



Newsletter



STEP AmeriCorps

**MLK Day
of Service**

Winter
2018

» on the cover:

- 6 STEP AmeriCorps
MLK Day of Service

» in this issue:

- 3 New Business:
Grant Awarded
- 4 STEP Head Start
Mitten Tree
- 5 Homeowner Occupied
Rehabilitation Program
- 8 Santa's Seniors

» in every issue:

- 3 Employee of the Quarter
- 10 Upcoming Events
- 11 STEP Retiree Spotlight

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STEP INC. *Employee of the Quarter*



Pictured from left: Executive Assistant Jamey Williams, Multimedia Specialist Dana Cain, and STEP President & CEO Jim Plankenhorn.

Dana Cain was nominated for her outstanding work as STEP's Multimedia Specialist, and in particular for her work on the most recent Annual Report. The innovative design refresh presents narratives and statistics in a dynamic, inviting format that showcases the agency's work not only to outside readers but also to STEP staff, and makes the accomplishments of our customers and staff come alive. Dana excels at helping those of us without multimedia skills to achieve a product that tells STEP's story and more effectively communicates our value to the community.

STEP INC. *New Business: Grant Awarded*

The STEP Round Hills Campus will be receiving an essential addition: two complete play areas. The STEP Head Start project is possible due to a \$108,000 grant from the Williamsport Lycoming Community Fund at the First Community Foundation Partnership of Pennsylvania, which will be combined with Head Start funds to install the two outdoor play spaces.

Both play areas will include climbers, water/sand tables, rhythm walls, play houses, and multiple raised garden beds for planting and growing flowers and food. These items will provide opportunities for fun and both social and physical development, as they allow play to be combined with learning and growth. "The staff and children are super excited about having two new play areas at the Round Hills facility," said Carolyn Hawk, who recently came on board as the Director of STEP Head Start.

It is expected that about 400 STEP Head Start children will utilize the equipment each year. Additionally, their siblings, neighborhood visitors, and children involved in other programs at the site will have access to the play equipment. Over the expected 10-year life span of most equipment, the initial grant will impact at least 4,000 children.



Pictured above: Herman Logue, Chair of the First Community Foundation Partnership of Pennsylvania and Jim Plankenhorn, STEP President & CEO.



STEP Head Start Mitten Tree

Warm, colorful mittens were distributed this winter to children in STEP, Inc.'s Head Start program, thanks to the generosity of many.

This is the 13th year STEP Head Start's annual Mitten Tree Project has been able to keep more than 600 children's hands warm. The collection ran through the end of December, then donations were sorted and distributed to Head Start classrooms in Lycoming and Clinton counties.

This year, the project saw donations of more than 2,000 items, including mittens, gloves, hats, and scarves. Each child received a pair of gloves or mittens as well as a cold weather accessory (scarf or hat). The large volume of donations also allowed for extras to be sent to the classrooms to be used when a child forgets their gloves, or if a new child enrolls who does not have any.

Items were donated by individuals and organizations in the community, including: Knitters for Neighbors, Sojourner Truth Ministries, Lycoming Christian Church, Bethel United Methodist Church (UMC), Pine Run UMC, Mill Creek UMC, Beech Valley UMC, Holy Spirit Parish, Williamsport Assembly of God, Church of St. Ann, St. Boniface Ms. Dincher's 2nd Grade, St. James Lutheran Church, and the Pennsylvania State Police.



“ Thank you to all the kind individuals and agencies who donated to this year's Mitten Tree Project. Your generosity has made a huge impact in our community.”

Jaime Fryer
STEP Early Intervention/Mental Health Specialist

Homeowner Occupied Rehabilitation Program



An 89-year-old veteran who owns a home in Castanea recently found out he qualified for STEP's Homeowner Occupied Rehabilitation Program. Updates being done on the 1955 home include exterior excavation (to prevent basement flooding, which has been a recurring problem), railings on the basement stairway, electrical work in

the basement, a walk-in shower in his bathroom, and new exterior paint.

The homeowner says he was most looking forward to the accessible bathroom update, stating that, "at 89 years old I don't walk as straight as I used to, and a walk-in shower will help make the bathroom safer." The bathtub/shower

being replaced is original to the house.

