

Desiree Jones

FOUNDING PRESIDENT & CEO

JAX Chamber 2023 Small Business Leader of the Year Candidate

Step by Step



“I Change Lives, Step-By-Step”

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**Small Business Leader of the Year
Presentation Book and Interview Application**



1. Name: DESIREE CORLEY JONES Title: OWNER/CEO
2. Company: STEP-BY-STEP BEHAVIORAL HEALTH SERVICES, LLC
3. Business Phone: 1-888-763-7837 Email: djones@stepbystepbh.com
4. Business Address: 1760 SHADOWOOD LANE #408 JACKSONVILLE, FL 32207
5. Are you a member of the JAX Chamber? ☒ Yes ☐ No
6. Your business is a ☒ Corporation ☐ Partnership ☐ Proprietorship
7. Year company established: 2019 (Jacksonville location)
8. Percentage of the business which you own: 100%
9. Industry Type: ☐ Financial ☐ Manufacturing ☐ Real Estate ☒ Health Care Services
☐ Technology ☐ Retail ☐ Other (specify)
10. Give a brief description of your company's products and/or services. Step-by-Step provides Community Behavioral Health Services which consist of individual and family counseling, psychosocial rehabilitation, targeted case management, and psychiatric evaluations for ages seven and up.
11. Number of outlets or offices: 2
12. Is the company headquartered in Jacksonville? ☒ Yes ☐ No
13. Gross annual revenue: ☐ less than \$1 million ☒ \$1-5 million
14. Number of employees: ☒ X1-25 ☐ 26-50 ☐ 51-100 ☐ more than 100
15. List Business/Trade/Professional and Civic/Service Associations and Positions held:
Trustee Member of the Jacksonville Chamber of Commerce, Member, Three Rivers Council, Member, Professional Women's Council, Council Member, Task Force on Safety and Crime Reduction, Member of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. Jacksonville Alumnae Chapter, Founder Board Member, Becoming Collegiate Academy
16. Honors/Awards Received: 2022 Jacksonville Business Journal, Women of Influence, 2022-2023 Jacksonville Leadership Cohort Alternate, 2021 News4Jax Image Awards: The "One to Watch" Award, 2021 Best Boss Healthcare Services, 2021 Best Boss Non-Profit Award, Delta Sigma Theta, Inc. Jacksonville Alumnae Chapter's 2022 Distinguished Pillar Award, Recognized by Voyage Atlanta Magazine and Voyage Jacksonville Magazine, Honoree Child Abuse Prevention Award

Small Business Leader of the Year

I have reviewed this application and confirm that all information given is correct:

Desiree Corley Jones

December 6, 2022

HISTORY AND PHILOSOPHY



I grew up in a single-family home. My father left when I was very young, so I often dealt with a void in my life. In absence of a father or brothers, I had a false sense of security. When I got older it was very difficult to be in relationships because I looked for security and I did not understand the importance of self-love. During my first relationship, I became a victim of domestic violence. I endured abuse for over six years, which began in high school and continued through college. This relationship left me with emotional, physical, and sexual scars. After years of blame and shame I decided that I had to do something. Following the completion of counseling for my trauma, I decided that I had to become the voice to help others not go through this, feel safe, heal from trauma and work through any mental health issues. When I went through counseling, I noticed that when people came to counseling, they did not always have the ability or the resources to get there and they also needed support, medication, guidance, and wrap-around services.

After completing my master's degree, I worked for various companies, and I obtained a License in Mental Health. I gave 100% to those companies and I treated them like they were my own. The more I worked, the more I learned. I constantly trained and poured into clients and staff. In my heart I always knew that there was so much more for me. I asked myself, if I could give these companies 100%, what more could I do for my own company? My heart's desire was always to help others and make a difference in the community. I was plagued with fear and doubt among other questions such as how I would be able to run my own company? I did not have enough money; I did not feel I knew enough, and I wondered if I would get any clients. I then realized that I was talking myself out of my dreams and everything that I had always envisioned for myself. Once I changed my mindset, I was able to move forward.

