

## Those whom we serve...

Stepping Stones of Rockford, Inc. is a private, nonprofit (501) (c) (3) organization dedicated to providing housing and rehabilitation services for adults who live with serious and persistent mental illnesses.

The organization is: licensed by the Illinois Department of Health and Human Services Office of Mental Health; funded primarily through participation in the Medicaid Program; partially funded by the Department of Children and Family Services and; accredited by the Commission on the Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF).

All facilities are located in Rockford. Residents are served from the greater Rockford and northern Illinois area.

Residents are admitted to our program by referral from a variety of sources including area hospitals, private mental health professionals, social workers, families, surrounding area mental health centers, nursing homes and other social service organizations.

Acceptance is based on a potential resident's need for the services provided and is subject to space limitations.

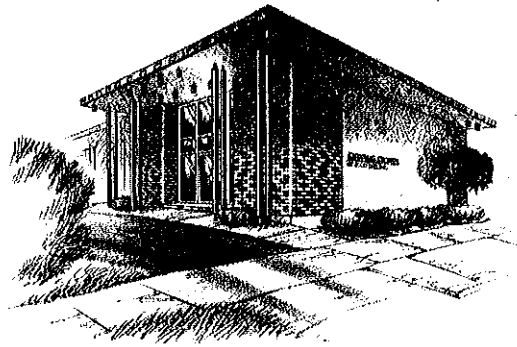
To learn more about our programs, contact us at: 706 N. Main St., Rockford, IL 61103

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on-line site: [www.ssrinc.org](http://www.ssrinc.org)



## "Rehabilitation Through Living"

Northern Illinois' leading provider of residential programs designed to meet the recovery needs of adults living with serious mental illnesses.



**Because of Stepping Stones, I have learned how to manage my illness and become a productive member of society."**

**"I feel better about myself...because these people gave me the courage." -to return to the work force.**

**"I am very thankful for this program. It has helped me come out of my shell and become stronger."**

-Residents described the progress they made since entering our program.

## **We are here because...**

Individuals with serious mental illnesses are a part of our community. They share the need for safe, affordable and decent housing and the right to a quality of life afforded by the least restrictive living environment. We are here because, to fulfill their daily needs and enjoy their rights as community members, many adults with serious mental illnesses require a strong network of support services; a special kind of on-going encouragement. The staff of Stepping Stones of Rockford, Inc. provides the housing, psycho-social rehabilitation and support to help adults with serious mental illnesses function as productively and independently as possible.

By offering a variety of housing alternatives and individualized life-skills rehabilitation programs, the staff of Stepping Stones helps residents attain their maximum potential for independent living. For some, Stepping Stones is the transition between institutionalized living and life in the mainstream. For others, Stepping Stones becomes a long-term home enabling residents to live in the community without relinquishing the support they need.

According to E. Fuller Torrey, MD, one of our country's leading authors and experts on mental illness and rehabilitation, **"The most important decision to be made by most persons (with serious, chronic mental illness) and their families is where the person should live."** Stepping Stones is here to make that decision easier for those in the northern Illinois area.

## **Where we began, and where we are headed...**

Stepping Stones first opened its doors as a halfway house in 1969 in response to the Community Mental Health Act of 1963 and the quickening pace of de-institutionalization for adults with mental illnesses. Since then the staff of Stepping Stones has helped hundreds of individuals re-enter their community and has become Northern Illinois leading provider of residential rehabilitation services for adults with mental illnesses.

Since beginning as a single halfway house serving eight residents and their families, Stepping Stones has grown to a service capacity of 135 residents. During this time we have shifted our focus away from a halfway house model in favor of a long-term program of psycho-social rehabilitation and recovery. These change resulted from a deeper understanding of chronic mental illnesses and were designed to enhance the long-term progress of our residents.

At Stepping Stones, we know individuals with persistent mental illnesses will succeed at varying degrees of independence from the mental health system and some may require life-long supportive care to break the cycle of repeated hospitalizations or homelessness. Therefore we provide all levels of supervised and supported living arrangements, from 24 hour-a-day supervision in group homes to daily or weekly support for individuals living more independently in apartments. These programs are designed to meet each person's needs and provide access to the support they need, when they need it.

