



Fletcher Group Partner Success Story

STEP STEPS UP

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TREATMENT *and* PREVENTION

STEP stands for "Support and Techniques for Empowering People." The Billings, Montana non-profit was founded 40 years ago to serve rural children with disabilities and developmental needs, but over the last two and a half years has boldly expanded its services by opening five new recovery homes. "The data is clear," says Program Administrator Tara Williamson. "Many people with developmental disabilities and intellectual delays have been impacted one way or another by substance use disorders. Our new sober homes will have a preventative effect by helping those in recovery be better moms and dads so their children grow up in safer, more nurturing environments."



SHELTER FROM THE STORM

"We started by researching homes all over the country as well as standards and certifications," says Williamson. Contact with the National Alliance for Recovery Residences (NARR) led Williamson to the Fletcher Group. "I could tell they had a successful model," she says, "but what convinced me to engage was the August issue of their monthly newsletter, the one about Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome." Within days, Fletcher Group Outreach and Engagement Specialist Scott Warnell was answering questions, providing guidance, and putting Williamson in contact with Jennifer White, the Fletcher Group's Director of Health Initiatives whose passion and knowledge of NAS and other women's issues inspired the Fletcher Group's August newsletter.

NO WORRIES

"We're not winging it anymore," says Program Administrator Tara Williamson. "Thanks to the Fletcher Group, we now have the connections and expert advice we were missing." The price is right, too. "We run on a shoestring budget, so the fact that there's no charge is fantastic. We're a non-profit so I'm always thinking, 'How much will this cost?' Even after we started, I kept wondering, 'How can they be doing all of this at no charge?' The Fletcher Group is such a solid resource. I have nothing but good things to say about the entire experience."





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A COMFORTING TOUCH

"We knew the community needed a women's and children's home, but I was hesitant," says Williamson. "I don't have children so it was totally outside my experience and seemed so complicated." Her fears were quickly relieved by Fletcher Group Director of Health Initiatives Jennifer White who answered every question and provided a detailed program plan based on successful homes in Kentucky. "Jennifer's so knowledgeable, so eager to help, and has such a great way about her," says Williamson. "Without her, we wouldn't be nearly as comfortable opening the new facility for women and children."



INCLUSIVE AND HOLISTIC

STEP takes pride in tailoring its services to the individual. One example is the modification of some facilities to make LGBT and transgender people feel more at home. STEP is exploring other initiatives as well. "To succeed, we need to address all the needs of our residents," says Williamson. "One is the mental health component and the need for dual-diagnosis. Substance use disorders and mental health issues are just so wedded." STEP seems up to the challenge. "I'm just so excited by everything we're doing," says Williamson, "including the NARR affiliation we're seeking. We may make some mistakes along the way, but the important thing is to just keep doing our best while staying open to new ideas. The Fletcher Group is helping us do exactly that."

IN STEP WITH STEP

"I feel like I've known Scott forever," says STEP Program Administrator Tara Williamson of the Fletcher Group's Scott Warnell. "Every question gets answered right away. And if he doesn't know the answer, he'll go get it. He never drops the ball and that's important to me because I'm the kind of person that wants everything done right now. If Scott says he's on it, he's on it. That's so great. Scott and Jennifer and the entire Fletcher Group team—I just can't say enough about them."

