



*Newsletter*

FALL PBIS

*Harvest and Kickoff*

EVENT



*Autumn*  
**2018**

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» Contact STEP



**STEP, Inc.**  
2138 Lincoln Street  
Williamsport, PA 17701  
570.326.0587

**STEP Clinton County  
Community Center**  
124 East Walnut Street  
Lock Haven, PA 17745  
570.858.5800



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**STEP** INC. *Employee of the Quarter* | 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter  
2018-2019



From left: Early Learning Resource Center Contract Specialist Gretchen Mantle and STEP President & CEO Jim Plankenhorn.

During STEP's programmatic transition from Child Care Information Services (CCIS) to the Early Learning Resource Center (ELRC), Gretchen went above and beyond with her duties to develop ClientTrack policy and procedures that worked for ELRC.

This was a massive undertaking and Gretchen had to apply her understanding of ClientTrack along with our proposed use of ClientTrack outlined in our ELRC grant which was key for our operations. Gretchen worked with the Information Technology staff to tailor ClientTrack to meet resource and referral, electronic file storage, funding tracking, and enrollment tracking needs. This was a much larger project than envisioned and Gretchen kept the department on track to make sure our procedures matched our grant considerations with a process flow that worked for ELRC. Gretchen's grasp of what was needed to make ClientTrack work for the program was beyond the expectations for her position and she truly made the transition a priority.

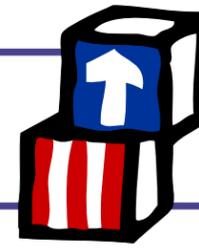
In addition, Gretchen is a motivator. She encourages her department to increase their participation in volunteer activities both within the agency and the community, and her attitude and humor bring out the best in the staff. She will not back down if she needs more information or resources to better her work effort, and she speaks her mind for the best interest of the program.

# STEP Head Start

## Fire Safety Awareness

October was Fire Prevention Month! Each October STEP Head Start and Early Head Start arrange activities aiming to educate and raise awareness to families, students, and the community about fire safety and home safety.

Head Start families in Clinton and Lycoming counties celebrated Fire Prevention Month with some help from many of the local volunteer fire companies, giving our students and their families the opportunity to talk to firefighters and get a close-up look at the fire trucks and safety equipment.



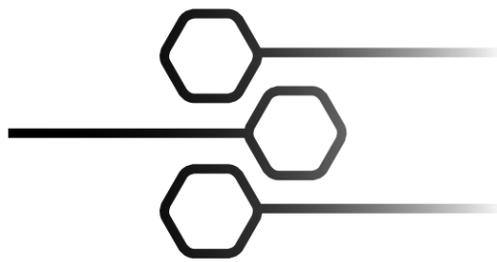
STEP Head Start held an Open House at the Hope Children's Campus on Monday, October 29 to welcome families and community partners into the facility to learn about the services provided by STEP Head Start.

STEP, Inc. began offering Early Head Start and Preschool Head Start classes at the Children's Campus in August 2018, providing a vital educational opportunity for children and families in the area. Classrooms include one Early Head Start classroom (birth through age 3), one Preschool Head Start classroom (age 3-5), as well as an Early Head Start playgroup classroom where students in the Home-Based program gather for playgroups (birth through age 3). Hope's Children's Campus also houses a WIC office and a variety of therapy services provided by Hope Enterprises, including: physical therapy, occupational therapy, and speech therapy for children with developmental disabilities, as well as pediatric neurology.

Children age 0-5 in Lycoming and Clinton counties, including those with disabilities, are eligible for enrollment in Head Start. STEP Head Start accepts applications year-round and fills vacancies from its waiting list as classroom spaces become available. Although children from low-income families receive enrollment priority, children from higher-income families may be enrolled as well. There is no cost to families whose children participate in the program.

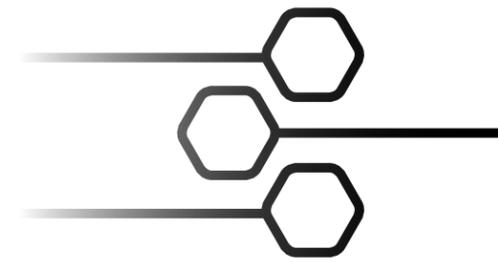
Visit [www.stepcorp.org/Head\\_Start\\_Recruitment\\_Form](http://www.stepcorp.org/Head_Start_Recruitment_Form) to begin the eligibility process, or call STEP Head Start at 570-601-9601 for more information.





