



Newsletter

DREAM WEEK 2021

#BetterTogether



Winter
2021

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STEP INC. *Star Awards*

This fall, STEP's Employee of the Quarter program transitioned to a peer recommendation and recognition program called the STEP Star Awards.

Employees are encouraged to submit the name(s) 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.

November, December, and January STEP Star award winners are:

- | | | | |
|---|--|--|--|
| Donna Myers
Head Start Classroom Aide | Courtney Kaufman
Head Start Teacher | Joey Foster
Transportation Dispatcher | Denise Snyder
Head Start Teacher |
| Ann Trout
Head Start Classroom Aide | Lori Boos
STEP AmeriCorps Member Development Coordinator | Ralph Cerrato
Building Maintenance Groundskeeper | Traci Daniels
Information Assistant |
| Deborah Pedokus
Head Start Classroom Aide | Jessica Barnyak
Head Start Teacher | Kelly Reynolds
Head Start Center Based Supervisor | Jason Fox
Transportation Driver |
| Ron Mayes
Housing Options Project Manager III | Carrie Bruning
Head Start Teacher | Helen Grosso
STEP Office of Aging Volunteer Coordinator Liason | Kevin Baker
Transportation Driver |
| Chris Crosley
Housing Options Construction Supervisor | Jennifer Wilson
Head Start Teacher | Erica Blake
Head Start Center Based Supervisor | Buffy Neese
Head Start Health Specialist |
| | Marcie Gentyzel
Head Start Teacher | Melissa Corlew
Head Start Center Based Supervisor | Brittany Terre-Blanche
STEP AmeriCorps Program Manager |



The winner of November's gift card drawing was Kelly Reynolds!
The winner of December's gift card drawing was Traci Daniels!
The winner of January's gift card drawing was Brittany Terre-Blanche!





EARLY LEARNING
RESOURCE CENTER

PA OFFICE OF CHILD DEVELOPMENT AND EARLY LEARNING

PPE Distribution

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, Early Learning Resource Center (ELRC) Region 7, in partnership with STEP, received Act 24 funding through the Office of Child Development and Early Learning to purchase and distribute Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) kits to the 95 child care providers it serves.

The kits included safety posters, vinyl and nitrile gloves, face masks, face shields, smocks, disposable gowns, hand sanitizer, anti-bacterial soap, touch-free thermometers, tissues, paper towels, toilet paper, Lysol spray, bleach, disinfectant sprayers, and steam mop cleaners.

The ELRC was able to purchase many of the items distributed from local vendors and agencies including North Central Sight Services, Clarkson Chemical, Janway Company, Susquehanna Paper & Supply Company, Eagle Janitorial Supply, and Hubs Home Oxygen & Medical Supplies.

With a staggered schedule to limit contact and promote social distancing, the ELRC staged PPE kits for drive-through pick-up over the course of three weeks to distribute the much needed supplies to child care providers.

In total, the PPE kits will benefit over 5,000 children attending 48 child care centers, 15 after-school programs, 23 family providers, 5 group providers, and 4 relative providers in Lycoming, Clinton, and Tioga counties.

I didn't expect to bring everything I did back to my center last week. With us being closed down for 10 days due to a positive case, I was able to organize all of those items and we will put them to good use starting next week. I feel like we are more prepared now as we step back into caring for the children we love and serve. Again, thank you as I'm sure it wasn't an easy task to organize.

Melissa K. Hamm, Director
First Southern Baptist Church of Lycoming County
Early Childhood Learning Center (ECLC)





DREAM WEEK 2021

#BetterTogether

Most years, the MLK Day of Service sees hundreds of community members step up to serve as volunteers, providing valuable work for local nonprofits and ultimately serving area residents with various needs, from hunger to homelessness and more. This year, STEP AmeriCorps, Lycoming College, Pennsylvania College of Technology, and Beloved Community Council planned Dream Week in honor of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. - a week full of opportunities to (safely) be **"better together."**

To kick off Dream Week events, Raphael Mnkandhla of Williamsport's City Church gave a livestreamed message via STEP AmeriCorps' facebook page at 10:45 a.m. on Monday, January 18. After the message, viewers were encouraged to go out for individual and family Peace Walks and share their journeys and photos using **#BetterTogether**, **#PeaceWalk**, and **#WilliamsportDreamWeek2021**.

In addition to the Peace Walk, Dream Week events included a Red Cross blood drive held at Pennsylvania College of Technology on Tuesday, January 19 and Wednesday, January 20, and a virtual speaking event on Thursday, January 21 with April Reign, creator of the hashtag-turned-movement #OscarsSoWhite, who has been challenging the lack of representation of marginalized communities in Hollywood and beyond since 2015.

