



# Newsletter



naeyc<sup>®</sup>

Week of the  
Young Child<sup>®</sup>

Spring  
2022

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**STEP, Inc.**  
2138 Lincoln Street  
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570.326.0587

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124 East Walnut Street  
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**STEP** INC. *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 of their choosing.



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

**Kathryn Stevenson**  
Office of Aging  
Care Manager/Assessor

**Joe Laver**  
Early Learning Resource Center  
Eligibility/Training & Compliance Specialist

**Amelia Zito**  
Early Learning Resource Center  
Eligibility/Resource and Referral Specialist

**Jessica Brumgard**  
Early Learning Resource Center  
Eligibility/Resource and Referral Specialist

**Renee Rafter**  
Head Start  
Home Visitor

**Brady Huff**  
Office of Aging  
Care Manager Assessor

**Debbie Snook**  
Administration  
Office Assistant

**Traci Daniels**  
Administration  
Information Assistant

**Lynn Landon**  
Service Navigation  
Family Navigator

**Stacy Steppe**  
Service Navigation  
Lead Family Navigator

**John Otto**  
Transportation  
Driver

**Stephanie Kreps**  
Head Start  
EHS Teacher

**Suzie Neatrou**  
Head Start  
EHS Teacher

**Stacey Lee**  
Head Start  
EHS Teacher

**Karissa Gilchrist**  
Head Start  
EHS Home Visitor

**Pete Spagnuolo**  
Transportation  
Driver

**Michelle Anderson**  
Head Start  
Teacher Assistant

**Kim Vergilis**  
Head Start  
Teacher Assistant

**Katie Adams**  
Head Start  
Classroom Aide

**Sunshine Kustaborder**  
Head Start  
Family Advocate

**Trena Paxton**  
Head Start  
Teacher

**Amanda Shaffer**  
Head Start  
EHS Home Visitor

**Jennifer Wilson**  
Head Start  
Teacher

**Chaleah Jenkins**  
Office of Aging  
Care Manager/Assessor

**Teresa Bartholomew**  
Head Start  
EHS Home Visitor



**The winner of February's gift card drawing was Kathryn Stevenson!**

**The winner of March's gift card drawing was Sunshine Kustaborder!**

**The winner of April's gift card drawing was Teresa Bartholomew!**



# celebrates

# COMMUNITY ACTION MONTH

2022 marks the 58th year since the Community Action Network was established to help American families and communities overcome obstacles to poverty. Over 1,000 agencies across the country are working every day to create opportunities and transform the lives of their neighbors, making communities stronger, and helping families across the US thrive. This year, STEP, a proud member of the Community Action Network, will commemorate 56 years of helping families throughout Lycoming and Clinton counties.

Community Action Agencies serve 99% of America's counties with life changing services that create pathways to opportunity and prosperity. As a Community Action Agency, STEP connects individuals, families, and communities to approaches that help them succeed - including high quality education programs for children, job readiness skills for adults, safe and affordable housing for families, programs for senior citizens, and so much more.

The month-long awareness campaign served 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 to bring together and recognize STEP's staff of nearly 300 employees for all of 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](http://www.facebook.com/STEPpathways) for posts that include Mission Monday, Transformation Tuesday, Impact Wednesday, Throwback Thursday, and Fact Friday among others.

Here are a few ways YOU can celebrate Community Action Month with STEP!



LIKE US ON FACEBOOK!

[facebook.com/STEPpathways](https://facebook.com/STEPpathways)

ADVOCATE FOR COMMUNITY ACTION

Share our content & impact posts on social media to spread the word about STEP!



VISIT OUR WEBSITE!

[www.stepcorp.org](http://www.stepcorp.org)



# naeyc® Week of the Young Child®

STEP Head Start celebrated Week of the Young Child from April 2-8. 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.



## Music Monday

When children sing, dance, and listen to music, they develop their language and early literacy skills while being active and encouraging movement.

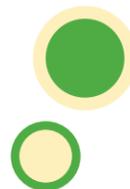
STEP Head Start children had the opportunity to explore a variety of musical instruments including drums, guitar, keyboard, symbols, and the xylophone.



## Tasty Tuesday

This fun, food-themed day is about more than just cheese and crackers. Cooking together connects math with literacy skills, science, and more. Head Start encourages healthy nutrition and fitness habits.

Some of the tasty treats enjoyed by Head Start children were smoothies, tacos, and frozen treats!



## Work Together Wednesday

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

In one of our Head Start classrooms, children worked together to build a tower!



## Artsy Thursday

Think, problem solve, create! 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.

Children were encouraged to get creative with coloring, painting, and tracing.



## 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.

To celebrate Family Friday, children drew pictures of their families.

# AARP<sup>SM</sup> Tax-Aide<sup>TM</sup>

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 7 volunteers filed 321 federal returns this past tax season. 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 9 community volunteers to help with tax returns. Clinton County tax volunteers filed 411 federal returns this past tax season, resulting in a total of more than \$408,000 in tax refunds.