Step-by-Step Behavioral Health Services mission is to end the stigma and myths related to mental illness. My philosophy is *"if you change your mindset, you can heal and make your pain pay you!"* To help our clients, we take a step-by-step process and ensure confidentiality. Our goal is to provide quality and effective services with the highest degree of integrity. I understand that clients need a safe space to ensure trust. We take the journey with our clients, step-by-step!



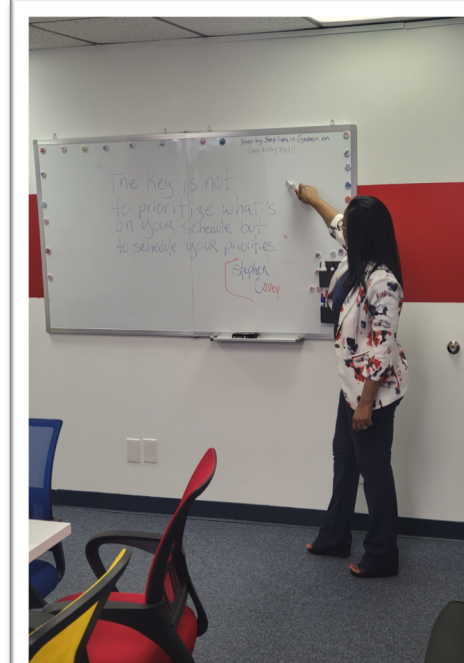
I feel strongly that the key to management, as well as success, comes from treating your team with respect as you would like to be treated. I constantly remind my team that without them there would be no Step-by- Step Behavioral Health. In the field of mental and behavioral health you must be whole and deal with your own issues before you treat other people. I encourage my team to get therapy for themselves as a form of self-care. This keeps the company in tune so we can provide effective, quality services for our clients. Although it is crucial that employees feel valued, protocols are in place for employees that do not meet expectations, need more guidance, or are just not cut out for the job. This may involve uncomfortable conversations, but this is necessary to have a successful company. It takes special people to work in the mental health field, so it is imperative that we closely monitor attitudes towards clients, as well as their documentation of the client's visits and behaviors.

I conduct business planning by working with my team to determine the best roadmap for growth. This is an ongoing process where we constantly review and make the necessary adjustments to ensure that we stay on track with our goals. This also allows us to review our Satisfaction Surveys and Quality Assurance Data. Additionally, we do this by conducting research, strategizing, financial forecasting, and writing a plan for execution. Being actively involved in the role of the programs has also been key to the success of both of my companies. I am often in the field with my staff assessing their needs and monitoring how to make their job easier. Working with clients with mental illness is already difficult, so however I can make their job easier is key to decreasing turnover and increasing revenue.

As CEO, I am constantly reminded that my position and global assignment is to help make a difference in the lives of others, as well as the community. I also keep in mind that my employees could also be dealing with past trauma or mental health issues, so I strive to be fair and solve complaints quickly. Being a survivor of domestic violence allows me to share my experiences with clients and it gives me the passion to push every day with my company. No day is the same. I am eager to change someone's life because I know that the pain, stitches, and bruises I encountered were not in vain; they were for all the people I encounter daily, to include my employees. I encourage my staff's input and ideas on company changes, projects, and community outreach. I constantly remind them that our situation can change at any time so treat all clients with respect and dignity regardless of their diagnosis.

LONG-TERM GOALS: 3-YEAR FORECAST (JUNE 2024)