# STEP Head Start

## FALL Harvest & PBIS Kickoff



STEP Head Start's annual Fall Harvest and Positive Behavior Interventions & Supports (PBIS) Kickoff events were held in October at STEP's Clinton County Community Center (CCCC) and Round Hills Campus.

The CCCC opened its doors to over 200 people for the event on October 3, while the Round Hills Campus hosted more than 350 people for their event on October 11. Both events offered healthy harvest food and a wide variety of activities including pumpkin decorating, leaf rubbing, games, and a story corner with STEP AmeriCorps. STEP's PBIS mascot, Phoebe, was seen buzzing around the event as well!



PBIS is being implemented agency-wide in all STEP Early Learning programs. The event engaged children and families in a variety of activities to promote social-emotional development based on three Program-Wide Expectations: Be Safe, Be Kind, and Be Responsible. PBIS promotes positive interactions and behavior in all settings. It provides a framework for parents and staff to work together to prevent and address challenging behavior.



Partner agencies present at the events included STEP, Lock Haven City Police, Old Lycoming Township Police, Old Lycoming Township Volunteer Fire Company, the Lock Haven Shoe Bank, The Life Center, YWCA/Wise Options, Penn State Cooperative Extension, Ross Library, Central Susquehanna Intermediate Unit, Early Intervention, Lock Haven Salvation Army, Penn State Family Pathways Program, YES Program Expectations for Women, Clinton County Dental Clinic, River Valley Health & Dental Center, AmeriHealth Caritas Northeast, and Early Learning Resource Center – Region 7, which serves Lycoming, Clinton, and Tioga counties in partnership with STEP.

# CAAP Self-Sufficiency *Award Recipient*

Alexis Kibler-Russitano (pictured below, at left) was nominated for a 2018 Community Action Association of Pennsylvania (CAAP) Self-Sufficiency Award and received her award during CAAP's Annual Conference on October 4, 2018 in State College, PA, accompanied by her YES program caseworker Stacy Bower (at right).

Alexis was referred to STEP's Youth Enrichment for Success (YES) program by the Education Leading to Employment and Career Training program. Alexis was a new mother in need of supportive services as she struggled to complete her high school diploma through cyber school as well as meet her newborn's needs as a teenage mother.

Alexis met with a YES program caseworker on a weekly basis as she completed the necessary enrollment and assessments to develop a goal plan and work towards gaining self-sufficiency. Shortly after being enrolled into the YES program, the family experienced a tragic house fire that destroyed their house and all of their belongings. Alexis and her family received numerous donations from the community and The American Red Cross provided temporary shelter at a hotel. After several weeks of searching for safe and affordable housing the family was able to move into a new apartment. Alexis continued to work towards her high school diploma and successfully graduated in July of 2017. After graduation, Alexis determined she wanted to pursue a career in the nursing field. Alexis received paid training through The Williamsport Home and obtained her Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) certificate.

Alexis has shown enhanced parenting skills, improved level of maturity, self-sufficiency, and determination to work towards maintaining a stable future. She continues to maintain employment, safe housing, and has successfully completed all of the requirements of the YES program. Alexis plans on continuing her full-time employment as a CNA and going back to school to become a Licensed Practical Nurse. Alexis explained one of her biggest lessons learned was she has a strong support system within the community as well as her family.



# PUMPKIN GLEANING

More than 6 billion pounds of fruits and vegetables go unharvested or unsold annually in the US, while individuals and families face growing problems obtaining healthy foods. For the fourth year, STEP AmeriCorps service members and community volunteers tackled this problem by gathering 2,776 pounds of pumpkins and squash from Carpenter's Pumpkin Farm in Linden for distribution by the Central PA Food Bank.



The gleaned pumpkins and squash will be distributed whole in Fresh Express boxes from the Central Pennsylvania Food Bank – Northern Tier Location. The Fresh Express program delivers perishable fresh foods directly to those in need. The produce will come with a variety of nourishing recipes.