# Loyalsock Center for Healthy Aging

## OPEN HOUSE

STEP's Loyalsock Center for Healthy Aging held an open house on Friday, May 20 to showcase the new space added on to the Loyalsock Township Community Recreation Center just over two years ago.

The expansion project broke ground in June of 2019 and was completed by the end of February 2020 just before the COVID-19 pandemic took hold. The planned grand opening event was put on hold indefinitely during the nationwide shut down, while STEP Office of Aging remained committed to holding an open house once it was safe to do so.

The promised open house featured tours of the facility and information on many of the programs and activities that STEP's Centers for Healthy Aging have to offer. Participants were encouraged to be social and join the center for lunch, exercise, card games, crafting, and technology classes. A variety of education programs to help consumers take control of their wellbeing are also offered at STEP's Centers for Healthy Aging, including falls prevention, chronic disease, and diabetes self-management.

For more information on STEP's Centers for Healthy Aging call STEP Office of Aging at 570.323.3096.





# Newberry Cleanup!

STEP AmeriCorps members participated in the Newberry Community Partnership's cleanup event in April. The Newberry Cleanup is part of the Great American Cleanup, the nation's largest community improvement project, which strives to motivate Americans to make informed decisions and take simple everyday actions to clean up, green up, and fix up their local communities.

AmeriCorps Members, along with other volunteers, collected 185 pounds of litter and 65 pounds of recyclables during the community cleanup!

Want to make a difference in your community? AmeriCorps is recruiting members! Visit [www.stepcorp.org/AmeriCorps](http://www.stepcorp.org/AmeriCorps) to learn more.



## Mark Your Calendar!



### STEP Head Start - Student Enrollment! Going on NOW!

STEP Head Start is accepting applications for the 2022-2023 school year. Preschool children in Lycoming and Clinton counties, including those with disabilities, are eligible for enrollment. Head Start accepts applications year-round, and fills vacancies from its waiting list as they occur. While children from low-income families have enrollment priority, children from higher-income families may be enrolled as well.

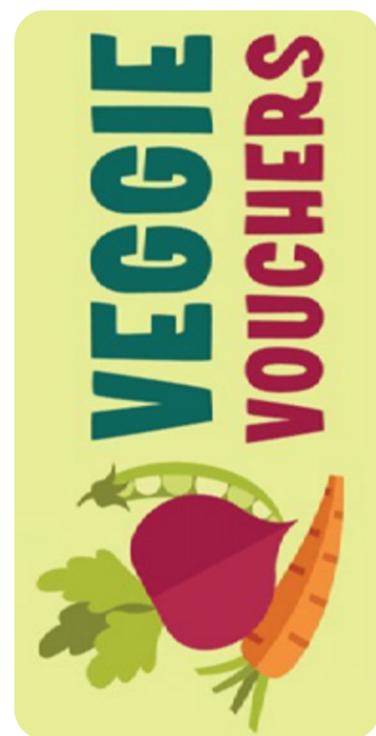


#### Student Enrollment



Download and complete your child's Head Start application online at [www.stepcorp.org/HeadStart](http://www.stepcorp.org/HeadStart). Completed applications can be emailed to Donna Flick at [dflick@stepcorp.org](mailto:dflick@stepcorp.org) or dropped off at the STEP offices at 2138 Lincoln Street, Williamsport or the Clinton County Community Center at 124 East Walnut Street, Lock Haven.

**Looking for a rewarding career in Early Learning?** STEP Head Start is recruiting talented staff! Visit [www.stepcorp.org/careers-service](http://www.stepcorp.org/careers-service) to learn more.



### Veggie Vouchers! Drive-Through Distributuion

**June 6 ♦ 9:00 AM - 12:00 PM**  
Clinton County Community Center ♦ 124 E. Walnut St., Lock Haven

**June 7 ♦ 9:00 AM - 12:00 PM**  
STEP RiverWalk Center ♦ 423 E. Central Ave., South Williamsport

**June 8 ♦ 1:00 PM - 3:00 PM**  
STEP Jersey Shore Center ♦ 641 Cemetery St., Jersey Shore

**June 9 ♦ 1:00 PM - 3:00 PM**  
Renovo Center for Healthy Aging ♦ 415 Fourth St., South Renovo

**June 13 ♦ 9:00 AM - 12:00 PM**  
STEP RiverWalk Center ♦ 423 E. Central Ave., South Williamsport

**June 14 ♦ 9:00 AM - 12:00 PM**  
Clinton County Community Center ♦ 124 E. Walnut St., Lock Haven

\$24 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 \$25,142 for one person or \$33,874 for two people. Proof of age and residence must be shown (driver's license, utility bill, PA ID, etc.). **Applications will be available on-site during distribution.**



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**We're Hiring!**

Visit [www.stepcorp.org/careers-service](http://www.stepcorp.org/careers-service) to learn more.

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