

FAMILY SUPPORT NEWS

August 25, 2014



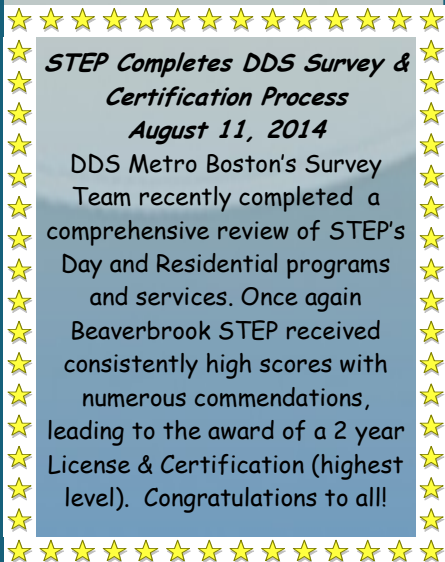
Beaverbrook STEP, Inc.
Enriched Lives.....
Enlightened Communities
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A private, non-profit corporation dedicated to enhancing the quality of life of individuals with developmental disabilities in Belmont, Waltham, Watertown, Brighton, Brookline & surrounding communities.



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STEP Completes DDS Survey & Certification Process August 11, 2014

DDS Metro Boston's Survey Team recently completed a comprehensive review of STEP's Day and Residential programs and services. Once again Beaverbrook STEP received consistently high scores with numerous commendations, leading to the award of a 2 year License & Certification (highest level). Congratulations to all!

BEAVERBROOK STEP MOVES TO WATERTOWN SQUARE

Dear Beaverbrook STEP friends and family members,

There's a lot happening at Beaverbrook STEP as we begin another major expansion of our services and programs. First and foremost, Beaverbrook STEP's main office has moved!

Effective July 1, 2014, our headquarters moved to 85 Main Street in Watertown Square. Our new, expanded space occupies nearly the entire second floor of this prime downtown office building and is wheelchair accessible from the Main Street entrance.

Free parking is available in the rear of the building, too. This spacious area underwent renovations prior to the move and now all of our departments are on the same floor level. Additional office, conference, storage, kitchen and reception space, as well as proximity to public transportation, retail stores, government offices, library and local businesses makes this location ideal for the future growth of our organization.

In addition to this major move, STEP's Options Day Services is in the process of opening our third site, in Cushing Square in Belmont, across the street from the Ben Franklin (Hollingworth) store. This new site will allow our employment training program to expand to meet the growing number of new referrals. Stay tuned for more information about a fall opening at the new site of another storefront business operated by individuals in the Options program.

Another recent initiative for Beaverbrook STEP is the development of a new Guardianship program. As part of our long standing commitment to advocacy, human and civil rights, STEP has been approved by the MA Dept. of Developmental Disabilities to provide guardianship services to individuals. Utilizing the resources offered by the Massachusetts Guardianship Association, we are designing guardianship, conservatorship and probate court trainings which will begin in the Fall. Our goal is to provide competent, accessible, and effective services to the growing number of people who require this assistance.

Also, read about STEP's Community Advocate Board's participation in the biggest state-wide annual advocacy event—All Aboard the Arc! This journey of self advocates organized by The Arc of Massachusetts, brings hundreds of self advocates from across the state to the State House each year....a truly awe inspiring event. In October 2014, over 20 CAB members will be attending the self advocacy national conference in Oklahoma City, OK.

Hope to see everyone at the Annual CAB/Family Support B-B-Q scheduled for Thursday, September 11, 2014 from 5 to 8 PM at 265 Grove Street, Waltham, MA. Food will be catered by Firefly's and there will be surprise guests, music and fun for everyone!!

Yours truly,

Virginia A. Connolly, Executive Director

Beaverbrook STEP has moved to 85 Main Street, 2nd floor, located in the heart of Watertown Square. Our new, expanded office space is wheelchair accessible from the Main Street entrance. Free parking is also available at the rear of the building.





ADVOCATES CELEBRATE PASSAGE OF 3 PRIORITY BILLS BY MA LEGISLATORS

AWAITING GOVERNOR'S SIGNATURE

THE ARC OF MASSACHUSETTS LED THE WAY TO THE PASSAGE OF 3 KEY LEGISLATIVE BILLS DURING THE LEGISLATIVE SESSION THAT CONCLUDED ON JULY 31, 2014. AFTER MANY YEARS OF ADVOCATING FOR PASSAGE OF THESE PRIORITY BILLS, ADVOCATES AND SELF ADVOCATES WERE INSTRUMENTAL IN OBTAINING PASSAGE OF—



The Real Lives Bill: Years and years of dedicated advocacy paid off this year as our Legislators passed the Real Lives Bill. This bill expands and further empowers individuals receiving services from DDS to self direct their own service dollars and choose where they want to live and with whom. This bill places in statute person-centered policies and procedures, including policies and procedures that allow more flexibility in spending DDS funds for services including self-designed services. The bill also allows individuals to be assisted by facilitators and/or fiscal intermediaries.

The Autism Omnibus Bill: This milestone legislation provides significant benefits to people diagnosed on the Autism Spectrum and their family members:

- ◆ Access to DDS services by expanding DDS eligibility to include people on the Autism Spectrum, with Smith-Magenis syndrome and Prader-Willi syndrome.
- ◆ MA Health recipients will be covered through age 21 years for ABA treatments deemed medically necessary, as well as both dedicated and non-dedicated augmentative communication devices.
- ◆ Once federal participation is secured, the bill provides for a tax-free savings account to be established that allows all families with disabled members to have a savings plan for education, housing and other needed supports and services.
- ◆ Re-establishes the Autism Commission as a permanent and autonomous entity.
- ◆ Public school special education teachers will be able to attain an "Autism Endorsement" certification.

The National Background Check: This bill provides a national safeguard for individuals with disabilities. It requires a national criminal background check for staff hired to work with individuals served by DDS who may have unsupervised contact. Currently, CORI checks only review criminal backgrounds in the state of Mass for staff.

Finally, many thanks are due to all advocates and self-advocates (including those from Beaverbrook STEP), state officials and legislators all of whose efforts resulted in the passage of these 3 bills. As The Arc of MA states, "Hard Work Pays

BEAVERBROOK STEP SELF-ADVOCATES JOIN IN STATEWIDE EVENT 'ALL ABOARD THE ARC'

On May 7, 2014, over 20 self advocates from Beaverbrook STEP's Community Advocacy Board (CAB) joined hundreds of self advocates from across Massachusetts on a journey to our State House in Boston. (See Beaverbrook STEP group photo on left.) This Annual Rally raises public awareness about people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. There was entertainment, speeches from local and state officials and even a cheerleading team! The day was a great success! For more information and pictures check out The Arc's website at www.arcmass.org.

