



Footprints November 2022



Chris and Keandre

"STEP means everything..."

Just talk to STEP Senior Keandre and he'll quickly share with you the incredible difference having a one-on-one mentor relationship has meant in his life. "I can't imagine what my life would be without STEP. STEP means everything to me." Without even knowing about our plans to replicate the STEP neighborhood mentoring center model, he volunteered, "Our neighborhood is different - you could drop STEP in any neighborhood and it would make a major impact." Pray with us that God will continue to guide and direct us to where He would have us go next!



Encourager Program Relaunch

For this school year, STEP hosted an Encourager Program Facilitator Luncheon to reconnect with past facilitators and encourage and give information for

new programs. We've refocused on the "church-school partnership" concept, where churches partner with an area school and can then invest in relationships with families and give opportunities for support.

In addition to several existing programs, four new Encourager Programs are launching or have launched this year in North Little Rock, Little Rock, and Pulaski County Special School district elementary schools. Encouragers assist with basic reading and math skills, as well as provide much-needed social and emotional support to children who are still catching up after the impact of the pandemic.

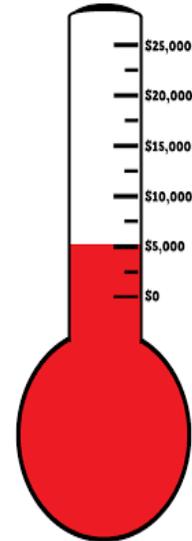
GIVING TUESDAY

Giving Tuesday is November 29th. It's held the first Tuesday after Thanksgiving to kickoff the giving season and to inspire people to give in impactful ways to the causes they support. Here at STEP Ministries, we are joined by a partnership of churches and dedicated volunteers who are united to disciple, mentor, and tutor local, under-resourced youth. STEP (Serving To Equip People) exists "to empower people through Jesus Christ to step in, step up, and step out.

If you would like to support STEP, go to the STEP website at

www.stepministries.org, click on the donate button and you will see the options for giving. We would like to invite you to join our **Friends of STEP** with a monthly donation in the amount you choose. The monthly option allows us to better budget and plan our ministry.

Our goal for this year's Giving Tuesday is \$5,000—thank you for considering giving to STEP on this special day so that more children learn about Jesus' love for them!



Help us reach our goal
of \$5,000 for
Giving Tuesday!

SAVE THE DATE!

Giving Tuesday
November 29th

**STEP CHRISTmas Store Toy
Donation Deadline**
Monday, Dec 5th

STEP CHRISTmas Store
Saturday, Dec 10th

STEP Contacts

Mentoring

Nikita
Nikita@stepministries.org
501.837.8833

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Tutoring

Juli
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501.539.3959

Encouragers

Mary Carol
marycarol@stepministries.org
501.425.4735

The Importance of Family



Ms. Nikita and

We know that family dynamics play the biggest role in a child's success and spiritual growth. So, STEP is redoubling our efforts to connect with and encourage the moms of the children we serve.

One way we have done this is through engaging with families more through special dinner events between mentors, mentees, and their families. During these events, there is guided discussion around topics that will help families and mentors to get to know one another better. In fact, we have a week of "Thanksgiving Dinner" events this month to provide food and fellow-

ship opportunities.

Another way is by providing scholarships for parents to go to a specially-designed "Refresh" Christian camp weekend where they can experience a "bubblebath in Jesus" and hear great teaching, feel pampered, and connect with other like-minded moms.

And, most exciting, is a new "Women's Table Talk" monthly dinner led by Nikita Jackson, in which moms discuss real life challenges and what God's word has to say about it. It's a time of good food and honest conversations.

STEP's Vision: Changing the heart of the city through the hope of the Gospel, one mentoring relationship at a time.

MORE TUTORS NEEDED!

Many of the children we serve face real academic challenges. Reading is such a fundamental and critical skill for navigating life.

Right now, we have several children who need tutoring in reading.

