

The Vision



Over 30 years of excellence

Step By Step, Inc.

Step By Step, Inc. Newsletter

Summer 2009

Step By Step, Inc. Celebrating National Re-Accreditation

Step By Step, Inc. has received a three year re-accreditation from the Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF). CARF reviews and grants accreditation services nationally and internationally on request of a facility or program. Its standards are rigorous, so those services that meet them are among the best available.

Programs receiving accreditation include: Community Services: Family Services; Community Services: Host Family Services; Community Services: Supported Living; Employment Services: Community Employment Services: Job Supports; Employment Services: Community Employment Services: Job-Site Training; Employment Services: Community Employment Services: Employment Planning Services; Case Management/Services Coordination: Psycho-

social Rehabilitation (Adults); Outpatient Treatment: Alcohol and Other Drugs/Addictions (Adults); Supported Living: Psychosocial Rehabilitation (Adults); and Behavioral Consultation (Children and Adolescents).



"This achievement is an indication of the organization's dedication and commitment to improving the quality of lives of persons served," noted **Brian J. Boon**, Ph. D., CARF president and CEO. "Services, personnel and documentation clearly indicate an established pattern of practice excellence."

"All of us at Step By Step take great pride in our services and our community outreach," said **James Bobeck**, president. "The whole team, including our board members and staff, share in this prestigious designation from CARF and, certainly, those that we serve are better off thanks to the quality of care we continue to provide."

Salute to Our Staff— Honoring Direct Support Professionals (DSPs) at Step By Step, Inc. and Throughout the Nation

In September, Step By Step, Inc. and communities across the nation will pause to honor a critical segment of our workforce. The U.S. Senate has declared the week of September 14, 2009 as National Direct Support Professional Recognition Week. On behalf of Step By Step's board of directors, management and administrative staff, we recognize our dedicated service staff for the quality supports provided to over a thousand Pennsylvanians with disabilities.

Our mission statement recognizes all employees as our most valuable resource because each and every one of you is vital to the work performed on behalf of our consumers. As a result of your dedication, skill and commitment, children receive support at home and in school classrooms; individuals with mental illness receive rehabilitative services and encouragement to believe in recovery and the ability to lead meaningful lives. Your efforts have given people with developmental disabilities the ability to leave institutions, live in the community and enjoy simple pleasures such as working, worshipping, and socializing in a neighborhood.

As professionals, you do not receive the recognition you truly deserve. You are known by a variety of names: direct service workers, direct care workers, direct support workers, home health aides, personal services

aides, long-term care aides, to name a few. No matter the reference, you offer a wide range of supportive services on a daily basis so that individuals with developmental and other types of disabilities can live and work in their communities.

Among the many services you as a DSP provide are: habilitation, health need fulfillment, personal care and hygiene, employment training, transportation, recreation, housekeeping and other home management-related tasks. You play a vital role by promoting independence and inclusion for individuals with disabilities. Out of respect for your work and dedication to our clients and profession, we take this opportunity to recognize you for the immeasurable difference made each day in the lives of people in our care.

All of us at Step By Step, consumers, families and community members across our 15 counties, say "thank you" for the wonderful work and dedication of our direct support professionals.

Dr. Debbie Tindell
Chairperson of the Board of Directors

James Bobeck
President and CEO

Robert Hintze
Executive V.P. and Chief Operating Officer

New Service for the Lehigh Valley Region

On July 1, 2009, the Lehigh Valley Region went live with Mobile Psychiatric Rehabilitation. The service is licensed by OMHSAS and is currently funded as a Northampton County HealthChoices expansion service.

Mobile Psychiatric Rehabilitation (MPR) is an intensive rehabilitation program designed to assist individuals in improving their functioning in their LIVING, LEARNING, WORKING and SOCIAL environments. MPR provides the framework for providing individualized services based on each individual's skills and desires. The program assists in reducing the need for psychiatric hospitalizations, reducing recidivism to facility based services, improving adult daily living skills and most importantly, improving the quality of life through personal choice.

The psychiatric rehabilitation practice is comprised of three strategies: (1) helping individuals identify goals; (2) helping individuals plan strategies and acquire necessary skills to reach and maintain desired goals; and (3) helping individuals

develop necessary supports to maintain these goals.

