

STEP INC. Newsletter



AmeriCorps

DREAM WEEK



Winter
2023

» on the cover:

6 STEP AmeriCorps
 Dream Week

» in this issue:

4 STEP Head Start
 Mitten Tree Project

8 Santa's Seniors

10 STEP, Inc.
 FCFP Grant Recipient

» in every issue:

3 STEP Star Awards

11 Upcoming Events

» STEP Board of Directors

Brenda Nichols
 Chairperson

Lindsay Stamm
 Treasurer

Randall Allison
Tia Hillyer
Joanne Ludwikowski
Scott Metzger
Gail Nestlerode

Aron Carter
 Vice-Chairperson

Jacqueline Oliva
 Secretary

Abigail Roberts
Jeffrey Snyder
Edward Weinoffer
Patricia Wylie

» STEP Administration

Jim Plankenhorn
 President & CEO

Patti Kiessling
 Chief Financial Officer

Rachelle Abbott
 Chief Operations & Planning Officer

» Contact STEP



STEP, Inc.
 2138 Lincoln Street
 Williamsport, PA 17701
 570.326.0587

**STEP Clinton County
 Community Center**
 124 East Walnut Street
 Lock Haven, PA 17745
 570.858.5800



Visit us at
www.stepcorp.org



facebook.com/
STEPPathways

facebook.com/
STEPHeadStart

facebook.com/
STEPELRC

facebook.com/
STEPHousingOptions

facebook.com/
STEPAmeriCorps

facebook.com/
STEPOfficeOfAging

STEP INC. *Star Awards*

STEP's recognizes its employees year-round through 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.

**November, December, and January
 STEP Star award winners are:**



Angie Mahonski
 Head Start
 Health Specialist

Kim Entz
 Head Start
 Teacher Assistant

Candice Poff
 Head Start
 Teacher

Lexi Girardi
 Head Start
 Teacher Assistant

Jessica Lentz*
 Head Start
 Teacher

Brenda Geyer
 Head Start
 Teacher Assistant

Cathy Grimm
 Head Start
 Teacher Assistant Floater

Staci Holter-Gardner*
 Head Start
 Classroom Aide

Jon Gehr
 Housing Options
 Facilities & Maintenance Lead

Rachel Kinley
 Service Navigation
 Family Navigator

Lois Ruhl
 Fiscal
 Purchasing Specialist

Amanda Long
 Service Navigation
 Family Navigator

Rebecca Hosier
 AmeriCorps
 Member Development Coordinator

Dawn Reynolds
 Early Head Start
 Teacher Assistant

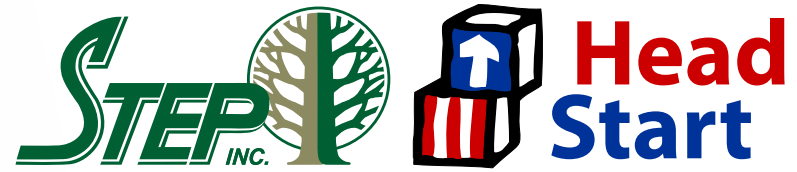
Individuals indicated with an asterisk ()
 were nominated more than once.*



The winner of November's gift card drawing was Angie Mahonski!

The winner of December's gift card drawing was Rachel Kinley!

The winner of January's gift card drawing was Rebecca Hosier!



Mitten Tree Project

Warm, colorful mittens were distributed this winter to children enrolled in STEP Head Start, thanks to the generosity of many. This is the 18th year STEP Head Start's annual Mitten Tree Project has been able to keep hundreds of children's hands warm for the winter. The collection ran from mid-October through November, then donations were sorted and distributed to Head Start and Early Head Start children in Lycoming and Clinton counties.

This year over 400 pairs of mittens were collected, as well as a monetary donation from Premier Real Estate of Williamsport! In addition to the mittens, 400 hats, 16 coats, 4 blankets, 3 earmuffs, and 3 scarves were collected for a grand total of nearly 900 cold weather items!



Many of the donated pairs of mittens were handmade by long-time Mitten Tree supporters, Knitters for Neighbors.



A large contribution of new coats and cold weather essentials were provided by employees of the Jersey Shore State Bank.



Lock Haven University organized an on-campus Mitten Tree drive and presented their collection of 166 items to the Clinton County Community Center.





The Martin Luther King, Jr., National Day of Service is a defining moment each year when Americans across the country step up to make communities more equitable and take action to create the Beloved Community of Dr. King's dream. Dr. King's acknowledgement and fight for systemic change serves as the call to action for the Day of Service.

MLK Day is the only federal holiday designated as a National Day of Service to encourage all Americans to volunteer to improve their communities. During the last quarter-century, the MLK Day of Service has grown, and its impact increased as more Americans embraced the idea that citizenship involves taking an active role in improving communities.

STEP AmeriCorps, Pennsylvania College of Technology, Lycoming College, the Central Pennsylvania Food Bank, and the United Churches of Lycoming County once again partnered for a week full of events known as Dream Week.

To kick off Dream Week events, STEP AmeriCorps planned its annual Peace Walk on Monday, January 16 as well as a first MLK Day for Kids in collaboration with the James V. Brown Library.

The MLK Day of Service is led by the Corporation for National and Community Service, a federal agency that engages millions of Americans in service through its AmeriCorps and SeniorCorps programs and leads the nation's volunteer efforts. For more information, visit www.nationalservice.gov.



