



Newsletter



Spring
2024

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Star Awards

STEP recognizes its employees year-round through a peer recommendation and recognition program called the STEP Star Awards.

Employees are encouraged to submit the names of fellow coworkers who are going above and beyond to make STEP's mission and vision a reality. Employees nominated for a STEP Star Award are recognized with a personalized STEP Star certificate and a STEP Star pin. Each month a name is drawn from that month's recipients for a \$25 gift card.



**February, March, and April
STEP Star award winners are:**

John Otto
Transportation
Driver

Olivia Penrod
Head Start
Early Intervention Mental Health Specialist

Amanda Shaffer
Head Start
EHS Home Visitor

Jennifer Wilson
Head Start
Teacher

Ada Probst
Head Start
Teacher Assistant

Katie Adams
Head Start
Classroom Aide

Becky Dorley
Head Start
EHS Home Visitor



THANK YOU TEACHERS!

Teacher Appreciation Week



National Teacher Day was May 7 and Teacher Appreciation Week was observed May 6-10.

This year's theme was "Teachers are Shining Stars!"

Making the world brighter, one student at a time, STEP recognizes the important role STEP Head Start teachers play in shaping the young children in our community. As they continue to go beyond the call of duty, we appreciate all their efforts in and out of the classroom.



STEP OFFICE OF AGING **VOLUNTEERS** WE THANK YOU ALL!



National Volunteer Week was observed April 21-27.

STEP Office of Aging celebrated all volunteers, from Meals on Wheels deliverers to AARP Tax-Aide preparers, with coffee and refreshments throughout the week.

This year's theme was "Shining a light on the people and causes that inspire us to serve."



naeyc[®]
**Week of the
Young Child**

STEP Head Start celebrated Week of the Young Child from April 6th-12th. Week of the Young Child is an annual observance hosted by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) to focus public attention on the needs of young children and their families, and to recognize the early childhood programs and services that meet those needs.

STEP Head Start families and staff organized a fun-filled week celebrating early learning, young children, their teachers, families, and communities. The week's activities included Music Monday, Tasty Tuesday, Work Together Wednesday, Artsy Thursday, and Family Friday. There is so much that children learn as they sing, cook together, build together, create art, and celebrate with their families.





For 60 years, the nation's Community Action Network has inspired a spirit of hope, helped people change their lives, and improved communities. When national, state, Tribal, and local leaders tap into Community Action Agencies (CAAs), they can promote workable solutions that connect more families to opportunity—and make America a better place to live for everyone.

The signing of the Economic Opportunity Act on August 20, 1964, launched a new movement and, over time—in virtually every county in America, rural, urban, suburban, and frontier—local people came together and established a Community Action organization. For nearly 60 years, individuals, families, and communities have supported their local CAA. Today, about 1,000 agencies are charged with the sweeping mission of addressing the causes and conditions of poverty that hold people and places back.

Community Action is distinguished by a national network of CAAs sharing a common set of core principles—precepts rooted in both the governing legislation and the history and knowledge developed over 60 years. America's CAAs connect millions of individuals and families to greater opportunity, transforming their lives and making our communities—and our nation—stronger.

Community Action brings hope to people in many different situations: expectant mothers, adults returning to the community from prison, and seniors living independently. For 60 years, Community Action has met people where they are and come alongside them to help them achieve their goals, whether it was helping young adults secure the training needed to earn a living wage; preparing preschoolers for kindergarten; securing safe and affordable housing; or providing transportation to medical treatment centers for senior citizens and individuals with disabilities. Community Action's efforts have made life better for millions of Americans.





As a Community Action Agency, STEP engages diverse individuals, families, and communities in the pursuit of social and economic success through five Pathways to Success: Early Learning, Housing Options, Workforce Development, Community Collaboration, and Independent Living.

In addition to the 60th Anniversary of Community Action, STEP celebrates Community Action Month each May as a reminder of the important work being done by STEP staff on a local level to empower struggling families within our communities. An "All Staff Call" took place on May 9 to bring together and recognize STEP's staff of nearly 300 employees for their hard work this year and beyond.

To learn more about the impact of our agency, please follow us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/STEPpathways for posts that include Mission Monday, Transformation Tuesday, Impact Wednesday, Throwback Thursday, and Fact Friday among others.



C&N Bank Raises Funds for STEP Office of Aging

C&N Bank has chosen STEP Office of Aging as one of the beneficiaries of their annual fundraiser. This year C&N Bank is actively raising monetary donations to fund programs and services that directly benefit seniors in our communities.

Seniors often confront a range of unique challenges, including isolation, financial hardships, and health concerns. In recognition of the immense value this group brings to our local communities, C&N teammates have turned their attention to supporting our seniors through their Giving Back, Giving Together program. With a multifaceted approach, they aim to address the specific needs of seniors and make a positive impact in their lives.

