

F E B R U A R Y

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S.T.E.P. News

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

DIRECTOR'S NOTES

It's a Win-Win!

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In 2006, we heard that minimum wage would be increasing to \$7.50 per hour as of January 2007 and then to \$8.00 per hour in 2008. While we were happy to hear the news, we were also concerned about the financial impact it would have. Labor Law requires that we pay at least minimum wage for our overnight positions in SLS, even if the person is sleeping and we have built this into SLS budgets as well as our SLS contract with the Regional Center. We had several discussions with Alta California Regional Center about how this minimum wage increase would impact SLS budgets and requested an increase in funds to cover the wage increase. The Regional Centers were in a difficult position because it appeared that DDS would not be releasing funds to the Regional Centers to cover the increase which in turn would mean Regional Centers could not compensate SLS vendors for the difference in budgets. Vendors worked together with Regional Centers to inform DDS of the situation and impact on services as a results. DDS Director, Terry Delgadillo received many letters and emails outlining the urgency of the situation and included the dollars in their budget proposal. When Governor Schwarzenegger released his 2007-08 budget, it included rate adjustments to cover the minimum age increase. This is a good example of the win-win attitude. We knew there was a solution that could work for vendors, employees and Regional Centers. Rather than working against the Regional Center, we worked together for something better- hey, that's synergy!

- Melanie Bazile

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Staff Development Manager

It is with great pleasure that I take this opportunity to welcome **Renee Mikbel** to the newly created position of Staff Development Manager for our Hearing departments.

As S.T.E.P. continues to grow, it has become necessary to invest more time and effort in the recruitment, hiring and training of one of our most important assets, our employees. The Staff Development Manager will take the lead in creating a recruiting and advertising campaign for all positions. The Staff Development Manager will also guide employees through the hiring process and see them through to be a well-trained employee ready to support our consumers. While the Staff Development Manager may not complete all the actual training for employees, they will insure the training is completed.

We recently held a structured interview day and we were impressed with the candidates and pleased that they prepared for the process, demonstrating the importance of the position. However, there was a lack of applicants for the position serving the Deaf units so we will be discussing a plan for the Deaf units that will most likely entail more aggressive recruiting from around the country.

Renee has been employed with STEP for three year as an SLS Coordinator. Renee came to STEP with a variety of experience that will compliment our HR department and we are excited about the possibilities that lie ahead.

Welcome, and congratulations Renee!

- *Melanie Bazile*

Healthy Habits Board

Look for our new **HEALTHY HABITS** Bulletin board coming in 2007.

In keeping with our Health and Well-being value we will be posting nutritious recipes, simple exercises, uplifting stories and much more on the bulletin board near the staff mail boxes. When you're in the office stop by and take a look. You might just find the inspiration you need to..... Live Smart, Live Healthy, Live Long!

- *Ayren Gabrielson*

Minimum Wage Increase

This is to remind you that the minimum wage was increased in January (this affects the sleep rate paid) all **Live In Personal Attendants** (formerly known as Roommates) will need to do new **Packets** and attend **Mandatory Meeting** regarding their responsibilities, policies and changes in their rental deductions. All Live-in Attendants will be notified of the meeting date and time when it is set.

- *Lisa Barrows*

FEATURE

Client Spotlight

Lynn Vaughan

Suzane Sarrette was born in San Francisco, CA, and if you know her you are aware that Suzane is not ready to sit in a rocking chair and knit. The 62 years old woman is a busy bee! Suzane came to STEP in 1997 and is a much loved member of our family. Suzane doesn't talk much about the past, but focuses on the future and all the things she wants to accomplish. You can find Suzane hard at work everyday with the catering cart full of quick snack and meal items. Suzane wants to work in a restaurant where she helps keep the dining room pretty and clean. She wants to greet and seat all the guests with a smile and a "HI" in her uniform and name tag. Her favorite place to go out to dinner is Fresh Choice. Suzane is in great shape because of her active lifestyle and healthy eating habits! However, when she wants a treat – it's COOKIES! Suzane loves shopping, and her hobbies are photography and scrap booking. Her favorite colors are orange and purple. Color psychologist say that orange is chosen by people that are adventurous and courageous, while purple is chosen by people who value knowledge, are dignified, regal and demand to be respected. I think those qualities fit Suzane to a "T". Suzane loves to travel, and although she has been to many places she still has one big dream vacation in mind. Can you guess? Suzane is Elvis' biggest fan and would love to visit his home - Graceland in Memphis, Tennessee.



