stepping stone

The Village We're Building Together



2026 Impact Report

Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.

MARGARET MEAD



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Letter from Our Founder

A community for our community. That's the essence of Stepping Stone.

Five years ago, our work began quietly to serve the most vulnerable children in the Charlottesville area. A small but committed group of people refused to look the other way when profound needs clearly existed.

What's happened since isn't the story of one organization working to meet those needs by providing children with life's essentials. Rather, it's the story of a region that said yes, over and over again, to ensuring the well-being of the whole child. It's a story about partnership. Dozens of agencies and organizations trusted our word and believed in our mission. Hundreds of volunteers gave their time. Individuals and foundations provided financial support. Together, the entire community decided that no family should have to endure a crisis without a village to support them.

Yes, this report counts the diapers distributed and the strollers delivered because those numbers matter. But underneath every number is a person who showed up — a partner who made a referral, a donor who committed to a monthly financial pledge, a volunteer who sorted through clothes and resources, a neighbor who donated a stroller she didn't need anymore. Stepping Stone didn't build a warehouse. We partnered with our community to build a village.

-Ashely Schneider
Executive Director

Our Impact

2026
Orders Filled: 1,693



144,341 Diapers Distributed



982 Children Served



260 Strollers Distributed



202 Car Seats Distributed



9,081 Pieces of Clothing Distributed



20,000 Hours of Volunteering

2022-2025
Orders Filled: 5,637



595,770 Diapers Distributed



3,301 Children Served



749 Strollers Distributed



805 Car Seats Distributed



24,455 Pieces of Clothing Distributed



37,000 Hours of Volunteering



Compassion Brings Our Mission to Life

Our model is simple and responsive. We put essentials in the hands of children who need them at no cost to their families. Every step depends on neighbors helping neighbors. And every step offers you a chance to get involved.

1. Collect

Everything starts with the generosity of our community. New and gently used items are donated by individuals, neighborhood and workplace drives, congregations, schools, and local businesses. These items include diapers, clothing, strollers, pack 'n plays, and personal hygiene products.

2. Prepare

Quality is dignity. That's why volunteers clean and sort each donation by type and size. By taking this important step, we can respond quickly to the needs of families and children. Clothing items and gear are always clean, safe, and sized right for the child.

3. Deliver

Stepping Stone works alongside more than fifty partners, which include health clinics, schools, and social service agencies. These organizations already know and serve families across Central Virginia, so when they see a young child in need of essential items, they send us a request. Our volunteers respond within 24 to 48 hours, filling each request with clean, safe, properly sized items and then delivering them straight to the family's door.

We Answer the Call

Currently homeless. Baby in NICU. Lost everything in house fire. Complex medical needs.

Every request we receive from one of our partners reflects the challenging reality of someone we've never met who's facing unimaginably difficult circumstances. We answer every call for help with life's essentials. Shampoo, properly fitting shoes and clothing, strollers, warm blankets, and diapers – these are the basics families need, the ones we often take for granted. On average, we fill and deliver fifty requests each week. Here are a few of the messages we receive:

Parent is currently living in a hotel and needs everything for her newborn son and two year old daughter.

A 10 mo old with complex medical needs - she is very small and developmentally delayed. Mom is looking for fall/winter clothing, a coat, and baby carrier.

Anything will help, mom did not predict that baby would arrive as early as he did and has a need for items, especially clothing.

Mom needs a stroller to get herself and her 1 year old daughter to and from the city bus stop.

Baby was in the NICU for a couple of months and then hospitalized again. She's home now, but mom needs lots of financial support due to limited income while baby was in hospital.

Family recently had a house fire and lost everything.

Currently homeless.

Maternal grandmother taking care of grandson.

The father is the sole guardian of the baby. Mother passed away during delivery.

Client has no stable address and needs pretty much everything.

At Stepping Stone, the support of our community enables us to meet the urgent needs of our neighbors.



DONOR SPOTLIGHT

$50k+
Raised since 2023

Merry Go Round and the Joy of Giving Back

When Charlottesville mother Meredith Gentine started Merry Go Round in 2022, she did so with one simple rule in mind: every dollar of profit earned through her work would be invested into the community she calls home.

She has lived by that rule. Since hosting the 2023 Merry Go Round, 100 percent of the proceeds generated from her pop-up children's clothing sale has been used to support Stepping Stone. Meredith's generosity has surpassed $50,000 over the past three years, enabling us to uplift children with essentials. The Merry Go Round-Stepping Stone relationship makes sense on a deeper level, too. Both organizations believe in giving items a second life. When shoppers at Merry Go Round purchase nice clothes at a fair price, they help us provide families in our community with clothes and other essentials that meet basic needs.

