

Impact Report

2025

FROM FIRST KICKS TO FINAL WISHES:
CARING FOR IOWANS TOGETHER



EveryStep 



*When every moment matters,
we're with you **every** step.*



Letter from the CEO



For more than a century, EveryStep has stood as one of Iowa's oldest nonprofit care providers. We are proud of the meaningful impact we've made and our long history of meeting a wide range of complex care needs. From hospice and home health care to programs for growing families and grief support, our dedicated team is with you and your loved ones every step of the way, ensuring comfort, dignity and peace of mind in life's most challenging times.

Because of your generosity and commitment, we were privileged to serve nearly 47,000 Iowans in FY '25, carrying forward our legacy of compassionate, dignified care when and where it matters most. In this report, you'll see statistics that reflect our impact, as well as stories that explain why we were named Des Moines' Best Nonprofit for the second year in a row. But more than numbers or recognition, our work is about the patients, clients and families who place their trust in us. Stories like those of Wren and her mom, Morgan, Paola and Steve offer just a glimpse of the lives touched by your support.

Thank you for believing in our mission. Your partnership makes our exceptional care possible.

Tray Wade
President and CEO

A Place for Healing: How Wren Found Comfort & Connection

When Wren's school counselor invited her to join a grief group, her mom, Morgan, found comfort and connection during a difficult time. Through Amanda the Panda's school program, Wren met other kids



who had lost a parent and realized she wasn't alone. She loved camp activities like art and drumming that helped her express emotions and keep her dad's memory close. Morgan noticed Wren opening up more and reminding her that "it's okay to have lots of emotions." For their family, Amanda the Panda offered hope, healing, and support when they needed it most.



*Learn more about
Wren & Morgan's
experience with
EveryStep*

Why our work matters



- Thanks to donor support, Amanda the Panda offers ALL services at no cost.
- Over 600 volunteers logged 2,395 volunteer hours to support Amanda the Panda programs.
- Amanda the Panda delivered 620 Cheer Boxes to individuals facing their first holiday season without a loved one.
- Amanda the Panda served 296 students through 59 school groups across 24 schools in 14 counties and provided 12 additional programs—including three new yearlong support group offerings.

A Journey of Resilience: How Paola Turned Her Challenges into Care for Others



Paola James' birth journey began with uncertainty but became one of resilience and transformation. After a miscarriage and difficulty finding a doula, she connected with EveryStep's Jazzmine Brooks and Nurse Family Partnership's Audrey VanKamen, who guided her through sickness, depression, and a challenging pregnancy.

Their support empowered her to deliver a healthy baby girl and gain confidence as a new mother. Inspired by that care, Paola became Polk County's only Spanish-speaking doula, supporting 22 births while running a jewelry business and engaging in community outreach. Having recently welcomed her second child, she hopes to become a midwife—continuing the cycle of compassion and care that once lifted her.

Learn more about Paola's experience with EveryStep:



Why our
work
matters



- 2,517 parents and children served through EveryStep's Storks Nest program.
- The I-Smile program provided oral health services to 1,285 clients.
- Healthy Start and Empowerment in Central Iowa assisted 1,443 parents and children.
- 18,670 Iowa children and families were connected to Medicaid services through EveryStep's Early & Periodic Screening, Diagnosis and Treatment Program.

Care That Feels Like Family: **Sheila and Steve's** Story

For years, Steve volunteered with Amanda the Panda, never imagining he'd one day need EveryStep's care himself. That changed when his wife, Sheila, was diagnosed with breast cancer in 2015. After treatment, remission, and a recurrence in 2019, the family turned to EveryStep hospice. Steve soon came to deeply trust Sheila's nurse, John, whose



compassion and honesty brought comfort and even laughter during the hardest days. When Sheila fell, John arrived within minutes, ensuring her care reflected dignity, love, and her wishes. As her journey ended, EveryStep's support brought peace—John and his wife, who is also a hospice aide, came not just as caregivers but as family. Steve calls Sheila a fighter who lived fully and believes John was placed in their lives for a reason—proof that EveryStep's care is as human as it is healing.

Learn more about Sheila & Steve's experience with EveryStep:



Why our
work
matters 

- EveryStep has provided hospice services in the Des Moines area for 47 years and has one of only two hospice houses in the area. Our mission is to ensure that no patient is ever turned away because of their inability to pay.
- EveryStep provided hospice care across 35 Iowa counties.
- A total of 2,566 hospice and home health care patients received compassionate, dignified care.
- 1,774 individuals received support through bereavement groups, outreach and mailings.