Overall, the principles of individual choice, control and voluntary participation guide all attempts to meet the support needs of individuals with mental illness. Step By Step places a high priority on having consumer driven, culturally sensitive, recovery-based Individual Service Plans.

Who is eligible for this service?—18 years or older; presence or history of a serious mental illness; active in Northampton/Lehigh County Mental Health Services and/or Health Choices members of Northampton/Lehigh County.

This service offers skill and support development in symptom management, medication management, health education, problem-solving techniques, assertiveness training, time management, communication, self care skills, use of public transportation, budgeting, nutrition, food planning and preparation; assistance with housing needs, community

awareness, resource management, empowerment and advocacy, and vocational and/or educational opportunities.

The *Transitional Age Youth (TAY)* service specializes in working with young adults between the ages of 18-25 transitioning from children and youth mental health services to adult mental health services.

Mobile Psychiatric Rehabilitation Counselors have a well-rounded knowledge and working relationship with providers of children's services, adult services, housing services, educational services, vocational services and transportation services.

The program will offer a peer specialist, who serves as a role model for recovery by guiding staff and consumers through the recovery process, based upon their own experiences.

For more information contact **Kim Orner-Rauch**, Mobile Psychiatric Rehabilitation Manager, at 610-867-0688 or korner@stepbystepusa.com.

Tree Planting Ceremony Marks Mental Health Awareness Month

The New Beginnings Drop-in-Center, Montrose (part of Step By Step's Supported Living Program), recently planted a Japanese Flowering Crab tree at Kennedy Park in Forest City. In recognition of Mental Health Awareness Month, the group plants a tree in a different Susquehanna County community each year.

The Montrose center serves approximately fifty consumers throughout all of Susquehanna County, including some from Forest City. Its purpose is to enable consumers to live on their own in the community.

Lou Ann Smith, Community Support Specialist, arranged for the tree planting with Forest City Borough representatives, Kennedy Park Board, and the For-

est City Shade Tree Commission. Forest City Mayor **Nick Cost** and Kennedy Park Board member **Hank Majdic** also participated in the ceremony. Step By Step employees **Tami Robinson**, Community Support Coordinator, and Community Support Specialists **Senga Thurston** and **Jessica Thurston**, assisted with the consumers.

Forest City Council member **Mary Twilley**, also head of the Shade Tree Commission, said the following at the ceremony: "I would like to thank the Supported Living Program, working under Step By Step, Inc. under the direction of **Lou Ann Smith**, Community Support Specialist, for choosing Forest City's Kennedy Park as the recipient for this year's tree planting in honor of the Mental

Health Program they provide to our community. May this Japanese Flowering Crab tree remind us of the dedication this organization has in the capacity in which they serve. We are grateful for their generosity. Thank you, also, to all the people involved in this endeavor. It is with deep-felt gratitude that we accept your beautiful gift to our community."



Pittsburgh Autism Walk

Step By Step participated in the Pittsburgh Autism Speaks Walk in June. This successful fundraising effort not only generates vital funds for autism research, but also raises awareness about the increasing prevalence of autism and the need for increased research funding to combat this complex disorder.

The regional Autism committee sold earrings and tee shirts to generate money for the walk, raising approximately \$500. Six of the Third Street consumers attended, along with Step By Step employees **Gerry Therrien**, **Paul Therrien**, **Bob Zbozny**, **Marcia Hutton**, **Carey Cravens**, **Renee Perozich**, **Jim McCarthy**, **Amy**

Pawloski, **Jody Givens** and **Carolyn Kidwell**. Participants wore tee shirts printed with "Step By Step for Autism."

The fundraising Walk in Pittsburgh was extremely successful. The 12,000 people who walked raised \$715,000. Step By Step looks forward to participating again next year.

Benefit Information

Aetna Health Insurance—Certificate of Coverage/Evidence of Coverage (COC/EOC)

Step By Step's health insurance plan, Aetna Open Access HMO, renewed July 1, 2009. It is important to note that the Certificate of Coverage/Evidence of Coverage (COC/EOC) was updated because of changes that were made. Employees covered under this health plan should review the current COC/EOC, which is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week on your secure Aetna Navigator website (www.aetn navigator.com). If you are not registered, use the "First Time User" box to register. After logging in to Aetna Navigator, select the Benefits tab to view your plan documents.

