



The Vision

NEWSLETTER

SUMMER 2026



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Deanne Chincola Promoted to Vice President of CBH Services



We are pleased to announce the recent promotion of **Deanne Chincola** to **Vice President of CBH Services**. Deanne has been a valued member of the Step By Step team for more than 20 years, most recently serving as **Director of CBH Services**.

Deanne has consistently demonstrated exceptional leadership, unwavering dedication, and a deep commit-

ment to the individuals, families, and communities we serve. Throughout her tenure, she has played a critical role in advancing our mission, strengthening program operations, supporting our teams, and fostering a culture of excellence and compassion.

In her new role as Vice President, Deanne will provide strategic leadership and oversight for our CBH Services division, working closely with organizational leadership to continue enhancing service quality, expanding opportunities for growth, and ensur-

ing positive outcomes for those we support.

Lesley Corey, Chief Operating Officer, shared: "We are confident that under Deanne's leadership, CBH Services will continue to thrive and build upon its many successes. Her experience, vision, and dedication make her exceptionally well-suited for this important role."

Congratulations to Deanne on this well-deserved promotion. We wish her continued success as she begins this exciting new chapter in her leadership journey.

Allison Seeley Joins Step By Step as Vice President of Advancement

Step By Step is pleased to welcome **Allison Seeley** as the Agency's new **Vice President of Advancement**. In this role, Allison will focus on expanding philanthropic support, increasing the organization's brand awareness and visibility, and strengthening connections with community partners and supporters.

Throughout her career in nonprofit advancement, Allison has been dedicated to building meaningful relationships, inspiring philanthropic investment, and advancing strategic priorities that create lasting impact.



Her professional experience spans higher education and mission-driven nonprofit organizations serving health-related causes throughout Northeastern Pennsylvania, the Lehigh Valley, and the greater Philadelphia region. Allison holds a bachelor's degree in Global Studies from Lehigh University and a Master of Nonprofit Management degree from Central Florida

Allison states: "I'm excited to join

Step By Step and contribute to an organization whose mission strongly aligns with the values that have guided my career in impact-focused fundraising. I look forward to helping share the inspiring stories of the individuals and communities served by Step By Step while engaging new supporters in the Agency's mission and vision for the future."

Please join us in welcoming Allison to the Step By Step team. We are excited to have her expertise, passion, and commitment to community engagement as part of our organization.

Jeff Wieland Joins Step By Step as Director of Business Systems



Step By Step is pleased to welcome Jeff Wieland as our new Director of Business Systems.

Jeff brings with him a diverse and extensive background in technology, operations, and leadership, with experience spanning numerous industries including steel, iron, gas, food, textiles, pharmaceuticals, automotive manufacturing, military, and defense. He holds a bachelor's degree in Elec-

tro-Mechanical Engineering from Penn State.

Jeff began his career working with electrical control panels, PLC automation, robotics, and technology stack development. Over the years, his expertise expanded into leading large hardware and software teams across the United States, most recently with McKesson. His experience ranges from fast-paced startup environments to multi-billion-dollar global organizations, providing him with a unique perspective on people, processes, and technology.

In his role as Director of Business Systems, Jeff looks forward to leveraging his experience to support Step By

Step's mission and continued growth. He shared, "I'm excited to join the Step By Step team and bring my experience to an organization that makes such a meaningful impact. I'm looking forward to finding opportunities that make day-to-day life a little easier for both our employees and the people we serve every day, while helping keep Step By Step focused on its continued success and growth." He added that he has already been impressed by the passion, dedication, and heart that employees bring to the organization's mission.

Please join us in welcoming Jeff to the Step By Step team!

Rewiring Hope: How Neuroplasticity Supports Mental Health Recovery

For many years, scientists believed the brain stopped developing in adulthood. Today, we know that the brain remains adaptable throughout life thanks to a process called **neuroplasticity**. This ability allows the brain to form new neural connections, strengthen healthy patterns, and let unused pathways fade over time.

