



“ The whole point of being alive is to evolve into the complete person you were intended to be. ”

– OPRAH WINFREY



COLISHA C. STANFORD, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dear Friends,

What an AMAZING and EPIC year we have had at StepUp Ministry! This past year included launching our exciting new mission statement: To provide pathways for people to overcome barriers and transform their lives. In addition, we launched an updated and forward-thinking vision: A safe and thriving community where people have stability, equal opportunity, and purpose.

As I think about my first year as Executive Director, I am reminded of the word **EPIC**—the theme of the year at StepUp.

E stands for enthusiastic. We continue to be excited about the individuals in our community and how we work to support them.

P stands for polished. We make it a priority to perform with excellence and maintain a high level of support for our staff, volunteers, and the families we serve.

I stands for informed. StepUp continues to listen to the voices of our participants and operate in alignment with their needs.

C stands for caring. There is nothing more important to StepUp than to support the people we serve with deep compassion! We are a safe place and stand ready to serve anyone who walks through our doors.

Being **EPIC** is not just a word—it is our way of life at StepUp.

Other exciting aspects of this year included celebrating four graduating classes and welcoming terrific new staff and Board members who are helping take us to new levels! We expanded and deepened our community partnerships, added new classes to our programs, and began offering image consulting for job seekers as they prepare for the interview process. Another important aspect of 2023 was our ongoing goal to grow our Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) efforts for staff, the families we serve, volunteers, and our Board.

We remain *deeply* thankful for our tremendous partnership with White Memorial Presbyterian Church and the many church partners in our community. It is with great anticipation that we look forward to growing pivotal relationships in the year to come!

May God continue to bless StepUp and our community,

Colisha C. Stanford,
Executive Director

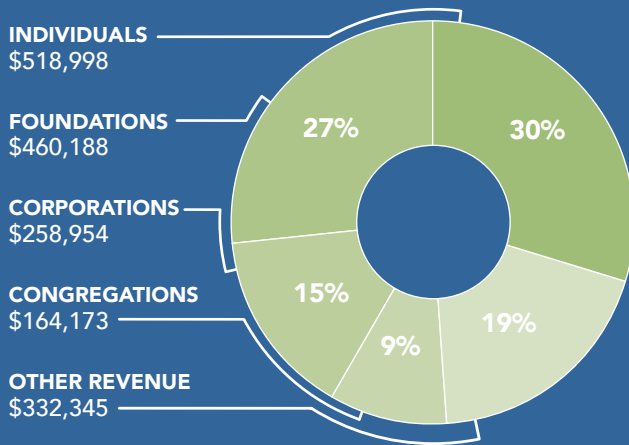
2023 BY THE NUMBERS



Thank you to *all* our supporters!
Scan QR code to make a donation or
visit stepupministry.org/donate.

Funding Sources

TOTAL REVENUE
\$1,734,658



Participants

| ADULTS | CHILDREN | REAL WORLD | TOTAL |
|------------|-----------|------------|------------|
| 366 | 77 | 100 | 543 |

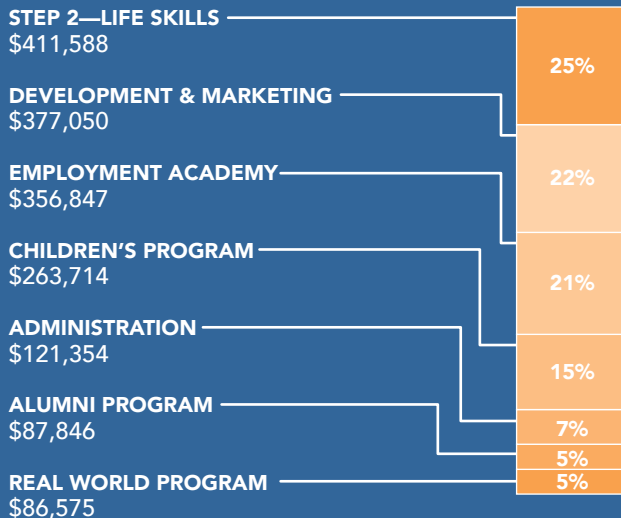
*** 8,978** TOTAL PARTICIPANTS SERVED TO DATE

Employment Academy

| EMPLOYERS | AVG STARTING WAGE |
|------------|--------------------------|
| 123 | \$15⁷³ |

Expenses

TOTAL EXPENSES
\$1,704,974



Support

| DONORS | VOLUNTEERS | VOLUNTEER HOURS |
|------------|------------|-----------------|
| 827 | 267 | 9,388 |

Community Partners

75+

An Intergenerational Impact

StepUp Ministry works across generations to provide pathways to stability for our participants. Just ask Patrick Bryant, Life Skills 2023 graduate; or his mother, Elaine Bryant-Donigan, Life Skills 2014 graduate and former StepUp employee; or his sister, Brianna Donigan, 2023 Real World Program graduate. "StepUp is a part of our family brand," Patrick shares.

