



Baby Steps

2023

Impact & Finances



Dear Friends,

It is estimated that 2.4 - 4.6 million college students will face unplanned pregnancies in the US this year.* What we thought was such a simple call to serve Student-Moms in Auburn, Alabama, has become so much more.

When we opened our doors in 2017, we knew that in our small pocket of the world, we were slowly helping people realize it is possible to have both your education and your baby. Unfortunately, that is not the reality on the majority of college campuses. Without the support of Baby Steps, students are forced to choose between finishing their education and having their baby. We now realize that this narrative must be changed nationwide. To do this, we must bring the tangible support of Baby Steps to college women across the country who are navigating an unplanned pregnancy alone and unsupported. No matter how challenging this is, we are dedicated to reaching this goal.

Can you imagine for a minute if we could expand to campuses across the country? That is the desire of many college communities right now! Hardly a day goes by that someone isn't reaching out inquiring. I firmly believe Baby Steps can and will deeply impact a forgotten population.

In light of our changing world, Baby Steps is needed now more than ever.

Last year, a freshman with a seven month old son came to us needing resources. She did not have the support from family or friends, and her dreams of attending Auburn seemed impossible. This would have been her reality if she had not become a Resident Student-Mom at Baby Steps. Today, the two are thriving. She is in her second year studying civil engineering, just got her driver's license, and bought her very first car with money she has been saving. Watching her grow as a student, young mom, and incredible woman has been the sweetest gift. Imagine if together we could make this a reality for millions of other women across the nation.

In order to make this dream come to fruition, the Baby Steps team is aggressively fundraising as we launch our Golden Year Campaign. I believe with everything in me that Baby Steps is the missing link for Student-Moms to thrive. We cannot meet this dire need without you. Will you lock arms with us so we can bring Baby Steps to Student-Moms across the country? Let us make our community the catalyst for change nationwide.

On behalf of all of us at Baby Steps, we are full of love and gratitude for you!

Michelle Schultz

Michelle Schultz
Co-Founder & Executive Director



**Story, W. (1999). The effects of unplanned pregnancy among college women. VTechWorks.*

The Nationwide Need

“Unplanned pregnancies constitute an epidemic in the United States. Over 3 million unplanned pregnancies occur each year.”

- National Library of Medicine

A significant number of college students grapple with a transformative moment when they discover they are facing an unplanned pregnancy. For Student-Moms, the hurdles they face are not only often invisible to others but also life-altering.

There are college students across the nation who will find out they are pregnant today. Without a program like Baby Steps, these students will not have access to crucial resources like housing, support, or community, leaving them restricted and defined by their circumstances. The problems that Student-Moms face play a major role in their decision to have their education and their baby.

- 1 FINANCIAL STRAINS:** The cost of higher education is a heavy burden to bear, but when you add the expenses of raising a child, the financial weight becomes overwhelming. Student-Moms often find themselves in dire financial circumstances, struggling to cover basic needs like food, diapers, wipes, and clothes in addition to tuition, textbooks, and rent.
- 2 CHILDCARE:** Finding affordable, reliable childcare is often a near impossible task on a college student's budget. Without access to childcare, a Student-Mom is unable to attend classes and is forced to choose between her academic ambitions and role as a mother. More often than not, this results in dropping out of school, leaving a Student-Mom without the means to provide a better future for her baby.
- 3 ACADEMIC PRESSURE:** Being a student is a full-time job in itself. The demands of coursework, exams, and deadlines don't pause when you have a baby. Student-Moms often face an intense pressure to hop back into classes immediately after their baby is born in order to maintain passing grades required to graduate.
- 4 SOCIAL ISOLATION:** The sense of isolation and alienation can be overwhelming. Student-Moms often feel detached from their peers, as their lives diverge significantly from those of their childless counterparts. It is not uncommon for the father of the baby to be uninvolved or for family members to cut ties. This leaves Student-Moms feeling further isolated as they attempt to parent all alone.
- 5 STIGMA & DISCRIMINATION:** Despite the progress society has made, Student-Moms still face significant stigma and discrimination. They are often judged by peers, professors, and even administrative staff which makes it difficult for them to access the support they need. This leaves them in socially awkward and embarrassing situations like not being able to fit into a desk because of their pregnant belly.

