



# *Newsletter*



*STEP Head Start*  
**WEEK OF THE YOUNG CHILD**

*Spring*  
**2019**

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» Contact STEP



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From left: STEP Database Administrator Tom Salisbury and STEP President & CEO Jim Plankenhorn.

Tom works within STEP's Information Technology department as the Database Administrator. Tom's effort throughout the year, especially with the year ending (last quarter being the most difficult), on data collection has been exceptional. This collection year has been a challenge between the changes to the Community Action management framework, ROMA Next Generation, and the lack of ClientTrack support for a good portion of the year. Tom has worked diligently to adapt our organization to the new reporting standards, develop tracking tools, and consolidate and analyze data.

Tom always puts his best effort in on any project, going above and beyond on every task. He cares that every report he works on is as accurate as possible, analysing the data and verifying its accuracy. He has taken all of the changes to COPOS and the lack of Client Track support in stride, coming up with ways to adapt to the new requirements.

Tom has worked with every program trying to help them understand the ROMA Next Generation goals and reports. He tries to give them the tools they need to make the reporting as accurate as possible. He is always available to help with reporting in any way he can, even assisting with data entry when necessary.

Tom is truly dedicated to this agency and does everything within his ability to help STEP be successful, report accurate numbers, and keep integrity in the data that we collect.



# Bi-County WIC Ribbon Cutting Event!



On April 12, the Women, Infants, and Children Program – otherwise known as WIC – formally cut the ribbon on its new office inside STEP’s Clinton County Community Center.

The WIC office has been up and running since January 2, when it moved from its former home on Bellefonte Avenue. WIC serves more than 700 families in Clinton County alone. It offers participant-centered nutrition education, healthy food, breastfeeding support, and has been serving as a gateway for preventative health for almost 45 years. It is considered one of the area’s most successful, cost-effective, and important nutrition intervention programs.

“It’s a little bit of a longer walk from the parking lot, but this is a one stop shop experience. Parents can get their children weighed and measured, they can get their kids to the classrooms, and then meet with a nutritionist without interruption,” WIC Director Nancy Bittner, said.

STEP’s Clinton County Community Center (CCCC), located at 124 East Walnut Street in Lock Haven, serves as a hub of resources for Clinton County and is along the bus route for River Valley Transit and Susquehanna Trailways. The CCCC currently houses WIC, STEP Early Learning Resource Center Region 7, STEP Office of Aging, STEP’s Utilities Assistance Program, the 4-C’s Cafe, as well as four preschool Head Start classrooms, two Early Head Start classrooms, and a Head Start home-based playgroup room.

# POVERTY LISTENING TOUR



**Senator Art Haywood pictured with customers from Central Region Community Action Agencies.**

Photographed from left: Leesa Gallagher (Trehab), Janice Gartland (Center for Community Action), Brittany Nunemaker (Center for Community Action), Senator Art Haywood, Kenar Swanston (STEP, Inc.), Judith Taylor (STEP, Inc.), and Tyran Fisher (Central Susquehanna Opportunities & STEP, Inc.)  
Not pictured: Breilun McCloe (Central Susquehanna Opportunities).

On May 23, STEP welcomed Senator Haywood to the Clinton County Community Center for the Central Region stop of his five part Poverty Listening Tour. Citizens of central Pennsylvania cities, small towns, and rural communities were encouraged to share the real experiences of living in poverty and the struggle to break the cycle.

Current and former clients of STEP, Inc., Central Susquehanna Opportunities, Center for Community Action, and Trehab spoke to the senator about their journeys toward self-sufficiency and the services they obtained through their local Community Action Agency.

# Week of the Young Child

STEP Head Start celebrated Week of the Young Child from April 7-13. The Week of the Young Child is an annual observance hosted by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC). NAEYC celebrates early learning, young children, their teachers, and their families across the globe.

Inside our classrooms, Week of the Young Child activities included Music Monday, Tasty Tuesday, Work Together Wednesday, Artsy Thursday, and Family Friday.



## Music Monday

Through music, children develop math, language, and literacy skills - all while having fun and being active!



## Tasty Tuesday

Cooking together connects math with literacy skills, science, and more. Head Start encourages healthy nutrition and fitness habits at home and in class.



## Work Together Wednesday

When children build together, they explore math and science concepts, and develop their social and early literacy skills.



## Artsy Thursday

Children develop creativity, social skills, and fine motor skills with open-ended art projects where they can make choices, use their imaginations, and create with their hands.



## Family Friday

Engaging and celebrating families is at the heart of supporting our youngest learners. We applaud family members' role as young children's first and most important teachers.

