

S E P T E M B E R 2 0 0 6

S.T.E.P. News

Bringing you stories and information from around the office and our community.

DIRECTOR'S NOTES

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My daughter starts kindergarten soon and I have been quite emotional about this milestone in her life. I've been thinking a lot about this and it finally occurred to me that one of the reasons I am so emotional is that is not just an important time in her life, but a milestone for me as well. It causes me to look inward and reflect on my life: Have I done everything I can do prepare her for school? Am I organized enough to help her get her homework done and keep track of all the events? Do I have the energy needed to keep up with her now?

That last question is the one I have been thinking about the most. Not only am I concerned about my current energy level but what about 5, 10, 15 years from now? I began to think about my own health and analyze the commitment, or lack thereof, to taking care of my body. Some people seem to naturally have the focus required to be healthy and some people seem to struggle daily to make good choices for themselves. I am one of those people who battle with this issue and I was thinking that a lot of the people we are supporting struggle just as much as I do. It is even more frightening when I look at the research and statistics that show people with

DATES TO REMEMBER

Sept. 4 **Labor Day**

The STEP office will be CLOSED.

Sept. 10 **Scrap-booking**

This is a crafts event that will be held at STEP. Please contact Melanie or Claudia for more information.

Sept. 11 - 15 **Camp Grizzly**

Sept. 21

Respect Review Class

Contact Lisa if to find out if you are required to attend.

Sept. 28 & 29

7 Habits ...

Contact Lisa if you are interested in attending.

Oct. 5 & 6

Supported Life Conference

**The date of the Sacramento Area
Annual SLS Picnic
has been set for September 29th
at McKinley Park.**

Last years picnic was a wonderful success with consumers, family members, agency staff and ACRC personnel mixing and mingling. This year we will, as last year, be inviting the new ACRC Director so that he can witness the great things that happen through SLS services. Please reserve the date now and get the word out.

**SAVE THE DATE – FRIDAY, 9/29
FROM 2 PM – 6 PM.**

Please RSVP to Ayren at the STEP office.

velopmental disabilities are more likely to experience early deaths, chronic conditions, and potentially preventable secondary conditions. People with developmental disabilities have more unmet health care needs, receive fewer preventative services, some of the highest rates of oral disease, and higher rates of diabetes. STEP set a goal for 2006 aimed at improving the overall health and well-being of both the people we support and our employees. As the year is winding down, I am realizing this will be a lifelong goal for all of us at STEP and one that demands our utmost attention. The incident report data shows a high number of unplanned hospitalizations, many of our folks are not satisfied with their doctors, some of our folks are facing potentially serious symptoms that may be unexplained, and many of the people we support have poor health habits in general.

So what can we do? We should first recognize the importance of communication and talking about our health. The four components of a “healthy lifestyle” include Emotional Health, Physical Health, Health Through Meaningful Activities and Social Health. These components are further defined later in the newsletter. We can continually strive to create opportunities to learn from individuals as well as more opportunities for staff to learn. We should educate the community at large and continue to create opportunities for self-advocacy. I know that we can make a difference by working together. If you have ideas, thoughts on improving the overall health and well-being of the people we support and the people who support them, I’d love to hear from you!

*Melanie Bazile
Executive Director*

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Reminder of Recent Policy Changes

Just a reminder to everyone that we have had 2 fairly major policy changes. Just to be sure everyone is up to speed, here they are again. Both policies became effective on June 1, 2006.

“Vacation” time off is now PTO (Personal Time Off)

Personal Time Off can be used by regular, full-time employees for Doctor’s appointments, vacation time, time needed for personal business, etc. You are still responsible for submitting your time off request at least 2 weeks in advance to your supervisor. If it is for a Doctor’s appointment, you will still follow the procedure for your position to request that time off. Please check with your supervisor if you are not sure about the specific procedure in your unit.