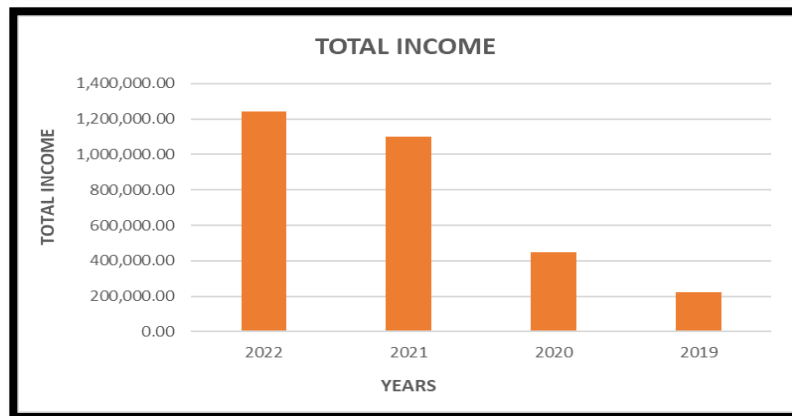
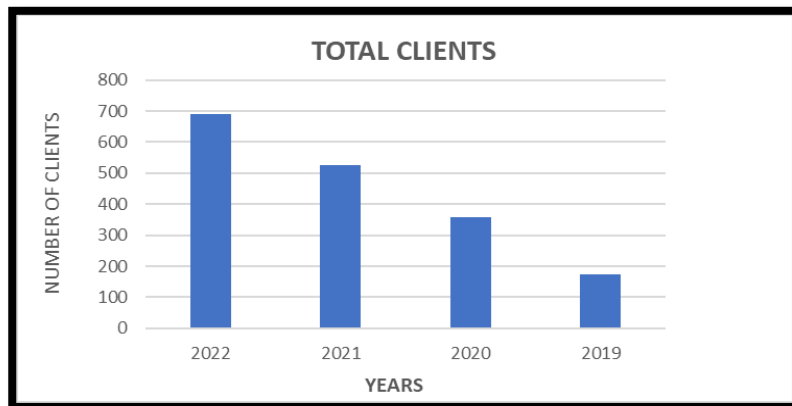
- ♦ **Raise awareness about mental health and mental illness in the Jacksonville community.** This will be done through community outreach, education, and advocacy. I will continue to implement community programs and initiatives. I will also continue working with the Gang Unit and the Jacksonville Sheriff's Department to help provide prevention and intervention services.
- ♦ **Increase clientele with Step-by-Step Behavioral Health.** This will be done by increasing social media visibility, marketing, and advertising, and also establishing more programs within the agency to benefit children, adults, and families.
- ♦ **Increase revenue from 1,141,000.00- \$3,000,000.00.** This will be done by securing additional contracts with the Health Department, Hospitals, Charter Schools, Private Schools, Churches, Businesses, Commercial Insurances Companies, and Government Entities.



In 2016, after researching the lack of Mental Health Resources in surrounding cities, I launched Step-by-Step Behavioral Health Services, LLC in Gainesville, FL. After building strong relationships, and attending workshops, training, and conferences, I landed a contract with Alachua County School and an MOU with Episcopal Children Services. This allowed me to expand into the surrounding counties. With a team of three, my revenue reached nearly 65,000, which gave me the motivation to keep going.

As my Gainesville clientele grew, the drive and ability to meet their needs became challenging. I had to come up with a solution because I was determined to provide quality services with integrity. Thankfully, the contractors lived in the Gainesville area. Once I determined that I may have to move my headquarters, I had to shift my mindset. During my daily drives to Gainesville and daily work, I felt like I left my heart in Jacksonville and needed to be home to help my community. The clients continued to grow in Gainesville, which increased revenue. This allowed me the ability to hire a Clinical Director and train the Gainesville staff to manage the office. By the end of 2018, income reached nearly \$200,000. This increase opened a door for me to establish Step-by-Step headquarters and solidify a second location in my hometown, Jacksonville, FL which was my heart's desire.

Jacksonville instantly grew; being a native of Jacksonville was a tremendous asset. As a Licensed Mental Health Counselor, I had numerous connections in the field that were eager to assist. In 2019, my staff grew from three to eight employees. Within the same year, I experienced exponential growth to 175 clients. Contracts with agencies increased, as well as relationships with physicians, psychiatrists, and business leaders. With the expansion, we provided a multitude of training for employees and contractors to assure all were productive and clients would receive continuity of care with passion and compassion. As I continued to work in the Jacksonville community, my desire to evoke change and dismantle the stigma and mental health myths grew stronger. So, I met with community partners, and spent valuable time with my staff and contractors to listen to their needs so I could create a safe space and open-door atmosphere. I built strong relationships to make Jacksonville a better place by changing the culture so mental health and mental illness can be embraced.





