



**Please call our 24-hour emergency hotline at 734-722-6800 if anyone you know needs help with issues related to domestic violence or sexual assault.**

To Our First Step Community,

As we all continue to evaluate and coordinate our responses to the COVID-19 pandemic, we want our valued past, current and future clients, our community partners, and the rest of the First Step family to know the actions we are taking. We understand that this outbreak is likely impacting many aspects of our lives and we hope you are staying healthy and safe.

As a measure towards social distancing and supporting public health, our satellite sites are temporarily closed. All upcoming groups and events throughout March and April have been postponed. **However, our Wayne and Plymouth offices will remain open with limited scheduled staff.** We know that violence and crime unfortunately do not disappear during a health emergency. Instead, we know that unsafe situations can escalate, and it can sometimes be harder to seek help and support. Therefore, we are doing our best to balance the safety of our staff and survivors while remaining available to provide counseling, shelter, advocacy, and crisis support.

**Our 24-hour helpline will remain open and available to our community.** Please do not hesitate to reach out if you or someone you know is being affected by domestic or sexual violence. Our advocates will continue to support our survivors and their families as best as we can by promoting remote working conditions and encouraging phone appointments. We have implemented numerous health and safety procedures and precautionary measures for those who need to visit our open offices.

**To Our Community Partners and Donors** please call ahead to know our current protocols before coming to our facilities. We are working diligently to review, update, and make any changes necessary as the understanding of this health crisis develops. We will continue to make it our priority to keep you as updated as possible. We will primarily use our social media and e-mail to communicate urgent needs for supporting survivors.

You and your family – our First Step family - are very important to us. Your health and your safety is a priority of ours. We hope that by us taking these measures, we can continue to be of support to those who need our services and resources, all while limiting the spread and risk of this contagion.

Please, stay connected and reach out if you need more support. We are in this together!

Thank you Kindly,

**Lori Kitchen-Buschel, Executive Director**