



S.T.E.P. News

Building on a Foundation of Quality News

Number 59

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Spring 2009

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Design/Production: John Foss

Editor-In-Chief: Melanie Bazile

Production Assistant: Jen Jones

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We invite editorial submissions of all kinds. Stories, pictures, milestones, events, art, poems! Send your materials to the address above, or via e-mail to melanieb@stepagency.com

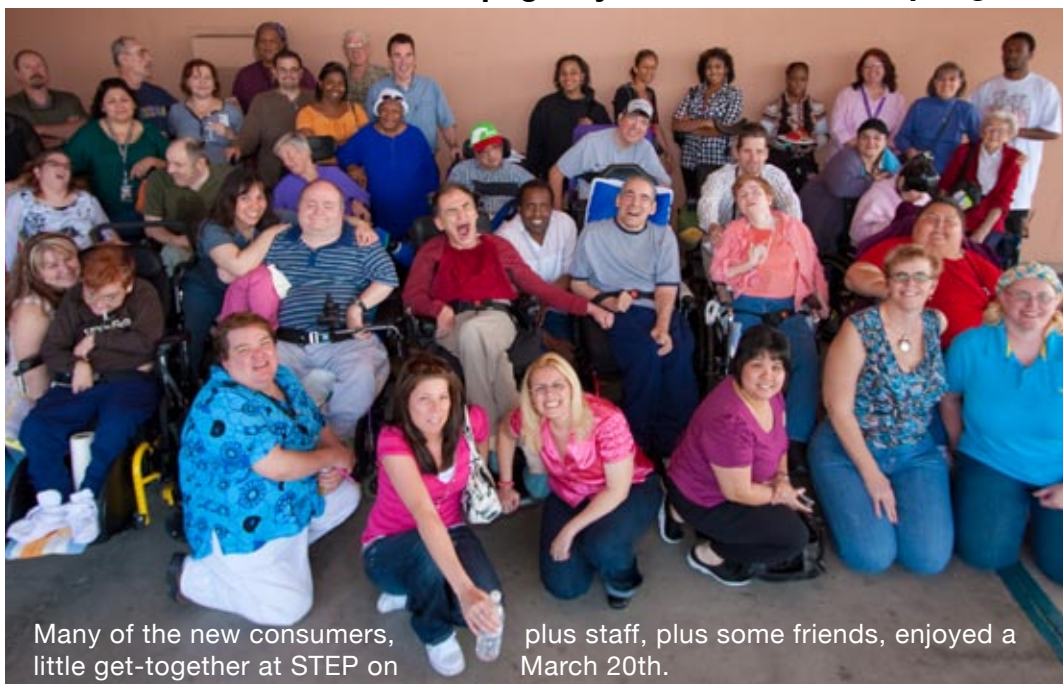
Copy deadlines: We try to follow these deadlines for receiving your stories for the next issue.

Spring – February 1

Summer – April 15

Fall – July 15

Winter – October 15



Many of the new consumers, little get-together at STEP on

plus staff, plus some friends, enjoyed a March 20th.

11 Consumers Come to STEP From The Gardens

Life is an incredible journey that presents us with moments of love, pain, loss, new opportunities and awesome adventures. Sometimes life offers situations where we feel we may not have a choice about our options. When these situations come up it is a chance to explore new chapters. For many of the residents who lived at The Gardens, life granted them such a moment of exploration. Although some of the former Gardens residents moved into

care facilities, S.T.E.P. had the opportunity to help 11 of the residents begin new chapters of independence in their lives. Although the transition has been a challenge, the rewards have far exceeded any bumps along the way.



Sandy Donnelly

Sandy Donnelly had wanted to move into her own apartment for many years. That chance had not been given to her until the closure of The Gardens. She moved in with another person supported by STEP and now has a great friendship and support system because of this. Her first week on her own, Sandy was ecstatic

over making her own salad. Oh, the simple pleasures in life that so many of us take for granted!



Debbie Johnson

Debbie Johnson was another person who had hoped to move into her own apartment. She looked forward to a home of her own without sharing her space and being able to do the things she wanted to do when she wanted to do them. Now Debbie has that ability. Debbie has begun to develop her own schedules and has enjoyed spending time by her self, something she could never do at The Gardens.



