

EMPOWERED TO HELP OTHERS: MELISSA'S STORY OF HEALING

Stepping Stones advocate Melissa is no stranger to what it's like to live in abusive relationships.

Melissa's life was controlled by her abusive relationships and drug addiction for years. The combination of violence and drugs created an environment of chaos and fear to the point where it "escalated to me getting thrown into a wall, or dragged out by my hair from my house."

But breaking away from abuse was not easy. "All of my relationships have been toxic. Every relationship I was in was around drug addiction and alcohol. It's hard to have any kind of healthy relationship when you are on drugs."

Melissa's struggle with abusive relationships and addiction led her in and out of recovery

throughout her adult life. At one of her lowest points, she found herself pregnant and homeless in Mexico. "I didn't know if I was going to live or die or make it out of there to see my children again. My parents took my children for me because I wasn't able to care for them, I wasn't there for them emotionally, mentally, and physically sometimes."

The Turning Point

Melissa found herself at the point where she knew she truly needed to change in order to escape the abuse in her life. She made the choice to enter West Yavapai Guidance Clinic's Hillside Recovery Center, but was hospitalized first. "I was in the hospital for a week waiting to get into treatment. (continued on page 2)



Stepping Stones advocates are available 24/7/365 on our Helpline and face-to-face. Call 928.445.4673 to speak with an advocate day or night.

BECAUSE WE WERE HERE...

(in West Yavapai County from January 1 - June 30, 2018)

Upon completion of services, families at Stepping Stones are asked to take an anonymous survey to provide feedback.

100% reported their safety improved after being a part of Stepping Stones advocacy programs.

100% reported they know how to plan for their continued safety.

95% reported they have an increased understanding of their legal rights.

92% reported they did not return to an abusive situation upon exit from safe shelter.

77% reported they set up their own household or moved in with supportive family or friends, while **15%** enrolled in an extended safe/therapeutic setting.

SNAPSHOT OF THOSE SERVED

(in West Yavapai County from January 1 - June 30, 2018)

66% of adults served experienced abuse/sexual assault or other traumas in their childhood.

63% have been in 2 or more abusive intimate relationships as adults.

89% have experienced challenges with substance abuse.

72% had a mental health diagnosis that also has to be addressed as part of changing their lives.

2 men received 1-1 safety planning and legal advocacy as they prepared to leave abusive situations.

100% of these families were from West Yavapai County communities.

24 children came to our emergency shelter or transitional housing as a result of their mothers choosing to leave abusive or dangerous situations.

74% of adults served did not need safe shelter but still received face-to-face advocacy services including: safety planning, legal advocacy, educational groups, and 1-1 case management in our self-sufficiency and resiliency service programs.

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(continued from page 1)

My addiction was in my face. I didn't love myself; I didn't care about anything, anybody, or myself. But once I was ready to quit and do what I needed to do to live; that was a turning point for me."

The realization that she had "hit rock bottom" pushed her to break away from the abusive relationships and motivated her to get clean and stay sober. "If you don't have recovery, you don't have a life. Drugs and addiction will take you down really quick and you don't even know it. And so that's a big thing for me because now, I want to live. Now, I love myself. Now I want to be there for my parents and for my kids. So with that, it's easier to be sober."

"Every day, I'm just thankful to be upright and breathing and being able to do something that I love to do."

Stepping Stones Connection
During this time, Melissa was mandated by probation to

perform community service at Stepping Stones Thrift. "At the time, the manager had been in the [shelter] program and some of the workers there went through Stepping Stones, so I felt really comfortable with my history. It felt good. It felt like I was at home." This connection helped her to continue in her recovery and healing from abuse.

"It's really empowering once you get that independence where you don't have to worry."

Now as a Stepping Stones advocate, Melissa is able to use her experiences to support others who are working hard to escape the terror of domestic violence. "I just want to be able to help people who were in my shoes before. I have the empathy and personal experience; it's a lot different if you've been through that when helping people. Every day, I'm just thankful to be upright and breathing and being able to do something that I love to do." She sees the changes happen for families daily when

they are able to take steps away from their victimization. "I like it when I see a mom, and the light comes on, and they say 'I didn't think of that!' I'm ok with them taking one thing out of the program that means something to them that they can utilize. That's what we're here for." Being an advocate at Stepping Stones continues to impact Melissa's life daily and her recovery. "It's really empowering once you get that independence where you don't have to worry. I am so empowered because I have my own place, one of my

children lives with me, I have my own job, I have my own vehicle." Her hard, life-changing work is evident as she continues to move forward, living free from all forms of abuse.

Today, Melissa's life is about continuing to make the right choices. "I think the thing that changed the most for me is my integrity. My motto is 'do the next right thing.' That's what I go by. It's simple, it's easy." Her advice: "Don't give up. Keep your head up. Seek help. If you want to change, you can make it happen."