For more information about your eligibility, and to apply, please contact STEP at 570-601-9657 or step@stepcorp.org. The assistance will be in the form of a grant. The amount, up to \$25,000, will be determined by an auditor and the work performed by STEP. Mobile home owners must own both the unit and the property, and have permanent utilities connected. Restricted or non-eligible modifications include additions to existing buildings and rehab to unconnected out-buildings. Homes will be brought up to code standards before accessibility modifications are made, and homes must be able to be brought up to code standards with available funding.



STEP AmeriCorps MLK Day of Service



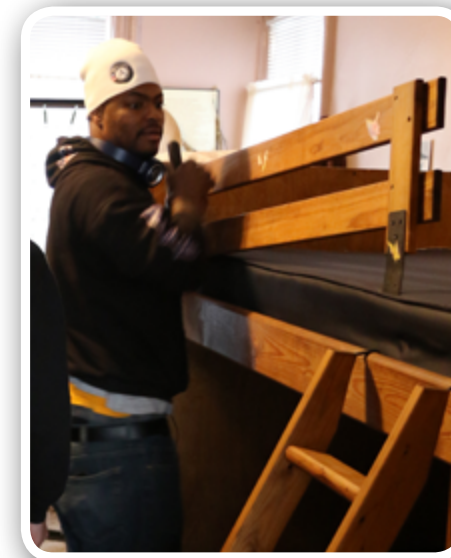
On Monday, January 15, 2018, STEP AmeriCorps, Pennsylvania College of Technology, Lycoming College, and Beloved Community Council hosted a Peace Walk and organized service projects throughout Lycoming and Clinton counties as part of the nationwide Martin Luther King, Jr. Day of Service. MLK Day 2018 marks the 11th year that STEP AmeriCorps has held activities for the day of service.

The Peace Walk began at 9:00AM at Penn College's Bardo Gymnasium. After the march, a Service Project Rally was held before participants dispersed to serve at nonprofit organizations throughout Lycoming and Clinton counties.



Service sites included the following organizations: American Rescue Workers, Sojourner Truth Ministries, Transitional Living Centers, Family Promise of Lycoming County, United Churches Food Pantry, Central Pennsylvania Food Bank, West End Christian Community Center, Salvation Army Thrift Store Lock Haven, Salvation Army Thrift Store Muncy, Firetree Place, and the YWCA.

At the sites, volunteers served the community by constructing, organizing, cleaning, painting, serving meals, packing food boxes, making repairs, and performing other hands-on activities.



“ With 300 community members and volunteers that participated in the peace walk and rally, we were reminded to come together in unity to move forward and create change together. The atmosphere was filled with excitement as the community bonded in values and service. STEP AmeriCorps, Penn College, Lycoming College, and Beloved Community Council came together to turn a day off into a day on. 150 community members volunteered at 14 different nonprofit organizations across Lycoming and Clinton counties. MLK Day of Service 2018 kicked off an amazing Dream Week honoring Dr. King’s legacy, bringing the area together in solidarity for peace and freedom for all.”

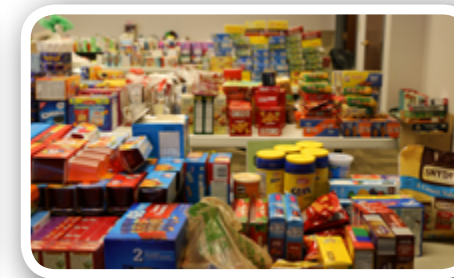
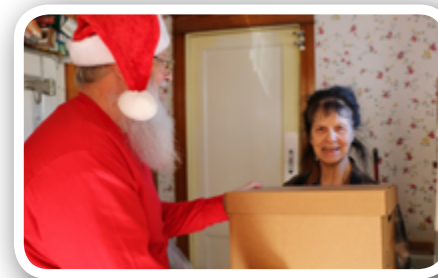
Emily Gale
STEP AmeriCorps
Program Manager

SANTA'S SENIORS



"Thank you to the ones with special hands who made this for me." That sort of heartfelt refrain was echoed by many recipients of the Santa's Seniors boxes that came with their delivered meals just before Christmas. The gift boxes contained ready to eat or easily prepared foods, cold weather necessities, personal care items, and unique cards made by local students and crafting groups, and were accompanied by a poinsettia donated by Helminiak's Greenhouse & Landscaping. Donations were gathered this fall, up until the second week of December, then sorted, packed, and distributed to over 400 area Meals on Wheels consumers shortly before Christmas.

