

VISION

To open up the world to people to encourage them to experience everything it has to offer; to communicate effectively; and to be as healthy, safe, and financially secure as possible.

For people to feel good about themselves and their relationships with others, to have fun, be happy, and have meaningful things to do.

For people to live in safe and decent neighborhoods where they are accepted, valued, and respected including their cultural preferences.

To guide people on their journey to discover their abilities, talents, and desires by empowering them to be interdependent; to encourage people to make their own choices and decisions so they will have control over their own lives, and over the services and supports they use.



STEP NEWS

June 2004 Volume 3 Issue 6

Life is Short

First I want to apologize to anyone who feels the topic of this column this month is not appropriate for a newsletter. Some people are not comfortable talking about this topic, so in advance, I'm sorry for bringing it up.

So what topic could be so taboo? Death, and planning for it. I know that sounds weird to plan for death but I have unfortunately had to deal with this subject a lot over the years and it has left me with certain imprints. I am a control freak- just ask anyone who works closely with me, my friends, or worse, my husband and they'll agree. Because of that, dealing with death is offensive to me; it really messes with my false sense of control over my life. I am a planner by nature and used to think the only thing I could not plan for was death. I have however, learned the hard way that making a few plans now makes a big difference in the event of your own death or someone else's.

I'm thinking about printing up some buttons for my new campaign: Get Life Insurance and Make a Will. I've been talking to people and am shocked at how many of my close friends don't have life insurance. Even if you are single, this is so important. It is not about you- it's about the people you leave behind. I have planned several funerals. I wish this was not something I could say I have experience with but the ones I've planned where the person had life insurance and had talked with the people they love about their wishes were almost peaceful in comparison to those where everyone is frantic to plan it and pay for it on top of overwhelming grief. You never think these catastrophic events will happen to you or even to your family and friends- but death and illness are equal opportunity events.

Get life insurance while you still can. Even if you are young, get it now! I know someone who was planning to get life insurance but just kept putting it off. Then at age 34 was diagnosed with a serious liver condition and can't get life insurance now. He is married, has one child and another on the way. Chances are that something will happen to him as a result of his condition and he will leave his family in debt with no income and no money to pay for a funeral. Nobody wants that. Get life insurance now!!

The other part of my campaign is the Make a Will and this is something I have yet to do. At the minimum, I am talking to the people I am close with to let them know what I want and more importantly, what I don't want if something happens to me. I am looking into putting it into writing and making it official.

I hope that you will consider making plans so that the people who have to live on without you, will have one less thing to worry about. There are many resources on the internet to help you plan. I found these websites to check out:

www.legaldirectory.com Estate Planning Resources

www.life-insurance-advice.com Life Insurance questions answered

"We cannot direct the wind, but we can adjust the sails." Bertha Calloway, Founder of the Great Plains Black Museum. Start building your boat now and plotting your course.

Melanie Bazile-Fernandez

STEP STARS

Thank you to Becky B, Sheila W, Tom S, Stanley W, Joe S, Leslie K, and Kenyon C for supporting their clients and helping out with the deaf-blind parties.

Sheila Warren & Marilyn Pierce for advocating for Sarah when their was a medical issue going on and ensuring that she's getting the right kind of support.

Thank you John Andrews for all your patience with Brad.

Thanks to STEP for inviting Sr. Bernie to come from Helen Keller National Training Center- it was a wonderful workshop.

Gloria G, Stephanie T and Melani R- thanks for shadowing with Christy.

Jan Lepisto for keeping your chin up during hard times with your crew.

Stephanie T- Thanks for hanging in there with Bonnie and never giving up!

Darin McDaniel for subbing for day program and being a team player.

Walter Price for accepting changes in your crew with a positive attitude.

Kathy V, Gloria G, Melani R, and Becky B- Thanks for all the help solving Judy and Alesia's disagreement.

Katrina P and Christi G for being there for Michelle's health needs-she's lucky you are there for her. Thanks for encouraging Michelle to exercise and get our more often.

June K- Thanks for taking Stefon to meet with Brad and really putting in a lot of time and work to help him become independent.

Thanks to Sheila W for being a team player and helping out with Nancy.

Matt Waters for jumping in with interpreting at the rally. What you did was awesome for the Deaf clients and staff. Many thanks Matt!!

Anna O'Brien and Melani R for being there for Bibiana's health change and adjustment.

Thank you Lisa Barrow for continuing to assist with roommate & staff schedules. THANK YOU for your patience!

Thank you Shannon R for helping Pam improve her reading and writing skills.

Special Recognition to Ann O'Brien for basically saving Bibi's life when she almost fell off the deck- we appreciate your quick response and safety focus!

