness and become a productive member of society.”

“I am very thankful for this program. It has helped me come out of my shell and become stronger.”

“I am learning to treat myself better, to act like an adult, to make commitments and follow through...I am in the process of saving my own life.”

“Stepping Stones has given me my life back.”

-Individuals describe how their lives have changed since entering our program.

<https://steppingstonesrockford.org>

We are here because...

Individuals with emotional disturbances and mental illnesses are a part of our community and share the need for safe, affordable and decent housing in the least restrictive living environment. We are here to help those we serve fulfill their daily needs and enjoy their rights as community members. Many adults with mental illnesses require a strong network of supportive services and on-going encouragement. Stepping Stones provides the housing, psychiatric rehabilitation services and support to help those in our program live as successfully and independently as possible.

By offering a variety of housing and rehabilitation programs, Stepping Stones helps those we serve to attain their maximum potential for independent living. For some adults, Stepping Stones is the transition from life in an institution to living in the mainstream. For others, we become a long-term home where individuals can live as independently as possible while still receiving the support they need.

According to E. Fuller Torrey, MD, one of our country's leading authors and researchers and experts on schizophrenia and psychiatric rehabilitation, **“The most important decision to be made by most persons (with serious, chronic mental illness) and their families is where the person should live.”** Stepping Stones is here to make that decision easier for individuals and their families in Rockford and throughout the northern Illinois area.

Where we began, and where we are headed...

Stepping Stones first opened our doors as a halfway house in 1969 in response to the Community Mental Health Act of 1963 and the quickening pace of de-institutionalization for adults with mental illnesses. Since then, Stepping Stones has helped hundreds of individuals re-enter their community and has become Northern Illinois leading provider of residential psychiatric rehabilitation services for adults with mental illnesses.

Since beginning as a single halfway house serving eight residents and their families, Stepping Stones has grown to a service capacity of 160 individuals. Over this time, we moved past that original halfway house model to a focus on psychiatric rehabilitation and recovery. Specialized programs now include: gender specific living environments; services to help young adults make a successful transition to adulthood, designated living and treatment services for seniors aged fifty and older; integrated mental health and medical services known as home health care, trauma informed care and forensic treatment consisting of fitness restoration, coordinated services with the Winnebago County Therapeutic Intervention Program (TIP), community conditional release services. These changes resulted from a deeper understanding of mental illnesses and the incorporation of evidence based practices that have been designed to enhance the long-term progress of those participating in our various programs.

We understand adults with mental illnesses will succeed at varying degrees of independence from the mental health care system and that some individuals may require life-long supportive care to break and/or avoid the cycle of repeated hospitalizations, criminal justice system incarceration or homelessness. We provide a housing continuum that includes supervised and supported living arrangements. These range from 24 hour-a-day supervised group homes to daily support for individuals living in supervised and supported apartment to regular supervision for those who live more independently or on their own.

Group Homes, Supported Housing and Supervised Apartment Living

Fully Supervised Group Homes

Group homes are designed to provide residents with 24-hour-a-day supervision. These homes situated in average residential neighborhoods in Rockford, offer the comforts of family living, semi-private bedrooms and common living, cooking, dining and recreational areas. Here residents take part in planned social and recreational activities and are encouraged to participate in outside activities as well. As part of a household unit, residents begin to re-build the life skills they will need to live more independently.

A trained program manager, mental health professional, or rehabilitative service aide is available at all times. Our staff's primary role is to help residents develop and maintain the psychiatric stability necessary to perform tasks from medication management, personal hygiene and money management to the shared tasks of housekeeping, weekly shopping and meal preparation. Since many residents have been unstable for a period of time before entering our program, emphasis is placed on what each resident must do to regain mental stability in order to begin completing something as basic as dusting to more complex skills like handling personal finances and re-claiming their desired social roles.

Staff assists residents in application for and administration of medical, financial and related benefits. As needed referrals are made for medical or other emergency care. Counseling and crisis intervention is provided to residents as needed.

Supervised and Supported Living

As residents exhibit psychiatric stability, regain living skills and develop the confidence needed to live with less supervision, they may choose to live in a more independent living environment while still receiving case management and other services.

While many residents reside first in one of Stepping Stones' group homes, others are accepted directly into one of our supervised, supported or independent living apartment programs.

The options available include: 1) living in one of the agency owned and operated 24-hour-a-day supervised or supported living environments which feature individual apartment living, 2) living in agency owned and operated apartments which are closely supervised by program managers, 3) living in one of the Rockford Housing Authority apartment facilities or 4) living in private apartments on their own in the community.

In each situation individuals continue to receive our support and supervision. The length and frequency of supervision provided is based on each individual's needs.

Staff conducts "progress checks" to make sure individuals are maintaining psychiatric stability and using the skills necessary to live safely and successfully. Encouragement is used to continue progress. If problems are seen, or serious regression occurs, staff intervene to arrange for increased services or additional assistance as deemed necessary.

Improving Lives One Step at a Time.

As individuals step further into the community, the staff at Stepping Stones is there to respond to their individual recovery needs whether those needs are social, psychological, educational or vocational.

Our mission is to be with our clients as they face the challenges of day to day recovery, to help them build competence in their skills, confidence in themselves and to develop the social roles of their choice. We strive to help those we serve help themselves to reach their greatest degree of independence possible.

The practice of psychiatric rehabilitation means that we offer formal interventions in all areas of living, up to and including education and vocational training. The key to this focus is the individualized rehabilitation plan followed by each person participating in our services. The approach means our staff is with those we serve to help assist and guide them through the challenges of daily living.

Successful recovery begins with psychiatric stabilization that allows those we serve to take back their lives and return to managing important aspects of their lives such as performing household duties, cleaning and cooking. This extends to performing "self-management" activities such as maintaining medication protocols, adhering to mental health treatment schedules, handling personal finances, solving problems successfully and participating in activities and other services in the community. For some individuals, resolving the effects of past abuse or trauma is necessary in order to achieve the focus to address areas above and this area becomes an essential focus of care.

Work and Vocational Training

"A job magically transforms a patient into a person" writes Douglas Bennett, a prominent mental health professional in England. We at Stepping Stones agree. Individuals who are ready and able to work are encouraged and supported in their pursuit of employment.

Through agreements with the Illinois Office of Rehabilitation Services and local sheltered workshops, individuals may participate in vocational training towards gradual entry or re-entry to employment.

"Supported" job opportunities allow individuals to experience a variety of job opportunities while benefiting from trained supervision. Individuals continue to be assessed for changes in behavior and management of on the job stressors. Focus is placed on creating and maintaining a successful work experience by in the areas of transportation, adjustment in medications as needed, grooming, coordinating work and treatment schedules and further developing the effective work habits and job skills. These experiences allow participants to develop the skills and confidence that may lead to securing competitive employment.

Artistic Expressions-The Stars of Light

The relationship between artistic expression and ongoing recovery is a significant one. The Stars of Light is a program of Stepping Stones that uses dramatic and visual arts to promote recovery, educate the public about mental illness and reduce stigma. There are opportunities to be a part of live theater performances, poetry writing, music expression, art galleries and book, video and movie productions.