Suzane on vacation.

What do you dare to dream? I am inspired by an article I read about Arthur Flemming, former Commissioner of the Social Security Administration. At the age of 95 he gave a speech at the White House and what he said inspires me in my own life and work. He said, "*We must value our memories, but we must also have a dream. I have a dream that this community will only go forward, not backward, in helping our people deal with the hazards of life.... I don't know what amount of time is left in me, but I'm going to do my best to draw on my memory to fuel the action that is needed to realize that dream.*" Wow! Here is a man at 95 saying he must have a dream. We are conditioned to believe that young able bodied people should have dreams, and the rest should be content to "take it easy". Research shows that doing new and different things is stimulating to the brain. What do you do that is new, different, or complex? Me? Lately I have fallen in love with Suduko puzzles, and cooking Greek food.

Client Spotlight

Michelle Armstrong



Melissa at home.

Melissa Turner is a 35 year old woman who has been with S.T.E.P. for the last 7 months. Melissa enjoys bowling, soccer and golf, as well as spending time with her boyfriend of two years.

Melissa currently works at Home Depot in Folsom where she waters plants in the garden area. Melissa expressed that she is eager to move into her own place with her boyfriend in the near future and when asked what her dream accomplishment would be, she replied, "Living on my own and having a corvette!" Melissa went on to say that if she could travel anywhere in the world, she would like to take a cruise around the world.

Melissa's ILS Instructor, Jaime Young, described Melissa as "very outgoing and she loves accessing the community!"

Everyday Heroes

Stephanie Sgro

There are a couple people I felt needed to be acknowledged this month. We all consider ourselves good people but are we the kind of people who really go the extra mile or really think about what is "the right thing" to do all the time; even when it is something tiny? Twice in the last month I have been surprised and very impressed by the actions of others.

First, when **Debbie Waters** showed me that someone had left her a note with a dime attached, stating that one of the vending machines had given her too much change. How many people do you know who would have taken the time to return a dime to its rightful owner. When I first heard this I laughed, thinking how silly to return a dime. I thought perhaps someone had not collected their change from a previous purchase. Well it turns out I was very wrong! Because of the stellar ethics of **Linda Buscher**, we found that the machine had actually been set up incorrectly for that item, and if the mistake had not been caught, we would have lost lots of money over the next few months. Thanks Linda for your honesty and integrity

Second, while walking to Subway for lunch the other day with a co-worker, I saw a man who looked to be homeless, enjoying the sun. I didn't stop to say hello or even offer a "nice day, isn't it?" I'm sure we just walked on by without giving him any thought at all. Later in the day I was talking to **Ayren Gabrilson**, who mentioned seeing the same man on her way to lunch. However she did not ignore him, or go on with her day like he was unimportant. Ayren said hello and then went over to Subway and bought him lunch!

I'm sure there are many wonderful people here at STEP and in our midst everyday, but we are not always so privileged to experience their generous spirits in such a way all the time. Thanks to these two women for being brilliant examples to us all.

DEPARTMENT NOTES

ILS

Independent Living Services

The ILS group continues to take on new clients and expand it's horizons with regards to overseeing it's "ILS with a kick" program! Welcome to both our newest clients, as well as our recently hired staff in Yuba City. We are currently hiring for a part-time ILS Instructor position. Those interested should contact either Heather ext. 123 or Anna ext: 122.

Our annual ILS Retreat took place last month at a beautiful cabin near Truckee, Ca., and was a tremendous success, not to mention- lots of fun! We worked on team building and establishing our unit goals for this coming 2007 year. A huge thanks to Mike Kelley for providing us with this amazing cabin and view! The ILS unit will be focusing on Habit 7: "Sharpen The Saw", this month, in an effort to remind ourselves of the importance of personal growth and exploration.

As it is "Dental Hygiene Month", this month's Parenting class will focus on maintaining proper dental hygiene and ensuring your children, as well as yourself, are attending regular dental checkups. We will have a special community presenter for this month's class, which is held every third Thursday of the month from 3:30pm - 5pm.

