

Dear Friends of First Step Fund:

After nearly sixteen years of providing direct entrepreneurship training and support in the Greater Kansas City area, First Step Fund has transitioned all of its programs to several of its long-term partners in the community. This transition was very deliberate and took place over the last three months of 2009.

Earlier in the year, the Board of Directors concluded that First Step Fund's business model—as a stand-alone microenterprise development program—was not sustainable in the existing economic environment. They began exploring new models and developed a transition plan that will allow the mission of First Step Fund to not only survive, but thrive in Kansas City in 2010 and beyond.

To make the transition as easy as possible, the programs of First Step Fund have been separated into three categories—First Step FastTrac® courses, Developing Your Child Care Business™ courses, and continued support for course graduates. Please take note of the new contact information for each.

- For information about First Step FastTrac courses, please contact FastTrac Customer Support at (816) 454-4380.
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- For information about Developing Your Child Care Business courses, please contact The Francis Institute at (816) 604-4142.
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- For information about continued business support services for First Step Fund graduates, please contact KCSourceLink at (816) 235-6500 or www.kcsourceink.com (click on the "Resource Navigator" to begin).

When the original founders of First Step Fund first met in 1993, they had not intended to start a new organization. They were brought together because they were inspired by the successes of microlending and microcredit programs in developing countries and similar programs that had started to emerge in the United States as well. These founders set out to form a network or consortium of business support providers and encourage their outreach to individuals with low to moderate incomes. The microenterprise development movement was so new at the time that an anchor organization could not be found. It was then that they were compelled to start the First Step Fund offering the "first step into entrepreneurship."

First Step Fund has been a strong advocate in the field of microenterprise development in Kansas City and across the country and has been successful in infusing its mission with other programs in the community. The 2009 program transition plan brings the mission of First Step Fund full circle using the relationships, collaborations, and partnerships that have been forged over the past sixteen years that now allow the original vision of the founders to be realized.

We are extremely grateful for all of your support of First Step Fund over the years. We hope you will continue to support those who follow us and carry on the mission after 2009.