"Lizzie" Lizzaraga

Jan Sumka and **Eulioigio "Lizzie" Lizzaraga** have known each other and been friends for many years. They had dreamed of having a swinging bachelor pad one day but did not think that would ever happen. With the closure of the facility, they

have been able to move into an apartment complex where they have many friends and can watch NASCAR whenever they want. Jan is planning to have a pool party when the weather improves.

Carl Virgin and **Jim Picel** are two other gentlemen who have known each other a long time who have wanted to be independent. They decided that they would like to be room-



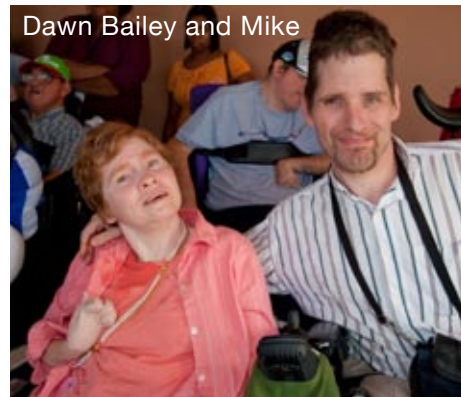
Jim Picel and Carl Virgin in their new home!

mates when they left The Gardens, so STEP helped them find an apartment to share. On their first weekend in their new place, Carl broke open a pony keg of Heineken (a housewarming gift from family)!

Mary Davis was a former STEP client who returned. Mary has moved into a big home with a friend and has enjoyed cooking, crafting, shopping, and re-decorating. Mary has enjoyed the social aspect her new arrangement offers her and has become very close to her staff and people in her community.

Joe Miller was a STEP

client, then moved to the Gardens, and now has returned to us. Joe said that he wished he had never left his own apartment. He missed the freedom that he experienced in his own place and has reveled in having that again. Joe is experimenting with new cuisines and meeting new people. He has enjoyed the friendships he has made in the new apartment complex where he now resides.



Dawn Bailey and Mike

Dawn Bailey was able to move into an apartment where all retrofitting had been completed. Dawn is an animal lover who had not been able to have a pet while living in The Gardens. She now enjoys her cat Otis,



Carol Nolan with Diane Azevedo

and spending quality time with her long-time boyfriend.

STEP is currently in the process of transitioning former Gardens resident **Christine Bolt**. She will move in with her long-time friend **Diane Azevedo**, and will be joining our family over March and April. Christine will have the joy of joining Diane in a home that her mother purchased and retrofitted years ago to meet Diane's needs. Christine has said that she loves the new place and looks forward to training staff and exploring her independence.

We often take for granted these experiences in life. However, for these new people that STEP is supporting, these were not necessarily expected outcomes for their lives. It has been and will continue to be an awesome journey for them, and STEP is honored to join them on their paths toward independence.

Donations for New Consumers:

by Jen Jones

On January 19th, KCRA News 3 ran a story on the closing of the skilled nursing facility The Gardens, where residents were given notice that they had until January 31 to vacate. A plea was made to our community to assist the people who were being displaced; many moving into their own homes or apartments with nothing but a few clothes. The response from the community was overwhelming! 2 entire storage units were filled with furniture items, while donations of household items, gift cards and cash came pouring in.

S.T.E.P. would like to recognize all of the generous people who opened their hearts and donated items to help these folks get a fresh start. Many donations were brought to STEP in person, and unfortunately

we were not able to collect all the names of the kind donors. Please be assured that even though your name may not be listed below, your donation is greatly appreciated!

- CC Meyers
- Traci Beckstrom
- Janet Brand
- Sarah Coaxum, Sutter Health
- Patti Dixon
- Kari Emery
- Maureen Fitzgerald
- Claire Gooden
- Jim & Jill Hampton
- The Jensens
- Arlene Kern
- Penny Layfield
- Debra Millot
- Nancy Nickle
- Tami Riley
- 21st & R Self Storage
- Sharon Silverthorn
- Margret Weersing
- Pamela Wu

STEP News is Going Electronic!

To make sure you don't miss one packed issue, send an e-mail with "E-mail Newsletter" in the subject line to jenj@stepagency.com and you will be added to the STEP News e-mail list. This will help cut printing and mailing costs, and save trees!



