GET OUR NEW MOBILE APP

SBS HUB

GET IT ON Google Play

Download on the App Store

Over 40 years of excellence

Step By Step, Inc.

The Vision

Opening the doors to independence and opportunity

Newsletter - Spring 2025

2024 Staff Survey

From December through January, all Step by Step staff were provided with the opportunity to offer feedback to the greater agency, Board of Directors and Executive Team through the **2024 Staff Survey**.

This opportunity afforded any team member, through a satisfaction level response format, the ability to share feedback on a variety of organizational, supervisory support and other work-related questions and initiatives. Additionally, the survey provided respondents with the opportunity to offer open comments on whatever topic areas the respondent had chosen and felt was/is most important to them.

Congratulations and thank you to all 376 respondents to this feedback process. This was our single largest

response to the staff survey since inception (1999). Also, thank you to the 152 team members who shared positive and constructive feedback through the comment section.

Within the overall responses, it appears that team members felt that the following were strengths for the agency: training; having a good work schedule; employees being treated with respect; and having sufficient knowledge of work expectations. Several of these areas have consistently been identified as strengths for our organization over the past 10-15 survey cycles and reflects the quality of team members working within Step By Step.

Team members identified: the need to offer additional staff recognition initiatives; having their thoughts and opinions heard; revisiting benefit opportunities; and the use of the newsletter for informational purposes as constructive challenges that would further assist in the growth and development of the agency and staff.

-continued on page 4-

WRAP UPDATES

Wellness Recovery Action Plan

Wellness Recovery Action Plan (WRAP) is a simple and powerful process for creating the life and wellness you want.

Scan the QR code for more information on WRAP.

Follow Us on Socials @StepByStepUSA

Join Us and Learn

Understand the five key wellness recovery concepts.

Develop a wellness toolbox and daily plan.

Identify stressors, early warning signs, and signs that things are breaking down and an action plan for responding to them.

Create a crisis and post-crisis plan to share with your supporters.

Explore recovery topics focused on creating a healthy way of life.

Step By Step is a licensed AHP (Advocates for Human Potential) Advanced Level Facilitator and an Advanced Level WRAP Recertification provider. This allows us to deliver virtual and in-person WRAP Seminar 1 sessions, in-person Seminar 2 sessions, and to train Advanced Level WRAP Facilitators.

Upcoming *Virtual* Seminar I Retreat Dates

May	June
5/01/25 - 5/02/25	6/05/25 - 6/06/25
5/15/25 - 5/16/25	6/12/25 - 6/13/25
5/22/25 - 5/23/25	6/19/25 - 6/20/25
	6/26/25 - 6/27/25

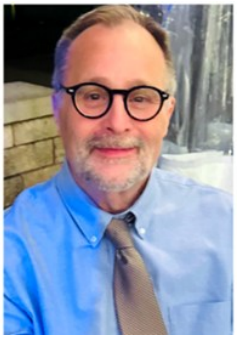
July	August
7/17/25 - 7/18/25	8/07/25 - 8/08/25
7/24/25 - 7/25/25	8/14/25 - 8/15/25
	8/21/25 - 8/22/25
	8/28/25 - 8/29/25

Step By Step, Inc.™

Supporting Wellness, Inclusion & Opportunities

wrap CENTER of DISTINCTION

A Message From Eric - The Impact of Servant Leadership on Organizational Culture



Hello Step By Step Employees,

Over the past few newsletters, we shared information about **Servant Leadership** and what comprises the core principles of being an effective servant leader. We also discussed information that reflects setting the tone for your team, department and services through respect, ethics, empowering others, being and providing flexibility, and supporting others.

Servant Leadership is generally comprised of several core values and virtues that speaks to honoring others in the workplace or volunteer space, before yourself. Servant Leadership strongly supports the enablement and empowerment of others while promoting growth and stability of services and support. It can influence an employee's performance, work commitment and trust. Servant Leaders demonstrate care and support to others, motivate individuals and often provide a level of mutual trust.

As you can imagine, working hand-in-hand with Organizational Leadership approaches, the introduction of Servant Leadership initiatives can have a significant impact on the culture within an organization.

"Company culture is the set of shared values, behaviors and beliefs that define how people within an organization interact and work together," according to **Brandy Bischoff**, Deputy Chief of a public-safety organization and a Freelance Copywriter. Organizational culture is also the "personality of our company," maintaining "influences over day-to-day decisions and operations."