2017 marked the third year of STEP administering the project, utilizing resources and volunteers/service members from STEP Office of Aging, AmeriCorps, and Head Start. The Sun Gazette and Backyard Broadcasting provided extensive publicity and coverage for the donation drive. The media outlets also served as donation drop-off locations, gathering a staggering collection of individual donations to help fill the boxes.



The boxes themselves were donated by Miller Brothers Auto Sales, and were filled with contributions from local businesses and groups. Donors of goods, gift cards, and cash included: Frito-Lay, Kellogg Company, Elmcroft of Loyalsock, Ralston United Methodist Church, Reese's Print Shop, Weis Markets (various locations in Lycoming and Clinton counties), Phoenix Physical Therapy, Steinbacher, Goodall & Yurchak, Muncy Inmate Organization (PA Department of Corrections, SCI Muncy), Xi Epsilon Sigma, Brigandi Cleghorn & Associates, Clinton County Dental Clinic, Susque-View Nursing & Rehabilitation, Pennsylvania State Police, employees from Restless Oaks restaurant and Woodlands Bank, Jersey Shore State Bank, Croda Inc., Komar Distribution Services, UPMC – Lock Haven, Miller's Furniture, Avery Dennison, Community Nurses, Crystal Vision Center, Presbyterian Homes, Wegmans, and Celtic Home Health & Hospice. Countless individual donations were delivered to STEP and to the media outlet offices. Handmade items in the boxes included cards from STEP Head Start and placemats from STEP's Mill Hall Center for Healthy Aging.

Sorting, counting, and packing the donations is possible only because of the astounding work done by volunteers from STEP's Office of Aging programs, service members from STEP AmeriCorps, and community volunteers. The Pennsylvania State Police delivered boxes in Montoursville and Renovo. STEP's Meals on Wheels volunteers delivered boxes on their routes throughout Lycoming and Clinton counties.

While the boxes are a once-a-year occasion, the home-delivered meals program provides regular social contact along with good nutrition for those unable to leave their houses or prepare meals without assistance throughout the year. If you are interested in being a regular part of delivering meals, or part of the Santa's Seniors program, please contact STEP at 570.326.0587.



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Mark Your Calendar!



March

STEP 'N Out! Bus Trips

Brought to you by the STEP Office of Aging and a grant through the Pennsylvania Department of Aging, "STEP 'N Out!" is a way for individuals age 60+ to experience local and regional history, entertainment, and landmarks.

March 1
Little League Museum & Lunch
Renovo Center: 570.923.2525

March 6
Community Aid Store, Selinsgrove
Mill Hall Center: 570.726.6378

March 7
Multi-Center Trip:
Philadelphia Flower Show
Call your nearest center for more details, including pick-up/drop-off locations.

March 8
Mohegan Sun Casino
Clinton County Community Center:
570.858.5820

March 15
Street of Shops in Lewisburg & Country Cupboard
Lincoln Center: 570.601.9573

March 20
Capitol Diner, Harrisburg
Hershey's Chocolate World, & Community Aid Store, Selinsgrove
Jersey Shore Center: 570.601.9591

March 22
Hollywood Casino
Loyalsock/Montoursville Center:
570.601.9590

March 27
Lewisburg Hotel & Campus Theater
Meck Center: 570.546.2542

March 29
Community Aid Store, Boscov's & stopping for a meal in Selinsgrove
RiverWalk Center: 570.601.9592



Tuesday, March 13

AmeriCorps Week: Day of "A"

PennSERVE and STEP will host over 600 members and alumni from AmeriCorps organizations across the state for the Day of "A" during AmeriCorps Week in Williamsport.



