

Our Services

Free Pregnancy Tests
 Earn While You Learn
 Education Program
 Next Step Boutique
 Post Abortion
 Healing Groups
 Memorial Garden
 First Step Relationship
 Education Program

We Are Open

Tues - Wed - Thurs
 11:00 - 3:00 pm
 Walk-ins Welcome!

Contact Us

Address:
 902 D Avenue,
 La Grande, OR 97850
 Office Phone:
 (541) 963-6918
 24-Hour Hotline:
 1(800) 712-4357
 Email:
nextsteppic@outlook.com
 Website:
NextStepPRC.org

Directors

Vonda Billman
 Kylee Torrico
 Amber Jackson

NextSTEP

Pregnancy and Relationship Center

we'll walk with you

Forgiveness, Peace, Purpose, and Joy

A Christmas Story of Healing and Hope

The following is a testimony provided by one of our volunteers.

She has asked to remain anonymous.



I felt a gentle tug at my heart strings. Seated safely in the sanctuary at church, nobody looking into my heart but God... nobody but God. I watched a presentation about Next Step Pregnancy and Relationship Center. The woman was a lovely person with a wonderful smile.

That's okay for her, I thought, but God understands how busy I am. Trying to smooth things over with God, I thought, *I'll make it a point to take a baby bottle and fill it up with money.* I ignored that gentle tug, which had become more of a mental pulling at my shirt tail by the time I got up to leave the morning service. I drove home thinking about my busyness and arguing with my own spirit about whether to keep ignoring this pulling that was morphing into being a pretty loud voice in my head. By the time I hit the driveway, I knew beyond any doubt that I was being called by the Lord to work at Next Step. History has proven that if you feel the calling of the Almighty and decide not to do it, you may end up in the belly of a fish. Thinking that wasn't for me, I decided to contact them.

My story is not the same as it used to be. Over the course of the last four months, including eight weeks of Bible study, it has changed. I asked to be a volunteer at Next Step because I had an abortion in my past and I thought I could help somebody heal as well as I had. After all, I was the queen of healing. I was required to take the Post Abortion Healing Bible Study offered, to "be sure that I was okay" before I could be an advocate. Of course I wouldn't turn down the opportunity to study God's word with a group of other women even though I didn't need it, so I agreed to do it.

My story is not the same because I had packed away a lot of feelings into the suitcase of my heart that was threatening to pop open and come out at any given moment. On the outside, I had a pleasant smile, a good marriage, fine kids, a life that had been totally cleaned up for years... inside I had baggage. Sad baggage, shameful baggage, guilty baggage, abandonment baggage, and anger baggage.

continued ➔

Next Step Team

Client Advocates
 Receptionists
 Post Abortion Healing Team
 Baby Bottle Boomerang Team
 Donation Partners
 Donation Care Team
 Property Care Team
 Next Step Board
 Next Step Directors

Next Step Board

Tim Gleeson
 Chairman
 Laura Pearson
 Treasurer
 Vicki Grove
 Secretary
 Vonda Billman
 Executive Director
 Anne Johnson
 Member
 Irwin Smutz
 Member

Our Purpose

Next Step PRC exists to encourage and equip women and men to build successful families.

We are a religious non-profit and as such all your contributions, financial or material, are tax-deductible.

If you want to donate online and/or become a monthly supporter, go to nextstepPRC.org, click on *Support Us* and select *Financial Support*. We are also a registered non-profit on Amazon Smile.

Anger is a funny thing. It folds very easily into a nice square piece and tucks away quite readily. It is always down there waiting to pop out and be used. You need only to grab a corner of it, pull it out of the suitcase, give it a snap to unfurl it, and you're in business. One moment, you can be just fine and the next moment you could bite the head off a rabid lizard because someone had the bad luck of being that guy that broke your favorite coffee mug. It's unpredictable and seems to have a mind of its own. I had no idea how angry I was until I was forced to unpack my suitcase. Did I even have the right to be angry?

Over the eight-week course of the Bible study, I learned that indeed I had the right to be angry. Yes, I had the right to feel sad about my baby. I learned that God does not desire me to feel shame, but offered forgiveness that I needed only to reach out and take. I learned that this Jesus, who I had asked into my heart as a very young girl, wanted more than just to bury this painful incident. He actually wanted to pull it all out and talk about it. He wanted me to admit that I broke His heart. He wanted me to accept his forgiveness.

He wanted me to know that even in the darkest moments of my life, He was standing beside me. He had waited for me for almost 40 years, as I put my life back together on my own, packing each piece of baggage into my suitcase. Then He lovingly took my hand and told me to start unpacking.

I did unpack. With the help of some beautiful souls in my Bible study group, who themselves have gone through the heartache of abortion, I have been able to take a look at all of the things in my suitcase. I have been able to discover that so many of the decisions I have made since, were born from this dark place in my past. I have been encouraged to grieve the loss of my baby.

When I came to Next Step, I thought that I was being called because they needed me. How funny that God uses even our own arrogance to get us to where He wants us. Next Step didn't need me, I needed them. I needed the Bible study.

Most of us would say that it's not appropriate to talk about things like abortion, anger, shame, grief, rabid lizards... at Christmas time. I speak of them only to say that I have traded those things for forgiveness, peace, purpose, and joy. I've traded my suitcase for a toolbox and within it is my past experiences. I know now that it's the dark moments that God uses as tools to help others.

At Next Step we celebrate babies. We celebrate Jesus who came into the world as a baby with tiny hands and feet and a precious innocent heart. He didn't come as a warrior or a king. He came as a baby. He came humbly and He came willingly. He came with a mission. He came to die for even those sins that we don't want to mention at Christmas time. His sacrifice was enough for even those.

Because of His story, mine makes sense.