Our educational support groups provide insight on topics including childhood trauma, family dynamics, co-dependency, dynamics of intimate violence, 12-step recovery, and more. Offered six days a week, our groups allow adults to process trauma, heal, and learn how to live free from further victimization.

24/7 From Jan - June 2018...
792 calls received on our 24/7/365 live Helpline

From Jan - June 2018... **203** adults & **121** children called for shelter due to violence

In 2017... **13,029** volunteer hours served agency wide

In 2017... **36,633** hours of paid job training provided

KEEP YOUR STATE TAXES LOCAL WITH A CHARITABLE TAX CREDIT

Choose to keep your money local with a **2018 AZ State Charitable Organization Tax Credit** donation! This tax credit program allows a **dollar-for-dollar tax credit** on your AZ State taxes when you give to Stepping Stones. Call Cori or Alexis at 772.4184 or go to SteppingStonesAZ.org/donate for more info.

STEP 1



Donate up to \$800 to Stepping Stones

+

STEP 2



Keep your donation receipt

+

STEP 3



File form 321 with your taxes

=



Get reimbursed by Arizona

Please fill out and mail with donation to: **Stepping Stones Agencies 6719 E. 2nd Street, Suite A Prescott Valley, AZ 86314**

I am excited to support families in our community by donating:

- \$25
- \$50
- \$100
- \$400 tax credit (individual)
- \$800 tax credit (couple)
- Other: _____

I would like my donation to go directly to the following service:

- Children's Program
- Emergency Shelter
- Transitional Housing
- Wherever Needed Most
- Safety Planning
- Employment Program
- 24/7 Helpline

Please send me information on how I can help local families for years to come through a **Charitable Legacy Gift**.

- Cash or Check enclosed
- Secure online donation at www.SteppingStonesAZ.org/donate via PayPal
- Credit Card donation by phone 928-772-4184 or in person at our Administration Office: 6719 E. 2nd Street, Suite A in Prescott Valley

Please send acknowledgement and tax receipt to:

Name: _____

E-mail: _____

Mailing Address: _____

City/State/Zip: _____

Stepping Stones Agencies is a not-for-profit 501(c)3 tax-exempt organization. Check with your tax professional for information regarding donations.

NOTES FROM ADVOCACY PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS: "THERE IS A GENUINE AND OVERWHELMING SENSE OF FREEDOM"

Because of you, families in our community are finding freedom, hope, and opportunity to live free from abuse. Below are a few notes from recent program participants about how you and Stepping Stones helped to change their lives!



"This program was so incredible for me. There is a genuine and overwhelming sense of freedom and hope in me now. Stepping Stones was instrumental in helping me get & stay sober and helping me become who I'm meant to be."



"Stepping Stones changed & probably saved my life. It made a huge change in the lives of my children. They taught me how to rise out of this bad situation."



"Outstanding, humbling, life changing. This program and the community involved changed my life for the better forever."



"I am a better person because of the standard of living I was taught to live by. I learned how to be accountable and assertive. Best decision I ever made!"



"my favorite part of the program is the groups. You learn so much about things you've gone through, and you realize sometimes its you who also needs work."

Thank you for making a difference in the lives of local families!

FINDING HOPE WHEN THE JUSTICE SYSTEM IS INVOLVED

Domestic violence legal advocacy is a special service we provide, as families in our programs work toward lives free from abuse. By helping to educate families about their legal options after abuse, our advocates are able to help bring clarity to the challenging process.

At Stepping Stones, we focus on civil legal challenges including orders of protection, divorce, and other legal decision making (such as child custody) in a safe, confidential environment. The task of navigating the legal system is overwhelming, and these areas can be particularly challenging because families can feel alone going through the legal process.

"One of the biggest things is that they feel listened to and believed."

A particularly hard part is simply working through the paperwork. With dozens of pages filled with unfamiliar language and detailing difficult personal information, it can feel overwhelming to

complete. But that is exactly where Stepping Stones' legal advocate, Kathy, and 10-year volunteer, Mark Kille, attorney at Mingus Mountain Law Group, come in; they support families working through civil legal issues as they break free from abuse. Kathy shared, "It can be discouraging to see how much it takes to get through. When broken down, the paperwork is simple. I am able to help them with that."

Completing and filing paperwork is only one aspect of what Kathy and Mark provide. The real support comes through encouragement and empowerment. Mark and Kathy shared that families are learning to hope again and becoming empowered as they take baby steps forward. "One of the biggest things is that they feel listened to and believed," Kathy shared, adding that for some, it is the first time they feel they are believed.