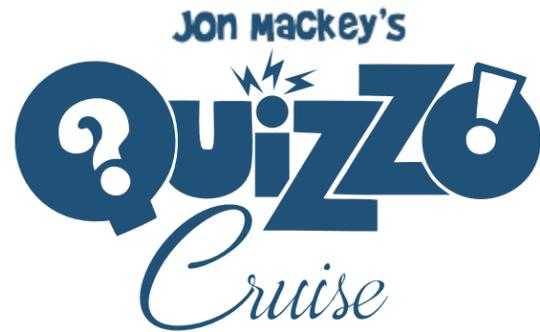




# Community Collaboration Endowment

Throughout the year, STEP has worked toward establishing the Community Collaboration Endowment. This permanent fund marks the fourth of six proposed endowment funds established to help support future STEP programming. The Community Collaboration Endowment Fund will generate income each year that is able to support any of STEP's Community Collaboration Pathway programs, including STEP AmeriCorps and Service Navigation, which lead to increased resources for individual and community success.

To assist in building the endowment, STEP held a variety of activities to raise funds, including: Jon Mackey's Quizzo Cruise aboard the Hiawatha, a Murder Mystery Dinner at DiSalvo's, and Gift Card BINGO at STEP's Clinton County Community Center. Fundraising efforts throughout the year have raised over \$25,000 - all of which will be used to establish the Community Collaboration Endowment Fund! STEP would like to thank our staff, Board of Directors, and individual and corporate contributors who helped make this another successful year.



**MURDER  
MYSTERY  
DINNER**




# Mark Your Calendar!



## Santa's Seniors

**Donations accepted through December 14**

**Volunteer opportunities December 17, 18, 19, 20, & 21**

Seniors are often forgotten during the holidays, and many times these Santa's Seniors gift boxes are the only holiday items received by our homebound seniors. From donating nonperishable goods to sorting and counting the items that fill up the boxes, YOU can help in a variety of ways to ensure that each box is a special gift for our local seniors on Christmas.

For more information, contact Marcella Englert at 570-726-6378.



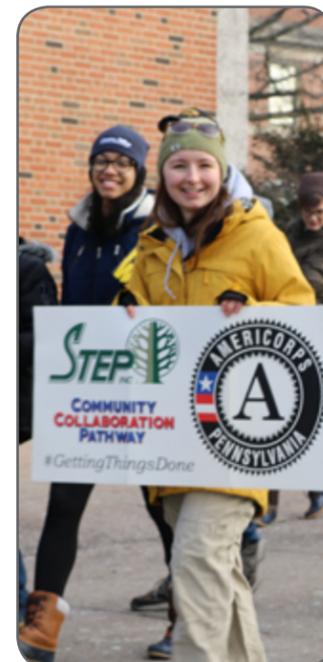
## STEP Head Start Mitten Tree

**Donations accepted through December 14**

2018 marks the 14<sup>th</sup> year of STEP Head Start's Mitten Tree. Each year this project has been able to keep more than 600 children's hands and hearts warm with your generous donations.

STEP Head Start | 2138 Boyd Street, Williamsport  
 STEP Main Office | 2138 Lincoln Street, Williamsport  
 Clinton County Community Center | 124 E. Walnut Street, Lock Haven  
 STEP Round Hills Campus | 136 Grimesville Road, Williamsport

Questions? Contact Jaime Fryer at 570-601-9613.



## STEP AmeriCorps

### Peace Walk & MLK Day of Service

**Saturday, January 19 • 10:00 AM**

First United Methodist Church | 604 Market St., Williamsport

The Peace Walk will begin at 10:00 AM at the fountain on Market Street near the First United Methodist Church. The group will walk a mile loop and return to First United Methodist Church for a speaker and music event in honor of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

**Monday, January 21 • 9:00 AM - 12:00 PM**

Lycoming College Recreation Center | College Pl., Williamsport

The MLK Day of Service will be held at Lycoming College's Recreation Center. STEP AmeriCorps members and volunteers from the community will be packing food distribution boxes for the Central PA Food Bank.



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