



2021-22 Annual Report

FirstStepsNashville.org



WHO WE ARE

Message from Executive Director

Dear First Steps Community,

Reflecting on the year that just passed, I continue to be amazed by the things our children and their families have accomplished! Our highly trained staff work to support these achievements through intentional instruction, family coaching and focused therapeutic interventions. We never underestimate a child and we are continually reminded of their strengths and opportunities. It is a joy to watch families blossom. Throughout this year we have been connecting with other organizations, examining strategic opportunities, and finding strength in partnerships. We have so much to look forward to on the horizon and are exploring new ways in which we can support families and make an impact in the Nashville community. Your support allows us to continue this important work that changes lives, and to dream about what is ahead of us.

With the challenges of the pandemic becoming less of an interruption in our in-person connections with each other, there has been renewed enthusiasm among our staff, families and Board of Directors in sharing in the bond we have as a First Steps' community. **We have so much ahead to look forward to and will continue to share how your investment makes a difference!**

Gratefully,



Heather Higgins
Executive Director
First Steps, Inc.



Our 2021-22 Board of Directors

Emily Childers
Board President

Kristy Frazier
Board Secretary

Jay Davis
Board Treasurer

Abhay Karandikar
Board Treasurer

Bahar Azhdari

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Ryan Keith

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Harlow Sumerford

Drew Weiskopf



MISSION DRIVEN

Our Mission and Vision

The **mission** of First Steps is to educate and care for children with special needs and medical conditions alongside their typically developing peers in inclusive environments and support their families.



Our **vision** is to:

- Enhance the quality of life for children and their families
- Eliminate barriers to services for children with special needs
- Empower families as they seek to meet the needs of their children
- Improve the community as a whole, child by child, family by family
- Celebrate each child's unique potential

Our Programs

Child Development Center

Our inclusive McWhorter Family Children's Center offers full time care and education to children with special needs alongside their typically developing peers ages six weeks to six years.

Pediatric Therapy

Pediatric Therapy at First Steps provides occupational, speech, physical, and feeding therapies to children with special needs in our McWhorter Family Children's Center.

Community Outreach Program

The First Steps Community Outreach Program supports families of children with disabilities or delays, age birth to three, in home-based and other community settings.



OUR IMPACT

Program Impact

**In 2021-22, First Steps provided services to
1,360 children**

Demographics

5%	Asian	38%	Female
23%	Black	62%	Male
17%	Hispanic or Latino		
54%	White		
1%	Other		

93% of children demonstrated improved functioning

99% of families also reported they would feel comfortable referring other families to the program



I believe my child is making progress as a result of First Steps services.

99% Strongly Agree or Agree

Child Development Center

All learning activities at First Steps are designed with my child's individual needs in mind across all major learning areas.

93% Strongly Agree or Agree

The atmosphere and environment at First Steps is comfortable, warm, welcoming, and appropriate for my child.

96% Strongly Agree or Agree

Pediatric Therapy

My child's therapist gives me clear information that helps me perform exercises and activities in the home with my child.

93% Strongly Agree or Agree

The treatment activities provided are relevant to my child's individual needs.

100% Strongly Agree or Agree

Community Outreach Program

My developmental therapist has given me the knowledge and support needed to prepare for my child's transition into the school system.

95% Strongly Agree or Agree

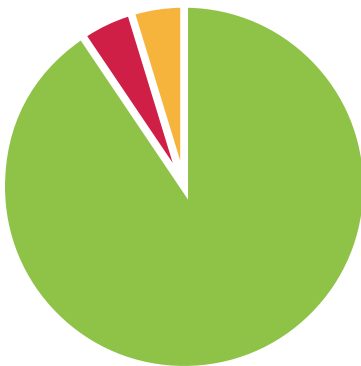
I believe all outcomes on my child's Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) are being addressed through my family's participation in First Steps' community outreach program.

