



Newsletter



Celebrates

naeyc®

**Week of the
50TH Young Child[®]
Anniversary**



Spring
2021

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STEP INC. *Star Awards*

Last 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.

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



Kay Keller
Transportation
Assistant Program Manager

Jennifer Sweet
Early Learning Resource Center
Intake Specialist

David Grieb
Transportation
Driver

Kathy Moltz
Head Start
Teacher Assistant

Aron Haefner
Administration
Assistant Operations Officer

Nancy Saiers
Head Start
Home Visitor

Amanda Klein
Head Start
Teacher

Donna Flick
Head Start
Enrollment Specialist

Holly Bilbay
Head Start
Home Visitor

Jessica Renninger
Head Start
Teacher

Kayla Powell
Service Navigation
Family Navigator

Mary Kurtz
Transportation
Driver

Erin Bissman
Office of Aging
Center Coordinator

Tara Coleman
Office of Aging
Center Coordinator

Helen Grosso
Office of Aging
Center Coordinator

Tammy Frye
Office of Aging
Center Coordinator

Becky MacIntyre
Office of Aging
Center Coordinator

Brenda McDermit
Office of Aging
Center Coordinator

Amber Newell
Office of Aging
Center Coordinator

Mike Snyder
Information Technology
Computer Specialist

Cheryl Goodwin
Head Start
Classroom Aide

Justine Leicht
Head Start
Classroom Aide

Susan Jones
Fiscal
Accountant II

Diana Lynch
Head Start
Family Advocate



The winner of February's gift card drawing was Nancy Saiers!

The winner of March's gift card drawing was Holly Bilbay!

The winner of April's gift card drawing was Cheryl Goodwin!



COMMUNITY ACTION MONTH

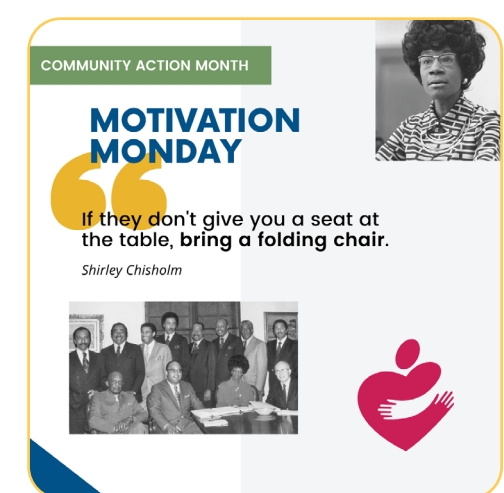
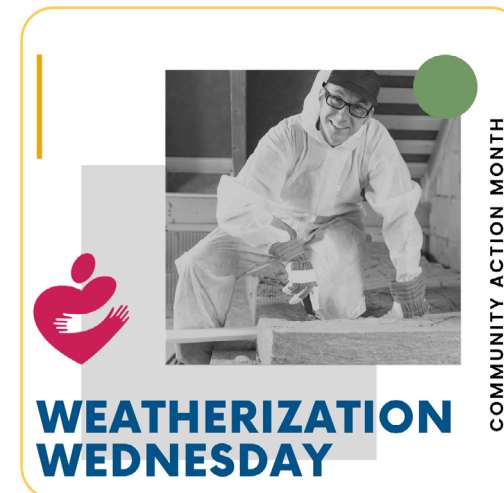
STEP celebrated national Community Action Month in May! Rooted in the Civil Rights Movement and established by the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964, the Community Action Movement connects millions of children and families to greater opportunity, transforming their lives and making our communities – and our nation – stronger. As part of this movement since 1966, STEP is one of more than 1,000 Community Action Agencies nationwide that serve others through programs such as Head Start, Early Head Start, Utilities Assistance, Weatherization, Office of Aging, Transportation, and a multitude of other programs, services, and initiatives designed to help children, adults, and families overcome poverty and chart a course toward self-sufficiency.

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 highlight **STEP's 55 Years of Community Action** and recognize STEP's staff of over 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 for posts that include Mission Monday, Transformation Tuesday, Impact Wednesday, Throwback Thursday, and Fact Friday among others.