INNOVATIVENESS



After serving a number of years in the mental health field, I understand the importance of being innovative. As a Community Mental Health Center, there are numerous services that can be offered as a provider for the Agency for Healthcare Administration. I thoroughly researched and studied the Medicaid manual to determine what services I could provide that would take me to the next level and separate me from the other companies. Not only did I look at this from an organizational standpoint, but I also looked at it from a client's perspective. Questions such as: What would help my company stand out from others? What services could I provide that my competitors were not offering? What services would help my clients heal? What services would help my clients with resources? What services would help my clients with their diagnoses? I proceeded to add a Psychosocial Rehabilitation Program, which allowed my clients with mental or emotional challenges to learn skills to function independently within their communities. Clients often have barriers that interfere with their therapy. It is difficult for them to express their feelings and emotions in therapy if their lights are off or they cannot pay their rent. Therefore, I implemented the Targeted Case Management Program that assist clients with access to much needed medical, educational, social, pre-vocational, vocational, rehabilitative, or other community services. Psychiatric services also commenced, treating the client's mental illness.

With these various components, I identified trends, patterns of behavior, or issues that needed more attention; this birthed the Monday Mindset social media broadcast. This broadcast has allowed me to address, emphasize and give additional time on topics that clients have expressed a need. As a Licensed Mental Health Counselor and CEO, I understand the importance of holistic, comprehensive care treating the "whole" client. To specify, when COVID-19 surfaced, it greatly impacted the way we do business. Our services are field based; we go into the homes and communities to see our clients. The pandemic created countless questions and concerns... How will we treat our clients? How will I keep my staff safe and keep them paid? How will my company survive? I quickly researched the Medicaid Handbook on Telehealth and its procedures. I researched companies that had telehealth platforms that would fit our budget, assist immediately with excellent reviews and quick turnaround. Within one week our entire team was able to provide telehealth services to our clients.

Being innovative does not come without challenges. Adversity allows me to learn and grow. I believe it's all perspective; I keep a positive mindset and speak daily affirmations. I also rely heavily on facts and data. No matter the situation, communication is key. More importantly, I never give up. I keep my mind on the people that are depending on me to heal them from their trauma and bring normalcy in their lives even with mental illness. This is what sets us apart from the competition; we take a journey with our clients, step-by-step. Despite whom our competition is or what they offer, I stay focused on my goals, vision, and mission. I am my only competition! As a leader, I compete with myself daily to do better than I did the day before. In the end, I always win with my heart and mind because I understand my true purpose.

COMMUNITY & LEADERSHIP

As the Owner and CEO of a Community Mental Health Center, I will always value COMMUNITY. Without the community, there is no Step-by-Step. After working with the Jacksonville community, I realized that there were people falling through the cracks that could not afford care or did not know how to find the resources they needed within the community. Therefore, I founded the Step-by-Step 4 Help Foundation. The mission is to reduce the stigma related to mental illness, intensify parental engagement, and reduce crime to create safer communities. Step-by-Step envisions a world in which all people have access to information and treatment that can help them improve their mental, behavioral, and emotional health and achieve harmony, thus promoting healthier families, schools, and communities. The foundation allows volunteer activities, fundraisers, and community events. I host annual events during the year surrounding May, which is Mental Health Awareness Month.

My Inaugural Shades of Green Mental Health Awards of Excellence Gala honors the Unsung Hero's doing the work in the mental health field; this year's gala was phenomenal. I am looking forward to this annual event to recognize the people in our community with hopes of gaining the corporate arena. The Jax Chamber gave me the creative idea of the Longest Table, so I incorporated the Longest Table 2022 Annual Community Resource Fair, which included 30+ vendors with materials, supplies and other assets to offer to the community. Furthermore, I hosted annual back-to-school events, give-a-ways, and a toiletries and toys give-a-way. I gladly offer a food and pantry closet, which the community has access to two days a week.

In addition to outreach, I am a trustee member of the Jacksonville Chamber, a Three Rivers Council member, a Professional Women's Council member, a member of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Incorporated, and the 2022 Jacksonville Business Journal Women of Influence. Lastly, I am involved with what our city needs to be safe as I was appointed by the City Council President as a council member for the Task Force on Safety and Crime Reduction. I also volunteer with the Sheriff Department's Gang Unit to go face-to-face with offenders that may be on the paths to incarceration or death. This allows me to speak life, share my story and offer Step-by-Step Behavioral Health Services to help change lives.