How the EveryStep Foundation Brings Hope to Patients and Families in Need

Every year, the EveryStep Foundation supports emergency quality of life requests, final wishes and funding for underinsured and uninsured patients. In the last fiscal year, the foundation provided more than \$132,000 in support. Here is an example from one of our grateful recipients:

Angela Zainel,
daughter of hospice
patient, Martha
Cathey:

Through the
generosity of its
donors, the EveryStep
Foundation filled a
'final wish' for hospice
patient Martha

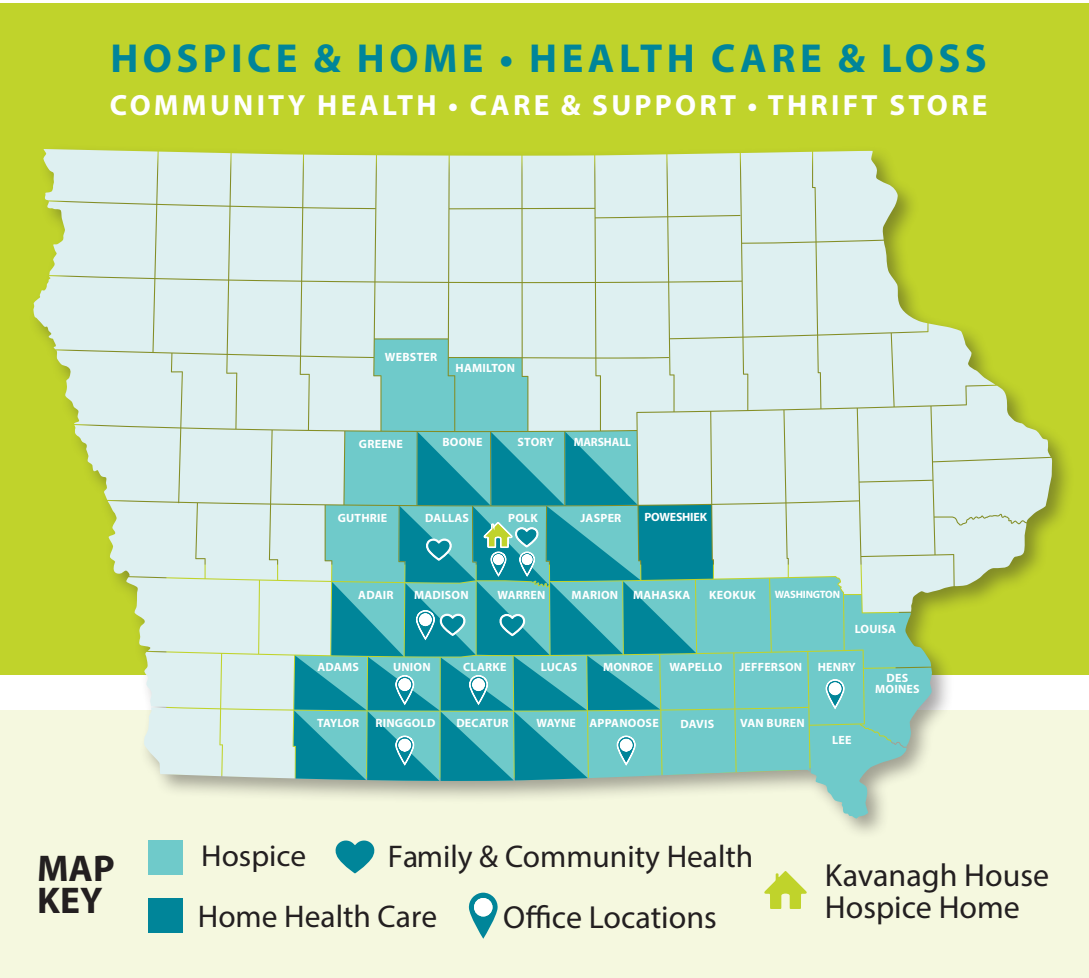
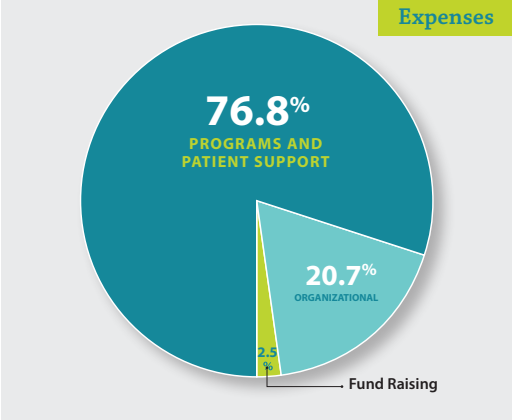
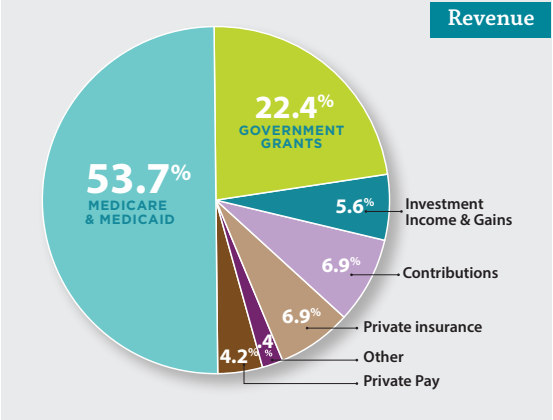


Cathey, paying for her daughter's round-trip flight from Canada, hotel accommodations, and money for food and gas during her visit to her mother in Fairfield, Iowa.