You should refer to the COC/EOC whenever you have questions

about what your plan covers or what steps are required to ensure coverage for services.

It includes a Schedule of Benefits that lists your cost-sharing obligations when you receive covered services. It also provides information on:

- Complaint, appeal and external review rights and procedures.
- Plan administration information.
- Selecting a doctor or health care professional, and after-hours care.
- Specialists or facility care.
- Referrals and precertification requirements (if any) and claims reimbursements.
- Emergency care in and out of

your service area, including follow-up care.

- Chronic/complex conditions and mental health/substance abuse services.
- Women's health.
- Member Rights and Responsibilities.
- Confidentiality of health insurance.
- Eligibility and enrollment specifications.
- All other plan provisions.

To get direct access to these and other important documents, register on Aetna Navigator at www.aetn navigator.com.

MassMutual Retirement How to Access Account Information

If you want to access retirement account information or retirement planning tools, MassMutual offers you two easy-to-use options:

INTERNET ACCESS—*The Journey*

www.massmutual.com/retire

The Journey is your comprehensive retirement planning tool kit that's easy and fun to use. Offering planning tools powered by Morningstar Associates, a registered investment adviser, *The Journey* has four main destinations:

My Account—My Account allows you to review your account balance and daily performance, perform transactions, and get a statement on demand that includes your personal rate of return.

Learn—Access a variety of calculators to help you understand more about investing. Explore different ways to meet your financial goals or personalize this educational resource.

Research—Access detailed information about your plan's investment options, including profiles and analysis prepared by Morningstar Associates.

Solutions—Using *The Journey's* planning tools, develop a strategy based on your personal goals in as little as five minutes.



PHONE ACCESS—*FLASH*

1-800-74-FLASH (1-800-743-5274)

FLASH, MassMutual's automated retirement information service, provides access to your retirement account from any touch-tone telephone, 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Just call to:



- Check your account balances
- Review investment performance
- Transfer funds
- Request loans, if available through your plan.

When you call *FLASH* (Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 8 p.m.), you also can be connected with MassMutual's Participant Information Center. Highly trained customer service representatives are available to answer your questions and guide you through transactions.

Up-to-date; Easy-to-Use: *FLASH* provides account information, updated daily. Once you're connected to *FLASH*, you will choose from an easy-to-follow menu to access your personal account information.

Staff Profiles - Fiscal Department

In the next several newsletters, we will be including a Staff Profiles section to help familiarize Agency staff with administrative personnel.

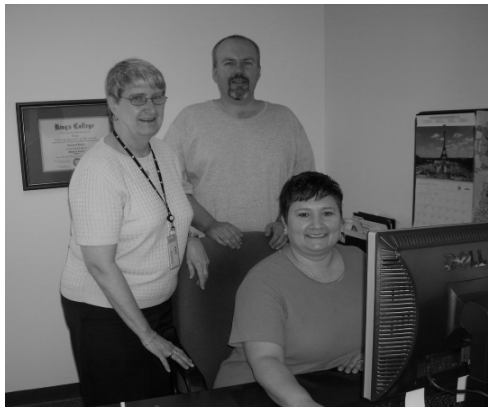
Many of them you know by voice only. They play key roles in helping Step By Step provide care, services and funding to dozens of consumers in our programs. They make sure employees receive their compensation and expense checks on time, and vendors receive their payments in a timely manner. They also manage the Agency's money, assuring wise investments, timely billing, and prudent financial policy. They are members of the Step By Step Fiscal Department.

Headed by **Mike Kasenchak**, chief financial officer, the Fiscal Department includes **Susie O'Donnell**, controller, and **Sergei Kapral**, contract and budget manager.

Tom Smith is financial analyst, while **Rosemary Dobbs**, **Michele Duris** and **Melinda Strunk** serve as fiscal accountants.

Andrea Graboske is accounts receivable supervisor. Her staff includes **Christopher Simmons**, accounts receivable technician, and accounts receivable fiscal assistants **Donna De-Cesaris**, **Ann Marie Higgins**, **Bernardette Lawler** and **Marjorie Culp**.

Payroll is handled by **Cindy Sherrill**, supervisor, along with **Judie Martin**



Pictured Above: Seated, **Cindy Sherrill**. Standing, **Judie Martin** and **Mark Zim**.

and **Mark Zim**, payroll specialists. They work hard to ensure that Step By Step employees receive their payroll checks in a timely manner. If you should have any payroll questions, contact them at (570-829-3477).