The challenges that Student-Moms face are often overlooked. It is imperative that we not only acknowledge their unique challenges but extend a helping hand as well. The world has tried to offer solutions to remedy the need this population faces, but none of them address the long-term problem. Free diapers and government assistance can only take a Student-Mom so far. These are not a remedy for prevalent challenges Student-Moms face on a day-to-day basis. A Student-Mom should be empowered and equipped with the resources she needs to have both her education and her baby.

The Impact of Baby Steps

The National organization serves as the driving force behind Baby Steps, setting the vision, mission, and standards that guide our work. Baby Steps National provides ongoing strategic leadership, expertise, and resources to ensure that each Baby Steps Hub is equipped with the necessary infrastructure and support systems to create a culture where Student-Moms can succeed.

1 EXPERTISE

- Establishing and equipping Baby Steps Hubs: Because modeling future Hubs after successful ones like Auburn is necessary as we onboard and train staff
- Fielding weekly inquiries from individuals who want Baby Steps in their communities: Because expanding nationwide is a way we fulfill our mission and vision

2 STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP

- Researching expansion models and structures: Because Baby Steps is not only meant for Auburn
- Exploring diverse funding opportunities (e.g., university and state partnerships or grant funding): Because the pressure of sustaining Baby Steps should not be solely on the shoulder of our private donors

3 RESOURCES

- Producing the “Unplanned and Untold” podcast: Because we need to offer real stories of hope to Student-Moms nationwide
- Pointing Student-Moms without Baby Steps to resources in their local communities: Because until Baby Steps is on every campus, we seek to equip every Student-Mom
- Equipping university faculty and staff to better support Student-Moms: Because this population shouldn’t fall through the cracks
- Producing marketing materials to spread national awareness: Because it’s time to open eyes to the need and offer a solution
- Creating educational resources like “Unplanned GrandParenthood”: Because Student-Moms are not the only ones who need support
- Connecting passionate individuals with local and remote volunteer opportunities: Because people are eager for a place to give of themselves to make real change in the world

Baby Steps Hubs are the heart and soul of our organization. They act as local sites of empowerment near college campuses, connecting Student-Moms to a network of support. Our Hubs focus on three fundamental pillars: housing, support, and community.

Let’s take a look at our progress on the ground!

Auburn University

Our flagship has had another successful year! The Baby Steps house is flourishing with actively involved Resident and Community Student-Moms and their Tiny Tigers. Our on-campus club is hard at work to reach even more. We’ve added new members and positions to our staff, and the team has raised \$150,000 this year so far.

University of Central Florida

Maureen, a former Student-Mom at UCF, and Jim Hutcherson are Volunteer Planters with hopes of opening doors at UCF soon. They recently mailed their first appeal letter to expand their network and petition financial support. Jim has gifted Baby Steps with his technical expertise, and Maureen even met with their first Student-Mom this month! They have raised \$16,400 for our UCF Hub as of October 19, 2023.