BIOGRAPHY

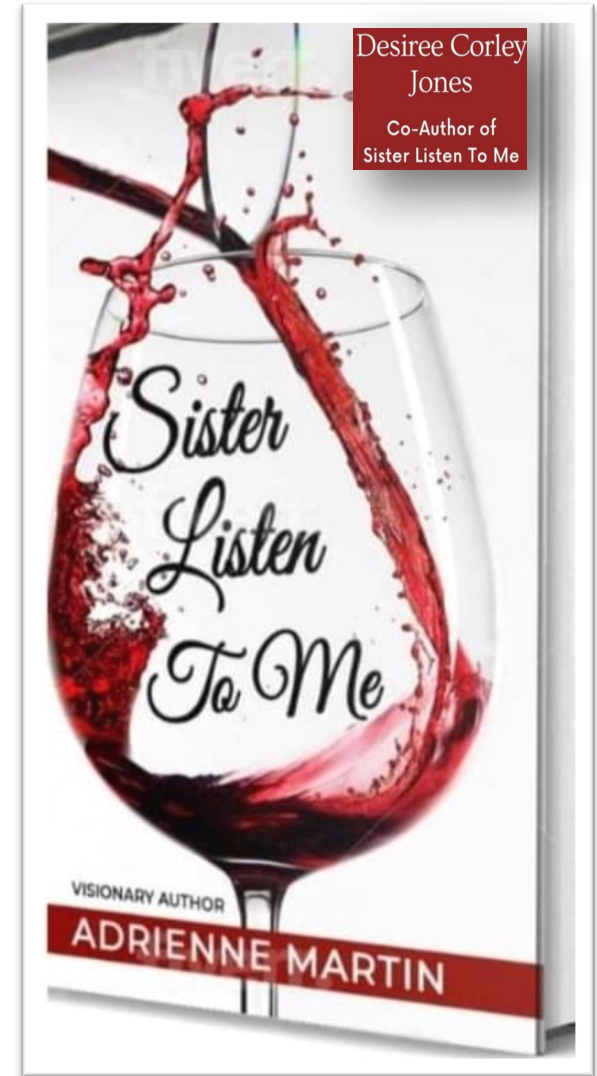
Desiree Jones



Desiree Corley-Jones is the CEO of Step-by-Step Behavioral Health Services and the Founder and President of Step-by-Step 4 Help Foundation. She is the Co-Owner of USA Pawn with her husband Thomas Jones. She is a Licensed Mental Health Counselor, a Qualified Supervisor, and a Certified Case Manager Supervisor. She is also a Licensed Professional Counselor for the State of Georgia. Desiree employs over 25 people between her two offices in Jacksonville and Gainesville, Florida. Additionally, Desiree is a philanthropist and a Trustee member of the Jax Chamber. She believes in helping those who are striving to help others. In doing so she has donated thousands of dollars to other organizations and businesses to assist in their growth.

Desiree's dream has always been to advocate and bring awareness to Mental Health issues impacting communities. She has devoted her life to spreading awareness to others by teaching and equipping them with the tools to cope with and treat their mental health. She is a loving and devoted wife and mother of three children. Desiree serves on various boards and organizations. She was appointed to serve on the Jacksonville Task Force on Safety and Crime Reduction. She serves as a Founding Board Member of Becoming Collegiate Academy, an HBCU inspired charter elementary school in Jacksonville, and has served on the Board of Directors for Hubbard House. Desiree is a proud and active member of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority Inc., Jacksonville Alumnae Chapter. She is the 2021 winner of the Best Boss Non-Profit Award, "The One to Watch" Award recipient for the Jacksonville Image Awards presented by News4jax, the 2022 Women of Influence, and the 2022 Distinguished Pillar Award with the Jacksonville Alumnae Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. She is a published Co-Author, and her inspiration is unmatched.

Desiree is a fierce businesswoman that has been involved in bringing awareness to community issues and leading the business community to be involved in making change. For many years, Desiree has organized and hosted annual, successful community outreach programs to support the lives of families on the First Coast. She continues to gather support and resources from local business partners to provide toys and food to families in need. Most recently, she hosted the Shades of Green Mental Health Awards Gala to honor Mental Health Community Heroes. The Longest Table Community Resource Fair is another major event she hosts for the city that brings vendors from all over the city to offer help to people in need. She also hosted a toy drive in the North Jacksonville community that provided several hundred families with toys for the holiday season. Her passion is truly for the people and helping make their lives better. She doesn't just talk the talk; she walks the walk. She has a pure heart for others making a difference in the lives of others, step-by-step.



