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Step By Step, Inc.



Newsletter - Winter 2026

2025 Staff Survey

In December of 2025, all Step By Step staff were provided an opportunity to offer feedback to the Agency, Executive Team and Board of Directors through the **2025 Annual Staff Survey**. This was made available through *SurveyMonkey*.

This opportunity allowed all team members the ability to share feedback on a variety of organizational, supervisory support and other work-related questions and initiatives. The survey also provided respondents with an opportunity to offer comments on whatever topic area the respondent had chosen and felt was/is most important to them.

During this opportunity, 455 team members provided a complete or partial response to this survey opportunity, which is a 21% increase over the previous year. Congratulations and thank you to all respondents.



This was easily our single largest response to the staff survey since inception (1999). Also, thank you to the 174 team members who shared positive and constructive feedback through the comment section.

Strengths identified by the responses include: Receiving praise from supervisor; my supervisor is committed to the job as shown by their actions; I am treated in a fair and consistent manner; and I am able to get answers to job related questions. Each of these areas has demonstrated consistent positive trending over the past few survey cycles. This truly demonstrates an effort towards the quality of the team working within our ser-

vices.

Some constructive feedback regarding challenges, as identified by team members include: organizational recognition of staff; having team members' thoughts and opinions heard and valued; expressing benefit package support concerns and needs; and ensuring on-going high-quality commitment from all staff within the organization.

Common themes from the 174 comments include (both from a positive and constructive feedback viewpoint): wage and salary enhancement; communication needs and efforts; the enjoyment of my job and associated work; training initiatives; and enhancing commitment to providing good service to the individuals we support.

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Step By Step Foundation: "Stepping Up for Possibilities" Grant



The Step By Step Foundation is excited to introduce a new opportunity for our staff to make a difference: the **Stepping Up for Possibilities Grant**.

This internal grant program was developed with one purpose in mind—to inspire our staff to dream big and create extraordinary, one-of-a-kind experiences for the individuals we support every day.

The Stepping Up for Possibilities Grant will be shared and open for applications in February 2026. Program Ser-

vices may apply for up to \$5,000 awarded bi-annually, to bring ideas to life that promote wellness and inclusion, spark joy and connection, and support growth opportunities in new and creative ways.

What could your idea look like? Perhaps it's helping someone reconnect with a family member they haven't seen in years. Maybe it's launching a creative arts project that allows individuals to explore their creative voices. Or it might be building a sensory garden—a peaceful place to learn, recharge, and experience the world through touch, sound, and scent.

No idea is too small if it has the power to make a big impact. We believe that the people who know our individuals best, **you**, our staff, also hold the most powerful and heartfelt ideas. Through the Stepping Up for Possibilities Grant, we can work together to turn those meaningful ideas into real moments of growth, joy, and connection.

We can't wait to see the creativity, compassion, and innovation that emerges from this new initiative. Let's dream big—step by step!

Step By Step Supports Special Olympics Night

Special Olympics Pennsylvania's Northeast Region held its Special Olympics Night on December 13, 2025, as the Wilkes-Barre/Scranton Penguins hockey team faced off against the Providence Bruins at the Mohegan Sun Arena at Casey Plaza in Wilkes-Barre.

This memorable evening—proudly sponsored by Step By Step, Inc.—highlighted the spirit of inclusion, sportsmanship, and community pride.



One of the night's most meaningful moments was the Special Olympics torch lighting ceremony, where Step By Step's own Sarah W. and Susan Casey, Direct Support Staff Lead, had the honor of participating. Sarah W. and Susan Casey, along with Arthur P. and Joshua Ladson, Direct Support Staff, also had the exciting opportunity to participate in

riding the Fanboni (a modified ice resurfacer), creating a standout moment that added even more fun and visibility to the celebration.

Families, fans, and athletes filled the arena with energy and encouragement, celebrating the power of sports to bring people together. Through its sponsorship, Step By Step reaffirmed its dedication to empowering individuals of all abilities and creating meaningful opportunities for them to shine.

