



## BEAVERBROOK STEP BULLETIN

*Enriched Lives...Enlighted Communities*

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Fall 2019



**A Message from STEP's  
Executive Director  
Community First—Advancing Real Lives**



Dear Families and Friends,

Beaverbrook STEP's [ADVANCING REAL LIVES](#) strategic objectives continue to move forward in Fiscal Year 2020. STEP's residential, employment, day, recreation, leisure, guardianship, community inclusion and support services have grown substantially over the past several years. With a budget of \$18m, STEP now provides services to over 350 children, adolescents, adults and elders with intellectual, developmental, autism and related disabilities.

Our creative and dedicated staff, clinicians, volunteers, affiliated businesses and community partners assist each person served, enhancing personal and meaningful community inclusion. By supporting Community First initiatives focused on [Advancing Real Lives](#), Beaverbrook STEP is able to support individuals served with:

- ⇒ **Establishing friendships;**
- ⇒ **Joining community clubs, churches and organizations;**
- ⇒ **Obtaining paid work or volunteer jobs working side by side with individuals without disabilities;**
- ⇒ **Learning new work and social skills;**
- ⇒ **Pursuing a college degree or other advanced education;**
- ⇒ **Learning communication skills;**
- ⇒ **Using IT, adaptive, electronic and assistive devices;**
- ⇒ **Introducing Positive Behavior Management tools;**
- ⇒ **Designing and locating a future home;**
- ⇒ **Learning Self-Advocacy skills;**
- ⇒ **Finding a job or starting a business;**
- ⇒ **Participating in inclusive leisure and recreational opportunities;**
- ⇒ **Making use of clinical, health, financial, retail & community services; and**
- ⇒ **Managing the daily 'ups and downs' of living.**

This Fall, STEP's entire Leadership Team and all module DSP staff are excited to participate in multiple days of training advancing Community Inclusion, led by Phoebe Goodman our new Community Inclusion Specialist (see page 5 for more details). Many new approaches for improving Community Inclusion for individuals with I/DD, dual diagnoses, Autism Spectrum Disorder, vision & hearing loss, behavioral needs, mental health issues, medical, nutritional and aging needs are being discussed in depth, and facilitated.

At Beaverbrook STEP, visionary services, supports and directions for Advancing Real Lives are built upon our values and beliefs that promote individual choice, independence and growth through real community inclusion. We hope you enjoy participating in our work and in the successes of those we support. Join our Facebook page to view updated pictures of individuals as they enhance their community membership opportunities.

Sincerely,

Virginia A. Connolly,

### **BEAVERBROOK STEP PROGRAMS & SERVICES**

#### **LIVING & HOUSING SUPPORTS**

**24 Hour Residential**

**In-Home/Supported Living**

**Shared Living**

**Agency with Choice (AWC)**

**Family Support**

**Respite Services**

**Dept of Ed/DDS Children's Services**

**MCB, MRC, DDS, Medicare Residential**

**"Self-Advocates: Building Homes Together"  
Project**

#### **OPTIONS EMPLOYMENT &**

#### **COMMUNITY BASED DAY SERVICES**

**Individual Supported Employment**

**Group Supported Employment**

**Competitive Employment**

**Community Based Day Services (CBDS)**

**MRC/MCB Competitive Integrated**

**Employment Services (CIES)**

#### **RECREATION, SOCIAL &**

#### **SELF-ADVOCACY SERVICES**

**Recreation, Sports & Social Events**

**Mentoring & Education Services**

**Community Advocates Board**

#### **SPECIALIZED SERVICES**

**Clinical & ABA Services**

**Nursing/Health Services**

**Autism Spectrum Services**

**Elder & Alzheimer Services**

**Community Inclusion Services**

**Positive Behavior Supports Committee  
(all constituents represented including an  
active family network )**

**Corporate Guardianship Program**

#### **AFFILIATIONS**

**UMass/Boston**

**Melmark New England**

**Advancing Lives Collaborative LLC**

# Beaverbrook STEP, Inc.



Beaverbrook STEP provides over 235 individuals with residential services—**Community Living and Housing Supports**. Our group residences, private apartments, condos and cooperative living homes offer a wide variety of living settings with services that include: 24 hour supervised residential homes, part-time in-home supports (individual supported living), multiple models of cooperative/shared living, and independent living opportunities.