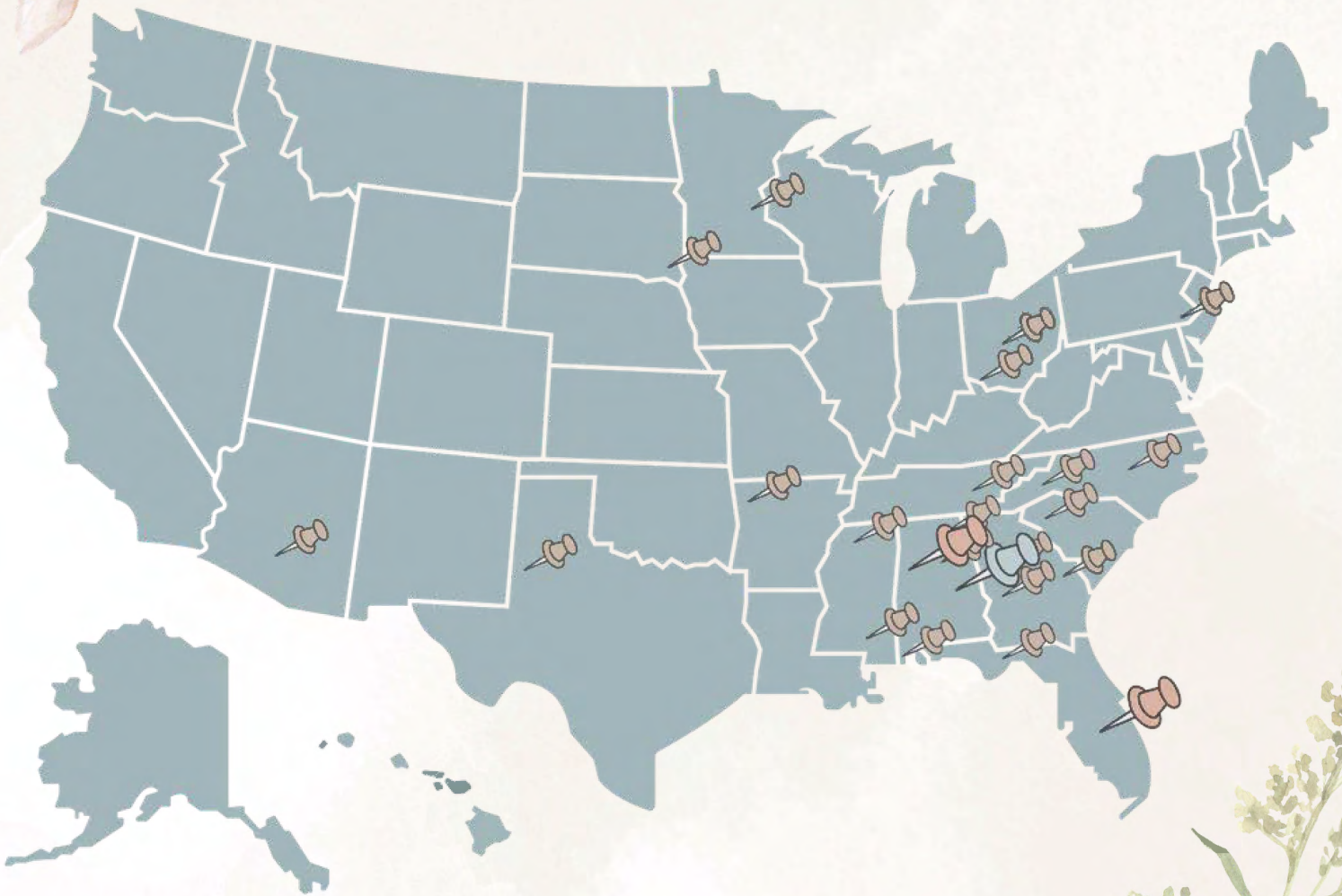
The University of Alabama

As Mary has gathered community support, she’s had the opportunity to connect with 15 Student-Moms! She’s diligently assembled an Advancement Committee and even has a Student-Mom Impact Video in production. Our Alabama Hub has raised \$88,000 as of October 19, 2023 with the hope of opening doors at Alabama soon.

Nationwide Interest

As we continue to expand, we recognize that our Hubs are marked by distinct stages that shape their growth. By joining forces with passionate individuals, we continue to build communities where pregnant and parenting college students can confidently balance their academics and parenthood.

This is only the beginning of our commitment to serving Student-Moms across the nation.



Communities with Significant Interest

Columbus, OH
Birmingham, AL
Oxford, MS
Huntsville, AL
Carrollton, GA
Knoxville, TN

Fayetteville, AR
Twin Cities, MN
Asheville, NC
Baton Rouge, LA
Mobile, AL

Clemson, SC
Tallahassee, FL
Lubbock, TX
Sioux Falls, SD
Statesboro, GA

Cincinnati, OH
Raleigh, NC
Tempe, AZ
Columbus, GA
Hattiesburg, MS

The Baby Steps Story

It began over 30 years ago when Co-founders Matt and Michelle Schultz found themselves facing an unplanned pregnancy. With fear and anxiety, Michelle felt that finishing her degree and having her baby was impossible. Because of this belief, she made the decision to terminate her pregnancy and continue with her plans for the future.