Said Angela, "Words are hollow in the gratitude I have for EveryStep in making this possible. I'm really beyond words. This whole experience and this gift — It's overwhelming. And then on top of this, the graciousness, the generosity of the people who've made this possible. They are nameless and faceless people to me, but they are in my heart and in my prayers. I just can't begin to say how grateful I am."

*"Words are hollow in the gratitude
I have for EveryStep".*

Our funds and Your Gifts at Work



Statewide services: Children at Home, Iowa Family Support Network and Grief & Loss

Where Generosity Lives On



“This year, our family had the honor of visiting EveryStep’s Kavanagh House on 56th Street to fulfill a wish that meant so much to our parents, Wes and Karen Ritchie. Wes Ritchie served on EveryStep’s Board of Directors from 2005 to 2011, during which he held several officer positions, including Board Chair. Before his passing, our dad shared that he wanted a gift to be made to EveryStep in support of hospice care — a reflection of both his and our mom’s compassion and their belief in caring for others during life’s most tender moments.

Making this donation in their memory was deeply meaningful for us. It allows their kindness, generosity, and love for community to continue touching lives through the care EveryStep provides to patients and families when every moment matters.

We’re grateful to see our parents’ legacy live on in such a special way.”
- **Wyatt Ritchie, BJ Ritchie and Andrea Parker**

*“Making this donation in their memory
was **deeply meaningful** for us”.*

Our **Donors** and
Caring Legacy
Members



Why Our Supporters Believe in EveryStep

Guided by compassion, dignity and empathy, our corporate donors stand behind values that change lives — here are the reasons they give to EveryStep.

“Our roots run deep in our communities, and we are proud to strengthen our financial and volunteer support,” said Jodi Schultz of **Sammons Financial Group** and a volunteer member of EveryStep’s Board of Trustees. “Our employees generously give their time and resources, reflecting our purpose to empower futures and change lives.”



As an employee-owned company, **Sammons Financial Group** supports a broad range of local charities and is honored to help EveryStep meet the growing needs of central Iowa communities.

WE  OUR SUPPORTERS

Volunteer

Learn how you can make a difference at:
Everystep.org/volunteer



“At **Homesteaders**, we’re dedicated to making a lasting, positive impact in the communities we serve,” said Justine Bell, Chief Human Resources Officer at **Homesteaders Life Company**.

“Partnering with EveryStep allows our employees to support compassionate care and vital services for individuals and families across central Iowa.

Homesteaders is proud to be an annual corporate funder, helping EveryStep continue its mission of providing comfort, support, and hope to those who need it most.”

NCMIC was founded in 1946 by chiropractors who recognized a need for quality chiropractic malpractice. Delivering on the promise We Take Care of Our Own®, NCMIC has grown into the nation’s largest chiropractic and naturopathic malpractice insurance provider.

“NCMIC is proud to be a champion supporter of EveryStep because of what they do for our community and how they take care of our neighbors,” said Melissa Knutson, Chief Strategy Officer, NCMIC & EveryStep Board of Trustee.



Leadership

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- Cara Hannam..... Director of Human Resources
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- Leann Uhlenhopp...Vice President of Clinical Services

Advancing Our Mission Together

At EveryStep, we believe in providing exceptional care and support services when they matter most. From hospice to home health care to programs for growing families and grief support, our dedicated team is with you and your loved ones every step, ensuring comfort, dignity and peace of mind in life's most challenging times.

As a nonprofit organization, EveryStep depends on the generosity of its supporters. Below are just a few ways you can make a difference:

- **Annual Gift (or make if effortless by giving monthly)**
- **Gifts of Appreciated Stocks or Bonds**
- **Donor-Advised Funds**
- **IRA Qualified Charitable Distribution**
- **Planned Gift or Bequest**

To make a financial contribution to EveryStep, please visit: **everystep.org/donate**

FOLLOW US ONLINE to see how we're making a difference every day for our patients, clients and communities.

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LinkedIn: [EveryStep](https://www.linkedin.com/company/everystep) **Website:** [everystep.org](https://www.everystep.org)