This discovery has become a source of hope for individuals living with depression, anxiety, trauma, and other mental health challenges. Our experiences, thoughts, and behaviors shape the pathways in our brains. When stress, worry, or negative thinking are repeated over long periods, those patterns can become the brain's default response. The encouraging news is that these pathways are not permanent.

Neuroplasticity shows that recovery is possible because the brain can learn new ways of responding to life's challenges. Through intention-



al practice, people can develop healthier thought patterns, improve emotional regulation, and build resilience. Evidence-based approaches such as Cognitive Behavioral

Therapy (CBT), mindfulness, and meditation work by helping individuals recognize unhelpful thinking patterns and create new, healthier neural connections.

Several everyday habits also support brain change and recovery. Regular physical activity increases the release of chemicals that promote brain growth and learning. Quality sleep helps the brain strengthen new pathways and process emotions. Consistent practice of positive coping skills, gratitude, and solution-focused thinking reinforces healthier mental habits over time.

It's important to understand that neuroplasticity is not about pretending problems don't exist or forcing

positivity. Healthy recovery involves acknowledging difficult emotions, seeking support when needed, and learning how to respond to challenges in constructive ways. Pain, stress, and grief are real experiences that deserve attention and care. The science of neuroplasticity offers an empowering message: mental health challenges do not define your future. While healing takes time, the brain's ability to adapt means that growth and recovery remain possible at every stage of life. With support, healthy habits, and consistent effort, people can build new pathways that foster hope, resilience, and overall well-being.

Ultimately, neuroplasticity is a reminder that the human brain is designed for change. Every positive step, no matter how small, helps strengthen pathways that support recovery. By understanding and harnessing this remarkable ability, individuals can move forward with greater confidence, knowing that healing and personal growth are always within reach.

Scott Gomb Graduates from Leadership Northeast's Core Class of 2026

Step By Step is pleased to congratulate **Scott Gomb**, Manager of Property/Risk Management, on graduating from Leadership Northeast's Core Class of 2026. Founded in 1981, Leadership Northeast is a nonprofit dedicated to developing informed and committed leaders from all segments of the community. A key component of the program is the **Community Impact Project**, which brings classmates together to identify and address a local need while developing and enhancing their leadership skills.

Scott participated in the **Fostering Hope** project, a collaborative effort supporting **CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocates)** of Wyoming Val-



Step By Step representatives attended the **45th Annual Leadership Northeast Dinner and Graduation** celebrating the Core Class of 2026. Pictured front row (left to right): **Michele Duris** (Core Class of 2024), **Scott Gomb** (Core Class of 2026 graduate) and his wife, **Brenda**, and **Mary Ellen McLean** (Core Class of 2025). Back row (left to right): **Eric Lindey** and **Josh Van Gorden**.

ley, an organization that serves more than 400 infants, toddlers, children, and teens who have experienced abuse or neglect and are navigating the court system. Their court-appointed volunteers serve as a consistent voice for them, and often remain one of the only stable figures in their lives during a case.

Through the project, Scott and his team provided **75 backpacks**

along with more than **\$12,000 in monetary and in-kind donations** to benefit children in Luzerne and Wyoming counties.

Working closely with CASA, the Fostering Hope team identified essential

items needed by children entering care and assembled backpacks designed to provide comfort, stability, and support during a difficult and often uncertain time. Beyond the practical value of the items they contain, the backpacks offer children a sense of dignity, hope, and reassurance as they navigate challenging circumstances.

Scott joined fellow graduates and community leaders at **Leadership Northeast's 45th Annual Dinner and Graduation** at Mohegan Pennsylvania in Wilkes-Barre. The event welcomed more than 300 attendees and celebrated 45 years of empowering leaders, strengthening communities, and creating positive change throughout Northeastern Pennsylvania.

We thank Scott and the entire Fostering Hope team for their dedication to improving the lives of vulnerable children in our community. Their compassion, leadership, and commitment to service reflect the values that make a meaningful difference in the lives of others.