## Group Homes, Supported Housing and Supervised Apartment Living

### Fully Supervised Group Homes

Group homes are designed to provide residents with 24-hour-a-day supervision. These homes situated in average residential neighborhoods in Rockford, offer the comforts of family living, semi-private bedrooms and common living, cooking, dining and recreational areas. Here residents take part in planned social and recreational activities and are encouraged to participate in outside activities as well. As part of a household unit, residents begin to re-build the life skills they will need to live more independently.

A trained program manager, mental health professional, or rehabilitative service aide is available at all times. Our staff's primary role is to assist or monitor each resident in developing skills from medication management, personal hygiene and money management to the shared tasks of housekeeping, weekly shopping and meal preparation. Since many residents have never been responsible for such activities, our program places major emphasis on step-by-step teaching of skills as simple as dusting to more complex skills like handling personal finances in a responsible and consistent manner.

The staff of Stepping Stones assists residents in application for and administration of medical, financial and related benefits. When necessary referrals are made to emergency care. Basic counseling and crisis intervention is provided to residents as needed.

### Supported and Supervised Living

As residents exhibit mastery of basic living skills, cooperation and most importantly, the confidence needed to live with less supervision, they may choose to live in a more independent living environment while still receiving case management services.

While many residents reside first in one of Stepping Stones' group homes, others are accepted directly into one of the supported or supervised apartment programs.

The options available to residents include: 1) living in one of the agency owned and operated 24-hour-a-day supported living environments which feature individual apartment living, 2) living in agency owned and operated apartments which are closely supervised by program managers, 3) living in one of the Rockford Housing Authority apartment facilities or 4) living in private apartments in the community.

In each situation residents continue to receive our support and supervision. The length and frequency of supervision provided is based on individual needs.

Visits serve as "progress checks" during which program managers ensure residents are successfully using the skills they learned previously. Reinforcement is used to help maintain progress and when needed new skills are taught. If serious regression occurs, program managers intervene as needed or arrange for special help

## Rehabilitation Through Living

As residents step further into the community, the staff at Stepping Stones is there to respond to their individual recovery needs whether those needs are social, psychological, educational or vocational. **Our mission is to be with our residents as they face the challenges of day to day recovery, to help them build competence in their skills, confidence in themselves and to develop the social roles of their choice.** We strive to help our residents help themselves to reach their greatest degree of independence possible.

The practice of psycho-social rehabilitation means that we offer both formal and informal skills training in all areas of daily living, up to and including education and vocational training. Key to our success is the individualized rehabilitation plan followed by each person participating in our services. The model of **Rehabilitation Through Living** means our staff is with our residents to help assist and guide them through the challenges of daily living.

An example of teaching methods is the step-by-step, "learn- by-doing" approach used to develop simple household skills such as cleaning and cooking. The same step-by-step approach is used to coach residents in "self-management" in areas such as maintaining their medication and mental health treatment schedules, handling their own finances and seeking and using activities and services in the community. Individual plans also include involvement in GED courses, community educational classes or vocational training.

## Work and Vocational Training

"A job magically transforms a patient into a person" writes Douglas Bennett, a prominent mental health professional in England. We at Stepping Stones agree. Residents who are ready and able to cope with the added stresses of working are encouraged and supported in their pursuit of employment.

Through agreements with the Illinois Office of Rehabilitation Services and local sheltered workshops, Stepping Stones assists residents in participating in vocational training and, ultimately, paying jobs that allow our residents to gradually enter or re-enter the working world.

"Supported" job opportunities allow residents to experience a variety of jobs opportunities while benefiting from trained supervision. These experiences allow our residents to develop their skills and Confidence, which leads to securing competitive employment.

Throughout the work experience, residents continue to be assessed for changes in behavior and management of on the job stressors. Focus is placed on creating and maintaining a successful work experience by helping each resident in the areas of transportation, adjustment in medications as needed, grooming, coordinating work and treatment schedules and further development of effective work habits and necessary employment skills