

FAMILY SUPPORT NEWS



January 2013

Beaverbrook STEP, Inc.
Enriched Lives.....
Enlightened Communities
125 Walnut Street
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www.beaverbrookstep.org

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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Dear Beaverbrook STEP friends and family members,

Happy New Year from all of us at Beaverbrook STEP. A special thank you to everyone who sent a donation during the Holiday Season. Each contribution is sincerely appreciated.

Looking back at the past year, Beaverbrook STEP has achieved many significant goals. We have completed renovations to several of our residences to maximize handicap accessibility; expanded recreation, leisure and self-advocacy opportunities for our individuals; and implemented a health and wellness initiative for our staff to complement our existing wellness program for STEP individuals.

Please read about our recent licensing and certification survey (page 2) conducted by the MA Dept. of Developmental Services that concluded with a 2 year certification award, the highest level of achievement. DDS surveyors found many noteworthy systems and organizational strengths at STEP. Of particular note, the report commended STEP staff at all levels of the organization for their exceptional knowledge about the lives of the people served and using that knowledge to successfully empower individuals served to make their own choices.

In August of 2012, Beaverbrook STEP sponsored a highly successful vacation trip to New York City for over 30 individuals. In fact, participants have had such fun and exciting vacation experiences that they are now asking for 2 vacation trips per year. In direct response, STEP is planning a vacation trip in April 2013 to an all-inclusive resort in Jamaica as well as an upcoming summer cruise to Bermuda in August.

In September 2012, 20 members and staff from our self-advocacy group, the Community Advocates Board, attended the bi-annual, four day Self-Advocacy Conference in St. Paul, Minnesota. Self Advocates Becoming Empowered (SABE) gives individuals with I/DD wonderful opportunities to gather with and learn from friends/colleagues/peers who live throughout the country.

Looking forward, we have a busy agenda for 2013 developing new opportunities for individuals served, family members and staff as STEP continues our Renovation, Recreation and Education projects. For example we are:

- ◆ Expanding information available on our website (www.beaverbrookstep.org);
- ◆ Continuing our Health and Wellness initiative for individuals and staff;
- ◆ Updating our IT software and developing iCloud capabilities;
- ◆ Developing partnerships to serve dual eligible (Medicare & MA Health) adults.
- ◆ Developing new communication and socialization tools for individuals using the latest technology such as iPads and other portable electronic devices.

We'll keep you posted! With my very best wishes for a happy and healthy new year,

Virginia A. Connolly, Executive Director

Family Support/CAB Barbecue a Huge Success

Nearly 250 individuals, family members, friends, volunteers and staff from Beaverbrook STEP enjoyed fabulous food, good conversation and great entertainment at the combined Family Support/CAB Barbecue held on Thursday, September 13, 2012. Warm weather and sunny skies prevailed at 265 Grove Street, Waltham where everyone enjoyed a fabulous cookout catered by Firefly's.

The menu included pulled chicken, sirloin burgers, all beef hot dogs and condiments, served with potato salad, coleslaw, watermelon and home made chocolate chip cookies. Entertainment for the event was outstanding thanks to our talented disc jockey, Patrick Kawalya who had all of us dancing and singing along. Many thanks to our volunteers for helping to buy soda, water and supplies, setting up and breaking down the canopies, tables & chairs and, last, but not least, for cleaning up afterwards.



Beaverbrook STEP Achieves Highest Level of DDS Certification

In the summer of 2012, officials from the Department of Developmental Services (DDS), Office of Quality Enhancement conducted a license and certification review at Beaverbrook STEP, using the Department's recently revised certification system. The "Survey and Certification" report findings concluded that STEP continues to:

- ⇒ provide quality supports to adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities in all of its programs and services; and
- ⇒ empower individuals served "to lead their lives as they choose."

Beaverbrook STEP was awarded the highest level of certification, a 2 year license with ratings of 96% for residential services and 98% for community based day support services. The report noted that a "hallmark of Beaverbrook STEP is the organization's commitment across all settings to individual empowerment and choice."

The report also stated:

"Throughout the organization, agency staff at all levels were knowledgeable about the lives of the people they served and maintained familiarity with people's families, friends and extended external support networks."

Furthermore, the DDS report commended STEP for its outstanding achievements supporting people to "explore and engage in activities....maintain friendships with others outside of their homes....see family and relatives as they desired."

Medical and clinical care were cited as top priorities for Beaverbrook STEP and in general, "systems were in place to ensure that the agency's homes were well maintained and portrayed a valued image."

Congratulations to all individuals, family members, volunteers and staff for an outstanding report!