

# Footprints



QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER OF STEP MINISTRIES  
DECEMBER 2025

## STUDENTS TUTORING STUDENTS

Avian and Iman Hill met Pastor Keith Williams, STEP NLR Men's Mentor Coordinator, at a STEP community event on a Thursday, went to his church that Sunday, and started training to be after-school tutors with STEP on Monday! Avian and Iman are sisters from McGhee, AR, attending UALR and were searching to get connected in serving their community, and what a blessing God brought them to STEP.

As a junior studying education, Avian says, "I'm passionate about helping kids grow not just academically, but personally. Volunteering with STEP Ministries lets me live that out in a real way. I love how STEP focuses on building relationships and showing students that they are valued and capable." Iman, who is also an education major, wanted to find a way to start making making a early on, says volunteering with STEP Ministries has been the perfect opportunity to do that. "I'm inspired by the way STEP invests in students through mentoring and encouragement. Seeing how a little time and care can boost a child's confidence motivates me to keep showing up and learning how to be the kind of teacher who truly makes an impact."

With their "yes" on the table, God gave them a fast pass to STEP, and now we have students tutoring students, the next generation investing in the next generation! What a blessing for the Hill sisters and for STEP!



## SISTERHOOD AT STEP

At STEP, we know that trust is the currency mentors build each week to encourage, lead, teach, and serve their mentees. That's why, on November 1, STEP Little Rock's Women's Coordinator, Eva McKinney, led a special one-day retreat for middle school girls and their mentors at Pinnacle Mountain State Park. Together they enjoyed Chick-fil-A for lunch, had an interactive tour at the visitor center, and enjoyed the outdoors together.

"Retreats like these are awesome for the girls to connect with their mentors and build a foundation for strong mentor-mentee relationships," said Eva. "It's amazing to see the girls open up, laugh, and really engage with their mentors in a different setting."

Moments like these remind us that relationships don't just happen, but they grow through intentional time, covered in prayer, shared experiences, and the faithful presence of mentors who step up week after week.

STEP LR Discipleship Club Girl's Retreat at Pinnacle Mtn State Park

## STEPPING IN TO SERVE

Pam Johnston is not new to mentoring, but is a first-year mentor at Discipleship Club at STEP LR with Melody. While she has only been with Melody for a few months, the Lord is deepening their relationship week by week. Pam explains her heart to mentor, "In the world we live in, we have to go after these kids and tell them truth. Like Jonah, sometimes I don't feel like I'm the right person, but like Jonah, I'm called to just share the truth and share life. Although it can be difficult, it is such a privilege."

Pam's truth for Melody and the other middle school girls at STEP LR is that they are valuable and they are loved: a timeless and biblical message. Regarding Melody, she often prays when walking into STEP, "Lord, help me say what needs to be said and give her ears to hear it!". We are blessed by mentors like Pam who faithfully answer the call to serve our kids!



## FAITHFUL GOD. GENEROUS PEOPLE. GOAL REACHED!



Left to right is John Rees, Mike Bowden, Steve Freeman, and Dr. Robert Lewis



STEP Board Member, Pastor William Boone and his wife, Helen



Lisa Haynie and Nathalie Hunt at the STEP photo booth



Left to right is Deb Strobel, Joanna Dennis, and Sherry McBryde

When the Board of Directors and Mary Carol decided the goal for the annual fundraising banquet would be \$200,000, it was an incredible *step* of faith. To reach this goal would require double the proceeds given in 2024. Immediately, the board, staff, and volunteers began to pray, and when God's people pray, God often shows up and shows out. With a full house, full hearts, and as God moved, we're so grateful to announce we received and have pledged **\$197,200!** What a faithful God! Because of the generosity of God's people, we will be able to mentor, encourage, and tutor more and more underserved children in our city!

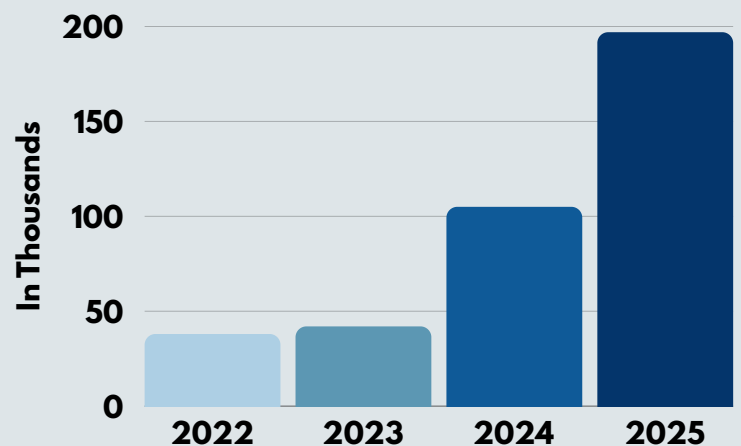
The evening was hosted by emcee Scott Inman, inspirational music by Kim Qualls, and Dr. Robert Lewis, former Directional Pastor at Fellowship Bible Church, was our keynote speaker. Long-time mentor, Cliff McBryde was awarded the STEP Impact Award, and STEP Alumnus La'Varian Robinson and his former mentor, Phil Denny, gave a heartfelt interview about their mentor-mentee relationship. It was a powerful night!

## GOD ALWAYS STEPS UP

God is always faithful to provide for His vision, His ministry, and His Kingdom. At STEP, we clearly see His hand at work as He continues to meet the needs of this ministry year after year.

As God has called STEP to multiply and expand its impact across the city, He has continually supplied the resources needed to fulfill His vision. We thank God for our generous donors, churches, and business partners who supported our annual fundraising banquet. Because of your partnership and God's faithfulness, we've seen a 425% increase in our banquet fundraising since 2022! That is something only God could do!