Cindy also heads Accounts Payable, with **Maxine Macko** and **Mary Ann Hudock** serving as accounts payable fiscal assistants.

With some recent changes and reorganizing in the department and the introduction of a fiscal liaison, the Fiscal Department is poised to assist Step By Step in its continual growth despite an environment of regulatory

and fiscal uncertainty.

"Mike and his team do a great job in serving staff from all our regions," noted **Jim Bobeck**, president and CEO. "Providing services and supports that are responsive to programs and staff in our four regions and 15 counties can be complicated, but staff always seems up to the task. Great job Fiscal - keep up the good work!"

Recent Staff Changes in Fiscal Services

Christopher Simmons was recently promoted to accounts receivable technician. He will help oversee new billing types and will troubleshoot denials and billing exceptions. He'll also be called on frequently for escalated concerns with any accounts receivable issue.

Mark Zim takes on the important role of payroll specialist - helping to ensure accuracy and timeliness in the important function of payroll operations.

Welcome to **Mary Ann Hudock** who joins Step By Step as accounts payable fiscal assistant after serving in a similar capacity with WBRE TV.

Northeast 4th Annual Vocational Golf Tournament

The Northeast Region recently held its 4th Annual Vocational Golf Tournament at Sand Springs Country Club in Drums, PA.

It was a beautiful day for the golfers and volunteers who came out in support of promoting the hiring of people with disabilities.

Once again, the department was thrilled to welcome Howell Benefits as the tournament sponsor. **Roger Howell** chose the hole-in-one prize, a golf vacation for two to Hawaii valued at \$10,000. Sadly, no one is packing for the trip, but the golfers

took home a variety of prizes. Everyone who golfed received a Step By Step party cooler as a participation prize, as well as a packet with coupons for free clubs, tees and balls. Other prizes were gift certificates for free golf, the pro shop, restaurants, golf towels, and more.

Other major tournament sponsors for this year's event included: PNC Bank, Brewers Outlet, BMC Desks, and 1st Liberty Bank.

Next year's event is planned for Friday, June 23.



Pictured Above: **David H.**, Volunteer and 2009 Honorary Chairperson, and **Mike Bernatovich**, Vice President of Operations/NE

Lehigh Valley Region Celebrates Staff—9/9/09



What better way to spend a day with such a unique date than celebrating the staff in the Lehigh Valley Region. In numerology, the number nine is associated with ferocious drive and energy, and characteristics such as determination and courage. Those characteristics are reflective of the staff in the Lehigh Valley Region. And just to keep it fun.... this year's theme was a "hoedown."

Staff celebrating monumental years of service with Step By Step, Inc.:

5 years: *Christine Bradley, Donna Lannen, Rebecca Foreman, Cindy Wilson, Dianne Banks, Ruth Borkowski and Jervis Roberts*

10 years: *Lori Rieker and Diane Mitchell*

20 years: *Joanna McNeill, Cynthia Gaston, Debbie Savercool, Beth Fehnel and Jane Gross*

25 Years: *Christine Stendell and Kathy Dreisigmeyer*

Lehigh Valley Staff selected these co-workers for the following awards:

MH Service Award - Booker T. Edwards, Jr. Award: *Lori Sysak.* Staff nominating Lori said, "Lori is a master at seeing possibilities within a person that no other person can see... She is an expert on resources available to help make everyone's life easier."

DD Service Award - Joanna Mackaravitz Award: *Paula Brensinger.* Staff nominating Paula said, "She loves to learn new things and to train others....You can see the genuine way she cares for con-

sumers."

D&A Recovery Award - Hal Reed Award: *Pam DeHart.* Staff nominating Pam said, "Her efforts have initiated and reinforced the recovery and sobriety of hundreds of individuals.... Her warmth and compassion can give hope to even the most down hearted addict."

Lifesharing through Family Living Sponsor - Maria Rios Award: *Sonyetta Stokes.*

Thank you to all the Lehigh Valley Staff, and especially the planning committee, for making this event such a wonderful day for everyone.... And thank you everyone for all you do each and every day!!!