Through numerous contracts including the **Agency with Choice (AWC)** program, STEP also provides family support services to adult children who may live at home with their families. AWC services are planned, delivered and jointly supervised by each individual/family served and Beaverbrook STEP. Supports include respite care, community inclusion activities, friendship supports, clinical services and positive behavior management.

Beaverbrook also offers **Children's Services** for school-aged children who live at home with their families. This service is funded jointly by the MA Dept. of Elementary & Secondary Education (DESE) and DDS. The program is designed to maximize school and home supports for children with intensive needs and their family members.

Several individuals we serve also participate in STEP's innovative, Becker Family Trust Funded, **"Self-Advocates Building Homes Together,"** a unique, self-directed approach that assists self-advocates with planning and creating their own shared living, supported living and independent living arrangements. With this model, self-advocates determine whom they want to live with, what home setting they prefer and what multi-disciplinary supports, including legal and/or financial, can best help them to achieve their own Community Inclusion vision.



## Beaverbrook STEP's Development Projects

This fall, Beaverbrook STEP is opening 4 new sites: an additional day service location, much needed and in demand, in the heart of Watertown Square (over 125 people now supported in multiple day programs sites); a beautiful, newly-renovated three person, fully accessible home across from the park with complete access to public transportation and shopping; a newly-acquired, historic home in Waltham, currently undergoing extensive rehabilitation for five young women which will open in late December; and a family-styled cooperative living home just outside of Belmont Center.



In addition to our 4 new locations, we are very fortunate that five men and women we support have moved back into their home that has been exquisitely remodeled by the Waltham Housing Authority and the Department of Housing and Community Development. The home has been designed to suit their individual needs.



# ARTISTS IN RESIDENCE

**Nick Morse is a colorful abstract painter.**



Nick expresses himself through liberating, high-energy, motion-packed paintings full of life and spirit. He uses acrylics and is known for powerful, strong strokes with bright colors that jump out with a unique symmetry.

"Nick's work is wonderful. So vibrant and full of speed and blur and curve and movement. It's the color I love above everything else though," says Sebastian Smee, the Pulitzer Prize-winning art critic with the Boston Globe. Nick exhibits annually at the Cambridge Arts Council's Open Studios, at venues such as Club Passim and ZuZu, and at events for the nonprofit Music Cures. The Harvard Innovation Lab has ordered three large prints of his work for their Director's Office.

Nick has been written up in the Huffington Post and was one of Artlifting.com's leading tote bag sellers in 2015. His designs have been featured on everything from T.J. Maxx notebooks to an album cover for a compilation release, "Boston Artists for Autism," to benefit Surfers Healing.



A Sunset Dream



Pretty in Pink



Changing Light



Untitled 16

Beaverbrook STEP, Inc.

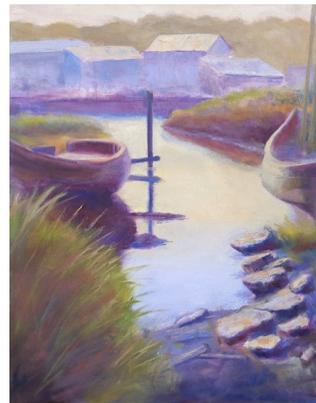
# ARTISTS IN RESIDENCE

Adam Adkison - adamadkison <adamadkison@gmail.com>

Adam Adkison has been drawing and painting for as long as he can remember. Raised in a coal mining town in Wyoming, Adam grew up surrounded by the austere beauty of the area. Adam's work has been called a mixture of realism and impressionism. He is attracted to scenes of quiet beauty.... finding peace and comfort in them. He works from real life as much as possible, finding that it gives his work more depth.

Adam is grateful to be working as a recognized artist and also at Beaverbrook STEP. To be able to share his work is a real gift, one he is continually thankful for. He feels fortunate to have a wife who is so supportive and a community that treasures the arts. One of Adam's hopes is that his work will both inspire and invigorate. Adam exhibits his work widely and displays his work online at:

<https://www.adamadkison.com/>



**Ellen Burns** loves art and enjoys creating it. She is at her best when mixing colors and making jokes with her friends in front of an easel. Her painting titled *Boston Moonrise* was selected for the 2018 Association of Developmental Disability Providers (ADDP) calendar cover and also displayed at both the 2018 ADDP Legislative Luncheon and ADDP *LEAD!* Conference & Expo. Beaverbrook Step is a member agency of ADDP.



