We served nearly 70,000 Iowans last year.

EveryStep is one of the oldest and largest non-profit organizations in the state. When Iowans face life's most difficult moments, EveryStep offers support and empowerment in the right place and at the right time.

Our people and programs provide support and education to young moms; assistance to immigrants and refugees; wellness services to communities; in-home care to people who are ill, injured or facing the end of life; and compassionate support to families during times of grief and loss.

By educating, empowering and improving the health of people, we create stronger families, healthier economies and more united communities.

Our Mission
We empower individuals, support families and strengthen communities.

Our Vision
EveryStep is the recognized and trusted leader in supporting people as they navigate life's challenges, through diverse expertise and inclusive care.

30+ programs 390 employees 500+ volunteers 99 counties

Every corner of the state is touched by at least one EveryStep program.
EveryStep asks for continued support of the school-based grief and loss program, and requests a renewed investment to sustain and grow the program to include additional rural school districts.

FUNDING REQUESTED: $200,000

Addressing Children’s Mental Health Through Grief Support Following Trauma & Loss

Since 2018, EveryStep has provided services in Iowa schools to support children experiencing grief and loss. In 2021, the Iowa Legislature provided funding to allow EveryStep to expand services beyond the Des Moines metropolitan area.

Studies show that roughly 1 in 14 school-aged children will lose a parent, and 1 in 5 will lose someone close to them. Furthermore, feelings of grief and loss can stem from divorce, abandonment, incarceration, and other traumatic events. EveryStep has a plan and vision to address the impact these losses have on children in Iowa.

Each child’s grief is personal and unique. EveryStep staff are trained to assist with the complexity of what it means to experience grief and loss at a young age. It is important that we provide children with the tools to address their grief and improve classroom engagement. Creating structures of support for grieving students is an investment in the long-term health of children, families and our communities.

By giving kids healthy coping skills we can help them down a path that leads to healing, positive relationships with others, and success at school. Our group-based approach provides the necessary amount of support for most kids, while allowing our staff to identify kids who need a higher level of support.

In January 2022, rural students began participating in the school-based program. Throughout each 6-week session, students shared their grief stories, connected with peers and learned resiliency skills to feel better equipped to cope with grief in healthy ways.

After receiving a $200,000 investment from the State of Iowa last year, two additional part-time program coordinators were hired in Fall 2022 to provide grief and loss support to Creston and Centerville area schools.

We thank you for your continued support!
Under the current system, the vital transportation provided by Senior Companions is not reimbursed by Medicaid. EveryStep is asking for your support in making transportation costs associated with the Senior Companion Program reimbursable through Medicaid.

EveryStep’s Senior Companion Program pairs a senior volunteer (age 55 or older) with an adult in need of companionship, transportation assistance, or respite care. The goal is to help Iowa’s seniors and other individuals maintain their independence and continue living in their homes.

The program is funded through the Corporation for National and Community Service with a match requirement achieved through Medicaid’s Elderly Waiver funding for Companionship.

Greater access to medical care is one of the most important benefits for our senior clients. Senior Companions provide familiar, reliable, personalized service. They help their clients by:

- Encouraging routine wellness checks and screenings
- Providing scheduling assistance with care providers
- Transporting clients to and from medical appointments, ensuring they arrive on time with required items. Senior Companions provide support and advocacy for their clients during the appointment if necessary, and transport clients home.
- Providing transportation to pharmacies
- Providing ongoing medication reminders and reminders for follow-up care.

Under the current system, the vital transportation provided by Senior Companions is not reimbursed by Medicaid.

EveryStep is asking for your support in removal of barriers to billing for this service to ensure that Iowa’s aging population will continue to have access to medical care, food, and essential items they need to maintain independence. This also reduces the costly financial burden of long-term residential care and provides support to our taxed health care system which is experiencing unprecedented staffing shortages.

89% felt connected to their peers
88% reported that they improved their knowledge of coping skills
89% felt comfortable expressing thoughts and feelings about their loss
96% reported they learned more about the grieving process
100% felt overall the support group was helpful for them
Per Iowa law, if a patient has a guardian, the guardian must return to petition the court to be granted additional rights as the patient’s health status changes. This includes having to get court approval to change a patient’s status from full code to “do not resuscitate” or to enter the patient into end-of-life (hospice) care.

Often, this results in significant stress to families and patients. It can take time to have the guardianship responsibilities updated, and many times the patient dies before the court approves the changes. This can also result in the patient’s death lacking the peace and dignity that hospice care provides.

EveryStep and the Hospice & Palliative Care Association of Iowa (HPCAI) understand and support the careful consideration when it comes to responsibilities of guardians, but urges the Legislature to enact an expedited process for changes to the responsibilities being approved.

Guardianship and Hospice
EveryStep asks the General Assembly to support legislation that allows a patient’s guardian an expedited process to be granted permissions by the courts related to end-of-life care.

EveryStep’s Maternal Child Health Programs
EveryStep offers many programs that support children and families from pre-conception to late adolescence. Goals include healthy pregnancies, births and post-partum care; reduction of child death and injury; increased positive physical and mental health outcomes as well as developmental screenings and early intervention services. Our programs include:

- **1st Five** – Early childhood developmental screenings, education and referrals for children ages 0-5. *Polk, Dallas, Warren and Madison*
- **Children at Home** – Assistance for families raising a child (age 0-21) with a disability. Funds help with disability-related services, adaptive devices and other supports. *Statewide*
- **Community Home Visitation** – Home nursing visits and education for pregnant and parenting women, children and adolescents. *Polk, Dallas, Warren and Madison*
- **Family Planning (Title X)** – Family planning resources and education, birth control, STI testing/treatment and more. *Polk, Dallas, Warren and Madison*
- **FathersMatter** – Guidance and education for new and expecting fathers to help them be successful parents and partners. *Polk*
- **Hawki/Presumptive Eligibility** – Helping families sign up for health insurance, including Medicaid, Presumptive Eligibility and Hawki — Iowa’s free or low-cost health and dental insurance for children. *Polk, Dallas, Warren and Madison*
- **Healthy Homes** – Education and remediation of triggers in the home to minimize clinic and hospital visits related to pediatric asthma. Serving families with children ages 2-18. *Polk*
- **Healthy Start & Empowerment** – Case management for families with young children. Services include home visits, education, support groups, screenings and referrals. *Polk*
- **I-Smile™** – Free oral health screenings, education, and referrals for urgent and regular dental care. For pregnant individuals and children ages 0-20. *Polk, Dallas, Warren and Madison*
- **Iowa Family Support Network** – A coordinated intake and referral system to assist families with finding healthcare providers and other community resources. *Statewide*
- **Nine2Thrive™** – Supporting the healthy development of babies during pregnancy by identifying risks and providing a support system. *Polk and Wayne*
- **Nurse Family Partnership** – Education and nurse visits in the home for first-time mothers. Support is provided throughout pregnancy and until the child’s 2nd birthday. *Polk*
- **Stork’s Nest** – An educational incentive program that helps new and expecting individuals earn diapers, car seats, cribs, and more through healthy behaviors. *Polk and Dallas*

For more information, contact:
Jim Knoepfler, Vice President – Administration
(515) 271-1318 | JKnoepfler@everystep.org