Janet Romero, Lehigh Valley Region
VP of Operations

Health & Safety Corner - Heart Disease, Often a Silent Killer

You may feel healthy today, but that does not necessarily mean your heart is pumping along just fine. Heart disease doesn't always announce itself loudly—its entrance is often silent.

Many people don't know they have heart disease until they begin to experience symptoms like chest pain and shortness of breath. In fact, for many, a heart attack is their first physical symptom of a problem. This is why it's important for you and your doctor to talk about all your medical concerns and carefully track your symptoms each year.

Why should you care now? Maybe you've got only a few risk factors for heart disease, like high cholesterol, being overweight, and smoking occasionally. If you're in your 30s or 40s, you might think those health problems are no big deal. But over time, all of these factors put strain on your heart and can turn into something quite serious. And it can happen faster than you think.

Heart disease can strike in a lot of different ways. There's coronary artery disease (CAD), congestive heart failure, or a sudden heart attack, to name a few. The most common type of coronary heart disease is CAD. It causes a narrowing of the small blood vessels that supply blood and oxygen to the heart.

CAD typically occurs as a result of atherosclerosis (hardening of the arteries),

which is caused by a buildup of cholesterol and other substances collectively known as plaque. The more plaque there is, the narrower the artery, so less blood gets pumped throughout the body. If an artery is completely blocked, a stroke or heart attack may result. But the more proactive you are about your heart health, the less likely that is to happen.

Are You at Risk? 15 Risk Factors to Watch For: Check off all heart disease risk factors that apply to you and share this list with your doctor. He or she will help you understand how likely you are to develop heart disease:

- Male
- Postmenopausal woman
- Men over age 45; women over age 55
- A family member has had heart disease
- High total cholesterol
- High LDL ("bad" cholesterol)
- Low HDL ("good" cholesterol)
- High triglycerides (blood fats)
- High blood pressure
- Diabetes
- Smoking
- Physical inactivity
- Being overweight
- Waist circumference more than 35" for women, more than 40" for men
- Unhealthy diet

Would you know it if you were having a heart attack or if you saw someone else having one? Symptoms are not necessarily the same for both sexes.

Men	Women
Chest discomfort that lasts more than a few minutes and can feel like uncomfortable pressure, squeezing, fullness or crushing pain.	Pain or discomfort above the waist that is fleeting, including pain in one or both arms, the back, neck, jaw or stomach.
Discomfort in other areas of the body like the arms, back, neck,	Nausea or indigestion.
Shortness of breath with or without chest discomfort.	Shortness of breath; women are more likely than men to experience shortness of breath.
Breaking out in a	Sweating
Light-headedness	Extreme fatigue
Nausea	Dizziness



Special thanks to the following employees for newsletter contributions: Jim Bobeck, Dr. Debbie Tindell, Bob Hintze, Bob Blazaskie, Edie Hennebaul, Pat Mentis, Janet Romero, Susie O'Donnell, Marbee Sultika, and Cheryl Bentley

Stepping Into Compliance

Over the past 18-24 months, Step By Step, Inc. has been engaged in the process of completing internal reviews of documentation and billing for several service areas. This process is known as "Compliance Reviews." To date, these reviews have largely focused on the areas of Out-patient Services, Children's Services, Home Based Waiver Services, Intensive Case Management Services and Adult Training Facility Services. During the course of the next 6 months, Compliance Reviews will extend to most, if not all services within Step By Step, Inc.

Compliance Reviews, sometimes called Compliance Audits, are comprehensive reviews of an organiza-

tion's adherence to regulatory guidelines, internal policy and procedure and funding entity requirements. Compliance reviews generally look to identify corresponding documentation or billing information that relates to specific requirements according to the services provided for a consumer.

Typically, reviewers perform a majority of their review by evaluating and verifying practices related to a certain number of consumer documents or by contacting consumers and families to verify the provision of services. Additionally, the quality of documentation and service provision is evaluated during this process.

Acknowledgment of consistent practice and adherence to requirements, along with suggestions and recommendations, are shared with the team at the conclusion of the review. Depending upon the review, Compliance Analysts would work in conjunction with the specific service or Regional Office to complete follow-up reviews.

Compliance Reviews allow Step By Step, Inc. to be on the cutting edge of service provision and verification. We are able to demonstrate commitment to consumers, families and stakeholders through our ability in meeting guidelines established for these services.