# Beaverbrook STEP, Inc.

## Real Lives—Community Inclusion

When asked to describe the community services and supports they receive from Beaverbrook STEP, typical answers from several individuals served included:



- I go to church on Sunday.
- Go to the YMCA twice a week.
- I am on the Volunteer Committee at the Library.
- I vote in all elections.
- I campaigned for a candidate.
- Go to my doctor.
- I work at the Boston Red Sox games!
- Love the Bermuda Cruises.
- Cash my paycheck at the bank.
- Shopping.
- Celebrating at a party.
- Dinner at my favorite restaurant and a movie.
- I enjoy the people at my job.
- I'm a member of the Community Advocates Board.
- Love to visit parks & museums.
- I'm learning to ride the T and Uber.

## Guardianship Program Update

Beaverbrook STEP's Corporate Guardianship Program has continued to expand. The program is managed by Beaverbrook STEP's Executive Director, Virginia A. Connolly and Michelle Awtry, Senior Director. They lead STEP's highly regarded team of 12 professional Guardians, Conservators and Rogers Monitors. The program has experienced very rapid growth this past year and now serves more than 2 dozen individuals with intellectual, developmental and related disabilities.

STEP's guardians include clinicians, medical/aging specialists and educators with BA, MA and other degrees representing the fields of social work, applied behavioral analysis, mental health/psychology, special education and other clinical disciplines. In addition, all guardians have extensive experience working with, supporting, and advocating for individuals who benefit from guardianship.

The Guardianship Team also consults with attorney Michelle Mulvena of the Mulvena Law Group. This legal practice specializes and focuses on Elder and Disability Probate services, Estate Planning, Guardianship and Special Needs.

Beaverbrook STEP's professional staff, clinicians, consultants and affiliates complete a comprehensive intake process for all new referrals to our Guardianship program, using our assessment and clinical tools. STEP currently has another group of individuals on our waiting list.

Whenever possible, guardianship is temporary and/or partial in nature. Our goal is to preserve and strengthen each person's autonomy, rights and liberties while ensuring safe, appropriate and quality services.

## Real Lives—Community Inclusion

Beaverbrook STEP has embarked on a major Community Inclusion initiative designed to enhance the lives of every person we serve. Our kickoff training event, conducted by Phoebe Goodman, STEP's new Community Inclusion Specialist, involved a 4 hour training session for 40 members of STEP's Leadership Team followed by extensive, small group module trainings.

Ms. Goodman shared her compelling insights and offered meaningful suggestions to staff who are key to promoting real, socially-valued personal community relationships for people with disabilities. Ms. Goodman has considerable knowledge from her own 15 years of experience. She also draws upon body of work and research of her own mentor Angela Novak Amado, Ph.D., author of *Friends: Connecting people with disabilities and community members* (University of Minnesota, Institute on Community Integration, 2013). Some key points discussed during the training session were:

- Challenge family members, staff and advocates to find more people to bring into each person's life;
- Nurture community inclusion and friendships that involve changing from an "activity" oriented process to a "relationship" oriented process.
- Focus on matching the interests, skills and attributes of each person with a community person with similar interests and skills; and
- Seek individualization, the key to success.



### Tips for success

- ◆ See the person as their interests and gifts
- ◆ Seek out relationships rather than activities — who can the person get to know there?
- ◆ Introduce one-to-one; know the "gatekeeper"
- ◆ Become an "asker" — "It never hurts to ask"
- ◆ Apply the rule: one person, one environment

# Beaverbrook STEP, Inc.

Beaverbrook STEP's **End of Summer BBQ** was a huge success. Self-Advocates, family members, friends, staff, volunteers, as well as community members all had a fabulous time!



*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.*

**Beaverbrook STEP, Inc.**

***Enriched Lives...Enlighted Communities***

## 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,  
Affiliated with:



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PLACE  
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