C&N's fundraising efforts included a golf tournament, financial literacy sessions offered to seniors at STEP's Centers for Healthy Aging, and the bank's "Hats & Horses" Kentucky Derby party.





2ND ANNUAL ELRC REGION 7 PROVIDER APPRECIATION CONFERENCE

THE POWER OF EXPRESSION

The Early Learning Resource Center (ELRC) Region 7 in partnership with STEP, Inc. held its 2nd Annual ELRC Conference: The Power of Expression April 12-13 at the Holiday Inn in Williamsport. More than 100 staff of child care providers in Lycoming, Clinton, and Tioga counties were in attendance with the opportunity select their courses and earn up to 7.5 Pennsylvania Quality Assurance System (PQAS) professional development hours.

Keynote speakers were Debbie Clement presenting "Making Monday Matter" and "The Arts turn STEM into STEAM," and Ty Howard presenting "Nurturing Minds." Breakout session presenters included Shashi DeHaan, Laurent Walter, Angel Avery-Wright, Jennifer Poole, and Elizabeth Marcello.

ELRC Region 7 is a partner with the PA Office of Child Development and Early Learning. The ELRC provides quality supports for early learning programs and helps families access high quality early learning programs. To learn more visit www.stepcorp.org/ELRC.



AARPSM

Tax-AideTM

The STEP Office of Aging annually sponsors the American Association of Retired Persons (AARP) Tax-Aide program in conjunction with the IRS. The volunteer-driven program offers free tax help for taxpayers with low and moderate incomes, with special attention to people aged 60 and older. The volunteers complete federal, state, and local tax returns, and applications for Pennsylvania's Property Tax/Rent Rebate program.

Retired Pennsylvania College of Technology accounting professor Phil Landers volunteers as the Tax-Aide site coordinator in Lycoming County. His team of five volunteers filed 489 federal returns this past tax season, resulting in over \$316,000 in tax refunds. The group prepares taxes at STEP Office of Aging's Lincoln Center for Healthy Aging in Williamsport.

Working out of STEP's Clinton County Community Center in Lock Haven, Clinton County Tax-Aide Site Coordinator Alice Bryerton enlisted eight community volunteers to help with tax returns. Clinton County tax volunteers filed 428 federal returns this past tax season, resulting in a total of more than \$452,000 in tax refunds.

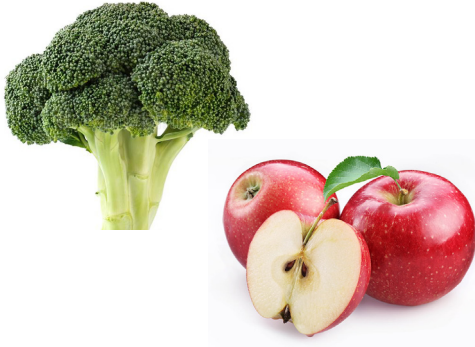


*Pictured from left:
AARP Tax-Aide site coordinator Phil Landers assists a couple with their taxes.*



Mark Your Calendar!

Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Program Veggie Vouchers



Veggie Voucher Drive-Through Distribution

Clinton County - June 11 | 10am - 2pm

Castanea Fire Co. Picnic Grounds | 859 Lower Creek Rd.,
Lock Haven

Lycoming County - June 12 | 10am - 2pm

STEP RiverWalk Center | 423 E. Central Ave., S. Williamsport

Lycoming County - June 13 | 10am - 2pm

STEP RiverWalk Center | 423 E. Central Ave., S. Williamsport

Clinton County - June 14 | 10am - 2pm

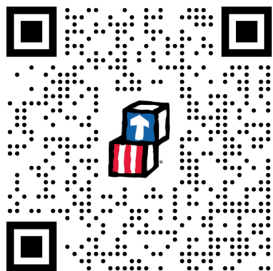
Clinton County Community Center | 124 E. Walnut St.,
Lock Haven



Juneteenth | Saturday, June 22

Join us at Shaw Park in Williamsport from noon - 4:00 PM.

The Juneteenth festivities will truly offer something for everyone! All members of the community of all backgrounds are invited to join in this celebration of African American liberation and civil rights history. It is a great way to celebrate American heritage together. This year's theme is "Celebrate our ancestors, elevate our youth, and liberate our mind."



STEP Head Start - Student Enrollment

STEP Head Start is accepting applications for the 2024-2025 school year. Preschool children in Lycoming and Clinton counties, including those with disabilities, are eligible for enrollment. Complete your child's Head Start application online at www.stepcorp.org/HeadStart.



Substitute Aide Pool Program | July 1 Rollout

Early Care & Education (ECE) is experiencing a shortage of qualified professionals to keep child care providers operating at full certified capacity. STEP in partnership with the Early Learning Resource Center Region 7 is developing a Substitute

Aide Pool Program (SAPP) to build the needed capacity in an innovative way that alleviates the burden of hiring new staff for providers, but allows them the comfort of knowing the substitutes have been vetted and trained.



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