On behalf of the entire ILS team, we would like to extend our heartfelt sympathy to William Marks, and his entire family, during the recent loss of their father. Our thoughts and prayers are with you.

- Michelle Armstrong

February Celebrations

February has always been one of those strange months with its 28 days (sometimes 29) and its position between the “Happy New Year!!!” month and the “Yeah! It’s Spring!!!” month.

Fortunately, according to Sherri Osborn of About.com, there are many reasons to celebrate in the month of February.

With the passing of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.’s birthday just the month before, February continues the celebration of Black History Month and Human Rights with the birthdays of both Rosa Parks and Abraham Lincoln. These special days are a great time to remember that we all have the potential and power to change the world by taking a step in the right direction. Our “Everyday Heroes” like Ayren and Linda are perfect demonstrations of small acts that result in big outcomes.

February 2007

Fun Excuses to Celebrate This Month:

Black History Month

International Friendship Month

2nd - Groundhog Day

4th - Rosa Park's Birthday

5th - National Weatherperson's Day

7th - Laura Ingalls Wilder's Birthday

8th - Boy Scouts' Day

9th - Toothache Day

10th - Umbrella Day

11th - National Inventor's Day

14th - Valentine's Day

15th - National Gumdrop Day

17th - Random Acts of Kindness Day

19th - President's Day

20th - Toothpick Patented

22nd - Be Humble Day

25th - Quiet Day

27th - Polar Bear Day

Find all these and other special days to celebrate @
Family Crafts - <http://familycrafts.about.com>

Birthstone - Amethyst

Flower - Violet

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28			

This calendar is a special gift for you from Family Crafts @ About

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Not only is it Black History Month, but February is also International Friendship Month. So as Lynn suggested, try something new. Remember pen-pals in 4th grade? Well, there is a pen-pal website for adults, too. Pick a country and pick a pal. Soon enough you'll get to know how other people live, in other cultures, in other parts of the world. Then perhaps we can all come closer together as human beings, and acts of kindness won't seem like such a far away, foreign deed.

Try it. It's free.

www.Correspondance-fr.org

- J. A. de la Concepcion

DID YOU KNOW?? The ILS unit would like to bring to your attention the lesser known holidays also celebrated this month: Feb. 5th is the Anniversary of the American Constitution; Feb. 18th is the Chinese New Year; Feb. 21st is Ash Wednesday; Feb. 24th is Flag Day and of course- Feb. 14th is Valentine's Day and with that, the entire ILS unit would like to wish you all lots of love and dark chocolate!

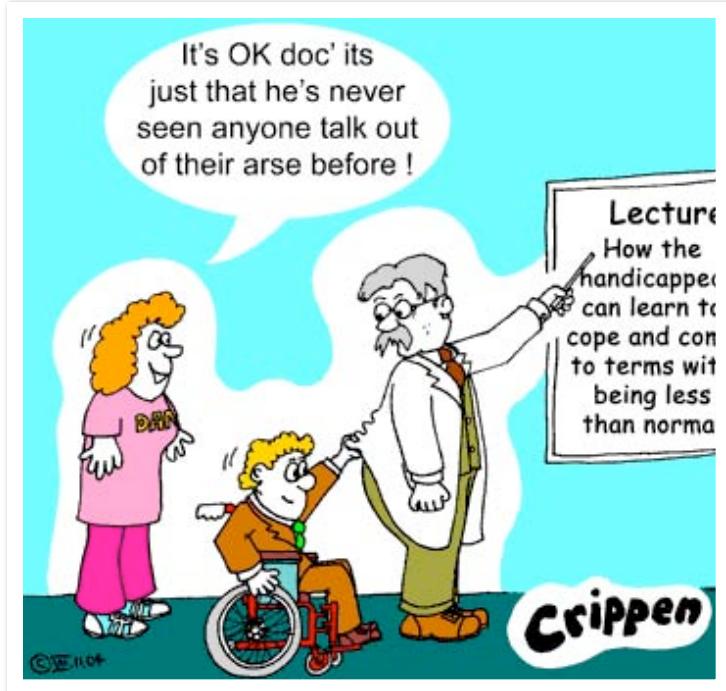
- Michelle B. Armstrong

Cartoon

Cartoons are some of the best ways to express creativity and controversy, while at the same time making people laugh. While surfing the net, I bumped into this great website for disabled artist: www.disabilityarts.com/depth/Crippen.