Lisa Raub and Chelsea Allen Promoted to Service Director Roles

Step By Step is proud to announce the promotions of two outstanding leaders within our organization: **Lisa Raub** and **Chelsea Allen**. Their dedication, expertise, and unwavering commitment to those we serve have earned them well-deserved advancement into key leadership roles.

Lisa Raub – Service Director, ID/A Northeast Region - Effective January 4, 2026: Lisa joined Step By Step in June 2023 as a Program Manager and quickly distinguished herself through her strong leadership and passion for supporting individuals and teams. She was promoted to Program Director in January 2024, further expanding her impact across the region.

Before joining Step By Step, Lisa spent 11 years with Goodwill Industries, where she advanced through multiple roles, including Residential Pro-

gram Worker, Site Supervisor, and Community Living Arrangement Manager. Her steady progression reflects both her professional capabilities and her deep commitment to human services.

Lisa's promotion to Service Director is a testament to her vision, operational strength, and dedication to Step By Step's mission. We are excited to see her continue to grow and lead with excellence in this new chapter.

Chelsea Allen – Service Director, Western Region - Effective January 4, 2026: Chelsea has been a valued member of Step By Step since December 2021. With professional experience in residential services dating back to 2014, including her most recent role as a Residential Supervisor, Chelsea has demonstrated leadership grounded in compassion and accountability.

She holds a Bachelor of Science degree from Pensacola Christian College and has consistently exceeded expectations through her commitment to quality care, team collaboration, and service excellence. Chelsea's promotion recognizes her strong work ethic and her positive impact on the individuals and communities we support.

Please join us in congratulating Lisa Raub and Chelsea Allen on their promotions to Service Director. We look forward to the continued growth, innovation, and leadership they will bring to their respective regions and to our organization as a whole. Their achievements represent not only individual success but also the strength and dedication of the Step By Step community.

Congratulations, Lisa and Chelsea!

Lehigh Valley Designer Bag Bingo April 19, 2026

Step By Step's Lehigh Valley office is excited to host its annual **Designer Bag Bingo** fundraiser on **Sunday, April 19, 2026** - and you won't want to miss it! Every dollar raised helps support fun, meaningful events for the individuals receiving services from Step By Step.

Get ready for 20 rounds of classic BINGO, plus the option to purchase



four special games at the event. Designer Bag BINGO prizes include a variety of bags by Coach, Michael Kors, Kate Space, Vera Bradley and Tory Burch. Bring your appetite! A variety of delicious food and baked goods will be available for purchase throughout the afternoon.

Doors will open at 11:30 a.m. and **BINGO begins at 1:00 p.m.** at

the American Club of Coplay Pavilion, 300 Cherry St., Coplay, PA. **Only 200 tickets (\$25 per ticket) will be sold!**

For tickets, or to be a promoted sponsor of the event, contact **Kim Orner-Rauch** at 610-867-0688 or korner@stepbystepusa.com.

Stay Connected: Follow **"Designer Bag BINGO"** on Facebook for purse previews, event updates, and sponsor shout-outs!

Step By Step's 2026 Calendar & 2025 Annual Report

We are excited to share that Step By Step's 2026 Calendar & 2025 Annual Report - *Expanding Our Reach, Enhancing Our Impact*

- has been recently distributed to employees, board members, community members, contributors, and agency partners.

This year's publication showcases



highlights from across the agency, focusing on the many ways Step By Step is growing to meet the needs of those we serve. Readers will find features on **new and expanded programs**, as well as spotlights on existing **services** that continue to change lives every day.

In addition to the calendar, the publication also includes Step By Step's complete **2025 Annual Report**; a letter from President/CEO Eric Lindey;

the names of contributors, sponsors and partners; and a listing of the Board of Directors and Management Team, recognized for their leadership and dedication.



To receive a complimentary copy, please call 570-829-3477 or scan the QR code for download.

Holiday Celebrations Held Throughout Step By Step

Individuals and staff across all Step By Step locations came together to celebrate the holiday season—and what a joyful time it was! Programs and regions hosted unique festivities, filling our spaces with laughter, music, and the warmth of togetherness. From decorating activities and spe-

cial holiday treats to games, gatherings, and cheerful surprises, there was no shortage of smiles or holiday spirit.