### Fundraising Banquets By Year







# CHRISTmas Toy STORE

**SATURDAY, DECEMBER 13**  
**DROP OFF BY MONDAY, DECEMBER 8**

**Toy donations should be new, \$8 or more,  
unwrapped, and price tags left on or with  
receipts.**

## WISH LIST ELEMENTARY

**black/brown dolls, doll strollers/cribs, bikes,  
Legos, science/play sets, games, craft kits,  
etc**

## WISH LIST JR/SR HIGH

**winter wear, body wash, make-up, jewelry, art  
supplies, cologne/perfume, sport supplies,  
pajamas, electronics, etc.**

## DROP OFF

**Your local church by Sunday, Dec 7 or  
STEP NLR at 601 E. 19<sup>th</sup> St. by  
Monday, Dec 8**



## THE HEART OF CHRISTMAS

Each year, the STEP Christmas Toy Store allows parents in our mentoring programs to select and purchase gifts for their children at deeply reduced prices, giving them both dignity and joy in providing for their families.

This past year, “Jessica”, a single mom with three children being mentored at STEP North Little Rock, had planned to attend. But on the day of the event, she didn’t show up. When our staff finally reached her, Jessica explained that her paycheck hadn’t arrived and she couldn’t afford to come. Our team encouraged her to come anyway, assuring her we would find a voucher for her to use. Just before the store closed, Jessica arrived overcome with emotion and grateful that the STEP family met her right where she was.

Because of the generosity of our donors, churches, and business partners, Jessica was able to give her children a Christmas they’ll remember. Her story reflects the true spirit of the season: God meeting us in our need and offering hope through the love of His people!

**TEXT “GIVESTEP” to 44321  
to support this year’s  
CHRISTmas Toy Store**

**OR  
SCAN  
TO GIVE**



## FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

MARY CAROL PEDERSON | FAITH THAT CAN MOVE MOUNTAINS

As many of you know, STEP Ministries’ staff and board took a prayerful leap of faith as we entered 2025. To multiply the impact, we grew our full-time staff by 5 and went from a budget of \$586k to almost \$1M. As I looked at that big number, what I heard in my heart was, “What BETTER way to invest \$1M than to share Jesus’ love locally through deep relationships with more and more children?” And, of course, through that, we’re addressing the real challenges they face every day of poverty, fatherlessness, education struggles, and prevalent violence.

Lately, there has been a recurring theme of Jesus’ words that keeps popping up “randomly” in my personal YouVersion Bible app devotionals and in comments from our staff: “You don’t have enough faith. I tell you the truth, if you had faith even as small as a mustard seed, you could say to this mountain, “Move from here to there,” and it would move. Nothing would be impossible.” And, “Truly, I say to you, whoever says to this mountain, ‘Be taken up and thrown into the sea,’ and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that what

he says will come to pass, it will be done for him.” God often communicates to me through repetition - and this one has been obvious. He’s calling us to believe Him for miracles. And, I see them every day! Just yesterday, my heart overflowed with joy as I saw many STEP high schoolers, who once didn’t even know the Gospel, practice sharing the Gospel in a winsome way and preparing to share with someone they know the next week! The miracle of multiplication right in front of me!

I’ve seen that God is always calling us to something bigger than we can imagine. He works through mobilizing His people to show His love to those who are hurting - in fact, it’s part of the Great Commission we are all called to follow.

Thank you for your support and for joining with us in believing God to move mountains for His children who are struggling in our community.

Let’s do it and believe for it TOGETHER, by God’s grace and for His glory!!

*Mary Carol*



**STEP Ministries, Inc.**

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**CHANGING THE  
HEART OF THE CITY  
THROUGH THE HOPE  
OF THE **GOSPEL**,  
ONE MENTORING  
RELATIONSHIP  
AT A TIME.**

## **A BIT OF A PARADOX**

We are overwhelmed with thankfulness that God moved on His people in a mighty way at our October 28th Stepping Up Fundraiser to bring in almost \$200,000 in pledges and donations (to date), and yet our ministry expenses this year still outpaced our donations given this year by about \$175,000 as of October 31st. How can both be true?

In September 2024, as we went into a strategic planning session with board and staff members, we prayed, discussed, and ultimately unanimously felt the Lord calling us to step out of our comfort zone and trust Him to provide financially for the needed growth in Christian one-on-one mentoring for under-resourced children in our community.

The financial growth included five additional full-time staff: a program director who would need to train and oversee a growing mentor coordinator team, two new mentor coordinators for the 3rd location, and a development director. We would also need to plan for additional supplies and food costs of reaching more children through our outreaches.

God had provided in abundance in previous years, and so STEP had the cash reserves that had been put back in investment and money market accounts that we could draw from in 2025. It was a faith step, but we knew we were not putting the future of STEP at risk, due to these reserve funds. And, we have pulled from those funds this year. But we are also at a critical time to increase overall funding for STEP as we move into 2026 and beyond.

So, will you pray with us and consider your response as we continue to step into trusting God's calling for MORE? More churches engaged, more neighborhoods reached, more children mentored, more children tutored, more children being encouraged in schools, more people experiencing the love, hope, and truth of the Gospel in our community! To receive a tax credit for 2025, please have your gift postmarked or submitted by December 31. Year-end donations can be made at [STEPMinistries.org/donate](https://STEPMinistries.org/donate).

<b>2024 Income YTD:</b>	<b>\$488,944.00</b>
<b>2025 Income YTD:</b>	<b>\$637,855.00</b>
<b>2025 Ministry Costs YTD:</b>	<b>\$809,439.00</b>
<b>Net Operating Income YTD:</b>	<b>-\$171,594.00</b>
<b>*As of October 31, 2025</b>	