One of the featured artists happened to be the British cartoonist **Dave Lupton** who is responsible for the funny and sometimes controversial comic strip, **CRIPPEN**. Check out Dave's work on his website, www.DaveLuptonCartoons.co.uk, and support the arts and our global community.

BOTTOM



Crippen's Note: This says it all really, with regard to the opinions that most non-disabled disability professionals hold in respect of disability and disabled people in particular.

FEBRUARY Birthdays

Corina Hoffman	1-Feb
Brigida Cavasos	2-Feb
Chaundres Carthan	2-Feb
Nichol Sutherland	2-Feb
Shirley Quick	3-Feb
Melissa Turner	3-Feb
Angelena Gayle	3-Feb
Melani Rogers	3-Feb
David Gehri	4-Feb
Jeffrey Sevall	4-Feb
Pamela Rumble	4-Feb
Leslie Guffin	4-Feb
George Basquez	5-Feb
Niki Davis	5-Feb
Kenyon Cahill	5-Feb
Shelly Pina	6-Feb
Richard Hodgkins	7-Feb
Clayton Hibben	7-Feb
Barry Krems	9-Feb
Rebecca Ehrhart	9-Feb
Joshua Barnes	12-Feb
Mariska Brinkley	13-Feb
Heather Campbell	13-Feb
James Fox	13-Feb
Thurston Miller	15-Feb
Roy Cogswell	16-Feb
Jaquline Tenney	16-Feb
Deslin Malone	18-Feb
Kaylie Fonseca	19-Feb
Michael Bachman	21-Feb
Shulamit Steinfeld	22-Feb
Jacqueline Benoit	23-Feb
Zona Lessard	23-Feb
Jerry Hadley	24-Feb
Theresa Grosskopf	25-Feb
Nancy Clyde	25-Feb
Cynthia Allen	25-Feb
Carey Baxter	25-Feb
Damira Bechtold	26-Feb
Heather Strella	26-Feb
Tyx Pulskamp	27-Feb
Ramon Brown	28-Feb

* Step Stars *

Stephanie S. Sgro would like to acknowledge the following people:

To **Jen Jones**, for always doing your job with a smile on your face. I often think how frustrating it might be to almost only have people come to your door when they have a problem, but you handle it always with grace, efficiency and a sense of humor. We are all so lucky to have you here.

To **Marcus Gunter**. You have been a positive and energetic addition to our Day Program team. We all appreciate your flexibility, and your willingness to see the positive in all situations. Thanks!

Victoria Marrel I would like to thank you for your consistent and caring work with Henry. You have been creative with his days and willing to try new things with him. It is wonderful to know that Henry is happy and feeling active in his daily life.

Becky Byng, thanks for taking on extra clients recently, we all appreciate your ability to develop new activities and asses needs. We can already see improvement with the level of work your clients have been doing.

The ILS Department would like to acknowledge the following:

TO ALL OF THE ILS INSTRUCTORS who assisted in client coverage this past month!! Thanks for your wonderful teamwork and ongoing commitment to helping each other out- ya'll ROCK!!

Tracy & Shelly- for keeping it together during all of the recent interviews! Thanks ladies!

June & Stephanie - for supporting Jennifer and Donna during the recent loss of their family members.

Christy - thanks for all your continued support to Jennifer during this difficult time.

Melanie Bazile would like to acknowledge the following people:

Thanks to those **ILS Instructors and SLS Coordinators** who have returned their Program Management feedback surveys. I appreciate you taking the time to provide feedback- it makes a difference!

Kelly McGurran - you demonstrate passion for our consumers and really center your work around their needs. Thanks you for setting that example and enjoying your work- it shows!

Lisa Barrows - Thanks for working quickly to establish the training schedule for the year. It takes time and patience and I appreciate your work in this area. Training is so vital to what we do and you play an important role.

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

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S T E P

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Building on a foundation of quality.

Jen's Tricky Trivia

Who was the only U.S. President to serve 4 terms?

*All correct answers will be collected and one winner will be drawn on the last Friday of each month.
Answers can be submitted by e-mail or in writing, no verbal answers accepted, to:*

Jen Jones
jenj@stepsite.com