Thinking of Ireland

by Lynn Frampton

In March you can't help but think of the Irish and St. Patrick's Day. Did you know that between 1820 and 1860, nearly 3.5 million Irish people immigrated to the United States? That's a lot of people! That culture has really made an impact on us if we can't think about March without shamrocks, leprechauns, or corned beef and cabbage. I know my last name "Frampton" is Irish, but I was curious who else I knew had Irish ancestors. Here is a short list; Bensen, Cotton, Craig, Curtis, Gee, Harris, Hull, Jackson, Magby, Meneff, Nash, Neeley, Scott, Wines, Wymer, and Waters.

Everyone can find out where their family started, because there are so many web sites dedicated to helping people find their roots. I know that times are tough for everyone because we are all worried about the dramatic changes in our state and world economy. Thinking about my ancestors and the challenges they faced as they immigrated to the United States makes me feel better. We are living the dream that they wanted for us. They struggled, traveled great distances, and worked very hard in dangerous times, in the hopes that we would have a better life that they did. I am so grateful for their courage!

Spring Fever is Upon Us!

by Michelle B. Armstrong

The ILS would like to extend a huge Thank You to both the Deaf SLS Department and to the Rotary Club of Carmichael (thanks Jeff Thompson), in addition to the entire S.T.E.P. family, for the generous food and toy donations which made this year's Toy & Food Drive such a success! All of your donations made a huge difference in the lives of the clients and families we serve and we cannot express the deep sense of gratitude felt by those individuals who received these items. You made the difference!

Our ILS team continues to take on additional SLS arrangements to assist with the growing SLS department, which recently transferred many new consumers into their own homes for the first time in their lives. A huge thanks to all of our ILS Instructors who have enthusiastically embraced their new roles as SLS Coordinators and provided tremendous teamwork as our unit continues to grow!

Thanks to the following team Coordinators: Tammy Smith, Katrina Parham, Doug Findlay, David Wade, Gloria Goode, Stephanie Tate and June Klock.

And a *HUGE* thanks to our entire ILS team, who have taken on additional clients as the need arose! We are incredibly grateful for all of your amazing teamwork and the quality of services you

continue to provide.

The Parenting Team is currently preparing for our annual Easter Egg Hunt, which takes place at Carmichael Park, and also upcoming Community Play Dates. Our Parenting group continues to provide support and resources to the families and children we serve, along with an opportunity for our parents to network and expand their circle of support.

Yuba City Events

by Tracy Cummings

Yuba City's clients and staff had a great time performing at the annual Christmas Party, it was a wonderful experience



for all that participated. I was amazed by some of our clients who, normally shy and reserved,

got up there and “wowed” everyone! We had a great time with the practices and it allowed people to get to know each other on a whole different level. A great Job to all that participated!

On February 13th we held a Valentine dinner at Romilda Jones’s home and had 13 clients attending. We had a great time, with lots of socializing, game playing, dancing and good food. The menu for the evening was Salad, rib eye steak, baked potato and French bread. For dessert there were two different cakes, baked by Romilda and her staff Jolene. Thank you to all staff, Donna Hernandez, Sar-



ah Sutherland, Donna Fletcher, Jolene Woodford, Tamara Mann, Kelly Gill, Margie Bates, Danielle Shelton and Veronica Beltran that helped with the cooking, serving and setting up.



Community Resource Corner

by Lisa Barrows

Welcome to a new year, I hope all is going well. It has been an interesting start for the year and I am excited to see what possibilities are in store for the rest of the year! As always I have some information that I hope will be useful for all.

During this time of budget crises and economic instability, everyone is trying to save money and be as fiscally responsible as they can. So in this issue I wanted to highlight some money saving resources.

\$\$\$ TAX TIME \$\$\$

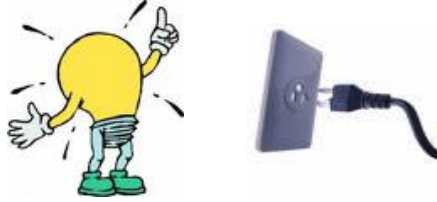
Free Tax Preparation is available for those with annual incomes below \$42,000. You can call 211 and ask for Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) nearest you or you can swing by my office and take a look at the list I have.

