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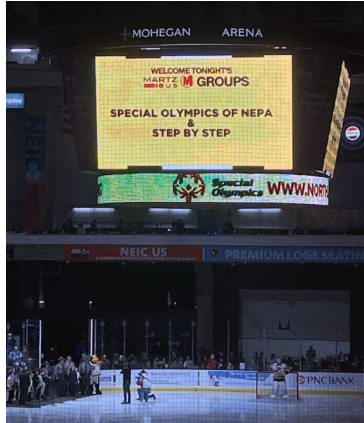


Step By Step, Inc.

Newsletter - Winter 2025

Step By Step Hosts Special Olympics Night

On January 3, Step By Step proudly sponsored the Special Olympics Pennsylvania Northeast Region's Night at the Wilkes-Barre/Scranton Penguins hockey game. This incredible evening, held at the Mohegan Arena at Casey Plaza, celebrated inclusion, sportsmanship, and the power of community.



ing, as athletes took to the ice to showcase their passion and dedication. Families, fans, and participants came together to cheer on these inspiring athletes and celebrate the unity that sports can bring.

Through this sponsorship, Step By Step reinforced its commitment to empowering individuals of all abilities and

creating opportunities for them to shine.

Outside the arena, brave Pennsylvania State Police troopers volunteered to take a chilly dip in a dunk tank to raise money for this worthwhile cause. The highlight of the night was the Special Olympics torch light-

Thank you to all who played a part in and attended this fun-filled evening of sports and community. Your support is greatly appreciated!



Left to right: **Jessica Hunter**, Program Supervisor; **Richelle B.**; **Katie Pineda**, Direct Support Staff; and **Brittani B.**, enjoying the game and festivities.

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.

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.

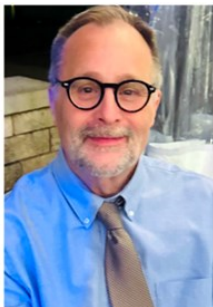
Step By Step is a licensed AHP (Advocates for Human Potential) Advanced Level Facilitator and an Advanced Level WRAP Recertification provider. This allows us to deliver virtual and in-person WRAP Seminar 1 sessions, in-person Seminar 2 sessions, and to train Advanced Level WRAP Facilitators.

Upcoming Virtual Seminar I Retreat Dates

March	April
3/06/25 - 3/07/25	4/03/25 - 4/04/25
3/13/25 - 3/14/25	4/10/25 - 4/11/25
3/20/25 - 3/21/25	4/24/25 - 4/25/25
3/27/25 - 3/28/25	
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



A Message From Eric—Exploring the Values of Servant Leadership



Hello Step By Step Employees,

As discussed in my previous article on the introduction of Servant Leadership, future informational and educational articles

would further explore aspects of the Servant Leadership style.

You may recall, Servant Leadership is generally comprised of several core values and virtues 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 be a model of leadership implemented in all types of organizations, including for-profit and non-profit models.

As a servant leader, you set the tone for your team, group, department and service. According to the Servant Leadership Institute, Point Loma Nazarene University (PLNU), and many other servant leadership minded organizations, aspects that reflect the genuine Servant Leadership approach can be identified, but not limited to, the following principles surrounding the Servant Leadership style implementation:

Honoring Others Before Self by:

- ▶ Recognizing and responding to the needs of your team
- ▶ Providing active resolution to is-

sues

- ▶ Respecting people in all positions

Providing Vision for your Team through:

- ▶ Modeling practices you want your team to adopt
- ▶ Encouraging people to be an active part of the team
- ▶ Helping folks understand why we maintain the “vision” of service that we have

Being Ethical by:

- ▶ Providing clarity to your team on ethics and ethical considerations (See the Quality Department on additional information related to ethical considerations and choices)
- ▶ Discussing ethical challenges and agreeing on a path forward
- ▶ Understanding how ethical practices can assist your group or the agency as a whole

Helping Others to feel Empowered through:

- ▶ The creation of an environment for other team members to have input and gain responsibility
- ▶ Encouraging ownership of an issue or concern
- ▶ Guiding others through development opportunities
- ▶ Encouraging others to offer feedback

Supporting your Staff and Team by:

- ▶ Demonstrating appreciation

- ▶ Offering Encouragement

- ▶ Offering Feedback

- ▶ Demonstrating a “people first” process

Providing Flexibility by:

- ▶ Responding to trends and patterns, although it may take you down a different path
- ▶ Being open to active and frequent discussions with team members
- ▶ Promoting measured risk
- ▶ Being active and not reactive

Serving and Supporting Others with Humility by:

- ▶ Recognizing we all have room to grow, learn and adapt
- ▶ Seeking personal feedback from other team members
- ▶ Connecting with others through task support

Servant Leadership rallies around the opportunities of leadership being reflected as leaders working to serve the people and not the people serving the leader.

Through your efforts in recognizing and implementing some of the points discussed above, your efforts will support longer term viability and stability of your team and our agency; promote team connectedness; and encourage a positive working environment.

Best,

Eric Lindley, President/CEO

Step By Step Named Best Places to Work in NEPA

Step By Step, Inc. has been named as a 2024 Platinum Winner “Best Places to Work” in Northeastern Pennsylvania by the **Wilkes-Barre Times Leader Media Group’s** annual reader contest. We are proud and excited to announce this achievement for the 8th year in a row!

This award is especially meaningful because it is obtained as a direct result of employees’ votes. Employ-



ees submitted their votes online through *Times Leader’s* voting portal over a four-week period from October 27

through November 13, 2024.

Our mission continues due to the support of our staff whose hard work and

dedication improves the lives of those we serve.

Thank you to all who voted! And thank you for recognizing Step By Step, Inc. as a company that values and supports its employees.

We are honored to be recognized as one of the **Best Places to Work in Northeastern Pennsylvania 2024** and hope to continue to earn your votes!

Holiday Festivities

Fun was in the air this past December throughout Step By Step. Holiday parties brought festive cheer as consumers and staff celebrated the season together.

At the annual **Northeast's Consumer Holiday Party**, everyone enjoyed the delicious food, lively music, and plenty of dancing. Adding to the fun, Step By Step Administrative staff dressed as beloved holiday characters like the Grinch, Santa & Mrs. Claus, and Elf, alongside other cheerful helpers.

The **Lehigh Valley Region's annual Holiday Luncheon** was held at the Northampton Banquet and Event Center. This event, in addition to all the holiday celebrations held throughout the Region, were memo-

orable and fun for all.

In the **Southeast Region**, the MH Holiday party was a fun time of coming together to celebrate the season with music, holiday trivia and bingo. The ID annual Holiday party was a success. Attendees appreciated the opportunity of coming together and sharing the fun of the holidays. It is an event they look forward to each year.

Supported individuals, along with many family members, and Step By Step employees, were treated to a marvelous afternoon of dancing, gift giving, and good cheer at the **Pittsburgh Region's** celebration held at the Georgetown Center - a banquet facility in Pleasant Hills. Attendees were treated to a special holiday per-

formance by a local high school choir and appearances by both Santa and the Grinch.

These celebrations are more than just parties, they are a testament to Step By Step's commitment to fostering community and belonging. Thoughtfully designed for accessibility and engagement, the events ensure consumers feel valued and appreciated. Together, we created lasting memories and shared the true spirit of the holidays.

A special thanks to the committees and individuals throughout the Agency for planning these fun events. Your hard work and dedication is greatly appreciated!



1st Photo (left): NE holiday characters: front, Nadine Rosenko (Grinch), back row, l. to r.: Brittany Kittle, Eric Lindey, Holly Curran, Christelle Hoffman, Colleen Reese, John Blaine, and Toni Fernandes. **2nd photo:** Lehigh Valley's Santa with Margaret S. **3rd photo:** Taren C., Lehigh Valley, welcoming the new year. **4th photo:** Southeast's ID celebration, l to r.: Veronica D. and Sonja Bishop.