David Wade for having Olaf involved in your life. You make a big difference!!

Donna, Sandy, and Lori for giving STEP and Barry all your support and love. It was neat to have you involved in house meeting. You are example of VISIONS & VALUES!!

Anissa F, Christy S, and Paloma M for your extra energy working with Leah's communication needs- it's so valuable.

Jermaine Murray- we appreciate your attendance at work and dealing with many issues.

Matty Spanton, Tim Fischer, and Tom Waters- to the three landscapers for continuing your hard work and sympathy cuz it's getting hot outside. You and your crews are awesome!

Thank You Darla for being there for Sofia!

Thanks to David Ruiz for taking over for KB on the weekend for Joe's Joint.

Thanks Stacy Young for subbing with Leah and Bibi.

Good job Paloma M for working through the weekend challenges like Bus- it was great exercise for you both-smile!

Thanks to Melanie F for working hard on the ELP meeting for Sofia.

Happy

Birthday

Joan Silveira 6/2
Artye Morriese 6/3
Lakiya Lowe 6/3
Howard Gonsalves 6/4
Kevin Marsh 6/4
Samuel Bazuaye 6/4
Dennis Stancil 6/5
Herman Collier 6/5
Richard McClintic 6/5
Jewel Anderson 6/8
LaShonda Lovette 6/8
Stacie Smith 6/10
Diana Miller 6/11
Lisa Barrows 6/12
Coralee Smith 6/15
Sadie Cromwell 6/15
Sheryl Jones 6/16
Sean Hauschildt 6/17
Matty Spanton 6/18
Stanley Winkle 6/18
Brian Clark 6/19
Cesar Morales 6/21
Susan Stacy 6/21
Brian Britt 6/22
Reyna Pinol 6/23
Stanley Willis 6/24
Alex Estrella 6/25
Judith McDonough
6/26
Corrine Palaia 6/28

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SLS- Deaf

Hello everyone, we hope everyone is getting ready for Memorial weekend which is the last week-end of May. Also would like to remind you guys that Monday(May 31st) is a holiday and S.T.E.P. office is closed. Also friendly reminder to the staff who are working on May 31st, Monday be prepare to work more hours than your normal shift due to your client will have no day program. So now is the time to help prepare your client Memorial weekend so they can have blast time. Few tips for those who work with our client and planning on being out in the community, please be sure to prepare our client before going out in the sun, be sure they have cool clothes on, water to bring with them, sun block lotion and be sure the coordinator are aware of the client's plan. If you do not know what to do with your client for Memorial weekend, please ask the coordinator for assist to help plan their weekend. So the Deaf Unit would like to say have a HAPPY & SAFE Memorial Weekend!!!!

Deaf Unit would like to remind the PA staff that your next PA meeting will be coming up on June 21st 2004 which is on Monday at Carmichael Park from 11am to 1:30pm. Please come to your PA meeting, because meeting will have few team building games, and few new ideas that you will be learn things about Deaf and Blind folks. We are looking for two different PA staff who would be interested in helping us leading games and hoping they can give us feedback on how to help make it more fun for June 21st PA meeting. So if anyone is interested please contact Sam Holden by e mail at samh@stepsite.com or leave a note in my box and you will be contacted to set up an appointment with Sam. We would really like to say THANK YOU for those who showed up at the last PA meeting, we could see that you guys really enjoyed it. Thanks for those who were really involved in the meeting and giving your feedback which was really important for us to know.

We would like to welcome a new client to our program which her name is Wendy S, she a beautiful young girl who just enter our program. We would like for those who are interested meeting with her introduce yourself to her, get a chance to know where because once you do you will find that she a sweet, caring and beautiful young woman who just want to live the life the fullest. So please if you see her, please get a chance to see her and have few minutes of chatting with her because afterward she will put a smile on your face.

The Deaf Until would like to welcome our new employee that started working at S.T.E.P., we hope you enjoy working at S.T.E.P. and spend many years working here. Here are the new employee that are now working for S.T.E.P. -Mike Watkins, -Bruce, -Mike Payne, -Sumeet P, -Amanda, -Betty, -Christy S, -Terry T, -Carey, -Aaron H and -Gray Williams. Please if you see any of these folks please be sure you welcome them to the S.T.E.P. FAMILY!