Patrick was approaching life without a strategy or vision: "My mentality was out of sight, out of mind. I was winging life." Encouraged by his mother, Patrick eventually decided to enroll in the Life Skills Program. The program taught him how to set boundaries and build financial management skills. "Learning how to effectively budget helped me not only foreshadow the future, but also address the leaks in my finances." Additionally, Patrick deepened his self-awareness and developed a road map towards becoming his best self.

Today you will find Patrick and his family thriving. Patrick is currently a full-time entrepreneur and happily married. His mom, Elaine, works for Durham County, and his sister will be attending Denison University on a full scholarship.

It is on a daily basis that Patrick uses skills first learned at StepUp. Now Patrick is no longer winging life: he instead approaches it with tenacity, with his mom and sister by his side.



Employment Academy Bootcamp

The first step in creating stability in one's life begins with steady and consistent employment. This past year, due to vast fluctuations in the employment landscape, we began piloting changes to our jobs program. We pivoted from a week-long workshop to a two-day Employment Academy Bootcamp, where skills such as conducting a viable job search and networking, creating an effective resume, and interview skills are taught.

To better serve our justice-involved participants, we also provided outreach to the North Carolina prison

system. This included conducting 'mini bootcamps' at Butner Federal Corrections and NCC Institution for Women. These bootcamps involved classes surrounding the articulation of incarceration, job searching, resume writing, and building interview skills.

We also re-launched our ENER-G Program (Employment Networking, Empowerment Resources & Growth). The ENER-G Program provides a deeper dive into job readiness skills while also teaching the importance of financial literacy. "The Employment Academy really

Our Youngest Participants

Our Children's Program was created and launched in 2008 and mirrors the Life Skills Program by including 48 weeks of age-appropriate education and mentoring support for children six weeks to 22 years old. StepUp tracks each child's development through individual development plans (IDPs). IDP evaluations cover the areas of academics and behavioral, social, and emotional learning. Last year, 78% of children enrolled in our program showed IDP improvement at graduation.

Our staff are certified trainers of Triple P, an evidence-based Positive Parenting program. This includes parental training and coaching on how to become strong role models and advocates for children.

Shaquanna Williams, 2023 Life Skills graduate and mother of four, recognized the need for stability in her home and thus decided to enroll in the Life Skills Program. "Each Tuesday night I learned something new about myself and my kids. My kids learned how to express their feelings and that it's okay to set boundaries." In fact, Shaquanna's 8-year-old daughter, Amonie—2023 Children's Program graduate—created a goal to become more outgoing and was proud to share when she met that goal. Amonie also really enjoyed earning StepUp Bucks for her good behavior and goal achievement. She was able to use those Bucks at the StepUp Store. This experience taught Amonie how to earn and save money and then spend it on fun stuff.

StepUp's tiniest participants begin their StepUp journey in the Children's Program. It is there that kiddos like Amonie learn that a life shaped by goal-oriented choices truly pays off!

changed my mindset. I now have a plan and understand that everyone needs help," shares Keirsten Ramey, recent Employment Academy graduate. "I show up every Tuesday night for ENER-G because I know that is key to becoming successful. I now realize that I am my own best advocate—how I show up and represent myself is important."

StepUp is passionate about making its resources accessible to all and teaching life skills that promote success and transformation.



KEIRSTEN
RAMEY

A League Above

Did you know that the Junior League of Raleigh (JLR) has been active in the Raleigh community for over 90 years? The JLR prides themselves on their commitment to leadership, partnership, and service in Wake County. At StepUp Ministry, the JLR has shown that very same commitment first-hand. Nearly 20 years ago, the JLR joined StepUp Ministry to serve as volunteers for our programs and today they are our largest source of volunteers, having provided over 13,000 hours of service.

Harriet Stephenson, Director of Nursing Education at WakeMed Health and Hospitals, is a member of the JLR and has been volunteering with StepUp since 2001. When asked why she continues to volunteer with us, Harriet shared, "It's the kids—they teach me something new every week. Also, the amazing staff and volunteers are very dedicated to supporting this fabulous community. Seeing the impact of such an amazing program first-hand is truly special!"

From planning Halloween costume parties to providing hygiene kits for our families, the JLR is a steady force of love at StepUp. Our Children's Program would not be what it is today without the League's long-standing partnership.



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