

GET OUR NEW MOBILE APP
SBS HUB



GET IT ON
Google Play

Download on the
App Store

The Vision

Opening the doors to independence and opportunity



Over 40 years of excellence

Step By Step, Inc.



Newsletter - Spring 2024

Step By Promotes Diane Kendig and Savannah David to Service Directors, ID/A Northeast Region

We are delighted to announce the promotions of **Diane Kendig** and **Savannah David** to the positions of **Service Directors, ID/A Northeast Region** at Step By Step.

Diane Kendig brings nearly 35 years of dedicated service to Step By Step, having held various pivotal roles within the agency. In her new role, Diane will oversee CLA's, ICF's, IHCS, and the Gerald Ave facility. Diane holds a Bachelor's degree in Psychology and Sociology from Wilkes University. In her leisure time, she enjoys playing pickleball, bike riding, and training her pups Piper and Willow.

Justin Hymon, Senior Vice President of Operations, shared his congratulations: "Diane's unwavering commitment and years of dedication to the organization have paved the way for



this well-deserved advancement. Wishing her every success as she steps into this new role and continues to inspire those around her with her exceptional leadership."

Savannah David also steps into the role of Service Director, ID/A Northeast Region, where she will be responsible for maintaining the agency's developmental programs. Savannah earned a Bachelor of Science in Administration of Justice from Pennsylvania State University and began her career in the criminal justice system, passionately advocating for change.



Prior to joining Step By Step, Savannah served as Residential Program Director at Goodwill Industries (acquired by Step By Step last year). In this capacity, she ensured that every consumer pursued a fulfilling everyday life by fostering opportunities, relationships, rights, and responsibilities for all. Outside of work, she volunteers with non-profit organizations supporting at-risk youth and low-income families.

Justin Hymon commented on Savannah's promotion: "Her dedication, passion, and leadership have truly set her apart. Savannah was a key player in the successful affiliation of Goodwill Residential Services into the Step By Step family. Wishing her continued success as she embarks on this exciting new chapter in her career journey!"

Please join us in celebrating the well-deserved promotions of Diane Kendig and Savannah David. We look forward to their forthcoming accomplishments and achieving new heights of success together. Congratulations Diane and Savannah!

Marbee Sulitka & Jamie Fiel Promoted To Non-Residential Service Directors

Step By Step is thrilled to share some fantastic news with all of you. Please join us in congratulating **Marbee Sulitka** and **Jamie Fiel** on their well-deserved promotions to **Regional Non-Residential Service Directors**!

Marbee Sulitka - NE Region Non-Residential Service Director: Marbee

began her career with Step By Step in 2005 and has been an exemplary leader ever since. She quickly advanced to the role of Vocational Program Director at the newly opened Gravel Street location, where she initially served 31 individuals. Her dedication and vision have been instrumental in expanding our services, leading to the opening of a second

location.

Today, Marbee's and her team's efforts support over 120 individuals across the Northeast Region. Her journey reflects her unwavering commitment to our mission and the people we serve.

-continued on page 2-



Non-Residential Service Directors Announced (continued from page 1)

Jamie Fiel - SE Region Non-Residential Service Director:

Jamie joined Step By Step in 2007, bringing a passion for service and care that has only grown over the years. Starting as a Supported Living Counselor in the Supported Independent Living Program, Jamie transitioned to the In Home and Community Supports Program in April 2018. Over time, she has excelled in many different positions such as Program Coordinator, Program Director, and direct care.

Recently, Jamie achieved the status



Marbee Sulitka (left) and Jamie Fiel (right)

of Advance Level Facilitator for WRAP, further showcasing her dedication to our community and the

individuals we support.

Marbee and Jamie have both demonstrated exceptional leadership, dedication, and a profound commitment to enhancing the lives of those we serve. Their promotions are a testament to their hard work and the positive impact they have had within our organization.

Congratulations to Marbee and Jamie on their new roles! We look forward to the continued growth and success they will bring to their respective regions.

Be An Advocate—Contact Your Local Legislators



Dear Step By Step Team,

At Step By Step, we believe in the power of advocacy

and community engagement to drive positive change. One impactful way to make our voices heard is by contacting our local legislators. Whether you have a concern about a particular issue, want to express support for a bill, or simply wish to introduce yourself as a constituent, reaching out to your representatives can have a significant impact.

