



November 2025

706 North Main Street
Rockford, IL 61103
815-963-0683
steppingstonesrockford.org

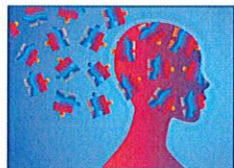
Dear Friend of Stepping Stones,

I am writing, during these uncertain times, to ask for your help as **you can make more of a difference right now than ever**. During this season of giving, whether you choose to give to Stepping Stones and the individuals we serve, or any of the other worthwhile nonprofit organizations in our community, **let me assure you that your financial support will have a positive impact**. In my 44 years of working in mental health, **the need I see today in some of our most vulnerable individuals has never been greater** and that's why I am writing to ask you to support our organization's mission with a financial gift.

As you know, the care we provide for individuals with emotional disturbances and mental illness **is not easy but is very rewarding when we see the progress made by the children, youth and adults who participate in our housing, psychiatric rehabilitation and counseling programs**. Your financial support will help us continue this mission and let us know how much you care about the individuals who participate in our services.

Earlier this month, we had the opportunity to gather together for an Employee Appreciation Dinner where we recognized certain employees for their years of service and celebrated others by awarding them peer nominated Shining Stars awards. The theme of the evening was, ***Like Pieces of a Puzzle, We Are Better Together***.

As part of the night's activities, a video of employees performing their roles (pieces of the puzzle) at work was shown. As I watched the presentation, I was reminded of how complex our workplace is and how it takes all of us working together to provide the high-quality care that our clients deserve. As I glanced down for a moment at the Stepping Stones logo puzzle that was the centerpiece of the table, I knew it, just like our organization, could not be complete without every piece fitting together. **And I thought of our other essential pieces of our puzzle-individual donors, supportive family members, corporate and foundation supporters and others who invest in our work**. It is clear we could not do our work as successfully as we do without the support of these essential pieces of our puzzle.



The theme of puzzles could not be any closer to our work here at Stepping Stones and I am sure you agree there is nothing in this world more puzzling than the human brain. We are reminded of this every day as we help those we serve navigate their recovery from brain disorders. Your support will help us to help our clients find solutions to their problems and that is why I am asking you to show your financial support to Stepping Stones by including a check in the enclosed envelope or by visiting <https://steppingstonesrockford.org> to make an online donation

today. **Your gift will go a long way towards helping individuals in our program learn the critical skills needed to solve some of the most challenging puzzles they face in their lives.**

Yes, I value the essential mental health care Stepping Stones provides in our community!

Please use my gift to help the individuals you serve improve their lives one step at a time.

I have enclosed my gift of \$ _____.

I made a online donation of \$ _____ by visiting <https://steppingstonesrockford.org>.

Email address _____ Phone number _____

☐ My employer has a matching gift program. I have enclosed their form.

☐ I have included Stepping Stones in my planned giving.

Please make your check payable to: **Stepping Stones of Rockford, Inc.**
706 North Main Street, Rockford, Illinois 61103
Telephone: 815-963-0683
steppingstonesrockford.org



Thank you!

Stepping Stones is a 501 (c) (3) nonprofit organization.
Your contribution is tax deductible
to the fullest extent allowable by law.



This is Stepping Stones' 56th year of providing housing and mental health care in our community and since our modest beginning and with the help of supporters like you, we have continued to expand services to meet our community's needs. I would like to take the remainder of my letter to provide an update on the progress and accomplishments that have occurred at Stepping Stones over the past year. These have included:

- A groundbreaking for the first "new build" Group Home on Stony Creek Way designed specifically for adults with serious mental illnesses in Winnebago County was held in the spring. This will be a fully accessible Group Home for ten residents. This home is expected to be fully operational in early 2026. This project's funding was provided in large part by a grant from the WCCMHB and the 1/2 cent sales tax. **A ribbon cutting ceremony will be held at 1480 Stony Creek Way on December 16, 2025, from 10:00 a.m. until noon. The opening remarks will begin at 10:00 a.m. and you are welcome to attend.**
- Renovations began on the property at 4930 East State Street in Rockford. **This facility will replace the Mildred Kral Rehabilitation Center (Main Office since 1991) as the organization's corporate office in the fall of 2026.** This new facility will provide additional space to expand client services. An *Accelerator* grant received from the WCCMHB and the 1/2 cent sales helped to purchase this building.
- **The Stars of Light celebrated their 30 Year Anniversary** with a live performance in October at the Nordlof Center that included a history of the organization, performances by the stars and cameo appearances by elected officials and local celebrities.
- The organization continued to expand services to serve more individuals in need of mental health care. After operating a fixed capacity to serve adults primarily in residential services for several years, **service capacity has expanded to reach over 800 children, youth and adults in 2025.**

I would like to thank you for taking the time to read my letter. We could not carry out our mission as successfully as we do without the confidence you show in us. **Remember, we count on receiving your support at this time of the year and I hope to hear from you soon.** Until then, I wish you and your family a safe and meaningful holiday season.



With continued gratitude,

Susan Schroeder, LCSW, CEO

P.S. As Thanksgiving has us counting our blessings and welcoming the beginning of the holiday season, I am grateful to include you and our supporters as essential pieces of our puzzle. Remember your support will make more of a difference this year than ever. We Are Better Together.