\$\$\$ UTILITY COSTS \$\$\$

SMUD Budget Billing Program – they average your bills over the previous year and set an average monthly amount so you know every month what your bill will be with no surprises! Go to <http://www.smud.org/en/pay/Pages/budget-billing-signup.aspx> (<http://tinyurl.com/b96gx8>). Your account must be in good standing and not currently on an installment plan.

SMUD Low Income Assistance (EAPR) – You can get discount

of up to 35% off your bill, based on income. Call 1-888-742-SMUD (7683) or go online at www.smud.org. Forms are also available at the STEP office in the file cabinet.



SMUD Medical Equipment Discount Rate – Get discounts up to 30% off your bill if you require the use of any electric powered medical devices or equipment.

You can go online or forms are available at the STEP office in the file cabinet.

These programs can all be combined for added savings. If you meet any of these criteria don't hesitate! Get signed up now and save some money.

If you have any ideas or resources you would like to share please contact me at lisab@stepagency.com or call me at 916-679-1555 ext. 120

State Park Discounts

Discover the many states of California! Consumers and others with disabilities can get a 50% discount on entrance fees (to include annual pass) to any California State Park & Recreation facility. This is called the Disabled Discount Pass Pro-

gram. Access the form at:

<http://tinyurl.com/cbqunr>

S.T.E.P. also has copies of the form available in the black forms file cabinet in the Sacramento Office, or ask Georgie at the Yuba City office.

Family Advisory Committee

by Melanie Bazile

The Family Advisory Committee met on March 10 for one of our best-attended meetings yet. We are grateful that Lobbyist Dwight Hansen of Hansen and Associates was able to join us, and that fellow SLS agency CLO and S.T.E.P. are working together to keep informed.

Dwight gave some history and opinions as to the reasons the State is in the crisis it is. He explained the current situation, which is basically the 3% provider rate reduction and the \$100 million that has to be found or an additional 7.1% rate reduction will occur in September. There will be a special election May 19 and the Governor will wait until after that election to release his revised budget. There will be public hearings between April 1 and the May revise. Dwight suggested we begin meeting with our Legislators so we develop a relationship and can explain the impact on services and supports. He suggested we focus on Roger Neillo, Dave Cox and potentially Dave Jones. He mentioned there would be a petition circulating soon and asked for assis-

tance in getting signatures. He also suggested continuing tours of Legislators and their staff. We asked Dwight to provide us with some information on the impact of the propositions passing or failing on May 19th.

Below you will find the schedule of Roger Neillo's Community Breakfasts. This is a low-key way for us to meet Roger and get our foot in his door.

Thanks again to our families for being there! Not just at the meetings but being there for STEP!

Fair Oaks Community Meeting

April 16, 7:30 AM

Please join us at our regular hangout for this quarter's community meeting. The coffee's on Roger.

Diandas Italian Bakery and Cafe
10131 Fair Oaks Boulevard
Fair Oaks, CA

Orangevale Community Meeting

April 17, 7:30 AM

The 2009 Spring Edition of the Orangevale Community Meeting. Join us at Denny's. Roger provides the coffee.

Denny's Diner
8841 Greenback Lane
Orangevale, CA 95662

Folsom Community Meeting

April 21, 7:30 AM

Join us in Folsom at our new location for the 2009 Spring Community Meeting. Roger provides the coffee.

Mimi's Cafe
2719 East Bidwell Street
Folsom, CA 95630

A New Day Conference

by Lynn Frampton

"The greatest legacy that we can leave as a result of our work or involvement is not necessarily seen in our lifetime. If we planted seeds, offered opportunities and set the stage, then we have contributed to a life worth living. People with disabilities deserve no less." — Derrick Dufresne, Community Resource Alliance, Inc.