Step 1: Identify Your Legislators

1. State Legislators: Start by determining who represents you in the Pennsylvania General Assembly. You have one state senator and one state representative. You can find this information by visiting the Pennsylvania General Assembly website and entering your address in the "Find My Legislator" tool.

2. Federal Legislators: Additionally,

you have representation in the United States Congress. You have one U.S. Senator and one U.S. Representative. You can find their contact information on the official website of the United States Congress or by using online tools like GovTrack.us.

3. Pennsylvania Advocacy Resources (PAR) has excellent advocacy tools that will help you find out who your legislators are, how to compose an email to them or make a phone call and gives you talking points to share in your communications with your legislators. **Please go to this link for this information: par.net/advocacy-toolkit**

Step 2: Gather Contact Information

Once you've identified your legislators, gather their contact information. This typically includes their office addresses, phone numbers, and email addresses. You can find this information on their official websites or by calling their offices directly.

Step 3: Choose Your Method of Communication

Decide how you'd like to reach out to your legislators. You can:

•Call: Contacting their office by phone allows for immediate communication and personal interaction.



•Email: Sending an email provides a written record of your message and allows you to articulate your thoughts clearly.

•Write a Letter: Sending a physical letter can be a powerful way to convey your message, especially for important or formal communications.

Step 4: Craft Your Message

When contacting your legislators, it's essential to be clear, concise, and respectful. State your purpose for reaching out, whether it's to express your opinion on a specific issue, request support for a particular bill, or share a personal story relevant to legislation.

Remember to include:

- 1) Your name and address to verify that you are a constituent.
- 2) Specific details about the issue or bill you're addressing.

-continued on page 5-

Introducing Our Newest Marketing Coordinator: Madelaine Mills!

We are thrilled to announce the latest addition to our team, **Madelaine Mills**, who has joined Step By Step, Inc. as our Marketing Coordinator. With her diverse background in graphic design, advertising agency management, and a passion for creating impactful marketing strategies, Madelaine brings a wealth of experience and creativity to our team.



background, combined with her hands-on experience in advertising agency management, positions her perfectly to spearhead our marketing efforts with innovation and creativity. Notably, Madelaine

Upon joining our team, Madelaine expressed her excitement, stating, "I am thrilled to begin this new chapter as the Marketing Coordinator at Step By Step. I am eager to collaborate with the talented team here to develop compelling marketing strategies that resonate with our audience and drive success for the agency."

We are confident that Madelaine's expertise, creativity, and passion will play a pivotal role in elevating our marketing initiatives to new heights. Please join us in welcoming Madelaine to the team, and we look forward to achieving great things together!

A graduate of Mansfield University, Madelaine holds a Bachelor's degree in Graphic Design, honing her skills and expertise in visual communication and branding. Her educational

also boasts extensive experience in crafting marketing campaigns for social services, demonstrating her commitment to using her skills for meaningful and impactful purposes.

Mental Health Services: Responding to the needs of the community and our teams

Step By Step's mental health services continue to transition based on what's important to the individuals who need services. And Step By Step's team members are the key to any service. Supporting our team members with tools and skills to provide quality support while maintaining their own self-care is essential.

In Luzern County, Step By Step purchased two new properties to move existing programs. The new properties will result in providing single occupancy bedrooms and establishing a location that is fully accessible for a person who is non-ambulatory and for individuals with mobility challenges. In response to the needs in Lehigh County, Step By Step has transitioned two residential services to more robust staffing patterns to meet the needs of individuals.

Step By Step's team members have been actively engaged in numerous activities for their own growth. Over 40 team members have become Certified Personal Medicine Coaches through **Pat Deegan and Associates**.

Before 2024 ends, two more cohorts will complete the process thanks to our exceptional in-house trainers, **Tracy Ciabattoni** and **Mary Harkenreader**. Nearly 70 team members have had the opportunity to enjoy the two-day WRAP (Wellness Recovery Action Plan) Seminar I retreats. In addition, individuals in services have also participated in the Seminar I 2-day retreats. Twenty-three team members have begun the process to equip themselves with knowledge for the CPRP (Certified Psychiatric Rehabilitation Practitioner) exam. Several team members have attained the Trauma-Competent Certification from **Lakeside Global Institute**, as well as in-house. The list of accomplishments and growth is unending.

The Agency's dedication to professional growth and attention to self-care enables Step By Step's mental health team to continue to respond to the needs of our community and what's important to the people who need services.