As years went by, they realized how a seemingly small decision impacted their life and the lives of others in immense ways. 12 years later, after much healing, they began sharing their story. Their eyes were opened to an overlooked, isolated population of people in desperate need of support. They felt an unceasing call to do something more. This is when the vision of Baby Steps was born.



As with anything worth doing in life, doubt slips in from time to time. A needed affirmation came in the spring of 2013. In a moment of uncertainty that Baby Steps was truly needed, Kaitlyn Willing (current Baby Steps Director of Operations) dropped into Michelle's lap. Kaitlyn shared that just two and a half years earlier, as a junior at Auburn University, she experienced her own unplanned pregnancy. While Kaitlyn decided to parent her child and finish her degree, the lack of support made graduating almost impossible. Kaitlyn not only affirmed the concept of Baby Steps but provided much needed insight to the life of a Student-Mom.

Although very different, their two journeys continue to be the inspiration that fuels our desire to create a space where young women are not defined by their circumstances but are empowered to thrive in all areas of their lives. In 2019, Michelle made Baby Steps her full-time job as Executive Director and has been striving each day to empower Student-Moms to persevere as both students and mothers.

Our Vision

To create a culture of empowerment that changes the way universities, communities, and society as a whole respond to and support Student-Moms across the nation.

Our Mission

To empower pregnant and parenting college students facing an unplanned pregnancy to have their education and their baby by providing housing, support, and community.

Baby Steps Ambassador Affirmation

"When I found out about Baby Steps, I was moved to tears. I see these Student-Moms who have your support, and I'm so thankful they have the chance to better themselves and know they don't have to walk around campus with their heads down like I did.

I'm thrilled to see what's happening because the love and support you give each Student-Mom impacts how she will love and support her child."

-Beth Kidd, *Baby Steps Ambassador*



Launched Student-Club on campus at The University of Alabama!



Baby Steps

2023

Fiscal Year in Review

42

Counseling Sessions Provided

170

Students in on-campus clubs



12



Service Projects

Celebrated our 6TH Anniversary!

80

Women reached out to share their unplanned pregnancy story on the podcast

77

Community Events

1,633,169



Instagram & Facebook Page Reaches



649

Donors that have contributed

1,453

Unplanned & Untold Podcast Downloads

37,022

visits to our website



44

Communities interested in bringing Baby Steps to their local areas

2017 - 2023



96

Total babies served

166

Student-Moms impacted

68

Meals provided by volunteers



159

people that have dropped off baby items

16,238

Social media followers

13

Student-Moms & Tiny Tigers housed



26

Student-Moms graduated

Thank you for a great year!

All-Time Baby Steps Graduates:

Emery Jones, 2023

Bachelor of Science in Nursing

Laken Nix, 2023

Bachelor of Arts in Interior Design

Raven Baught, 2023

Bachelor of Science in Psychology

Kelis McGhee, 2023

Bachelor of Arts in Journalism

Veronica Neeley, 2023

Bachelor of Science in Business Administration
in Finance

Neat Tinsley, 2023

Bachelor of Social Science Education

Julianna Rezek, 2023

Bachelor of Science in Agricultural Science

Kaitlyn Rancher, 2022

Bachelor of Science in Elementary Education

Sidney Whitfield, May 2022

Bachelor of Science in Wildlife Enterprise
Management

Ashley Greenwood, 2021

Bachelor of Science in Agricultural Science

Brittany Grant, 2021

Bachelor of Science in Aviation Management

Caroline Krista, 2021

Bachelor of Science in Pre-Medicine

Reagan Tetreault, 2021

Bachelor of Science in Nursing

Madison Parker, 2021

Bachelor of Art in Business Management

Emily Brown, 2021

Bachelor of Science in Organismal Biology

Alexa Patti, 2020

Bachelor of Arts in Journalism

Kat Ewing, 2020

Bachelor of Science in Psychology

Anna Claire White, 2020

Bachelor of Arts in Graphic Design.