100% Strongly Agree or Agree



FINANCIALS

Expenses



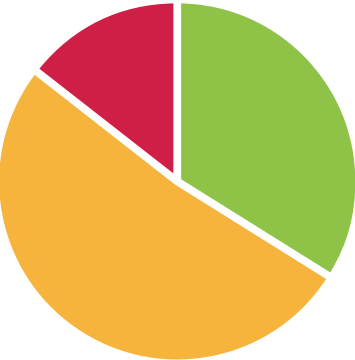
90.75% Program Services

4.68% Administrative

4.57% Fundraising



Revenue



- 33.99% Government*
- 51.62% Program Revenue
- 14.39% Fundraising and Events

*First Steps partners with the TN Department of Intellectual & Developmental Disabilities

OUR COMMUNITY

Personal Impact

“Families are the compass that guides us. They are the inspiration to reach great heights, and our comfort when we occasionally falter.” —Brad Henry

Donna and her daughter Joy began their journey with the organization in the Fall of 2010 and both have remained valuable members of the First Steps family. Joy, a child with a brain injury resulting in cerebral palsy and cognitive impairments, was enrolled in the Child Development Center and received therapy services including physical, occupational, speech and feeding therapies.

Donna joined the world of parenting by adopting Joy as a single, full time working mother. Donna explains “... it was imperative to find a place like First Steps where she could be loved, nurtured, encouraged and also receive her necessary therapies.” She also expressed her concerns as a mother to a child with special needs, she often worried about Joy being able to make friends in her environment. Seeing her peers become her companions and her family was truly priceless and an experience she looks back on fondly. Joy graduated

from First Steps in 2014 and is continuing to grow and thrive, building on the strong foundation she gained due to her time spent in such an inclusive program and the love and support of her mother.

With such a great personal experience and her passion for supporting children with differing needs, Donna joined the First Steps Therapy team as a Physical Therapist in 2017.



Personal Impact Continued...

The life-changing and positive experiences she had with her very own daughter; she is now able to provide to so many in our community. She finds **joy** each day at First Steps now by watching her patients achieve new goals and grow into the best they can be. She watches friendships blossom, progress develop, and other children learn about their friends with special needs in open and welcoming environment.

Donna also witnesses the relief that the First Steps programs provide to parents and caretakers as they continue their journey with a family of resources and support. “First Steps made a huge impact on my & Joy’s life together—I love that First Steps truly IS a family.”

Volunteers and Interns

Thank you to the volunteers and interns who donated their time and talents to First Steps.

Courtney Brandon
Rya Carroll
Emily Day
Bella Ferrel
Keena Otero
Jennifer Rice
Brittany Rowe
Ryan Schmidt
Catherine Snyder
Maria Villa
Madeline Watson



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Thank You 2021-22 Donors

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\$25,000+

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OUR DONORS

Duncanwood Society

In recognition of individual donors who made gifts of more than \$1,000 in the 2021-22 year

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Catherine Snyder & Matt Potempa

Cheryl & Andrew Hilgenbrink

Christy & John Farrell

Donna & Jeffrey Eskind

Emily & Devin Childers

Gay & John Greer

Jennifer & Mikell Hopson

John Morrow

Julie & Stuart Burkhalter

Lisa & Karl Cox III

Mark Swaim

Michelle & Brian Supko

Richard J. Vaughn

Sue & Ed Ramans



In Honor Of

First Steps is grateful to the donors who made gifts in honor of others in the 2021-22 year

Alice & Michael Yopp

in memory of Mikayla Yopp Honeycutt

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in honor of Solomon Schultz

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in honor of Heather Higgins

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in honor of Reid Nagy

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*in honor of Lezette Thomason
and Anne Friedland*

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in honor of Heather Higgins

Fred Collins

*in honor of Lamar and Carmen Collins
and in memory of Mary M. Collins*

Robert Whaley

in honor of Piper O'Dell

Heather Higgins

in honor of Bahar Azhdari

Susan & Bill Brownie

in honor of Karla Garig



While every attempt is made to report with accuracy, some errors may occur. We apologize and invite you to contact us at 615-690-3091 with corrections. Thank you!



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