Human Resources

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Policy Review:

On page 9-2 in your handbook are the training requirements. The policy states "in order to ensure quality services are provided by S.T.E.P., employees are required to complete certain trainings during the first 90 days of employment and on an on-going basis. Some of these required classes are provided by S.T.E.P. and employees will be notified in advance of upcoming training events. It is the employee's responsibility to request time off in writing at least 2 weeks before the scheduled class if it conflicts with his/her shift. The required classes include CPR/First Aid Certification (this is NOT provided by S.T.E.P.), RESPECT Training, and Medication/Universal Precautions. There will also be required specific trainings based on employee's position within the agency. The timely completion of all initial classes/trainings as well as all required renewals or additional specific classes or trainings are the sole responsibility of the employee. Failure to complete any of these classes or training could result in postponement or loss of qualification for merit increase, suspension, or termination. "Your handbook has more information on pages 9-3 to 9-5. If you have questions about classes, please see Lisa Barrows.

Reminder from Lisa Barrows: All moves (in or out of a residence) must be cleared through Lisa Barrows first. This applies to both clients and paid roommates. Proper notification must be given to Lisa in writing prior to moving in or out.

Thank you to all who have been working so hard to get the evaluations up to date, your progress is much appreciated.

Open enrollment for the 401k plan is coming up in June. Flyers will be distributed with the date and time of the meeting. Anyone is welcome to attend. The requirements for joining are: 1. One year of service with S.T.E.P., 2. You must be 21 years of age, 3. You must have worked 1000 S.T.E.P. hours in the preceding year. This is an excellent benefit for employees, please come and check it out!

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ILS

Well it must be the start of summer... Welcome back Mike Bachman. We would also like to welcome Christy Schoneman to ILS. Please make them feel welcome! Good luck to Steve L who is transferring back to day program. Please make sure you are having your folks check their A/C units and have the filters changed. You may be able to contact the apartment manager to have them change the filter each month.

We have taken on several new ILS clients in the last month and have gotten several referrals to start later this month. Parenting Support Group will next meet again on June 17, 2004 at the STEP office from 3:30 to 5:00pm. Topic is "Fire Safety."

Day Program

Spring is almost over but that means summer is just around the corner. Make sure you have sun block with you and plenty of water for you and your clients when working outside.

A warm welcome to new job coaches Darla Tankink and John Jeter to Next Step. Goodbye to Anna O'Brien and good luck at your new job. Welcome back to Steve Lantz! We are expecting 2 new clients sometime in the middle of June- another warm welcome to Sarah Gee and Gene Hull.

We also want to tell Sandy we miss her and we are thinking about your family!

Thanks to Judy Belotz and Ada Torres for the thoughtful service they provide here at STEP. If you have received a birthday or anniversary card from STEP- the beautiful penmanship is Judy's. She is also responsible for making sure the positive recognitions made in the STEP STARS newsletter column are noted in the Human Resource Department. Judy and Ada are a valuable part of the "Walk the Walk" campaign to help recognize people who inspire us everyday.

A recent addition to Extra Step is Jamie Christopher. Wow- Jamie is a skilled and hard worker! Jamie loves the outdoors and animals. She is employed as a professional dog exerciser and groomer. Right now she has room to expand her business, so if you have a lonely, lazy, smelly dog at home that needs more love and attention, please contact Extra Step. Jamie is also an experienced Horseperson and she grew up on a farm. In June she will begin working at Saddle Pals which is a therapeutic horseback riding program for disabled adults in Orangevale. Keep up the good work Jamie.

Earth's Easiest Exercise

Walking can add years to your life and life to your years. And it couldn't be easier. You don't need to join a health club, wear special equipment or go into training to reap the rewards:

The Conditioner: walking conditions your heart and lungs and raises your body's ability to use oxygen more efficiently. Fact: in one study, women who walked briskly (3-4 miles per hour) at least three hours a week cut their risk of heart attack and stroke by more than half.

The Protector: walking helps beat other health problems, too. It reduces your risk of some forms of cancer and osteoporosis. It fights the battle of the bulge, taking off fat and building muscle. Walking can even help people with diabetes reduce or eliminate their need for medication.

The Joint-Saver: walking can burn about as many calories per mile as jogging does. But it delivers only about a quarter of the jolt, so it's much easier on your joints and muscles.

The De-Stressor: walking easy on your mind, too, since it lessens stress and lightens depression. Beginning walkers usually report that they feel better, sleep better and that their mental outlook improves.

The Winner: Best of all, walking has the lowest dropout rate of any form of exercise. So you're more likely to stick with it and get all these benefits and more, like better digestion, improved regularity and lower blood pressure.



STEP SPOTLIGHT

Michelle Armstrong

Michelle currently works as the ILS Program Manager and she's been with STEP for four years. Michelle is a native Californian, from "good 'ol Madera County". Before working at STEP she had held down an interesting mix of jobs including an office assistant, a Winnie the Pooh mascot, and for Pizza Hut delivery- "may I take your order please?".