This resourceful stewardship of clothing makes a meaningful difference for families who might otherwise have to choose between buying diapers and putting food on the table. Thanks to Meredith's generosity, people in our community can help support babies and young children during their earliest, most vulnerable months of life.



Thank You, Partners!

To serve our community, Stepping Stone partners with a network of more than fifty organizations and agencies across Charlottesville. They perform a wide variety of services, including mental health counseling, early education intervention, at-home wellness visits, and refugee relocation aid.

By partnering with community organizations to support the whole child, Stepping Stone helps address the challenges that affect children's well-being and eases the burden on families. These collaborations also strengthen the impact of our partners' work.

Health Services

Birth Sisters of Charlottesville

Blue Ridge Health District

Charlottesville Health Services CVHS

Child Health Partnership

House on the Corner

Sentara Martha Jefferson

WellAware & Population Health

Westhaven CARES Center

Region Ten

Ronald McDonald House

Pediatric Associates of Charlottesville

UVA Health

VIA Centers for Neurodevelopment

Schools and Early Childhood Development

Albemarle County Public Schools

Charlottesville City Schools

Piedmont Virginia Community College (PVCC)

MACAA

Housing and Social Services

Albemarle County Department of Social Services (ACDSS)

Charlottesville Department of Social Services

Charlottesville Redevelopment and Housing Authority

The Haven

Shelter for Help in Emergency

Mama Bees Housing Community

Care Portal

Civil Rights, Advocacy, and Public Policy

Freedom for Felons

Central Virginia Violence Interrupters

Legal Aid Justice Center

Offender Aid and Restoration - Jefferson Area Community Corrections (OAR - JACC)

Virginia Prison Birth Project

The Fountain Fund

International Relief and Development

Sin Barreras

International Neighbors Charlottesville

International Rescue Committee

Cville Tulips

Human Services

People Places

Piedmont Court Appointed Special Advocates, Inc. (CASA)

Young Lives

Foothills

Donor Diapers

Loaves & Fishes Food Pantry

Community Attention Foster Families (CAFF)

The Women's Initiative

ReadyKids

Sexual Assault Resource Agency (SARA)

City of Promise

Jefferson Madison Regional Library

One Stop Cville

Home to Hope

Benjamin Hair Just Swim for Life

Come As You Are Cville

Love Inc

Family Bridge Support

As we extend the reach of our services, we'll continue to develop partnerships with organizations that share our concern for families and children in Central Virginia.



VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT

Meet Alice Fitch

Volunteering at Stepping Stone Since 2024



> *"In a world that feels increasingly disconnected, pulling together bundles of basic essentials for other local families feels like a true moment of human connection."*

"In a world that feels increasingly disconnected, pulling together bundles of basic essentials for other local families feels like a true moment of human connection.

Every week I fill client requests by selecting items from Stepping Stone's inventory of donations. I love picking out the outfits and PJs, the blankets and bottles, the tiny little utensils, and of course the diapers (babies need so many diapers!) But my favorite part is picking out the books. I have such fond memories of reading to my girls when they were little, and choosing a book for another child to enjoy is such a treat – not only for the child but for me.

Stepping Stone is meeting such a critical need in our community, and I am so grateful to be part of their volunteer team. My own daughters are out of the nest now so volunteering at Stepping Stone gives me the chance to connect with little ones again by helping to provide babies and toddlers in our community with the basic essentials they need to thrive."



Meet Teens GIVE

Volunteering at Stepping Stone Since 2021

VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT

Teens GIVE is a service-learning program that places children, from ages 12 to 18, in supervised relationship-based volunteer activities. Volunteering is supplemented with mentoring, life skills training, case management, reflection activities, counseling, and other support services.

"We participate in the Teens GIVE Program and do service projects with organizations that are helping our community. We have worked at Stepping Stone packing and delivering baby clothes and essentials for families because babies and young children need a lot of supplies, and most of those supplies are extremely expensive.

> *"Knowing that I'm helping someone makes me feel happy. It feels good to think about other people and not just myself."*

Stepping Stone helps parents get what they need for their families and stay in budget. Knowing that I'm helping someone makes me feel happy. It feels good to think about other people and not just myself. It's also a lot of fun to pick out baby clothes!"