Lauren Carter, 2020

Bachelor of Science in Nursing

Rachel Neneck, 2020

Bachelor of Science in Building Science

Tasha Miles, 2020

Masters of Arts in Community Planning

Kaitlyn Sheffield, 2020

Bachelor of Science in Exercise Science

Amber Lee, 2019

Bachelor of Arts in Apparel Merchandising

Teeja Miles, 2019

Bachelor of Arts in Business Management

Charlton Jones, 2018

Bachelor of Arts in Communication

Master of Arts in Communication Management

Kaitlyn Taylor, 2018

Bachelor of Science in Biomedical Science



If it Wasn't For Baby Steps...



Ashley

Bachelor of Science in Agricultural Science

"I drove 45 minutes to my full-time job, went to my classes, then drove 45 minutes back home. By the time I got home, it was time to get Riley ready for bed. There was such a disconnect between the two of us while I was trying to juggle it all. Because of Baby Steps, I didn't have to continue to struggle in that way.

All of it honestly, the whole experience helped me. The living space was ready when I arrived, I didn't have to worry about living expenses. I was able to keep my child in a clean home that had everything we needed to take on life. Without Baby Steps, I don't think I could have invested in my child the way I needed to."

Brittany

Bachelor of Science in Aviation Management

"Because of Baby Steps, my baby never had to go without diapers, wipes, or many other necessities. I didn't have the money to provide my child with Christmas for two years, but Baby Steps made it happen. That's the love of Baby Steps. Family Dinners were amazing because they provided a wonderful meal in a cozy, welcoming environment. Baby Steps gave me a community of women that understood me. They shared in my successes, and they cheered me up during my disappointments. They added so much light to my life in such a small amount of time that I wish I would've discovered the group sooner. The impact that Baby Steps had in my life will last forever."



Madison

Bachelor of Art in Business Management

"My greatest concern after finding out I was pregnant was whether or not I could keep my baby. Without Baby Steps, I would have been working a full-time job and going to school at night. I probably would not have graduated from Auburn University. Graduation is possible and with Baby Steps there will be people cheering you on the entire way!

The biggest impact Baby Steps has had on my life (outside of the financial support) is the confidence I have gained by being around the giant Baby Steps community. The resources that Baby Steps offers are reassuring and have grown my confidence as a new mom."



2024 Annual Budget

Projected Budget: \$1.5 Million

Auburn Hub	\$461,439
Alabama Hub	\$461,439
National Support Team	\$369,731
UCF Hub	\$207,391

***The following budget breakdown is provided for a fully-operating Hub, Auburn, and reflects the allocation of resources necessary to sustain the comprehensive range of services and support that Baby Steps offers to Student-Moms in this area.

Please note that the specific budget components outlined may vary for other locations, depending on the location, scope, and scale of services provided by Baby Steps in those areas.

1. // Housing // \$83,985

Housing Expenses - This includes allocating funds for essential expenses such as rent, insurance, utilities, internet, furniture, maintenance, and security systems to ensure a comfortable and secure living environment.

2. // Support // \$342,172

Wellness - A comprehensive wellness budget for Student-Moms encompasses critical components including professional childcare, counseling services, emergency medical funds, and support for sleep training and homeopathic wellness solutions.

Student-Mom Events & Gifts - Because Student-Moms should feel connected through community events, study breaks, and dinners while being encouraged with meaningful gestures like baby showers, graduation gifts, welcome baskets, access to the Baby Boutique to shop at no cost, etc.

On-Campus Activities - This plays a pivotal role in raising awareness among both Student-Moms and fellow students who are keen to support and empower this population.

Support Team & Subcontracted Services - To provide support for Student-Moms, we must take into consideration support our team needs including employee salaries & health benefits, attorney fees, consulting & development, payroll taxes, accounting & bookkeeping, etc.

General Admin - To ensure smooth operations including software, board member meetings, background checks, office supplies, professional memberships, etc.