Bischoff further defines Organizational Culture impacts and influences on:

1. Successful Teamwork
2. Staff retention
3. Organizational reputation
4. Increased staff productivity

According to ***Business Leadership Today***, organizational leadership plays an important role in not only shaping the culture within an agency but maintains the responsibility for reinforcing that cultural identity. Organizations can ensure that they are "leading in ways that are positive and positively reinforce a successful culture" by practicing and implementing the Servant Leadership core values.

As we had previously identified in prior newsletter articles, we are all leaders to one degree or another. As leaders, each of us shares the burden and responsibility to have that positive impact on not only the individuals we support, but with each other, as peers in the human services field.

Through the implementation of a clear Mission and Vision, including the implementation of Servant Leadership approaches, the cultural identity of an organization begins to take shape and becomes rooted into the daily fabric of the services and supports offered, as well as our individual approaches to "opening the doors to independence and opportunity."

Best,

Eric Lindey, President/CEO

2025 RCPA Capitol Day!

An orange wave filled the Capitol on March 19 as Step By Step joined health and human service providers from across Pennsylvania for **RCPA's (Rehabilitation & Community Providers Association) 2025 Capitol Day**.

As proud members of the RCPA, Capitol Day is our annual call to action: (1) Invest in the Workforce (2) Fund Essential Services; and (3) Protect the Future of Care in Our Communities. Together, we raised our voices for direct support professionals, caregivers, and service recipients at the heart of Pennsylvania's health and human services system

Legislators and industry leaders spoke of millions of state residents served by support programming. The event spotlighted the pressing need for funding, training, and support within health and human services. Our Step By Step team was eager to contribute to the dialogue surrounding workforce issues and budget priorities affecting the field, and advocate for the interests of our employees and individuals who rely on the services we provide.

Thank you to all the Step By Step team who attended the event. Also, a big thank you to our legislators who took the time to listen and urge continued commitment to the priorities outlined in Governor Josh Shapiro 2025-26 budget. Because when providers are supported, Pennsylvanians thrive.

Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) Now Available through Step By Step!

At the recent **NATCON 2025** conference held in Philadelphia, Step By Step Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) Instructors attended the *Mental Health First Aid Summit* l. to r.: **Jeff Sherwood**, **Dawn Alexander-Rizzo**, **Robin Martin**, **Kim Orner-Rauch**, **Alyssa Durnien**, **Karen Yob**, **Dianhery Castro-Torres**, **Kristen Tyrrell**, **Kimberly Barber**, **Larissa Benson** and **Janet Romero**.

"Most of us would know how to help if we saw someone having a heart attack — we'd start CPR or call 9-1-1. But too few of us would know how to respond if we saw someone having a panic attack or showing signs of alcohol use disorder.

Just as CPR helps you assist an individual having a heart attack, Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) teaches you how to assist and support others who may be experiencing a mental health or substance use challenge.

This evidence-based, early-intervention course... uses community-specific scenarios, activities and videos to teach the skills needed to recognize and respond to signs and symptoms of mental health and substance use challenges as well as how to provide initial support until they are connected with appropriate professional help." **National Council for Mental Wellbeing**.

MHFA is an evidenced-based tool taught worldwide to over 8 million people. Step By Step sees MHFA as a perfect addition to our TRE Transformation, expansion of WRAP © and incorporation of Certified Personal Medicine Coaches (CPMC). The Agency continues to seek to provide wellness tools for our employees, the individuals in our services and our communities. MHFA interventions use the acronym "ALGEE", Assess, Listen, Give reassurance, Encourage Professional Help and Encourage Self-Help. MHFA's mascot is named ALGEE and is an adorable Koala Bear because MHFA originated in Australia in 2000.

Step By Step, Inc. now has 16 MHFA Instructors; Kimberly Barber, Larissa Benson, Dawn Alexander-Rizzo, Kristen Tyrrell, Kim Orner-Rauch, Anthony Artinyan, Robin Martin, Evelyn Robles, Karen Yob, Tracy Ciabattoni, Dianhery Castro-Torres, Alyssa Durnien, Jeff Sherwood, Lee Horton, Dennis (Freedom) Horton, and Janet Romero.

