



BEAVERBROOK STEP BULLETIN

Enriched Lives...Enlighted Communities

85 Main Street, 2nd Floor, Watertown, MA 02472

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www.beaverbrookstep.org

Fall 2018



A Message from STEP's Executive Director Celebrating Direct Support Professionals (DSPs)



Dear Families and Friends,
Every September, Beaverbrook STEP joins with staff, self-advocates, families, volunteers and community members across the country to recognize and celebrate Direct Support Professionals. The role of the DSP has changed considerably over the past decades, expanding from primarily a caregiver role to that of an educator, advocate, facilitator and community connector.

The multi-faceted roles of DSPs are critical to assuring that federal guidelines under the Home and Community Based Services Rule that become fully effective in 2022 are met. These guidelines require providers of disability services to support individuals with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (I/DD) in the most integrative community settings possible. Additionally, community settings must provide opportunities for individuals served to interact with people without disabilities to the fullest extent possible.

At Beaverbrook STEP, our celebration of Direct Support Professionals included:

- ◆ A \$50 stipend for STEP's Direct Support Professionals;
- ◆ A Staff Appreciation Party planned for November, 2018;
- ◆ An Annual Staff Education Benefit; and
- ◆ A Staff Loan program.

Also in this newsletter, read about the outstanding services provided by our Direct Care Professionals everyday. These services contributed to Beaverbrook STEP's recent award of a 2 Year License and Certification from MA Department of Developmental Services, Office of Quality Enhancement.

In the DDS certification report, STEP's Direct Support Professionals are described numerous times as highly involved advocates who know and understand the individuals they serve very well. DDS also states that staff are active promoters of new and creative opportunities that help individuals served to be valuable and meaningful members of the community!

Sincerely,

Virginia A. Connolly, MEd, LCSW, LMHC
Executive Director

STEP RECEIVES 2 YEAR LICENSE & CERTIFICATION

Beaverbrook STEP recently completed the MA Dept. of Developmental Services (DDS), Office of Quality Enhancement's biennial (every 2 years) licensing and certification survey process. Our DDS Quality Enhancement Team, led by Leslie Hayes included Raymond Edi-Osagie, Regional QE Director, Mark Boghoin, Lisa MacPhail and Joseph Weru. They conducted the on-site survey from August 2-8, 2018.

STEP selected a quality enhancement survey review comprised of a Self-Assessment combined with Targeted Reviews by DDS. STEP's DDS Survey Team reviewed our completed self-assessment report and also performed targeted, on-site checks of Beaverbrook STEP's residential, community, employment and community-based day services.



The DDS Survey Team used the new DDS Licensing and Certification manual that addressed federal changes to standards, focusing more closely on provision of person-centered and self-directed services for individuals with disabilities. These new standards emphasize full community inclusion, and optimization of independence and autonomy including:

- ◆ **Choices for a living environment and personal supports that promote community access and support individual preferences;**
- ◆ **Social inclusion, including friendships and an active community life; and**
- ◆ **Personal control over activities, schedules and decision making.**

The 2018 DDS Survey and Certification findings determined that organizationally STEP met all critical indicators across all services. Beaverbrook STEP was awarded a:

- ◆ **Two-Year License for Residential/Individual Home Supports with 99% of Licensure indicators Met. Options Employment and Community Based Day Supports program services received a Two-Year License with 100% of indicators Met.**
- ◆ **Beaverbrook STEP also was awarded a Two-Year Certification in Residential/Individual Home Supports with 100% indicators Met; and a Two-Year Certification for Options Employment and Community Based Day Supports with 100% of indicators Met.**

Our staff, individuals, families and volunteers all deserve to be very proud of the outstanding survey results. To read excerpts from Beaverbrook STEP's Survey and Certification report, see Page 2.

Beaverbrook STEP, Inc.

Becker Family Trust Grant Project

Self-Advocates: Building Homes Together

Project Update



Leo Sarkissian, Executive Director, The Arc of MA; Alex Moschella, Trustee, Becker Family Trust; and Virginia A. Connolly, Executive Director, Beaverbrook STEP at award ceremony last March.

As reported in Beaverbrook STEP's FY 2018 Annual Report, STEP has been awarded a 2 year, \$100,000 grant from the Becker Family Trust and The Arc of Massachusetts, supporting our new project '**Self-Advocates: Building Homes Together**.' The goal of the project is to build a flagship, self-directed support model for Advancing Real Lives in the community for self-advocates in the Metro Boston Region.

Teresa Ricker, MSW is heading up the '**Self-Advocates: Building Homes Together**' project, as the Community Broker. Teresa is working with Virginia Connolly, Executive Director and Beaverbrook STEP's Senior Team.

Teresa has extensive experience working with adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities; she is a Licensed Certified Social Worker (LCSW) and a current candidate for licensure as a Licensed Independent Clinical Social Worker (LICSW). As an accomplished Advocate and Counselor, Teresa brings strong planning, social service and community development skills to the project. Her dedicated commitment to working with self-advocates includes helping each person design his/her own personal vision for community living. Self-advocates enjoy working on this project; they are very excited about planning their own personal future homes, designed to assure enhanced community membership through independent living, working and friendships.