1st photo (left): Holiday Party Southeast MH, front kneeling; Jeff Sherwood. Back row, l. to r. ; Yolanda G., Darnell S., Abraham J. (Santa), Robin B., Louis P., Christopher Y, and Larry S. **2nd photo:** Western Region celebration attendees waiting their turn for a visit with Santa.

TRE Transformation = Safety

Unlike typical newsletter articles, this article is a very personal story by me, **Janet Romero**, shared with the permission of my husband. In January 2017, my husband was shopping at our local supermarket. As he was leaving the store and approaching his car, a truck with several flags flying, and a rifle in the back window pulled up by him. Several men with bats got out and came at him. My husband was able to get into his car, lock the doors and quickly leave.



My husband and I have lived in Allentown since 1989 and in our home in a quiet West Allentown neighborhood since 1996. My husband spent his entire career being the most skilled professional working with adolescents and directing services for children and adolescents I have ever met. He has received numerous awards during his career for his work and his leadership developing and operating successful programs. He only stopped due to his physical disabilities.

So why was he targeted in 2017 by these men? My husband is 100% Puerto Rican, and as confirmed by the heritage testing kit "23 and me", one third European, one third African and one third indigenous Taino decent. He was born a US citizen, and both of his parents were US citizens by birth. He has no accent and is well educated. The color of his skin is black.

The men in the truck felt empowered and justified to attack my husband because of one characteristic they saw, the color of his skin.

My husband came home and shared what happened with me. After we talked it over for a couple of days, we agreed he should talk with our neighbor, who was at the time the Chief of Police for the area in which the store is located. The Chief was

grateful that my husband shared the information and told him to call the police if it happened again. My husband had to explain to him that historically his encounters with the police have not been a safe experience, so calling the police is possibly inviting a worse outcome. The Chief understood and gave my husband his card with his direct number and instructed my husband to only call him.

What changed in January 2017 to make living in our safe haven community unsafe? People looking for the right to hate, dehumanize and harm others were emboldened and felt they not only had permission but a call to action to destroy marginalized groups

Trauma is a wound and an event or series of events that overwhelm one's ability to cope. In my husband's situation, the event was compounded by previous racist assaults and the inability to feel safe with the people who are meant to keep us safe.

Resilience is the capacity to move through stress and adversity in a manner that doesn't cause lasting harm or from healing from the harm caused by trauma. Resilience is built by the person gaining strength and wisdom. The greatest factor in building resilience is having a strong authentic positive relationship early in life and through the person's lifetime. My husband had/had these authentic loving connections throughout his life to enable him to heal from experiences such as this one in 2017.

Equity means recognizing that we do not all start from the same place and must acknowledge and make adjustments to imbalances. In this situation, the equitable act occurred

when our neighbor, the Chief of Police, gave my husband direct phone access to him 24-hours a day.

In 2025, there are actions in our nation to dismantle DEI initiatives and actions that forbid the recognition or support of specific groups of people. It is important for us to be aware of how this message is taken by some as, not only permission, but a rallying cry to take up arms like the men in the truck did with my husband. How does this impact us, the people we work with, and the people in our services? What can we do?

- ▶ Acknowledge how the change in our culture is negatively impacting marginalized communities.
- ▶ Listen to the experiences and feelings of how safe people are feeling.
- ▶ Support by confirming your support through not only words but actions.
- ▶ Safety – create an environment that is overtly welcoming, inclusive and helps others to have a sense of belonging.
- ▶ For those impacted, seek out safe people and environments, increase strong connections of support and practice your known methods of self-care.

Step By Step's TRE Transformation continues to work to ensure that Step By Step is a safe working environment. TRE Transformation also works to equip our team with tools to provide services that acknowledge the importance of recognizing and addressing trauma, supporting and building resilience and adjusting our services to be equitable. Please keep members of the TRE Transformation teams informed of the needs and any suggestions to increase the safety of all.