A special part of Kathy and Mark's partnership also comes in the form of positive male interaction. Many women in Stepping Stones'



Advocate Kathy and Mark Kille, attorney at Mingus Mountain Law Group, provide domestic violence legal support for families at Stepping Stones.

programs have few supportive males in their lives. Kathy shared that Mark is sometimes the first positive male figure they experience. "His demeanor and intention provides families with encouraging support."

Seeing the growth of families from the time they first begin working with Kathy and Mark to completion is another awesome part. Many families begin very fearful of the process and the outcome. But with the support

of our advocates, they are able to take one step at a time toward their goals to be free from violence and abuse.

Stepping Stones' domestic violence advocacy services are available to anyone; you don't have to live in shelter to receive services. If you need support in pursuing an order of protection or other issues related to a domestic violence situation, call our Helpline to speak with an advocate: 928.445.HOPE.

SHOP LOCAL • DONATE LOCAL • SERVE LOCAL

FIND & DONATE SPECIAL TREASURES AT STEPPING STONES THRIFT



Stepping Stones Thrift Stores offer a variety of used furniture, housewares, clothing, books, games, sporting goods, and more. When you donate and shop here everything stays LOCAL! Proceeds go directly to our 24/7/365 advocacy services for families right here in West Yavapai County. Beyond the unique treasures, our thrift stores also give local families the opportunity to live healthier lives.

We provide on-the-job training for those receiving our advocacy services and others who need a second chance. Because of this, Stepping Stones Thrift Stores provide families with so much more than a place to shop - they provide hope for a positive future.

Thank you to our amazing community for shopping and donating with Stepping Stones. You're changing lives for local families!

Want to donate furniture? Call us at 759.0225 to arrange a pick up. For our three locations, hours, or to learn more, visit steppingstonesaz.org.



The perfect place for unique treasures in Prescott & Prescott Valley!



VISIT ALL 3 LOCATIONS!

CALL US TO PICK UP
LARGE ITEMS + FURNITURE:
759.0225

PRESCOTT

Stepping Stones Thrift
408 W. Goodwin (in the Park Plaza)
776.3010

PRESCOTT VALLEY

Red Barn Thrift
6689 E. 1st St
499.3206



Clothing Outlet Thrift
6717 E. 2nd St (behind Red Barn)
775.7222

Mon - Sat 9 am - 5:30 pm
Sunday 10 am - 5 pm

www.SteppingStonesAZ.org

GREAT PLACE • GREAT COFFEE • GREAT CAUSE



Step One Coffee House brews fresh, locally roasted coffee and crafts delicious breakfast sandwiches for customers six days a week. Beyond coffee and pastries, Step One Coffee House provides 12-step recovery and support books, medallions, and inspirational gifts. But the Coffee House is so much more than a cup of great coffee - it is a gathering place, job skill development,

and safe place to heal for families escaping violence. Our baristas work hard to create a welcoming, warm environment where you can enjoy some great coffee and conversation.

STEP ONE COFFEE HOUSE & RECOVERY BOOKSTORE

6719 E. 2nd St. in PV
(in the Step One Community Center)
928.759.3770
Mon - Sat 7 am - 3 pm
Coffee, breakfast, recovery gifts, & WiFi!



Step One Coffee House is a great place to meet with friends for coffee and conversation, work on a special project, or enjoy a quick bite to eat. With locally roasted coffee and an inviting atmosphere, make it your go-to coffee shop in Prescott Valley!

NEXT CHAPTER RECOVERY BOOKSTORE IN PRESCOTT

Next Chapter Recovery Bookstore and Advocacy Center in Prescott has a variety of 12-step recovery and support group books, medallions, and inspirational gifts available for purchase.

Additionally, this location provides advocacy services by appointment through our 24/7 Helpline for people affected by violence, but who do not need safe shelter. To meet with an advocate here, call 928.445.4673.

1670 Willow Creek Rd. Suite A (in Santa Fe Office Park)
Wed - Sat, 9 - 2 (Advocacy by appointment)



BE A SUPERHERO FOR LOCAL FAMILIES!



Don't be mild-mannered - become a Stepping Stones Volunteer Superhero! We invite YOU to join our League of Extraordinary Men and Women and make a difference for families in our community!

If you yearn to defeat our archenemy "Mediocrity" then our alter-ego can be a Service Superhero at our coffee house or thrift locations. Telepaths, lightning speedsters, and those with eight arms can become an Office Assistant Extraordinaire.

Share your super powers as a justice-seeking masked advocate and work with families in our advocacy services and shelter (additional training required!).

Learn more about becoming part of our league of superheroes at steppingstonesaz.org or make an appointment to meet with our Volunteer Coordinator, Jesus: call 928.772.4184 or email volunteer@steppingstonesaz.org.

Top: Stepping Stones volunteers sort and price clothing at the Clothing Outlet in Prescott Valley.

Bottom: At our thrift stores, volunteers help to display items, organize departments, and assist customers looking for special items.