PTO “Cash-outs”

We will no longer cash out your accrued PTO without limit. Your paid PTO is so that you WILL take some time off during the year for rest, recreation, and relaxation. The accrued PTO is NOT a bank account, or a source of extra money throughout the year. We want you to have balance in your life and that is why we provide you with paid time off.

During a calendar year, this is your guide for cashing out available PTO:

Directors:	1 time per year	No more than 50% of your total yearly accrual
All other staff	2 times per year	Combined total not to exceed 50% of your total yearly accrual

Cash out requests are to be submitted on a time off request with your regular timecard and will be disbursed with your regular payroll checks. Exceptions will be made in case of emergency.

Sick time accrual and Use

You (regular, full-time employees) have now, starting on June 1, 2006, begun accruing Sick Time at the standard rate of 2 hours per pay period, up to 48 hours per calendar year. We will also be allowing sick time to “rollover” at year-end with a limit of 80 hours. Once you reach the limit of 80 hours, no more sick time will accrue until you are below that amount. Sick time is NOT payable at termination, whether voluntary or involuntary.

Please be aware that the procedure for notifying your supervisor that you are ill and unable to come to work remains the same and depends on your specific position within the company. Please ask your supervisor for clarification on the specific procedure you should use.

- Sandra Goodsell

Program Staff Questionnaire

Our program staff team would like to know how we could better support you. We have made a questionnaire and put it in all of your boxes and would like your feedback. We really want to know what we could be doing differently and what areas you think we need some improvement in. It is anonymous. So please fill it out and let us know.

The feedback on this questionnaire should only pertain to our positions in the office. If you have an opinion about the way we dress or what we eat for lunch etc. Please keep it to yourself. We would like only serious feedback in order to support you better.

- Ayren Gabrielson

FEATURE

A New Ambition

by Lynn Vaughan

With the help of her teachers and companions, Anne Sullivan, Polly Thompson, and Winnie Corbally, Helen Keller proved that a disability is not the end of the world. To quote Helen in her own words:



“ The public must learn that the blind man is neither genius, nor freak, nor idiot. He has a mind that can be educated, a hand that can be trained, ambitions - which it is right for him to strive to realize, and it is the duty of the public to help him make the best of himself so that he can win light through work.”

I'm reading the quote, and I'm thinking, “Yeah Helen, you tell ‘em. I'm with you!” But wait, hold up. One part of the quote made me stop, go back, and read again. I wanted to understand clearly - “...ambitions - which is right for him to strive to realize...”

Ambitions? The definition of *Ambitions* is as follows: A strong feeling of wanting to be successful in life and achieve great things.

Helen please! Ambitions? What does a prissy, rich, deaf-blind, girl who has no responsibilities, and has a constant interpreter/guide know about ambition? In 1890 Alabama I doubt you had to deal with the constant competition to succeed we experience in 110 years later here in California. The daily pressure to be the best – the prettiest woman, the

best cook, the best mom, the best wife, the best employee, etc. The more I thought about who she was, the time she lived in, and the barriers she had to tear down my narrow understanding of “Ambition” expanded.

Helen lived in a world where everyone described her as “Deaf, Blind, and Dumb.” Daughters were the property of their fathers until they married, and then they became the property of their husbands. Women commonly were not educated beyond the 8th grade, and Women from “good” families did not work. Can you imagine all of the people that shook their heads and rolled their eyes when Helen applied to go to Radcliffe University which is the sister school for Harvard – they didn't let girls attend Harvard back then. How many publishers turned down a book written by a deaf-blind girl? To date over 10 million copies have been sold all over the world – and two major movies made! Even her own family and teachers did not support her decision to marry. Yes, I can see now that Helen did have ambitions. She had a strong feeling of wanting to be successful and to achieve great things.

I have a new ambition; to communicate with you and learn YOUR ambitions. Let's be successful and achieve great things!!!