These celebrations created wonderful memories for everyone involved, showcasing the creativity, compas-

sion, and dedication of our teams. We are incredibly grateful to all staff, volunteers, and supporters who helped make this past holiday season so meaningful. Thank you for your hard work and enthusiasm, which brought joy to the individuals we serve!



Spreading Thanksgiving Cheer



Ahead of the 2025 Thanksgiving holiday, Step By Step's President/

CEO, **Eric Lindey**, took time to personally deliver pumpkin pies to the individuals we serve in our **Southeast region**. This thoughtful gesture was a sweet way to celebrate the season and share gratitude and connection.

"Thanksgiving is about gratitude and togetherness, being able to spend time with our Individual's and share

a small token of appreciation is a reminder of why we do this work and the strong community we continue to build together," said **Eric Lindey**.

Small moments like this make a big impact, reminding our individuals that they are an important part of the Step By Step family.

Using Compliance Review Summaries

Phil Fritchey, Step By Step, Inc. Quality & Compliance Associate, shares: *"I am occasionally asked by staff members what they should do when they get their compliance reviews. Since I remember asking myself the same thing as a new program supervisor, I'd like to share the strategy I used. The following tips may help you work through a compliance review and turn the findings into program improvements."*

► **Carefully Read** - Carefully read the review, identifying the separate areas that need to be addressed – ex., billing, staff training, Individual documentation, record-keeping, site or program issues. Prioritize the findings, addressing health and safety

concerns as well as billing issues first, then working on the rest.

► **Seek Clarification** - Always discuss any review findings you may not understand with your program peers or the compliance reviewer.

► **Classify Errors** - For Billing and Documentation issues, classify the error type. Look at the materials that were reviewed and consider if the errors were unique or part of a larger pattern. Did the staff member completing documentation make a one-time mistake or is there a pattern of mistakes? Patterns of error need to be addressed as soon as possible.

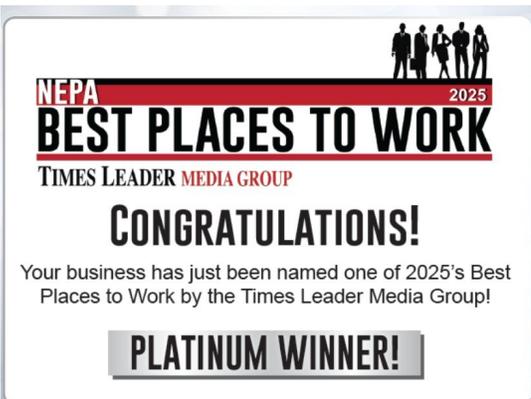
► **Meet With Your Team** - Discuss the review with the relevant staff

members to establish staff participation in improving areas of concern. Consider staff feedback and change/modify program routines as necessary.

► **Record Your Progress** - Document what you have fixed as you proceed for your own future reference. I would sometimes use a copy of the compliance review format itself and cross off/date what I fixed, keeping the document as a comparative for subsequent reviews.

Phil adds, "Remember: when in doubt, call your compliance reviewer to discuss the review. We are happy to be of assistance."

9th Consecutive Year - Step By Step Voted Best Place To Work



We are thrilled to share some incredible news: **Step By Step, Inc.** has once again been honored with the Wilkes-Barre Times Leader's **Platinum Award** for "Best Places to Work" in

Northeastern Pennsylvania—marking our **9th consecutive year** receiving this prestigious recognition!

This achievement is especially meaningful because **it comes directly from you—our amazing employees**. Your votes, submitted through the Times Leader's online portal from October 24 to November 13, 2025, made this win possible. Your belief in our mission and workplace culture continually inspires us.

At Step By Step, our work is powered by the dedication, compassion, and commitment of every staff member. **You are the reason our mission**

thrives and the lives of those we serve are enriched every day.

To every employee who voted - **thank you!**

To everyone who contributes to making Step By Step a supportive, welcoming, and empowering place to work—**thank you!**

We are honored to be named among the *Best Places to Work in Northeastern Pennsylvania for 2025*, and we look forward to continuing to earn your trust, your support, and—hopefully—your votes for years to come!