Janet Romero, Vice President of Operations



Mary Ellen McLean Leadership Northeast Graduate



L. to r., Little League Legends team members: Alicia Stavitski, Dan Burke, Jeff McLaughlin, Daren Miller, Eddie Klein, Mary Ellen McLean.

Congratulations to Step By Step's most recent **Leadership Northeast (LNE)** graduate, **Mary Ellen McLean**, Property/Risk Services Associate, Property & Risk Department. LNE was established in 1981 in response to the community's need for a steady supply of leaders who are both familiar with the general structure of the community, its problems and issues and assets, and who are also capable of organizing and directing the efforts of others.

The nine-month core program is de-

signed for adults [professionals to develop leadership skills, become more acquainted and involved within the community, and to work together to strengthen Northeast Pennsylvania.

As part of the community service project component of the LNE, classmates are grouped together to design and execute a project that fulfills a community need. This is a win-win endeavor as it helps the group members to develop leadership skills while positively impacting the community.

Mary Ellen's group is partnering with the **Hanover Township Little League**. The community project, **Little League Legends**, involves revitalizing the league's concession stand, which needs some critical repairs and upgrades. The goal of this project is to enhance the experience for players, families, and the community, helping to support the league for years to come. The committee said, "We plan to clean, paint and provide much-needed commercial equipment to

bring the stand to its optimum efficiency."

Mary Ellen McLean shares, "Participating in Leadership Northeast has been an amazing experience. At each monthly meeting, the core class interacts with community leaders and different businesses to enhance our leadership skills and build a network of like-minded individuals who desire to make a difference in our community. My team, *Little League Legends*, has chosen to renovate the Hanover Township Little League concession stand as our community impact project. Our hope is to make an impact on the children for this season and years to come."

A fundraiser for Little League Legends was recently held at **Benny Brewing Company**, Wilkes-Barre. Many Step-By-Steppers came out to support the project. They enjoyed a delicious buffet and live music.

Thank you to Mary Ellen McLean and her team, along with all those who participated in the fundraiser. Your efforts to improve our community are greatly appreciated.

Without community service, we would not have a strong quality of life. It's important to the person who serves as well as the recipient. It's the way in which we ourselves grow and develop. - - - *Dorothy Height*



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.stepbysteppusa.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.)

Let's Focus On Health & Safety

While the mission of Step By Step is to help provide the best lives possible to those who we are entrusted to care for, it's often very easy to forget that without the health and well-being of our dedicated staff, this would be impossible to do. And while there are so many things in today's world that make our lives hectic and sometimes just a little too fast-paced, it's easy to not only overlook our safety, but our health as well.

As a member of the **National Safety Council**, the **Property & Risk Department** will be helping to promote within the agency the monthly safety topics below with each of you in mind. These safety topics were recommended by the Safety Council and are meant for you learn a few new ways to keep yourself safe and sound!

Remember, your safety and well-

being directly effects that of our consumers as well, so it's a win-win for everyone!

So for the months listed below, we will be looking to promote safety on those topics. Hopefully, we will all learn something new.

February - American Heart Health Month

March - Brain injury Awareness Month

April - Distracted Driving Awareness Month

May - Clean Air Month

June - National Safety Month

July - Eye Safety Awareness

August - National Immunization Awareness Month

September - National Preparedness Month

October - Crime Awareness and Prevention Month

November - Family For Safe Streets

December - Safe Holiday Season Driving.

And with such a large fleet of vehicles that logs over a combined 130,000 miles each month, we will also be focusing heavily on safe driving. Driving safely at Step By Step is very important and we want to make sure you are aware of the rules of the road, remaining vigilant of your surroundings, and are driving safely while you are transporting consumers or are on your way to the sites or offices. And getting home safe to your families too!

Thank you for all that you do every day and stay safe!

Scott L. Gomb, Manager, Property & Risk Department, Step By Step, Inc.

Celebrating over 40 years of excellence



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We're on the web at
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