DEPARTMENT NOTES

ILS

Independent Living Services

The ILS department continues to work on the 7 Habits training by choosing one habit a month to focus on and discuss during our ILS meetings. Our focus this month will be Habit 2: "Beginning with the end in mind".

Did you know the ILS unit currently services 145 clients total, 37 of which are deaf and 18 clients which fall under the parenting unit. ILS continues to provide the alternative "ILS with a kick program", which provides additionally support to individuals who fall under ILS guidelines but require more support than the traditional ILS services.

Our ILS Parenting group had their annual pool party on August 11th. This year it was held at the Arden Manor Parks and Recreation. The Parenting group is looking at establishing a parenting committee consisting of a panel of our current parenting clients who will organize and head up parenting events including the end of the year Food & Toy Drive. Anna & Michelle will soon be venturing down to Southern California to visit "Independent Community Recourses" to tour their current Parenting Program. We are hopeful this will provide us with new resources and tools to utilize in our current parenting program.

Our Yuba City office continues to run strong providing both ILS & SLS services to individuals in that area.

***A HUGE THANK YOU TO THE ENTIRE ILS TEAM FOR
THEIR FABULOUS WORK DURING THE
RECENT HEAT WAVE.***

- Anna Shands

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Jen's Tricky Trivia

The Brady Bunch made its debut on September 26th, 1969. What was the story in that first episode?

The first person to answer this question wins a PRIZE!
Please see Jen Jones and collect your winnings!

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Last month's Trivia: August was made longer by adding a day from another month.
From which month was it taken?

Answer: February

Winner: Nicole Sutherland

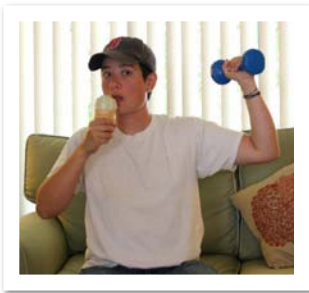
Try This . . .

Move Your Body

by J. A. de la Concepcion

Lately, I've been watching my stomach grow bigger and bigger as I consume more potato chips and ice cream during these warm summer days. I tell myself that I'm hormonal and it is just a part of my monthly cycle of craving salty then sweet food items. But the monthly hormonal cycle doesn't last more than a week, and my belly has gotten bigger over the last couple of months. Huh... Perhaps I'm just a junk food junkie. It is a scientific fact that sugar is addictive and many experts say that if sugar were to be an illicit drug, then its addictive qualities would compare to that of cocaine. It's not like I'm trying to come up with excuses of why I love ice cream. I'm just wanting to share with you some of the ideas I have regarding our eating habits and our movement habits as a community.

I love ice cream. It is the one food I absolutely cannot say "NO" to. If it is in my house, I will eat it all. If I know that I will drive by an ice cream shop I will stop in and grab a double scoop on a cone or a double scoop, hot fudge sundae with nuts, no whip cream or cherry, even if I'm so very full after eating a huge meal (this is why I never drive down Arden - to avoid Leatherby's).



Asides from ice cream, I also like T.V. (particularly when I have an ice cream cone in hand). I recently discovered a new show on Bravo called "Work Out". Boy, did that show make me feel all lumpy-bumpy. After watching a couple of episodes, I decided not to eat ice cream while watching "Work Out" just so I could feel a little better about myself. Then an episode later I decided to only have ice cream once during the day before 4 pm so that my body has time to burn off the fat and sugar. Then while watching another episode, I found myself doing mini-workouts during the mindless commercials. My partner and I would do push ups, sit ups, jumping jacks, and free weights until the show would come back on. Now that the show has ended, I feel a bit sad that my T.V. motivation is gone.