Here's to nine incredible years... and many more ahead!

Spring Into Safety With Property & Risk!

After a long, chilly winter, Property & Risk is excited to *spring forward* with fresh initiatives designed to keep our staff informed, prepared, and safe. Here's what's blooming this season:



Regional Safety Fairs Are Coming Soon!

Beginning later this spring, a **Safety Fair** will be held at each region—an interactive, hands-on event created in partnership with the Training Department. Here's what to expect: Numerous vendors will be featured, including our insurance broker, JJK; along with **Eastern Alliance**; **Cintas**, and several others, who will set up booths or tables at the regional office grounds. Staff will have the opportunity to visit each station to receive safety tips and take part in interactive demonstrations on the proper use of various safety equipment. Vendors will offer live demonstrations, including how to

extinguish a fire, operate a Hoyer lift, and use a fire-evacuation chair, along with other practical safety techniques.

Our goal is simple: ensure every team member is equipped with the confidence, knowledge, and tools to maintain safe workspaces and environments every day, for themselves and for our consumers.

📅 Quarterly Drills: What's New This Year?

We've also collaborated with the Training Department to design and schedule this year's **quarterly training drills**, bringing new scenarios and timely topics to help prepare us for the unexpected. Training will continue to be available on **Relias**, and this year's lineup includes:

2026 Quarterly Drill Schedule:

1st Quarter: Civil Disturbances

2nd Quarter: Hazardous Air Condi-

tions

3rd Quarter: Unexpected Vehicle Emergencies

4th Quarter: Critical Power & Network Interruptions

These drills are designed to be practical, informative, and relevant—helping all of us stay ready for whatever comes our way.

Here's to a Safe, Bright Spring!



Thank you for everything you do to make Step By Step a safe, supportive, and fun place for both staff and consumers. We're looking forward to a sunny season ahead!

The Property & Risk Team

Scott L. Gomb, Manager

Property & Risk Department, Step By Step, Inc.

2025 Staff Survey (continued from page 1)

The majority of respondents (91%) were full-time, while 69% were non-supervisory level team members. 21% of respondents were employed for less than 1 year, with 26% being employed 10 years or more. 39% of respondents worked within the MH/BH system (including CBH), while 35% were identified as a part of the IDD support system and 23% reported as administrative/support team mem-

bers.

Consistent with what has traditionally been a part of this process, the Executive Team is actively meeting and discussing the survey results. Through these planning sessions, the Executive Team is evaluating the opportunities to best address challenges that were presented and how to further build on strengths that were acknowl-

edged, while maintaining focus on individual care and maintaining a successful and skilled labor force.

Again, thank you for taking the time to offer your thoughts and feedback. Please know that the agency values and appreciates your thoughts, feedback and suggestions as we continue to support our organizational mission and vision.



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.)

Step By Step Foundation Golf Tournament



The Step By Step Foundation is excited to announce that the annual Golf Tournament is scheduled for Monday, August 24, 2026, at the Huntsville Golf Club in Dallas, PA.

Each year, this signature golf outing brings together supporters, golfers, friends, and community partners for a day that’s as mean-

ingful as it is memorable. Guests can look forward to a full day of friendly competition, followed by an evening featuring delicious food, great company, and an exciting selection of auction items.

More than just a day on the greens, the tournament plays a vital role in supporting the **Step By Step Foundation**, which directly funds and enhances the diverse programs and services offered by Step By Step. Your participation helps strengthen our mission and ensures we can continue providing impactful support to individuals across our communities.

This event remains one of our most

anticipated gatherings of the year – and we can’t wait to share another unforgettable day with you.



Interested in Sponsorship?

Sponsorship opportunities are available and offer a wonderful way to support the mission while gaining

meaningful visibility. For those interested in sponsorship opportunities or any related inquiries, please contact **Patti Blazaskie** via email at pblazaskie@stepbystepusa.com or call **570-829-3477**.

We look forward to seeing you on the course!

Celebrating over 40 years of excellence



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We're on the web at
www.stepbystepusa.com

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: Madelaine Mills, Patti Blazaskie, Bob Blazaskie, Philip Fritchey, and Scott Gomb.