Community Action Pledge:

"Community Action changes people's lives, embodies the spirit of hope, improves communities, and makes America a better place to live. We care about the entire community, and we are dedicated to helping people help themselves and each other."





STEP INC. Celebrates **naeyc** **Week of the Young Child** **50TH Anniversary**

STEP Head Start celebrated the 50th anniversary of Week of the Young Child from April 10-16. The Week of the Young Child is an annual observance hosted by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC).

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.

Thank you to all who shared photos and videos with us to make #WOYC21 a unique and amazing Week of the Young Child!



Music Monday

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

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

Tasty Tuesday

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, fruit, and tacos!

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 Early Head Start classrooms, children worked together to plant flower seeds and make bubble solution!

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.

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

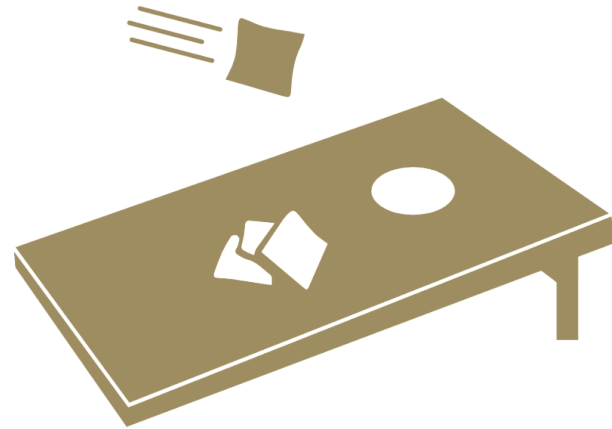
Family Friday

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 brought in photos of their families and drew pictures.

Workforce Development Endowment

CORNHOLE FUNDRAISER



STEP's Service Navigation department held its long-awaited Cornhole Fundraiser to benefit the Workforce Development Endowment Fund! Originally scheduled and put on hold during the spring of 2020, the event was rescheduled for May 8, 2021 at Bald Birds Brewery in Jersey Shore.

Twelve teams faced off in the double elimination tournament hosted by STEP and administered by West Branch Cornhole. In addition to the cost of admission, funds were raised through concessions, chance auction baskets, door prizes, and a 50-50 raffle - totaling \$1,620 for the event.

Thank you to Bald Birds Brewery for allowing us to host our fundraiser at their facility and to Steve with West Branch Cornhole for administering the tournament and providing the boards and bags to make the event possible.

CONGRATULATIONS TO THE FIRST, SECOND, AND THIRD PLACE WINNERS!



SOCIAL JUSTICE TASK FORCE

Community Action has a long history of working on Social Justice and equity for all individuals. In the Summer of 2020, STEP formalized their efforts around diversity, equity, and inclusion with the establishment of the Social Justice Task Force. The Social Justice Task Force is made up of various members of staff and is always looking for more members. Moving forward, the Social Justice Task Force will continue to implement training for staff, support the conversations of diversity, equity, and inclusion, and work to move the community forward.

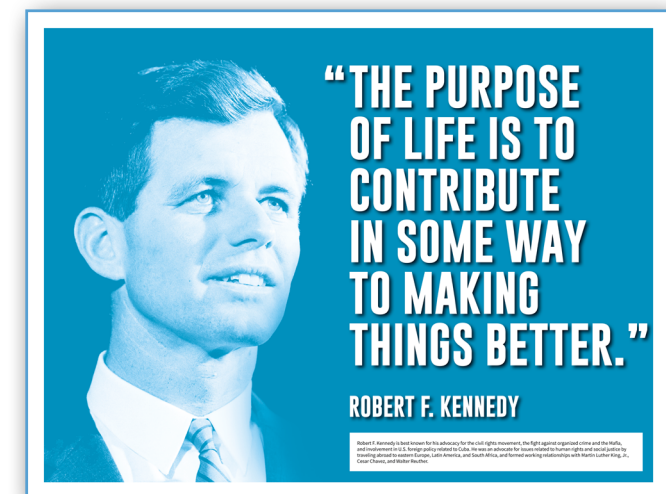
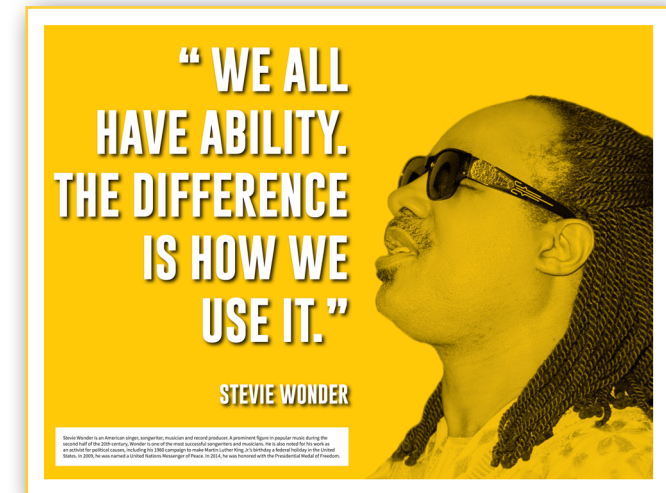
At STEP we strive to challenge bias and prejudice such as racism, sexism, ableism, ageism, homophobia, and all forms of oppression, while respecting the dignity of every person with whom we have contact. STEP has released a Diversity Statement to formally define the culture that we strive for and is the expectation for each of us as we serve each other and our customers:

