You can't go back and change the past, but you can start where you are and change the ending.

— C.S. LEWIS
A Year In Review

StepUp started off this year with our program doors closed, our computers open, and our virtual programs in full swing. We reached our program participants with employment training workshops, life skills training, and financial literacy on the screen. In January 2022, we went back to in-person programs and were able to adopt a hybrid model to continue to effectively reach program participants. The pandemic impacted our program numbers, but thanks to our incredible staff, Board of Directors, loyal donors, and volunteers, we served many people in our community.

The pandemic, along with some shifts and changes in the national employment landscape, encouraged StepUp and our Board of Directors to form the Future of Jobs committee. This committee was made up of local employers, community leaders, Board members, and StepUp program participants. They researched and analyzed what employers are now seeking in employees as well as what StepUp currently offers in our employment program. As a result of this work, we are making programmatic changes that allow us to better serve our participants and employers.

Though faced with challenges, StepUp was able to support and serve program participants as they developed life skills and secured employment in their quest for personal and professional success.

Leadership that Extends Outside the Walls of StepUp

After twelve years of impactful work at StepUp Ministry, Executive Director Linda Nunnallee is retiring. In addition to all of the work done at StepUp Ministry, Linda’s influence stretches outside the walls of StepUp. She and Megg Rader, former Executive Director of Alliance Medical Ministry, helped to form a women’s nonprofit leadership cohort. This original collaboration was composed of prominent leaders from organizations such as Dress for Success, Poe Health Education, and Green Chair Project. The group would meet several times a year and discuss an array of topics, including organizational growth, human relations, and board governance.

Over time, the cohort blossomed, providing a comfortable space to share more personal experiences, and thereby transitioned their relationships from that of colleagues to friends. “I was a better Executive Director because of these women,” shares Linda. It was in this cohort that Linda discovered dear friends whom she will cherish forever.

As Linda steps away from her role as Executive Director, StepUp is pleased to announce our longtime StepUp Ministry Director of Programs, Colisha Stanford, who will serve at the helm as our new Executive Director. Welcome, Colisha!
Lauren Swint Found Her Voice and Confidence at StepUp

Lauren began StepUp Ministry’s Step 2 Life Skills Program after being referred by partners, BLOOMHERE and Carroll’s Kitchen. Due to COVID-19 — a time of many uncertainties — Lauren began the 48-week program virtually. StepUp staff recall Lauren was initially observant and attentive, but preferred to keep to herself. However, when classes shifted to being held in-person, Lauren began growing and opening up more as she developed relationships with her peers, case manager, and class facilitators.

By the end of the program, Lauren bravely presented her vision board to the class and spoke at the Life Skills graduation ceremony! Lauren’s success continued after graduation when she was promoted to a management position at Carroll’s Kitchen.

Through the support and encouragement of her copartner and those who facilitated the Life Skills Program, Lauren has been able to experience tremendous overall success, learn new skills, and gain new friends. Lauren shares, “When I first came to StepUp, I was nervous and didn’t know what to expect. After completing the Life Skills program, I’m truly grateful as it has absolutely increased my confidence and self-esteem.” Lauren’s experience exemplifies the mission of StepUp Ministry to provide resources and opportunities for individuals to discover their potential and capabilities and act upon them. The StepUp staff looks forward to hearing about Lauren’s future successes as she continues to set — and achieve! — her goals.
Martin Marietta Supports
StepUp Ministry

Martin Marietta Materials, a locally based company and leading supplier of aggregates and heavy building materials, has been a corporate partner since early 2005. Their dedicated team supplies the resources needed for roads, sidewalks, and infrastructure to build our communities. While Martin Marietta puts their focus on building the foundations of cityscape, StepUp Ministry’s work with our program participants builds lifelong skills, etiquette, and knowledge to support change and excel towards life goals. StepUp is incredibly thankful for Martin Marietta and their support in strengthening our program and allowing us to expand our reach in the community.

MESSAGE FROM BOARD CHAIR
Anna White Hosea

Through this pandemic, StepUp Ministry did not give up. We continued to move forward and exemplify resilience in the face of tremendous circumstances. Despite working at reduced capacity, the ongoing generosity of our supporters ensured we could continue to respond to the needs of our community. My sincere thanks to our staff, Board, and community supporters whose determination over the last year has been truly remarkable. StepUp is now the strongest it has ever been.

“...At Martin Marietta, our goal is to build a world-class organization committed to the long-term success of our employees, communities, and other shareholders. We are proud to support StepUp Ministry, an organization that has been making a positive impact in our community for nearly 40 years.”