Wednesday, March 14 through Thursday, March 15

Raise the Region 2018

Raise the Region is a 30-hour online fundraising event held by the First Community Foundation Partnership of Pennsylvania. You can support STEP by visiting www.raisetheregion.org/designee/step-inc.



NOW through early April

AARP Tax Aide

STEP Office of Aging is partnering with AARP and the IRS to bring free tax assistance to those who need it most! Tax-Aide is a free program that offers individualized tax preparation, with special consideration for tax filers 50 and older. For more information, call the STEP Office of Aging at 570-323-3096.

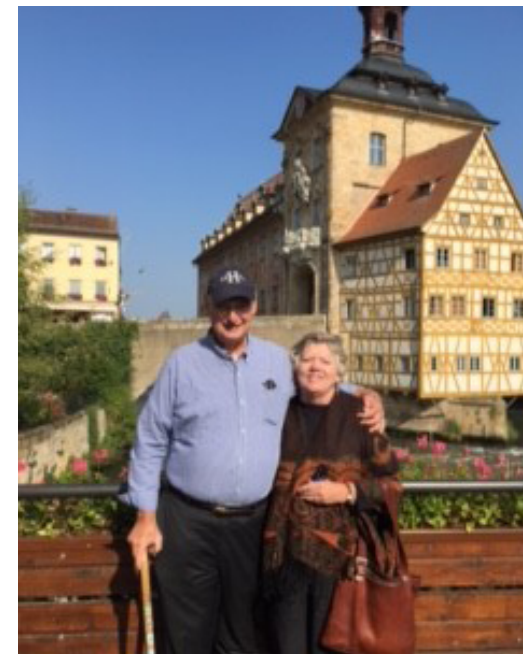


Retiree Spotlight - Anne Doerr

Since my retirement at the end of April 2014, I have continued to do those things I've always done with my free time, though, of course, I have a lot more of it! Gardening, knitting, reading, traveling to Germany, enjoying my three grandsons, and, lately, local community activism. Unsurprisingly, I discovered that housework can always wait, just as it did before retirement! But, as I had anticipated, it has been difficult to come to grips with the fact that Head Start and I are no longer one. I deeply miss my Head Start colleagues and our shared passion for our work. I was truly fortunate to have had a meaningful job that I loved, a job I was proud to hold, and a job that represented the values I hold dear. In the end, retirement is like most things in life - you get out of it what you put into it. So, I set myself to gardening, knitting, and community activism with gusto, and to overcoming the ever-present danger of staying up too late and sleeping in too late. I joined the Gesang Verein Harmonia Chorus because I wanted a challenge, and singing is that for me.

My husband and I have visited Germany for 3½ weeks each fall, starting back in 2010. We begin and end in the Mosel River Valley, famous for its wonderful Riesling, street festivals, skilled winemakers - many of whom have become friends, and gorgeous, steep wine slopes. From the Mosel we drive to Franconia, near Würzburg, famous for its Silvaner wine, rarely found in America. We stay with a winemaker and are friends with the newly named 2018 German Winemaker of the Year. Finally, we go to Bamberg, a world UNESCO Heritage City, and where David was stationed in the Army in 1967-68, which is when our German love affair began. Bamberg is famous for its smoked beer, or Rauchbier, from the world-famous Schlenkerla. There are more than 185 small, independent breweries within 75 miles of the city and its breathtaking medieval and baroque architecture.

I also enjoy flower and vegetable gardening. After seeing how gorgeous container gardens can be from visiting Germany, I fill 20 or so containers with flowers every summer. Making homemade jams, preserves, relishes, chutneys, and fruit liquors is always interesting and fun to do too. I continue to be a dedicated knitter, and I'm proud of finishing a very complicated Shetland lace shawl for my newest grandson, now almost 19 months old. I wish I could see more of my grandsons, but the two oldest live in Charlotte, North Carolina and the youngest lives in Connecticut. It's funny thinking back, that the father of the 19-month-old rode a Head Start tricycle after-hours around the now demolished STEP Office on 3rd Street some 33 years ago!



- Anne Doerr, Retired STEP Head Start Director



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