"STEP is committed to and accountable for a culture and environment that is positive and diverse, and where everyone is respected, valued, celebrated, and safe despite perceived differences."

As a Community Action Agency, STEP is a powerful platform for social change and equity and will use its community presence to educate and model inclusiveness through the fulfillment of our mission and vision."

Most recently, STEP's Social Justice Task Force created a project to highlight famous figures who support the ideals of diversity, equity, and inclusion. Called ***"On the Walls,"*** the poster series includes famous quotes from Martin Luther King Jr., Robert F. Kennedy, Michelle Obama, and many other prominent and historical figures.

Keep an eye *On the Walls* of the STEP offices at Lincoln and Boyd Street, as well as the Clinton County Community Center - the framed posters will be displayed in the near future!



STEP Head Start's Meal Distribution Program

receives donation from

Lingle's Neighborhood Market

Lingle's Neighborhood Market in Jersey Shore recently donated 6,000 plastic bags to STEP Head Start's meal distribution program. These bags will be used to carry a week's worth of lunches for each child enrolled in the Head Start program in Clinton and Lycoming counties, delivered weekly via contactless drop-off. Lingle's donated enough bags to last the program eight weeks.

These meals, and the means to safely prepare, package, and deliver the meals, are especially important this year, as children attending in-person classes are at Head Start only two days a week and learn virtually the rest of the week. Head Start's meal distribution program ensures that breakfast and lunch are provided to each child five days a week, regardless of attending the in-person/hybrid model or fully remote. In total, more than 13,970 meals were provided to children enrolled in STEP Head Start during the 2020-2021 program year.



STEP Head Start Nutrition Specialist Angela Mahonski accepts a donation of 6,000 grocery bags from Lingle's Store Manager Sam Lenker.



Mark Your Calendar!

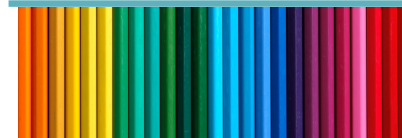


STEP Head Start - Student Enrollment! Going on NOW!

STEP Head Start is accepting applications for the 2021-2022 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 <https://www.stepcorp.org/step-pathways/early-learning/head-start.html>. Completed applications can be emailed to Donna Flick at dlflick@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.



Veggie Vouchers! Drive-Through Distributuion

June 9 ♦ 1:00 PM - 5:00 PM

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

June 14 ♦ 9:00 AM - 3:00 PM

VFW 7863 LeRoy O. Buck post ♦ 150 Shaffer St., South Williamsport

June 16 ♦ 11:00 AM - 1:00 PM

STEP Jersey Shore Center ♦ 641 Cemetery St., Jersey Shore

June 17 ♦ 1:00 PM - 3:00 PM

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

June 18 ♦ 11:00 AM - 1:00 PM

STEP RiverWalk Center ♦ 423 East Central Ave., South Williamsport

June 22 ♦ 11:00 AM - 1:00 PM

STEP Renovo Center ♦ 415 Fourth St., South Renovo

\$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 \$23,606 for one person or \$31,894 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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