FROM LEFT: BECCA, KENNEDY, LONDYN, AND LYRIC ARE MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENTS AND VETERAN TEENS GIVE MEMBERS

Financials

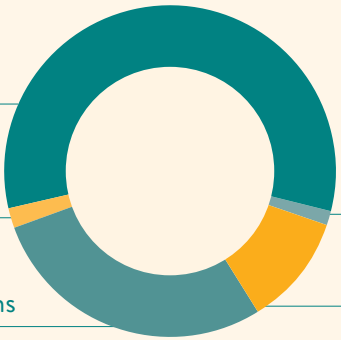
$1,048,527

Total Giving Since Founding

587

Total Donors Since Founding

2025 Funding



58% Individuals

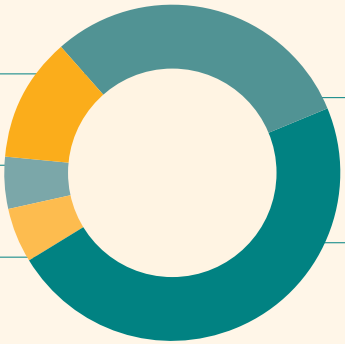
2% Government

28% Grants / Foundations

1% Investment Income

11% Corporate

2025 Expenses



12% Operations

5% Administrative

5% Events

30% Salaries

47% Program and Baby Supplies

Financials reflect our most recent completed fiscal year. Financials for 2026 will be available in February 2027.

Yesteryear Author Caro Claire Burke to Headline Fifth Annual Book-Author Event

March 30, 2027 **Charlottesville, VA**

$60k+
Raised since 2022

For each of the past four years, Stepping Stone has partnered with The She Lab to welcome a distinguished author to speak on themes tied to our mission: community and motherhood.







In March 2027, our fifth annual author event will welcome #1 *New York Times* best-selling author of *Yesteryear*, Caro Claire Burke. Burke is a novelist and cultural critic whose work examines media's influence and the evolving narratives of modern womanhood. She has become a compelling voice in debates about feminism, media literacy, and online identity. She also co-hosts the podcast "Diabolical Lies." In March, Burke will invite us to question what is real, what is curated, and how the stories we consume and create shape our understanding of ourselves and the world.

Stepping Stone's Book-Author event serves as the centerpiece of our fundraising effort. The evening brings together local decisionmakers, business owners, and change agents invested in our work and the families we serve. Since 2023, the event has raised over $60,000 and engaged attendees with *New York Times* best-selling authors Kate Baer, Elise Loehnen, Jia Tolentino, and Margot Lee Shetterly.



Growing Stronger *Together*

Every year our community grows, and so do the needs of those who live here. What also grows is the number of neighbors ready to meet them . . . donating resources, volunteering their time, providing financial support. Five years in, our mission hasn't changed and our commitment runs deeper. We know that we're not doing this alone. We're stronger together. Over the next few years, we're focused on achieving three objectives:

Extending our reach.
The families who need us most might sometimes be those farther from our door, so we're expanding our reach into surrounding rural communities. Our aim is to provide families in outlying counties with the same access to essentials as families in resource-rich Charlottesville.

Deepening what we offer.
While we started with clothes and diapers, car seats, strollers, and personal hygiene items, we'd like to deepen the resources we offer our families. To do so means engaging our partners in discussions about the special needs they identify when they meet with their families. For example, we may discover that children with specific medical conditions require resources we currently don't distribute. Through serious dialogue, we can serve as a trusted resource when partners consult with us about the best way to serve their clients.

Strengthening the foundation.
We can strengthen our impact on the community by expanding our warehouse space. Doing so would give us more room for resources and enhance our efficiency when collecting, sorting, and packaging essentials to families. More space would also allow us to host larger groups of volunteers. Hiring staff members is also a priority. The work of a village is never finished. Neither is ours.

One Village with a Clear Mission

Thank you for being the many hearts and countless hands of the Stepping Stone Village.

Your compassion is what brings our mission to life. The partner who makes the referral. The donor who gives every month. The volunteer who sorts diapers on a Saturday morning. The neighbor who drops off a stroller their little one has outgrown. Your generosity is the reason we can plan for what's next, not just hope for the best.

Stepping Stone began five years ago because a small group focused their hearts on a critical need among neighbors and friends and young children – the most vulnerable members of our community. Today, we have an entire village of people looking out for one another.

We're deeply grateful to be doing this meaningful work alongside you. If you'd like to keep building with us, there's always a place for you.

Give

What you can, each month or each year.

Volunteer

Your time, whether once or every week.

Donate

Gently used baby gear or clothing.

Host

A collection drive with your school, workplace, congregation, or neighborhood.

Share

The Stepping Stone newsletters, posts, and events with your friends and family.

stepping stone

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Start where you are, use what you have, do what you can.

ARTHUR ASHE