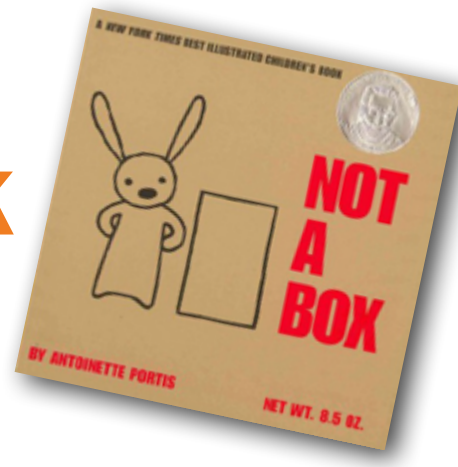
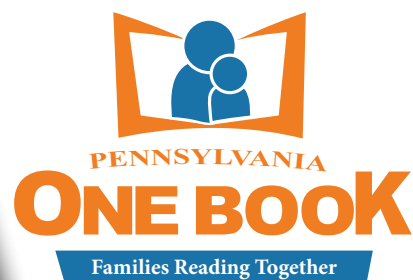
# PA One Book: *Families Reading Together*



Now in its 14<sup>th</sup> year, **Pennsylvania One Book: Families Reading Together** highlights the importance of early literacy development in preschoolers and the significance of reading early and often to children, as well as engaging them in conversation and other activities around books.

This year, young readers across Pennsylvania were introduced to two books as part of the 2019 PA One Book early literacy program. **Barnyard Banter**, written by Denise Fleming, was the PA One Book for infants and toddlers, while **Not A Box** by Antoinette Portis was the selection for children ages three to five.

Many STEP Head Start and Early Head Start classrooms welcomed guest readers to share their PA One Book. Guest readers included members of Leadership Lycoming, Master Gardeners from the Penn State Extension, and many others from the community. All children enrolled in STEP's Early Learning programs received their own copy of **Barnyard Banter** or **Not A Box**.



# STEP Office of Aging Honors Volunteers



STEP Office of Aging volunteers were recently recognized for their contributions at banquet luncheons held at the STEP RiverWalk Center in South Williamsport on April 5th and 12th, and on April 26th at the STEP Clinton County Community Center in Lock Haven.

During the last fiscal year, across all STEP Office of Aging programs, 500 volunteers donated over 46,000 hours. Many of these volunteers deliver Meals on Wheels, some help out with bingo and exercise classes, while others donate their time to ensure the success of STEP Office of Aging programs including Ombudsmen, APPRISE counsellors, and AARP Tax Aide volunteers. Dozens of volunteers received certificates for their extended years of service to senior programs.

Each year during the volunteer banquets, the STEP Office of Aging presents the George C. Meck Volunteer of the Year Award to the volunteer who has given the most hours and has not already won the award in the past. This year the George C. Meck Volunteer of the Year Award was presented to Andrea Schenck. Andrea has been a volunteer at STEP's Clinton County Community Center for over five years and gave 746 hours to STEP this past year.



Meals at both locations were served by STEP staff, along with the Chairperson of STEP's Board of Directors, to show their appreciation for all of the volunteers' work through the year.

# AARP Tax-Aide *Wraps Up*

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 District coordinator in Lycoming County. His team of seven volunteers filed 826 federal returns this past tax season, resulting in a total of more than \$545,000 in tax refunds. The group uses space at the Office of Aging Lincoln Senior Center at the STEP office building in Williamsport.

Working out of STEP's Clinton County Community Center in Lock Haven, Clinton County Tax-Aide District Coordinator Alice Bryerton enlisted 17 community volunteers, including students in the accounting program at Lock Haven University, to help with tax returns. Clinton County tax volunteers filed 641 federal returns this past tax season, resulting in a total of more than \$513,000 in tax refunds.



*Mark Your Calendar!*



Vouchers provided by the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture.

## Veggie Voucher Distribution

**Monday, June 3** ♦ 11:00 AM - 4:00 PM  
Clinton County Community Center ♦ 124 E. Walnut Street, Lock Haven

**Tuesday, June 4** ♦ 10:00 AM - 3:00 PM  
RiverWalk Center ♦ 324 E. Central Avenue, South Williamsport

**Wednesday, June 5** ♦ 11:00 AM - 2:00 PM  
George C. Meck Center ♦ 50 Fitness Lane, Muncy

**Thursday, June 6** ♦ 12:00 PM - 2:30 PM  
Renovo Center ♦ 415 Fourth Street, South Renovo

**Friday, June 7** ♦ 1:00 PM - 3:00 PM  
Jersey Shore Center ♦ 641 Cemetery Street, Jersey Shore

\$20 of free fruit & vegetable vouchers will be available for qualified seniors to use at participating vendors. To qualify, you must be 60 years of age or older, live in Lycoming County or Clinton County, and have a total annual income of less than \$23,107 for one person or \$31,284 for two people. Proof of age and residence must be shown (driver's license, utility bill, PA ID, etc.).



## Color Me Fun Family Run

**Saturday, September 14**  
Race Start Time: 10:00 AM

STEP's Color Me Fun Family Run is a 5K family-friendly race held at the South Williamsport Community Park Complex adjacent to STEP's RiverWalk Center. Register at <https://runsignup.com/Race/PA/SouthWilliamsport/ColorMeFunFamily>

Proceeds of the Color Me Fun Family Run benefit the STEP Early Learning Endowment Fund.



## Gift Card BINGO

**Sunday, November 3**  
1:00 PM - 4:00 PM  
Clinton County Community Center  
124 E. Walnut Street, Lock Haven

Mark your calendars for November 3rd and join us for Gift Card BINGO! Details on purchasing tickets will be available soon!

Proceeds of Gift Card BINGO benefit the STEP Early Learning Endowment Fund.



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