Do YOU have an hour once or twice a week to read with a child on Mondays and/or Thursdays from 4-5 p.m

If so, contact Juli Atkinson at juli@stepministries.org.

From the Executive Director...

It has been such a fruitful fall for STEP Ministries! We've seen lots of new mentors and tutors step up to invest in the lives of children, as well as so many who have been doing so for years and years. One of the most encouraging things to me is to talk to our Ambassador Club high school mentees and hear them talk about the difference that STEP has made in their lives. Learning about the love and hope of Jesus, and having a Christ-following mentor walk alongside them in the ups and downs of life is transformative.

Looking back, we were thankful to launch a new website over the summer that provides more robust information and interaction opportunities for our partner churches, volunteers, donors, and our community. The Summer Mentoring and Literacy Camp programs were super! Plus, we took a large group to Kids Across America Christian camp once again this year and several made a first-time decision for Christ. For me to get to be a part of that was a highlight of my year.

And, as the board, steering committee and staff have been going through a strategic planning process for multiplication of STEP, we are prayerfully considering where God is guiding us for the next mentoring center location. So exciting!

Thank you for your involvement with STEP—and may you feel the peace of Christ this holiday season.

For His Glory, Mary Carol Pederson



Just 1 night—1.5 hours—once a week

The men and women who serve as mentors at STEP often remark how STEP makes fulfilling our mandate to discipleship relatively easy.

Elise Fullwood, one of our new mentors says, "I chose to be a mentor because I heard about it at my church and I love children. While that is still a motivation, I now desire to watch myself and the kids grow in knowledge and understanding of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. I have enjoyed every part of STEP – my mentee, the Bible studies and Faithfulness Outings. STEP is truly an organization that Serves to Equip People. My time here has helped me understand Bible sto-

ries better, increased my patience, and learn to love better."

Are YOU feeling prompted to step out and invest in the life of a young person who may be struggling? Our community is certainly in crisis, and one-on-one mentoring is a tangible way that you can be a part of changing the heart of our city through the hope of the Gospel. New mentors are always needed. Contact Rob Smith or Nikita Jackson for more info!



Mentor Elise and Khristy



21st Annual!

CHRISTmas Toy Store!

December 10, 2022

SHARING CHRIST'S LOVE THIS HOLIDAY SEASON

Help By Donating Toys!

Your donation empowers parents to use their limited income to be providers of gifts for their children by purchasing new toys at greatly reduced prices.

TOY DONATIONS SHOULD BE:

- New ... \$8 or more
- Unwrapped
- With price tags left on
- Dropped off at your designated collection point by **SUNDAY, DEC. 4TH**

WISH LIST

Elementary: black/brown dolls, bicycles, doll strollers, cribs, Legos, play sets, craft kits
Jr. / Sr. High: wireless headphones & ear buds, bicycles, body wash/shampoo/ deodorant, make-up, art supplies, basketball, football

For More Info: www.stepministries.org
Mary Carol Pederson 501.425.4735
marycarol@stepministries.org

Friends of STEP

If you aren't already, would you consider joining our monthly financial support team? The Friends of STEP is our main source of income that allows us to provide programming for the youth. We accept all monthly donations from \$5.00 per month and up. Your recurring gifts help enable this ministry to disciple young people through:

Weekly One-on-One Youth Mentoring
Service Projects & Life Skill Training
School-Year Tutoring

STEP's In-School Encourager Program
Retreats & Summer Camps
Summer Literacy Camps

To join **Friends of STEP**, visit stepministries.org, click on the **DONATE** link. Or, make checks payable to **STEP** and simply mail it back to our return address. Of course, special gifts are appreciated as well.

We appreciate your faithful support and prayers more than you can know!



STEP Outings

Getting the youth outside and experiencing new things like camping, service projects and retreats is so important to building meaningful relationships and having deeper conversations about important life topics and what God's word has to say about it. This fall, the young men experienced an unforgettable outdoors camping experience at Jabali with mentors, and our young women learned about God's unique design for them at an extended sleepover retreat!