Step By Step's MHFA Instructors are currently building their skills by providing in-house classes but have a vision of reaching the world! Watch for a MHFA course calendar to enroll in course.

When you are with someone who displays the signs of a stroke, is choking on a piece of food lodged in their throat, or is unconscious, a person trained in CPR/First Aid knows how to support the person and when to seek professional help. Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) teaches how to help someone experiencing a mental health or substance use challenge.

1 in 2 people in the US will experience a mental health challenge in their lifetime. MHFA helps to:

- Ensure people receive support early in the challenge to decrease possible negative outcomes. For example, a person experiencing a challenge, such as anxiety, can identify the challenge and receive support before possible loss of employment, housing or relationships.
- Normalizes understanding of mental health and substance use challenges to reduce stigma. Reduction in stigma leads to more people feeling comfortable talking about their challenges as well as people available to support them.
- Increase supports in our communities, families and work. By increasing our general knowledge, people have a better understanding of their own self-care, ways to improve our wellness, more people around us taught on how to listen and assess.

MHFA is not a substitution for professional support. In the same way that a person certified in CPR/First Aid still refers people who need professional medical interventions, Mental Health First Aiders also refer people to professional or crisis services when needed. MHFA helps to ensure people are equipped with community resources, as well as the use of 988 and 911.

Step By Step - June Open Enrollment

Mark your calendars! Benefits open enrollment begins in June. Be sure to watch your Step By Step email for instructions on when and how to enroll or make changes to your benefits.

Open enrollment is your annual opportunity to review your current benefits selections and make changes, such as choosing a new medical plan or adding a dependent or spouse. Any changes you make will become effective on July 1, 2025.

Keep in mind that open enrollment only happens once a year and when it ends, you cannot make changes to your coverage during the year unless you experience a qualifying "life event" such as having a baby or getting married or divorced.

Resource Fair for Caregivers

Step By Step recently took part in a free Resource Fair focused on supporting caregivers of individuals with disabilities. The event was hosted by **Gather Community Space** in Wilkes-Barre, along with **Misericordia University's Occupational Therapy Department.**

L. to r.: **Susan Reavy**, Program Manager; **Amanda Crouse**, Program Manager; and **Dorothy O'Boyle**, Community Employment Specialist.

The fair brought together a wide range of community organizations sharing helpful services and resources.

Step By Step highlighted its **Lifesharing Program**, which connects individuals with disabilities to supportive families who offer long-term care in a home setting.

The event fostered an inclusive, welcoming environment where caregivers could explore a broad range of resources. Other vendors offered services such as employment support, social engagement opportunities, transportation, and educational tools—all aimed at enhancing quality of life for caregivers and the individuals they care for.

2024 Staff Survey (continued from page 1)

From the 152 comments, some common themes were apparent. These include (both from a positive and a constructive feedback viewpoint): communication efforts; various salary issues; training (volume of and addressing less "live" training); hiring; and benefits.

The majority of respondents (90%) were full-time, while 66% were non-supervisory level team members. 21% of respondents were employed for less than 1 year, with 26% being employed 10 years or more. 42% of respondents worked within the MH/BH system (including CBH), while 35% were identified as a part of the IDD support system.

Please watch for future informational notices on the 2024 staff survey. It is our intent to provide a more thorough comparative summary for team members though the HUB, in the not-too-distant future.

Again, thank you for taking the time to offer your thoughts and feedback. Please know that we will give thoughtful consideration to all feedback and suggestions, and we continue to navigate the challenges of our system and advance the mission and vision of Step By Step.

Step By Step Annual Golf Tournament to be Held Monday, August 25, 2025

We are excited to announce the date for our 2025 Annual Fundraising Golf Tournament. The event will be held at the beautiful **Huntsville Golf Club** on Monday, **August 25, 2025.** The Tournament Sponsor this year is **Willets Technology,** and the Food and Beverage Sponsor is **Johnson, Kendall & Johnson**. Mark your calendars and plan to join us for a memorable day of golf, fun, and giving back!

The annual golf tournament is a major fundraising event for Step By Step's foundation, helping to support the Agency's program and services throughout the year. It's a perfect opportunity to connect with colleagues and meet community supporters who share our passion for making a difference.

The tournament will start with a continental breakfast, followed by a shotgun start. The day will end with a BBQ dinner, a chance to win basket raffles and awesome auction items.