Top row, l. to r: **Tracy Ciabattoni**, **Allison Stiles** (Pat Deegan & Assoc.), **Jeff Sherwood**, and **Kris Zabinski**. Center row, l. to r.: **Randall Harmon**, **Karen Yob**, **Larissa Benson**, and **Laurie Kivler**. Bottom row, l. to r.: **Kimberly Hatcher**, **Janet Romero**, **Janet Gonzalez**, and **Robin Martin**.

"Rest is not idleness, and to lie sometimes on the grass under trees on a summer's day, listening to the murmur of the water, or watching the clouds float across the sky, is by no means a waste of time."

— **John Lubbock**, *The Use Of Life*

Training and Nursing Departments Welcome New Talent

We are excited to announce that two vital departments at Step By Step have recently added several new staff members to their teams. This addition marks a significant step forward in our mission to provide the best possible services to our clients.

The **Training Department**, known for its comprehensive programs and commitment to continuous learning, has added three trainers, in addition to a Training/Development Manager: **Jamie Halko** (Training/Development Manager), **Garbo Goodkin**, **Nicole Wood**, and **Christelle Hoffman**. These talented professionals bring a wealth of knowledge and innovative ideas to our training programs. Their expertise

will enhance our offerings and ensure that our team is well-equipped to meet the evolving needs of our clients.

Similarly, the **Nursing Department** has welcomed three new nurses: **Mike Barnett**, **Laura Broadwater**, and **Jackie Mirigliani**, in addition to **Kathleen Walsh**, who has been with the Agency since 2021. These individuals bring a diverse range of experience in various medical fields, ensuring that we continue to offer top-notch care to those we serve. Their addition strengthens our ability to respond to the growing demand for quality nursing services.

In response to these exciting developments, our Senior Vice President of Operations, **Justin Hymon**, shared his thoughts: "We are incredibly grateful to welcome these talented individuals to our team. Their skills and dedication are exactly what we need to continue providing exceptional service. We are confident that they will achieve great things and play a crucial role in our ongoing success."

Please join us in congratulating and welcoming the new members of our Training and Nursing Departments. We are eager to see the positive impact they will have on our agency and the individuals we serve.

Southeast's Spring Fling Art Thing

Step By Step's Southeast Region recently held a *"Spring Fling Art Thing,"* which was an art and design group event, which all individuals and staff were encouraged to attend.

Jeff Sherwood, SE BH Service Director, shared: "It was such a great time and the turnout was incredible.



Alphonso S. proudly shares his artwork.

Thank you to everyone who attended or helped in any way."

The event's main art project was called the *"Tree of Life,"* as presented by the **Southeast TRE Team**, as well as other art projects that could be chosen such as: coloring, painting and sand art. It

truly represented an amazing day of creativity.

Thanks again to members of the **Southeast TRE Team**: **Jeff Sherwood**, **Kim Hatcher**, **Toni Fernandez**, **Madona Ganda** and **Orville Griffiths**. Also, thanks to **Tammy Johnson**, **Jamie Fiel**, **Janet Romero**, and others who took time out of their busy day to assure this came together! Great job!

Active Shooter Training Held

It was a privilege to welcome **Sergeant Jamie Sheridan** from the **Wilkes-Barre City Police Department** to Step By Step for an informative session on civilian response to active shooting situations. The Civilian Response to Active Shooter (CRASE) course is designed and built on the *Avoid, Deny and Defend* principle and provides strategies,



Pictured, l. to r.: **Garbo Goodkin**, Southeast Training Coordinator, **Sergeant Jamie Sheridan**, and **Christelle Hoffman**, Training Coordinator, Northeast and Lehigh Valley.

guidance and a proven plan for surviving an active shooter event. Topics include the history and prevalence of active shooter events, the role of professional guardians, civilian response options, medical issues, and drills.

Unfortunately, active shooter events continue to be a growing concern. The world we live in today is becoming less and less predictable and it pays to be knowledgeable and aware of how to handle and ser-

vice an active shooter situation in the unlikely, but ever present chance, one occurs around or near you. Having the knowledge to understand and prepare for potential active shooting scenarios can save lives.

Fifty staff attended the May training in the Wilkes-Barre office. Step By Step has scheduled additional trainings to be held in Wilkes-Barre and Lehigh Valley. We are hopeful trainings will be offered in other regions in the near future as well. This is a great training no matter where you serve in the agency. The knowledge gained can be put to use anywhere you are and also passed onto family and friends.