Michelle has a flair for the dramatic. She has been involved in theatre and can be seen on stage several times a year. She loves boogie boarding, traveling and volleyball. She says she is also a dominoe champion.

She says she loves people most days so it makes for "good times". She hopes to direct short films, produce theatre and after she's tackled the entertainment industry, she wants to surf the waves at Mavericks Point in California and then see the world. No big dreams here- but we know she can do it! Michelle said that if she came into a lot of money, she would buy a house in Ireland, Northern California, and Kauai. Then she would say her good byes and miss us all terribly! Send us a postcard.

Michelle is a vibrant part of STEP and has an energy that is contagious. We're so happy she's part of the STEP family!



Any articles, announcements, STARS, and resource information is welcome. The deadline for the next newsletter is 7/15/04.

Jen's Trivia Question

Be the first person to visit Jen Jones's office with the correct answer and receive a prize:

Name 5 Deaf MAJOR LEAGUE baseball players.

June 6th, 2004 is National Cancer Survivor Day.

"Freedom is what you do with what's been done to you."
-- Jean-Paul Sartre

The Deaf PA meeting will be coming up on June 21st 2004 which is on Monday at Carmichael Park from 11am to 1:30pm.

*Challenge is a dragon with a gift in its mouth....
Tame the dragon and the gift is your.*

Noela Evans

Strawberry Smoothie

Serving Size = 1 cup Makes 5 servings

3 cups cranberry juice cocktail

8oz reduced-fat vanilla yogurt

1 pint fresh strawberries, cleaned, tops removed

1 banana sliced

1) Combine half of all ingredients in a blender or food processor and blend or process until smooth.

2) Repeat with the remaining ingredients. Combine the mixtures together and pour into individual glasses to serve.

S.T.E.P. STARS CONTINUED

Thank you Jaimie Dillard for getting more information about Salt-KB learned a lot!

Thank You Charlene Rhodes for doing Michelle's hair.

Annissa F- thanks for your continued concern for Leah's needs and your commitment to her! Also thanks for subbing at the last minute.

Thanks to Matt Call for volunteering to interpret at the rally at the last minute.

Thank You Linda L for your follow through with Terry and showing motivation to help her better her life.

Thank You Lee F for your continuous feedback about Sarah and your stable support to her.

Deaf/Blind Awareness Week

June 27-July 3, 2004 is Deaf/Blind Awareness Week and is also the 40th anniversary of Rubella. June 27, 2000, is the 120th anniversary of the birth of Helen Keller, and each year the week in which her birthday falls is recognized as Deaf-Blind Awareness Week. In honor of Helen Keller -- and other members of the deaf-blind community.

The story of Helen Keller is well known. Born on June 27, 1880, the healthy infant was developing normally. But at the age of 19 months, an illness left her deaf and blind. When Helen was six, her equally famous teacher, Anne Sullivan, was able to teach her to communicate. Helen Keller went on to excel in all aspects of her life: graduating from college with honors and writing, lecturing, and inspiring people worldwide.

President Ronald Reagan first proclaimed Helen Keller Deaf-Blind Awareness Week in 1984, stating that America should help her deaf-blind citizens by fostering independence, creating employment opportunities, and encouraging their contributions to society.

The following are some great websites to check out:

The Life of Helen Keller: An American Hero
<http://www.hki.org/helen.html>

A-Z to Deafblindness
<http://www.deafblind.com>

A Deafblindness Web Resource
<http://www.deafblind.co.uk/index.html>

Deaf World Web
<http://dww.deafworldweb.org>

STEP serves several people who are Deaf/Blind. We recently had the privilege of hosting Sr. Bernie Wynn from the Helen Keller National

Training Team for a one day workshop and visits with some of our Deaf/Blind folks. We learned so much from the visit as we have every time in the past.

Between 1964 and 1965, there was a worldwide epidemic of rubella, also known as German measles. Pregnant women who contracted rubella in the first trimester of their pregnancy could pass the rubella virus to their developing fetus, causing the child to be born deaf, blind, with cardiac problems, developmental delays and other medical conditions. In the United States alone, approximately 20,000 children were born with two or more of these symptoms, which came to be known as congenital rubella syndrome or CRS. Several thousand of these children were reported to be deaf-blind.

In the late 1980s, families and services providers in the U.S. started to report changes in the behaviors and health status of adults with CRS. Based on information about changes that had occurred in the Australian population with CRS (born in the 1940s), the Helen Keller National Center conducted a national survey to determine the prevalence of late onset manifestations in these individuals. This year marks the 40th anniversary of the worldwide rubella epidemic of the 1960s.

The best and most beautiful things in the world cannot be seen or even touched. They must be felt within the heart.

Helen Keller

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