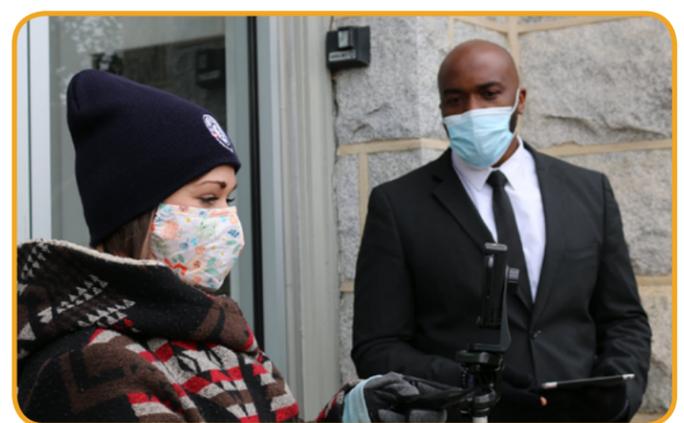
Throughout Dream Week, individuals were also encouraged to donate items to various nonprofits in our community, as well perform a virtual good deed or act of service.



AmeriCorps member Dwayne and his wife Gena donated these personal care items to the Shepherd of the Streets for their good deed.



STEP AmeriCorps member TJ chose to help with food distribution to the community at Antioch Baptist Church for his Dream Week act of service.



This year's altered activities can be summed up perfectly with this Martin Luther King, Jr. quote: **"If I cannot do great things, I can do small things in a great way,"** as we found new ways to serve others and build a beloved community.

The MLK Day of Service is led by the Corporation for National and Community Service, a federal agency that engages millions of Americans in service through its AmeriCorps and Senior Corps programs and leads the nation's volunteer efforts. For more information, visit www.nationalservice.gov.



Santa's Seniors

Over the past 15 years, STEP Office of Aging has partnered with the Williamsport Sun-Gazette, the Lock Haven Express, Backyard Broadcasting, and many other area businesses to coordinate the Santa's Seniors Program. This annual program provides gift boxes to over 350 senior citizens who receive Meals on Wheels through STEP's Office of Aging. The gift boxes are typically delivered by the Meals on Wheels volunteers with help from the Pennsylvania State Police. Often, these gift boxes are the only holiday items received by our home-bound seniors.

This year, for the safety of the older adults being served, the packing and delivery methods were changed to keep consumers and delivery service staff safe. STEP Office of Aging's Center Coordinators worked to sort and pack donations with the assistance of STEP AmeriCorps - a huge task that is usually done by many volunteers! A new partner, Bill MacIntyre Chevrolet Buick, provided a large van for the transportation of the bags from the packing sites to the meal distribution site.

Instead of a single boxed delivery, large holiday tote bags were delivered five times throughout the holiday and winter season using the same contactless procedures as for Meals on Wheels. Hats, gloves, scarves, toiletries, water bottles, snacks, breakfast foods, and single-serve pantry staples were among the items included in the bags gifted to our most vulnerable seniors, often forgotten during the holidays.

STEP Office of Aging and its partners would like to thank all of our donors who helped make the holidays bright for home-bound seniors!



Mitten Tree

Warm, colorful mittens were distributed this winter to children enrolled in STEP Head Start, thanks to the generosity of many. This is the 16th year STEP Head Start's annual Mitten Tree Project has been able to keep hundreds of children's hands warm for the winter. The collection ran from mid-October through the end of December, then donations were sorted and distributed to Head Start and Early Head Start children in Lycoming and Clinton counties.

This year, the project saw donations of more than 1,200 items, including mittens, gloves, hats, and scarves. Head Start Teachers and Home Visitors arranged contactless drop-offs to give each child a set of cold weather gear, as well as additional pairs of gloves or mittens for any siblings in the household.

Items were donated by Knitters for Neighbors, BLaST IU #17, Marcellus/Utica Gas, Williamsport Sight Services Lions Club, as well as many individuals in the community.



Workforce Development Pathway Endowment

Gathering the \$25,000 needed to establish the Workforce Development Endowment Fund is STEP's fundraising focus for 2021.

Visit www.stepcorp.org/give to make a contribution.



Raise the Region

Wednesday, March 10 at 6:00 PM
through Thursday, March 11 at 11:59 PM

Raise the Region is a 30-hour online fundraising event held by the First Community Foundation Partnership of Pennsylvania.

You can support STEP by visiting: <http://bit.ly/STEP-RTR>



2021 Community Needs Assessment

A Community Needs Assessment identifies the strengths and resources available in the community to meet the needs of Lycoming and Clinton County residents. The purpose of the Community Needs Assessment is to determine the current needs and the resources required to fill those needs.

Lycoming-Clinton Counties Commission for Community Action (STEP), Inc. requests your assistance to assess our county's needs. Your knowledge and perceptions of the needs faced by you and your community are important to us.

Please visit www.stepcorp.org/CNA to complete the survey.



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