Making Memories at the NE Spring Fling



These moments capture the joy, friendship, and excitement shared throughout the day as employees and individuals we support enjoyed the **NE Spring Fling** at the Plains Pavilion.

Sunshine, smiles, and plenty of laughter made this year's **Step By Step Northeast Spring Fling picnic** a wonderful success! Held at the **Plains Pavilion**, the event brought together employees and the individuals we support for an afternoon of fun, food, and connection.

Guests enjoyed a delicious lunch,

treated themselves to ice cream from a visiting ice cream truck, and took part in activities like corn hole and dancing while a DJ kept the energy high throughout the day. One of the event highlights was the dunk tank, which had everyone cheering and laughing, especially when **Eric Lindey**, Step By Step's President/CEO, stepped

up and took the plunge!

The Northeast Spring Fling was a fantastic opportunity for staff and the individuals we support to come together and celebrate the strong sense of community that makes Step By Step so special. With such a great turnout and so many smiling faces, the day was truly memorable. Thanks to all who made this event such a success!

Creativity, Connection, and Resilience Shine at the 3rd Annual Spring Fling Art Thing



Photo 1: **Carrie Oxendine**, Healthcare Assistant, and **Jane Chan**, Finance Generalist, welcomed guests at the TRE resource table. Photo 2: **Madona Ganda**, Program Manager, delivered a heartfelt dance performance that celebrated resilience and connection to loved ones. Photo 3: The **Spring Fling Art Thing** brought smiles and meaningful moments as individuals and caregivers enjoyed a day of creativity, fun, and community. **Mariama Boakai** (standing) and **Bashira B.** Photo 4: Participants showcased their creativity through a vibrant collection of artwork entered into the **Spring Fling Art Thing** art contest.

Step By Step's Southeast TRE Team proudly hosted its **3rd Annual Spring Fling Art Thing** on June 26, welcoming nearly 200 participants for a day focused on resilience, creativity, and connection.

Attendees enjoyed an energetic atmosphere featuring music from a DJ, dancing, a delicious catered meal, and a wellness resource table hosted by the **Southeast TRE Team**. The event provided meaningful opportunities for engagement, social connection, and celebration.

One of the day's most memorable

moments was a moving performance by **Madona Ganda**, Program Manager, who shared a beautiful song about being far from home. She dedicated the performance to individuals receiving services who are separated from their families, accompanying the song with a heartfelt dance that deeply resonated with the audience.

The celebration also featured a lively art contest with prizes and a collaborative resilience activity where participants created a wave of bubbles together, symbolizing strength, unity, and hope. As attendance and enthusiasm continue to grow each year,

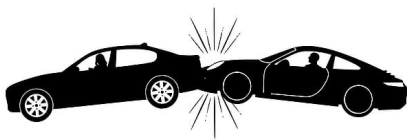
the Spring Fling Art Thing has become a meaningful and inspiring tradition in Step By Step's Southeast Region.

Art plays a vital role in fostering creativity, critical thinking, and emotional expression. It provides individuals with a powerful way to explore and communicate experiences that words alone may not capture. By promoting personal growth, cultural identity, and social connection, the arts enrich both individuals and communities, making events like the Spring Fling Art Thing an important part of building resilience and belonging.

Know The Step By Step Motor Vehicle Accident Procedures

Motor vehicle accidents unfortunately happen, regardless of who is at fault. No matter how safely and cautiously you are driving, it is always a risk once you get behind the wheel and pull out into traffic. So if you are involved in one, it is imperative you know the right steps to take to safeguard yourself, our consumers and the agency by following the tips below.

First off, a vehicle can be repaired. The people inside, including



yourself, are much more valuable. The first thing to do when in an accident is to make sure everyone is

okay. Call 911 and share any injury information with them so that they can send the appropriate first responders to the scene as soon as possible. Don't try to move anyone who has a serious injury unless there is immediate danger such as a car fire.