ENDORSEMENTS



December 2, 2022

To whom it concerns:

It is an honor to write this letter of recommendation in support of Desiree Corley Jones, Executive Director of Step-by-Step Behavioral Services. Desiree serves as a Founding Board Member for Becoming Collegiate Academy. She has been instrumental in helping us provide a high-quality education to students in the North Jacksonville community. Her commitment to service extends beyond the board, she is a fierce business woman that has been involved in not only bringing awareness to community issues but providing solutions. For many years, Desiree has organized and hosted successful community outreach programs to support the lives of families on the First Coast. She continues to gather support and resources from local business partners to provide necessities to families during times of need. Most recently, she hosted a toy drive in the North Jacksonville community that provided several hundred families with toys for the holiday season. Her passion is truly for the people of Jacksonville and helping make their lives better.

It is without reservation that I write this letter of recommendation for Desiree Corley Jones. She is a dedicated person with high regards for her profession and devotion to the First Coast.

Should you have any questions regarding the recommendation, please feel free to contact me via email at cfrazier@becomingschools.org or call at 904-465-2799.

High regards,

Cameron Frazier

Executive Director, Becoming Collegiate Academy

Address: 5258 Norwood Ave, Suite 101
Jacksonville, FL 32208
Phone: (904) 465-2462
Fax: (904) 465-2883
Email: information@becomingschools.org
Website: www.becomingschools.org



December 2, 2022

To Whom It May Concern:

My name is Dr. Irvin PeDro Cohen and I am the writing you on behalf Desiree Jones. Dedicated, Determined and Diligent, are three of many attributes to describe Desiree. I am honored to have known Mrs. Desiree Jones for 30+ years; her approach is Different because she is making a Difference! Despite her private fears and reservations, she stepped out on faith to help and change the lives of others by taking one step at a time. I once heard someone say, that if you address your mental health, you won't have mental issues. Desiree is making sure that mental health is addressed!

Congratulations, Desiree! I cannot think of a more deserving candidate.

Thank you in advance,

I am

Dr. Irvin PeDro Cohen
/Executive Director

Local Initiatives Support Corporation
100 North Laura Street, Suite 800, Jacksonville, FL 32202 | T: 904.353.1300 | lisc.org



December 1, 2022

To the Jacksonville Chamber of Commerce:

It is with great pleasure and my honor to recommend Desiree Jones for Small Business Leader of the Year. I have known Ms. Jones for over 30 years. As a business owner, Ms. Jones possesses excellent leadership skills and professionalism and is a very hard worker. She is passionate about her community and committed to making a difference in the lives of others. As a leader and advocate for mental health, Ms. Jones has shown perseverance, and ambition, and is innovative. If she sees a problem, she will find a solution. As a native of Jacksonville, she is well-connected and driven to make a change in the city.

In my opinion, if you are seeking a superior leader with a proven record of achievement, then look no further than Desiree Jones. Her drive, determination and her passion for helping others will truly be an asset to the community and your organization. Ms. Jones is a true inspiration and motivation to others. She understands that her purpose is bigger than her and is determined to help others and change their future. She is a faithful servant of others and has grown her business expeditiously.

Sincerely,

Sabrina Mixson

Dr. Sabrina Mixson
Executive Director of Compliance and Operations
sabrina@fscj.edu
(904) 361-6193

Administrative Offices

501 West State Street, Jacksonville, FL 32202 | fscj.edu



Women of Influence 2022: Desiree Corley Jones of Step-by-Step Behavioral Health Services

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SHOUTOUT ATLANTA

LOCAL STORIES



Meet Desiree Jones | Chief Executive Officer of Step-by-Step Behavioral Health, Founder/President of Step-by-Step 4 Help Foundation, Inc and Licensed Mental Health Counselor

August 19, 2021 · Leave a reply

Community Highlights: Meet Desiree Jones of Step-by-Step Behavioral Health and Step-by-Step 4 Help Foundation

LOCAL STORIES



Today we'd like to introduce you to Desiree Jones.