Derrick was a dynamic speaker at the A New Day conference. Each February, the Association of Regional Center Agencies organizes a conference where everyone connected to the work we do can be inspired, educated, motivated, and validated on the belief that people with developmental disabilities are valued members of our communities and deserve to be recognized as such. I am so proud that I have been asked to be a representative of S.T.E.P., and I am grateful for the opportunity to go and connect with people and agencies that are taking bold innovative actions in employment for people with disabilities in California. One of our greatest supporters is the First Lady of California, Maria Shriver. Please visit her WE Include website: www.firstlady.ca.gov/projects/needs/

Watch the WE Include video, which I found so moving, and gave me encouragement that even in these uncertain fi-

nancial times WE have never been more certain that our mission to plant seeds, offer opportunities, and set the stage for everyone to have a life worth living isn't suspended because of a weak economy. WE know what lies ahead won't be easy, but when has it ever been easy for anyone we know and love with a disability? It's time for us to borrow their strength of character and bravery to keep moving forward toward what is right – together!

STEP Stars

Congratulations to the Yuba City Personal Attendants for knowing the 5 principles! I was very impressed and touched you had all taken the time and effort to learn them.

Welcome our two new Hearing SLS Coordinators Kara Skinner and Liz Brunton! Welcome to the S.T.E.P. family!

— Melanie Bazile



BASIC HOME MAINTENANCE

A Hands-On Training facilitated by Jerry Hadley

Thursday April 30, 2009



3:00pm-5:00pm
STEP office classroom

This hands-on training is for SLS and ILS folks and anyone wanting to learn the basics on how to maintain their home. These are some of the topics that will be covered:



- Basic tool kit
- Carpet care
- Common vacuum cleaner problems/needs
- Sink and garbage disposal 101
- Toilets- clogs, cleaning, water turn-off, basic repairs
- Changing light bulbs
- Changing air filters
- Smoke detectors
- The right and wrong way to hang a picture
- Kinds of issues you should contact a landlord about



Sign Language Interpreter provided

Please RSVP to Melanie at STEP at 679-1555 ext 108 or melanieb@stepagency.com so we know how many handouts to make.



April 22, 2009 Training Opportunity, Feeling Safe, Being Safe Emergency Preparedness Materials (FSBS)

California's Department of Developmental Services Consumer Advisory Committee (CAC) will be offering this unique and time-limited training to providers across California. The FSBS project was developed to assist individuals with developmental disabilities create customized emergency preparedness plans using accessible FSBS tools. Several CAC members have become certified FSBS trainers along with many volunteer advocates from area boards and regional center consumer advocates. All trainings are co-conducted by certified trainers with a facilitator team member from the Board Resource Center.

This FSBS train-the-trainer was developed for agencies, providers, and others who want to learn about and assist individuals and family members to use the FSBS materials. We are asking interested community-based providers to host a training in their region to ensure more individuals have access to the FSBS materials so they will be better prepared in the event of an emergency.

The two-hour training is hands-on and interactive. It's

free and all participants will be provided FSBS materials, which include a personalized workbook, magnet, and a DVD that demonstrates how to complete the materials and put together a home emergency kit. Upon completion of the training, each participant will receive FSBS materials to provide support to 25 individuals and/or family members so they may also learn to use the FSBS emergency preparedness tools to Feel Safe and Be Safe.

The goal of the CAC is to assure that all persons with developmental disabilities in California have effective emergency plans that work for them and for those assisting them. We encourage you to host a training and invite neighboring providers to attend. Please feel free to view Feeling Safe, Being Safe DVD now posted at www.dds.ca.gov/ConsumerCorner/Publications.cfm.

S.T.E.P. will host a Feeling Safe Being Safe training on Wednesday April 22, at 9:00am at the STEP office. This is open to SLS Coordinators, ILS Instructors, Managers, Directors and PA2's. Please contact Melanie at STEP to RSVP!



New Employee Handbook: Professional Judgment and Behavior ***By Sandy Jones***

By now, all employees should have received their new Employee Handbook. That's the smaller, streamlined version. And by now, you should also have noticed a big difference, not only in the size of the handbook, but the content.