3. // Community // \$35,282

Donor Relations - The budget allocation for donor relations serves as the foundation for nurturing relationships with generous supporters and encompasses vital elements such as legacy boxes, birthday cards & magnets, physical newsletters, thank you cards, donor cultivation events, etc.

Fundraising Events - These are the backbone of organizing successful initiatives that provide the financial support needed to advance the Baby Steps mission and may include expenses pertaining to venue, marketing, catering, decorations, entertainment, etc

Advertising - These resources are allocated across community and campus promotions such as flyers, on campus tabling, brochures, banners, etc to be able to spread the word about Baby Steps and raise awareness for our mission.

Leave a Legacy



The journey of a Student-Mom is marked by the intersection of education and motherhood, and they encounter hurdles that demand our attention and support. Often, these women grapple with the question: "Do I pursue my degree or have my baby?" The problem is clear, and the solution is within reach.

The challenges that Student-Moms face are often overlooked and deeply rooted. The fact is, an unplanned pregnancy can completely change the trajectory of a student's life, impacting the future of generations to come. While society has attempted to offer solutions to address their immediate needs, Baby Steps ultimately serves as the long-lasting solution.

Baby Steps is not just an organization; it's a lifeline for Student-Moms. By offering a comprehensive range of support services tailored to the unique needs of Student-Moms, Baby Steps has the potential to positively transform generations. The impact of Baby Steps goes beyond immediate assistance—it fosters empowerment, community, and, most importantly, a path to a better future.

By supporting Baby Steps, you become a vital part of a transformative movement. You offer tangible assistance and empowerment to a vastly underserved population. But, to harness this transformative power fully, Baby Steps needs your support.

The problem isn't localized; it's nationwide. The challenges faced by Student-Moms are real and pressing no matter where they live. It's time to recognize the transformative potential of Baby Steps and take a stand for Student-Moms and their babies.

Financial assistance is the missing puzzle piece that can enable us to extend our reach and offer more comprehensive support and resources to Student-Moms across the nation. With your help, we can make a substantial difference in the lives of these resilient women, equipping them so they do not have to navigate their education and motherhood alone and unsupported.

Your contribution is not just a donation; it's a lifeline that can make all the difference when a Student-Mom is suddenly faced with the reality of choosing between her education and baby. Your financial assistance is the catalyst for positive change, helping us create a world where Student-Moms aren't judged or restricted by their circumstances.

Join us on this remarkable journey to make a tangible difference, one baby step at a time.



Frequently Asked Questions



What population does Baby Steps serve?

Baby Steps empowers pregnant and parenting college students (between the ages of 18 - 25) facing an unplanned pregnancy.

How is Baby Steps funded?

The majority of funding has always and continues to come from individual, one-time, and monthly donors from across the country. However, we are currently exploring the possibility of official university partnerships and state funding in some expansion locations.

Are Baby Steps Hubs located on campus?

No. While our fully functioning Hub in Auburn is not located on campus, the house is just a short walk away. Our plan for future Hubs is that they will also be located convenient to campus.

Does Baby Steps charge for its services?

No. Everything we offer to our Student-Moms is provided at no cost to them. Our generous supporters make this possible.

Is Baby Steps faith-based?

No. We are a non-faith-based 501(c)(3) organization. We serve Student-Moms regardless of their backgrounds and beliefs.

Is Baby Steps affiliated with any particular political party or social movement?

No. In a world that can be extremely divided, we are proud to be an organization that brings people with differing opinions and views together.

What does the Baby Steps National Leadership Team provide for their Hubs?

The Baby Steps National Leadership Team establishes and equips new Hubs on college campuses so they can empower Student-Moms in their community to thrive.

What resources do Baby Steps Hubs provide for Student Moms?

Baby Steps Hubs provide Student-Moms with multiple resources that fall under three pillars: Housing, Support, & Community

How long does it take a Baby Steps Hub to get up and running?

Because multiple factors influence the timeline of a potential Hub being built, there is no definitive time frame for a Hub to open. We are actively piloting Hubs to discover the best and most efficient way to replicate Baby Steps in other communities nationwide.

Thank you from all of us at