To reserve your team foursome or become a sponsor contact Patti Blazaskie at pblazaskie@stepbystepusa.com or by calling (570) 829-3477 ext. 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!

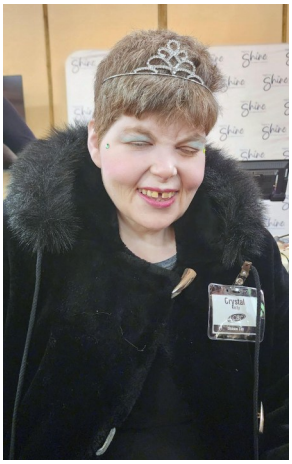
The Key Features of Excellent Service/Progress Note Documentation Across All Step By Step Programs

Service/Progress Notes are completed for most of the services Step By Step Inc. provides. While additional documentation may be needed depending on the program, the common features of all Service/Progress Notes include:

- Name or identifying information of the Individual receiving services
- Name or identifying information of the agency providing the service
- Printed Name and Signature of the staff member(s) providing the service along with the date they are signing
- Date service was delivered
- Location of the service
- Service Type or Name of the Service (procedure codes such as W codes are acceptable)
- A relevant description of what outcomes or goals were worked on during service provision:
  - On Progress Notes for Mental Health services, Intermediate Care Facilities, and Children's Behavioral Health Services, the goals/outcomes are derived from a Treatment Plan, IPP (Individual Program Plan), or a Service Plan. Some goals are categorized as short-term and some as long-term.
  - On Service Notes for Intellectual Disabilities and Autism Services, the outcomes are found in the annually updated ISP (Individual Supports Plan) and there will be outcomes attached to the various services an Individual receives. The outcome is also used in the service details section of the ISP to indicate how the service funds will be allocated.
- For services billed by minutes or units (15-minute blocks) - Exact Start and End Times of Services including AM and PM designations are required. For programs using EVV (Electronic Visit Verification), all start and end times on notes must match the digital information. For all services billed in minutes, total service time should be documented.
- For residential services billing in Day Units - Completed daily census grids indicate the whereabouts of Individuals receiving residential services. These are used for billing purposes as well to determine if the day is categorized as an "X" day or a "D" day. Other daily unit designations include "H" for hospital and "T" for therapeutic leave.
- Completed checklists for notes featuring activity options or other fields staff can circle or comment on.

A Service/Progress Note is complete only when all the items mentioned above, and any additional program-specific note requirements, are accurately and thoroughly documented on the same day that services are provided. For programs still using paper documentation, handwriting should be legible. A failure to complete any part of the document could result in financial loss for the company during an audit. Excellent Service/Progress Notes, moreover, demonstrate to auditors, monitoring entities, and supports coordination services the high-quality work that staff continue to deliver daily.

Night to Shine Event



Lackawanna County NE individuals attend **A Night to Shine Event.** 1st Photo (left): **Leo G., Brian C.** and **Brian M.** 2nd photo: **Crystal K.**

It was a night to remember for several of our **Northeast** Individuals as they graced the red carpet for the ***"A Night to Shine"*** event sponsored by the **Tim Tebow Foundation**, whose focus is fighting for "the most vulnerable people around the world."

This event takes place annually on the Friday before Valentine's Day. This year, the event was held around the globe on Friday, February 7. The events are held simultaneously on the same day worldwide.

A Night to Shine is an event centered on honoring and valuing people with special needs. While each *A Night to Shine* event is tailored to its specific location, there are several shared experiences across all the events. These include a red-carpet entrance greeted by a welcoming crowd and paparazzi, hair and makeup stations, shoeshines, limousine rides, karaoke, gifts, a catered dinner, a sensory room, a respite area for parents and caregivers, dancing, and of course a crowning ceremony where every guest is celebrated as a king or queen.

Several Lackawanna County Northeast Region Step By Step individuals attended the event, hosted by the **Parker Hill Church** in Dickson City. This is the third year the Parker Hill Church has held "A Night to Shine," with all the amenities donated by area businesses and organizations in Lackawanna County. Everyone had a wonderful evening of pampering and fun!

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: Bob Blazaskie, Madelaine Mills, Patti Blazaskie, Eric Lindey, Janet Romero, Cheryl King, and Philip Fritchey.