There is no "Friends and Family" policy; no "Attendance and Punctuality" policy; no Dress Code. Does that mean that we no longer have high expectations for our employees? Ab-

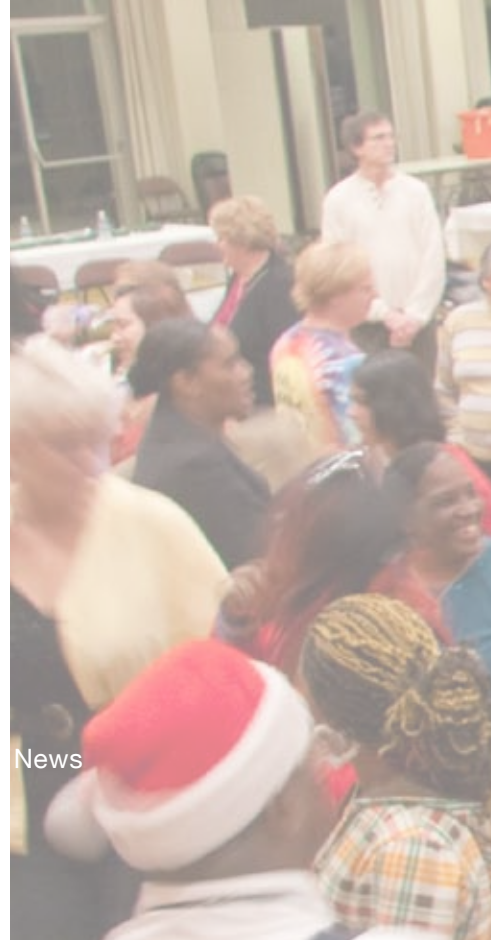
solutely not. Note that on page 1, you will see our policy, titled, "Use of Professional Judgment and Behavior" that summarizes all performance expectations. What this means is that we are placing the responsibility for this behavior on you and that the expectation is for you to maintain these standards for professional behavior while at work.

We all know what "professional" looks, acts, and sounds like. Just think about the occasions in your life when you are the person receiving "services" and what your expectations were for that person. Your doctor, your child's teacher, your hair stylist, your tax preparer. Do you want them to show up in a pair of flip flops with dirty hair and fingernails, cussing and arguing with someone on the cell phone while they examine you?

Do you want them to have a friend or relative with them while they are doing your taxes or waxing your eyebrows? No, you don't and you shouldn't. If they did any of those things, you would immediately know it wasn't "professional", and it would probably make you uncomfortable, impact your trust in that person, maybe even make you angry enough to stop using their services and find another provider that *WILL* act in an appropriate manner.

In any situation, if you are conducting yourself in a professional manner, it means you are dressed appropriately, you are communicating appropriately, and you are behaving professionally. We want you to know that we believe in your ability to

be a professional in this field. We trust that you will conduct yourself in a professional manner while working with a person we provide services for. After all, isn't that to be expected from us all?



More Fun From the STEP Holiday Party

Photos by John Foss



Jen's Happy Springtime Word Search!

S	E	E	F	R	L	I	L	I	E	S	J	W	B	S	X	S	B
A	R	S	E	D	O	W	J	I	V	Y	R	F	U	N	U	H	A
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L	Z	O	B	Z	G	H	P	N	U	O	M	I	T	W	M	N	Z
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B	C	N	T	A	G	A	R	C	B	S	G	H	H	G	Z	E	T
M	S	I	R	C	N	S	Z	Z	G	F	C	O	I	Y	P	C	P
U	R	A	I	J	I	O	E	W	R	A	W	P	O	N	V	N	C
B	G	R	B	P	N	N	U	I	M	E	U	E	R	M	E	O	E
O	N	I	Z	I	E	C	K	Q	R	N	O	B	F	E	L	G	U
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E	A	I	U	J	A	G	L	A	U	S	V	R	O	I	G	Q	L
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S	T	U	E	D	O	J	U	R	E	U	A	C	E	H	E	F	O
Z	S	T	X	O	Y	A	O	K	L	N	R	W	P	W	I	Q	M
N	D	T	H	G	I	R	B	I	Z	Y	Q	L	Z	B	U	F	S

BIRTH
 BLOOMS
 BONNETS
 BRIGHT
 BUDS
 CLEANUP
 COLOURFUL
 EASTER
 FLOWERS
 FRESH
 GARDENING
 GREEN
 GROWTH
 LILIES
 NEW
 RAINBOOTS
 SEASON
 SHOWERS
 SUNSHINE
 THAWING
 TULIPS
 UMBRELLAS
 WARM



S.T.E.P. Inc.
 5945 Palm Drive
 Carmichael, CA 95608
 916-679-1555
www.stepagency.com