POPULAR

JACKSONVILLE'S MOST INSPIRING STORIES

HIDDEN GEMS: LOCAL BUSINESSES & CREATIVES YOU SHOULD KNOW

VOYAGEJACKSONVILLE FAQ

THE TRAILBLAZERS: REWRITING THE NARRATIVE



FIRST COAST NEWS

Local non-profit provides mental health resources to underserved communities

May is Mental Health Awareness Month. Advocates say it's an opportunity to spark an important conversation about ending the stigma associated with mental health.

Author: Keitha Nelson
Published: 11:18 AM EDT May 19, 2022
Updated: 3:41 PM EDT May 19, 2022

WJCT News

RadioLab WJCT News 89.9

New 988 suicide hotline may help save Black teens in Jacksonville

By Will Brown - Jacksonville Today
Published July 18, 2022 at 3:58 PM EDT

Desiree Jones, CEO of Step By Step Community Behavioral Health, was one of the licensed mental health

FIRST COAST NEWS

MENTAL HEALTH AWARD OF EXCELLENCE

MAY 22 5 PM

HONORING THE HEROES IN MENTAL HEALTH

Local non-profit provides mental health resources to underserved communities

May is Mental Health Awareness Month. Advocates say it's an opportunity to spark an important conversation about ending the stigma associated with mental health.

Author: Keitha Nelson
Published: 11:18 AM EDT May 19, 2022
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JACKSONVILLE, Fla. — The St. Elmo W. Acosta Bridge, which spans the St. John's River in Jacksonville, is lit up in green in honor of National Mental Health Month.

National Mental Health Month is observed in May to help raise awareness and advocate for improving the nation's mental health care system.

Mental health professional, Desiree Jones says people need help, compassion and hope.

Local Mental Health Advocates Honored as Community Stakeholders

May 31, 2022 admin Local 0



Shown is Step-by-Step 4 Help Foundation founder Desiree Corley-Jones, Honoree Sylvester Pinckney and Dr. Diana Green

FIRST COAST NEWS

LONGEST TABLE 2022

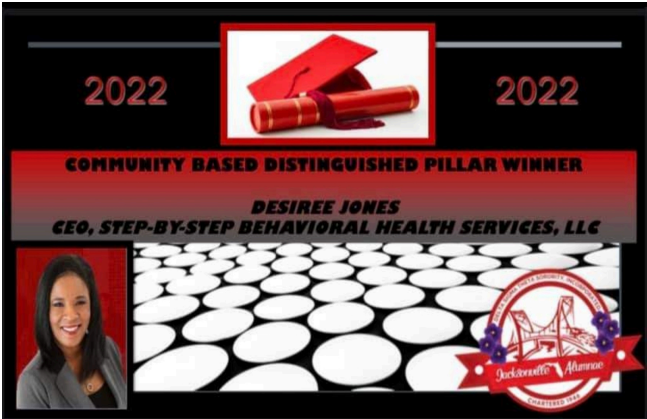
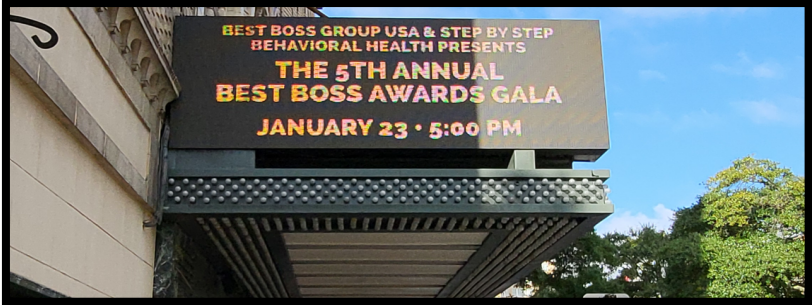
Annual Community Resource Fair

Local non-profit provides mental health resources to underserved communities

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Author: Keitha Nelson
Published: 11:18 AM EDT May 19, 2022
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Awards of Excellence



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<https://www.facebook.com/stepbystepbehaviorhealth/>



Behavioral Health Services
and

STEP-BY-STEP
4 HELP FOUNDATION 