But just today I weighed myself, after decreasing my ice cream intake and increasing my movement, and was pleasantly surprised that I did not gain any weight. *What?! Did you say you didn't gain any weight? Why are you happy about that? Aren't you suppose to loose weight?* The point of me moving my body was not to loose weight. The point was so that I could continue eating ice cream with less emotional guilt and less body expansion. But since experiencing more movement in my life, I've realized that I like it. I like being active. I feel better about myself when I move my body. I feel stronger, more energized, more coordinated; I'm even considering moving my body on a more regular basis. Now as far as ice cream is concerned, I don't think I could ever not have it in my life. But I can find ways to counter balance its negative affects on my body.

Try this - challenge yourself and move your body more than usual: walking in place while watching T.V., parking in the farthest spot from the building you wish to enter, taking the stairs. See if you feel any different after one week. Write to me about your experience and your story may selected for the October newsletter.

Email your experience to: judec@stepsite.com.

* STEP STARS *

Amanda Lee - We really appreciate the quick and accurate filing in the HR Dept. It looks great in there. Also--the safe looks great!

- Sandra Goodsell

Many thanks to the entire staffing team (**Carey, Brandon, Bruce, Billy, John J., Eddy** and **Darrell**) for Atif. You're on-going devotion to ensure the best quality of life and your dedication in working with his difficult behaviors shows how committed you are. Keep up the good work!

- Melanie Bazile

Bree and **Anna V.** - Thank you for your help at the ER.

- Melanie Bazile

Mel R. - Thank you for your assistance when asked.

- Melanie Bazile

Sam - Thanks for your help with the staffing team (**Tim Fishcer**).

- Melanie Bazile

I wanted to recognize the whole team in **Eureka** - you are really committed to our vision of *Building on a Foundation of Quality*. I really enjoyed my visit and meeting everyone. It is a great team and being there with all of you reminded me why I chose this as my career and what I love about STEP. I am very proud of the **Eureka** services and look forward to being there again.

- Melanie Bazile

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For questions, comments, or to submit an article and/or pictures to the STEP Newsletter, please contact our editor:

J. A. (Jude) de la Concepcion
judec@stepsite.com

SEPTEMBER Birthdays

Kathleen Chapman	1-Sep
Carol Drummond	2-Sep
Anthony Harris	3-Sep
Sean Perryman	3-Sep
Ivy Nikita	3-Sep
Kelley Michael	3-Sep
Latoyia Shahid	4-Sep
Debbie Moreno	5-Sep
Eric Malone	5-Sep
Allyson Marsh	5-Sep
Weidman Carl	5-Sep
Kenneth Hodge	6-Sep
Leon Chau	6-Sep
Cherrylyne Baxter	6-Sep
Donald Lystrup	7-Sep
Rebekah Horn	7-Sep
Heath Conway	8-Sep
Vita Vongsikeo	8-Sep
Stephanie Tate	9-Sep
John Somaduroff	10-Sep
Annette Langston	11-Sep
Tina Centeno	11-Sep
Courtney Kondro	11-Sep
Edith Steele	12-Sep
Debra Jones	13-Sep
Ray Smith	13-Sep
Kenneth Jourdan	15-Sep
Katie McDonal	15-Sep
Daniel Sevall	16-Sep
Melissa Knight	16-Sep
La Sheena Johnson	18-Sep
Pamela Obrien	18-Sep
Mahnaz Navabi	19-Sep
Charlene Beck	20-Sep
Anthony Antoinette	21-Sep
Valerie Magby	22-Sep
David Nyamadzawo	22-Sep
Lisa Ogles	23-Sep
Denis Strella	23-Sep
Johanna Egan	24-Sep
Monica Soares	25-Sep
Larry Hopper	25-Sep
Tara Wood	26-Sep
Bahram Ghodsshowghi	26-Sep
Ellie J Vikre	28-Sep
Norman Constant, Jr	28-Sep
Griselda Contreras	28-Sep
Corrine Wheeler	29-Sep
John Watkins	29-Sep
Timothy Glover	30-Sep
Brenda Ashford	30-Sep
Miguel Genochio	30-Sep
Karla Pinson	30-Sep

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Building on a foundation of quality.