MLK Day for Kids

Children of all ages got the chance to learn more about the significance of MLK Day at the James V. Brown Library.

"As a library, we want to educate our community on all things for all people, and this program is just kind of the start for this year," said Nicole Rader, the children's librarian.

STEP AmeriCorps members had several activity stations for children to make posters and craft instruments to be used during the kids peace parade inside the library.



Peace Walk

More than 100 people took to the streets of Williamsport Monday for a Martin Luther King Jr. Peace Walk.

Folks gathered along Market Square to honor the civil rights pioneer's legacy. During the walk, attendees read quotes from letters he wrote during his time in a Birmingham, Alabama, jail.

"It is very important because what Martin Luther King did allowed us to be here today. We can solve stuff through peace and without conflict," said Nathaniel Woods of Williamsport.



Santa's Seniors

Over the past 17 years, STEP Office of Aging has partnered with the Williamsport Sun-Gazette, the Lock Haven Express, Backyard Broadcasting, and many other area businesses to coordinate the Santa's Seniors Program. This annual program provides gift boxes to senior citizens who receive Meals on Wheels through STEP's Office of Aging. Often, these gifts are the only holiday items received by our home-bound seniors.

This year, 150 Meals on Wheels recipients in Lycoming and Clinton counties received Santa's Seniors gift deliveries over the holiday season!

STEP Office of Aging staff sorted donations from the community and packed the gift sets in the weeks leading up to the holiday season. Instead of a single boxed delivery, large tote bags were delivered twice during the holiday season by Meals on Wheels volunteers, Pennsylvania State Police, and Frey's Commissary. Hats, gloves, scarves, toiletries, word puzzles, snacks, breakfast foods, and single-serve pantry staples were among the items included in the bags gifted to our most vulnerable seniors, often forgotten during the holidays.



STEP Office of Aging and its partners would like to thank all of our donors and volunteers who helped make the holidays bright for home-bound seniors!



STEP, Inc. | FCFP

Grant Recipient



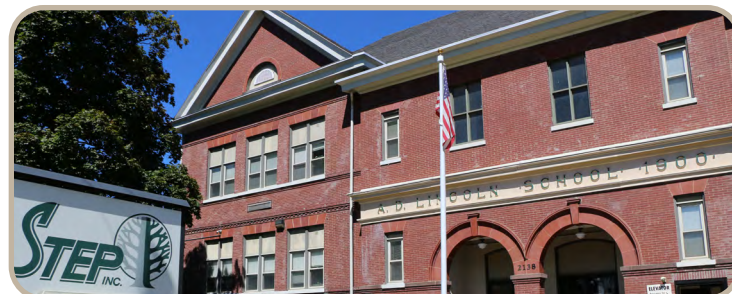
STEP, Inc. was awarded grants from First Community Foundation Partnership of Pennsylvania (FCFP) through community fund grants. Over \$2.5 million in requests were considered through the FCFP's grant cycle. Advisory Board members worked with FCFP staff to determine the most advantageous uses of the funding. Service area, population, sustainability, community support, need, and adherence to the grant criteria were considered for each proposal.



STEP's Housing Options Pathway was able to add a much-needed new vehicle to its fleet through a combined grant from the Williamsport Lycoming Community Fund and the Charles A. Szybist & Carla G. Szybist Fund at the FCFP.

STEP maintains its own crews of construction workers to provide high-quality weatherization and housing rehabilitation services in Lycoming and Clinton counties. Customers are also connected to the wider range of STEP services to meet additional needs their household may be experiencing.

The new van is expected to make possible approximately 140 weatherization and housing rehabilitation jobs in the next year, impacting around 350 individuals.



As part of our goal to maintain community resources, STEP continues to improve the offices at the former A.D. Lincoln School. Having moved into the space in the 1990s, the Community Action Agency found a major need arising: the replacement of nearly 150 windows.

"The older windows were getting to be an issue from several perspectives – keeping offices a steady temperature year round, building security, and generally providing a well-maintained environment for our customers and staff," said STEP President & CEO, Jim Plankenhorn.

With most funding restricted to program-specific expenditures, STEP applied for the Williamsport Lycoming Grant Cycle at the FCFP. Once the grant was awarded, STEP's Housing & Building Initiatives staff, which also maintains STEP's facilities, worked to secure a vendor and coordinate office moves for the installation.



Mark Your Calendar!

Raise the Region

Wednesday, March 8 at 6:00 PM
through Thursday, March 9 at 11:59 PM

Raise the Region is a 30-hour online fundraising event held by the First Community Foundation Partnership of Pennsylvania.

Raise the Region gives community members an opportunity to support our local nonprofits by helping them raise as much money as possible! Donations from this strategic and unified effort will support our local nonprofits in addressing the increasing needs of our region. Your contribution will help them in creating more vibrant communities and ultimately help our North Central Pennsylvania region thrive!

You can support STEP by visiting: www.stepcorp.org/RTR





facebook.com/
STEPPathways

facebook.com/
STEPHeadStart

facebook.com/
STEPELRC

facebook.com/
STEPHousingOptions

facebook.com/
STEPAmeriCorps

facebook.com/
STEPOfficeOfAging



STEP, Inc.

2138 Lincoln Street
Williamsport, PA 17701
570.326.0587

**STEP Clinton County
Community Center**

124 East Walnut Street
Lock Haven, PA 17745
570.858.5800



Visit us at
www.stepcorp.org

This publication is available electronically or via US Mail. To change the status of your delivery, including unsubscribing, please call or email STEP.