Beaverbrook STEP is collaborating with a group of self-advocates, our local Century 21 Real Estate office and Watertown Savings Bank, defining services and exploring community housing options. STEP's initial plan involves the development of 2 of our current properties to meet the future visions of up to 6 of our self-advocates. Self-advocates are working to create an accessible accessory apartment that would accommodate one to 2 interested individuals; other self-advocates are designing their own supported living apartment with part-time, personal support services appropriate for up to 4 individuals who want to live together. Home ownership and other creative housing options are being explored, as well. Our '**Self-Advocates: Building Homes Together**' project is well underway!

Beaverbrook STEP's New Facebook Page



Communication with our constituents is an extremely important aspect of providing quality services to the individuals we serve. We are proud to announce our new Beaverbrook STEP Facebook page where we plan to share current activities, pictures and events with self-advocates, family members, staff, volunteers, funding sources and community members.

STEP's Facebook page will further enhance our current media family: Website, Constant Contact e-News and our agency newsletter, **Beaverbrook STEP Bulletin** that is published 2 to 3 times a year. Please contact Nora Forziati, Support Director at nforziati@beaverbrookstep.org if you would like to have information posted on our new Facebook page.

EXCERPTS FROM BEAVERBROOK STEP'S 2018 DDS CERTIFICATION REPORT



The DDS Survey and Certification report highlighted many positive aspects about services and programs provided by Beaverbrook STEP. Read some highlights below excerpted from the official report:

- ◇ **"Agency staff across all settings demonstrated a deep knowledge of the individuals they serve and were able to discuss in depth each individual's specific likes, dislikes and circumstances. Programming was tailored to each individual's needs and interests."**
- ◇ **"Beaverbrook STEP provided plentiful opportunities for people to be active in their communities."**
- ◇ **"In addition, the agency gathered information from stakeholders regarding satisfaction with services and used this to make program changes and other agency decisions."**
- ◇ **"The agency strongly supported the building and maintenance of strong personal relationships between individuals and their family and friends, across settings....staff actively assisted individuals to thrive in the area of relationships....there was strong community integration."**
- ◇ **"The day programs were embedded within communities, and individuals made use of community resources and took part in neighborhood and town activities."**

Our presence is the fundamental gift that we bring to the human community. Presence is the foundation of all other opportunities and interactions, of everything that is meaningful.

*Judith A. Snow
Self-Advocate
Inclusion Press*

Beaverbrook STEP, Inc.

ADVANCING REAL LIVES

Assistive Technology—Empowering Individuals with Disabilities

Assistive Technology (AT) is a necessity for Advancing Real Lives for individuals with intellectual, developmental and related disabilities. Whether high tech or low tech, assistive solutions are vital to the development of meaningful inclusion into the community. By allowing each person to overcome functional limitations, Assistive Technology tremendously expands opportunities for social relationships, jobs, home life, education and community participation. These opportunities often are transformative and empowering, allowing individuals to be independent and in control of their own lives.

Successful use of Assistive Technology involves using a team approach to services that always places the perspective and input of the person involved at its center. The team may look to an AT specialist or consultant to conduct an in-depth, specialized assessment of the individual's needs and preferences. The individual/team will develop an AT plan and services based upon all the information collected. The plan should include how services will be coordinated, what supports will be provided, specialized training necessary and a process for evaluating progress.



BEAVERBROOK STEP COMMUNITY SERVICES

LIVING & HOUSING SUPPORTS

- 24 Hour Residential
- In-Home/Supported Living
- Shared Living
- Agency with Choice
- Family Support
- Respite Services
- Autism Spectrum Services
- Elder & Alzheimer Services
- Dept of Ed/DDS Children's Services
- MCB, MRC, DDS and Medicare Residential Services

OPTIONS DAY SERVICES

- Employment Training
- Community Based Day Services (CBDS)

RECREATION, SOCIAL & SELF-ADVOCACY SERVICES

- Recreation, Sports & Social Events
- Mentoring Services
- Education Services
- Community Advocates Board

SPECIALIZED SERVICES

- Clinical & ABA Services
- Nursing/Health Services
- Corporate Guardianship Program

Beaverbrook STEP, Inc.



DONATE TO OUR STORE
Sweet Deals Boutique
next door to
Gifts at Peppermint Place
An Elegant & Fun Gift Store
5 Lexington Street
Waverley Square
Belmont, MA 02478

Incorporated in 1973, Beaverbrook STEP's mission and philosophy focus on empowering individuals to make their own personal choices and decisions about their lives to achieve full community inclusion.

Using a person-centered planning approach, STEP focuses on strengthening relationships among individuals, families and communities — relationships that support the people we serve, helping them to realize their dreams and live meaningful lives.

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Contact Us

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Virginia A. Connolly, MEd, LCSW, LMHC
Executive Director

Serving Communities in Eastern MA
Including: Arlington, Belmont, Boston,
Brighton, Brookline, Cambridge,
Newton, Waltham, Watertown
Affiliated with:



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Watertown, MA 02472

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