Have your insurance card and driver's

license ready to share with the police. If there is another vehicle involved, note the make, model, and plate number as well as the color of the vehicle. Always remain courteous to the other driver and the police. Never engage with another driver who is agitated or aggressive. If you have a cell phone, take pictures of the scene, vehicles and surroundings.

Staff must then contact their supervisor and a member of Property & Risk immediately to notify them of the incident.

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From Vision to Reality: A Collaborative Garden Project at Gravel Street



Step By Step, Inc. was pleased to partner with Wilkes University's Senior Projects team on a meaningful and creative community-based

design project for Step By Step's **Gravel Street Day Options** program. What began as a conversation about program needs grew into an exciting opportunity to bring something special to the newly-added garden area. After touring the facility and learning more about the individuals supported

at Step By Step, the student team selected an interactive outdoor sculpture that would add beauty, engagement, and purpose to the space.

Guided by their project advisor and supported by Step By Step staff, the Wilkes students brought enthusiasm, thoughtfulness, and hard work to every step of the process. Their finished tree sculpture is a beautiful addition to the Gravel

Street property and reflects the creativity, dedication, and collaboration of everyone involved. Beyond creating a beautiful outdoor feature, the project provided the students with valuable real-world experience working alongside a community partner to develop



Interactive tree sculpture created through a partnership between Step By Step, Inc. and Wilkes University.

something meaningful that can be enjoyed by the individuals we support.

We are grateful to the Wilkes Engineering team students; Dr. Ed Bednarz, Wilkes Engineering Advisor; and our Day Program staff led by Marbee Sulitka, retired Service Director, for the care and creativity they poured into this project. This partnership is a wonderful exam-

ple of what can happen when education, service, and community come together with a shared goal. Step By Step looks forward to seeing the sculpture inspire interaction, enjoyment, and smiles for many years to come.

Know The Step By Step Motor Vehicle Accident Procedures (continued)

The Step By Step Motor Vehicle Accident Report must be completed in full and sent to Property & Risk within 24 hours. This form is necessary whether the accident involved another vehicle or if staff hit a stationary object. Completing the accident report in a timely manner is not only re-

quired by our insurance carrier but can also play an important role when determining fault. It will also speed up the process of getting the vehicle repaired and back on the road.

Awareness and attention to the road are the first and best tools of accident

prevention. Always be courteous, drive within the speed limits, know the laws and take your time when driving and it will greatly improve your chances and our consumers' chances of arriving at their destination and getting home safely.

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 an important component of tax planning.



**Step By Step
FOUNDATION**



Call us at (570) 570-7909 or scan the QR 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.)

Stepping Up For Possibilities: Turning Dreams Into Reality

The **Step By Step Foundation** is excited to announce the launch of our internal grant initiative, **Stepping Up for Possibilities**. This program is designed to inspire creativity and empower our teams to create meaningful, life-enriching experiences for the individuals we support. Through this initiative, bi-annual grants of up to \$5,000 will be awarded to help bring innovative ideas to life. The initiative looks for proposals that:

- Encourage greater community involvement and inclusion
- Create fun, meaningful, and memorable experiences
- Promote health, wellness, and personal growth
- Help individuals achieve personal goals or explore new opportunities

Our staff have already submitted some incredible ideas for the first cycle, that showcases the power of possibility; these grant proposals included:

- Helping an individual attend their dream NASCAR race
- Taking Day Program participants on a community outing and lunch
- Purchasing art supplies to support an individual's passion for painting and selling artwork
- Providing photography equipment to encourage connections with nature and the outdoors



- Creating a sensory room with specialized sensory materials

Two of these projects received funding, and the others are currently being considered for the upcoming grant cycle.

The best ideas often come from the people who work alongside the individuals we support every day. Whether your idea is large or small, we encourage you to share it. You may see an opportunity to create an experience, open a door, or fulfill a dream that could have a lasting impact on someone's life.

The Step By Step Foundation invites all staff to think creatively, dream boldly, and help make new possibilities a reality through **Stepping Up for Possibilities**.



Step By Step, Inc.®

Supporting Wellness, Inclusion & Opportunities

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