TRE Team members presented at NatCon24 in St. Louis

Step By Step, Inc. was selected to share the importance of being Trauma-informed, Resilience-oriented, and Equity-focused (TRE) at **NatCon24**, the annual conference hosted by the **National Council for Mental Wellbeing**. The Council is guided by its vision that mental wellbeing — including recovery from substance use — is a reality for everyone, everywhere; fighting to ensure all Americans receive the high-quality treatment they deserve.

Step By Step launched the official TRE transformation as part of a learning community with the na-

tional Council in 2020. A huge thank you to our talented Step By Step presenters, **Tracy Ciabattoni** and **Janet Romero**, and to the invaluable support from **Ami Roeschlein** from the National Council, and **Laurie Kivler**, one of the Agency's Core TRE Team members. Great work, team!

Photo, r. to l.: **Laurie Kivler**, SBS BH Service Director; **Tracy Ciabattoni**, SBS Training Coordinator, **Janet Romero**, SBS BH Vice President of Operations; and **Ami Roeschlein**, National Council.



Be An Advocate—Contact Your Local Legislators (continued from page 2)

3) Personal anecdotes or experiences, if applicable.

4) A clear call to action or request for a response.

Step 5: Follow Up

After reaching out to your legislators, don't hesitate to follow up if you haven't received a response within a reasona-



ble timeframe. Persistence can often lead to meaningful dialogue and engagement.

Governor Shapiro has proposed an increase to the rates for intellectual disability and autism services for organizations like Step By Step. **If approved by the legislature, the executive team and Board of Directors are prepared to authorize an additional increase in the fall of 2024 pending the Pennsylvania legislative approval of the Governor's proposed budget.**

Your voice matters! Call, email, or write your legislators today!

This is an excellent opportunity for you to advocate for yourself and our consumers! Engaging with your local legislators is a crucial aspect of civic participation. By taking these steps, you can actively contribute to the democratic process and help shape policies that affect our communities and our organization.

Thank you for your commitment to making a difference, both within Step By Step and beyond.



Step By Step Foundation

Leave a Legacy

By making a contribution to the Step By Step Foundation

Your contribution to Step By Step will be used to wisely enhance our education, training, health and rehabilitation services for those in need. Please consider making a gift to the Step By Step Foundation. Opportunities to leave a legacy and commit resources to help the agency continue to

serve those in need are plentiful. And, they can be important components of tax planning.

Call us at (570) 270-7909 or visit www.stepbystepusa.com to learn more about charitable giving through the Step By Step Foundation.

(The Step By Step Foundation is registered with the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania Bureau of Charitable Organizations.)

Save the Date for Step By Step's Annual Golf Tournament



Time: 9:00 AM - 5:00 PM

Why You Should Attend:

Support a Great Cause: The golf tournament is a major fundraising event for our agency's foundation, helping to support our programs and services throughout the year.

We are thrilled to announce the date for our 2024 Annual Fundraising Golf Tournament! This year, the event will be held at the beautiful **Huntsville Golf Club** on **August 26, 2024** and the Tournament Sponsor this year is **Willets Technology**. Mark your calendars and prepare for a fantastic day of golf, fun, and community support.

Event Details:

When: August 26, 2024

Where: Huntsville Golf Club, 1334 Market St, Dallas, PA 18612

Networking and Team Building: It's a perfect opportunity to connect with colleagues and meet community supporters who share our passion for making a difference.

Fun Activities and Prizes: Along with a fantastic day of golf, there will be contests, raffles, and prizes for participants.

How to Get Involved:

Register to Play: If you would like to participate in the tournament or know someone that does, you can register as an individual player or as part of a team.

Volunteer: If golfing isn't your thing, consider volunteering to help with event coordination, setup, or other roles throughout the day.

Spread the Word: Share the news with friends, family, and business contacts. The more people who attend, the more support we can gather for our cause.

Next Steps:

We will send additional information soon, including registration details, sponsorship opportunities, etc. In the meantime, please save the date, and if you have any questions or ideas for the event, reach out to **Patti Blazaskie** at (570) 829-3477 extension 7909.

Thank you for your continued support of the Step By Step Foundation's Annual Golf Tournament. We look forward to seeing you on the golf course!



Karen Zomerfeld, Editor. For more information on contents in this newsletter, please contact info@stepbystepusa.com. Special thanks to the following employees for newsletter contributions: Patti Blazaskie, Janet Romero, Jeff Sherwood and Scott Gomb.