

FAMILY SUPPORT NEWS



BEAVERBROOK STEP, INC. - May 2013

Beaverbrook STEP, Inc.
Enriched Lives.....
Enlightened Communities
125 Walnut Street
Watertown, MA 02472
(617) 926-1113
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,

The Patriot's Day bombing and ensuing events leading to the capture of the suspects in Watertown have shaken all of us at STEP. We are very fortunate that none of our individuals, staff or family members were hurt or threatened. Thanks to the wonderful efforts of our dedicated staff, communications and coverage were maintained all day on Friday, April 19, when an unprecedented lock down in Watertown, Waltham and Belmont was declared. Our emergency procedures were successfully implemented and sustained, even though STEP's main phone lines were down for part of the day. We're very thankful for the heroic efforts of law enforcement, first responders and local citizens during this stressful time, including the special efforts of everyone here at Beaverbrook STEP.

On Wednesday, March 20th, over 200 self-advocates, family members and staff attended "Facing Our Challenges," a Legislative Forum held at the MacArthur School in Waltham. Co-sponsored by Beaverbrook STEP, GWArc, and WCI, community members spoke to their legislators about serious funding challenges faced by constituents, particularly for individuals/families seeking Turning 22 and Family Support services. Legislators attending the forum included: Honorary Chairperson Rep. Tom Stanley, House Revenue Chair Rep. Jay Kaufman, Reps. Jonathan Hecht, Sean Garballey and John Lawn; and Senators Mike Barrett and William Brownsberger.

STEP continues to renovate our homes to assure handicap access. Recent projects have included fully renovating an accessible bath at Irving Street and early this summer, building a ramp at Kensington Circle. A new accessible bathroom will soon be built at Banks Street. In addition, STEP has installed all new windows at Union Street.

We recently welcomed back over 25 of our self-advocates and their support staff who took a "Spring Break" to the island of Jamaica. They had a fabulous time and now are planning an August cruise to Bermuda, one of their favorite places to visit!

Please check out our website at www.beaverbrookstep.org, where there's new and updated information about our events, programs and services. See you at our Annual Meeting on Tuesday, June 4th, at 6pm at the Hellenic Ctr., 25 Bigelow Ave., Watertown.

Appreciatively,

Ginny

Virginia A. Connolly MED, LCSW, LMHC
Executive Director

Our waterfront hotel in Montego Bay,
Jamaica.



Health & Medical Services at Beaverbrook STEP



As our individuals have aged and medical advances have extended lives, Beaverbrook STEP has greatly expanded the health care and medical services available. Our full time nurse, **Diane Shepard (pictured)** is a Registered Nurse (R.N.), as well as a Certified Hospice and Palliative Care Nurse. She is also a member of both

the Massachusetts and National Associations of Developmental Disabilities Nurses. Beginning her career as a direct service worker and program clinician for STEP over 20 years ago, Diane left to pursue her dream of becoming a nurse. She has come full circle, returning to STEP about 3 years ago as our nurse.

Diane's responsibilities are multi-faceted and extensive. Her role falls into 3 distinct and interrelated areas: clinical, consultative and administrative.

- ◆ **Clinical:** Diane provides direct clinical services for STEP individuals who have chronic diseases and/or in some cases, acute conditions. She completes health care assessments for all served and communicates with health care professionals, staff and directors regarding diagnoses and treatment plans.
- ◆ **Consultative:** A key role for STEP's nurse is to oversee and train direct care workers to provide individual-specific care for those we serve. She also provides consultation about health care issues, diseases, disabilities and community resources. Depending upon each person's health care needs, she trains staff to monitor vital signs, use g-tubes, detect non-verbal symptoms of pain, use adaptive and assistive equipment & devices, administer oxygen, use proper lifting techniques and oversee pain management.

"Overall my goal is to achieve optimal health for each person served by Beaverbrook STEP."

Diane Shepard, RN

Training is also given relative to caring for individuals with seizure disorders, skin breakdowns, catheter care, as well as using epipens, preparing specialized diets, providing wound care and other therapeutic services. Diane also supports staff in the management of care for individuals with Alzheimer's disease, elders who are frail, individuals who are dependent for all care and individuals with special medical needs such as diabetes, sleep apnea and respiratory diseases.

- ◆ **Administrative:** Beaverbrook STEP's nurse has detailed administrative responsibilities as well. She oversees the agency's medical files and conducts file reviews to monitor each person's annual health care visits, medications, hospitalizations and follow-up clinical services. She works with each program site to ensure that staff maintain a level of competence, understanding, consistency and reliability in regard to all aspects of medical-health care provision, assessment, medication management, communication and documentation.

Diane works with health care providers, local and Boston hospitals and clinics to establish & maintain working partnerships, thereby maximizing services (including transitional hospital & rehab protocols) for all individuals. We are very grateful for her expertise.

The Enhanced Person-Centered ISP Planning Process

Staff at Beaverbrook STEP recently completed training on new ISP procedures developed by the MA Dept of Developmental Services. An enhanced Person-Centered Planning process, the new ISP includes the development of a "Vision" for each individual served.

This Vision statement reflects each person's long term future goal for community living. Then the Service Coordinator works with the full ISP team to develop objectives toward achieving steps to meet the identified goals over time. Finally, the ISP team sets measurable objectives that quantify success.

Beaverbrook STEP has two staff who are currently being trained as "trainers."

Options Employment Services Explores The Charles River Waterfront



Thanks to a \$500 grant from the Watertown Community Foundation's Riverfront Mini-Grant Program, Beaverbrook STEP day program participants were able to experience 2 highly successful Charles River Walking Tours. Led by Martha Harrison the tours took place on January 8 and January 14, 2013. The tours included educational information about the riverfront and observation of the wildlife including herons, ducks, geese and red tail hawks. Individuals observed the rowing of one and two person skiffs, trees felled by Hurricane Sandy and a dramatic dammed area. Participants have not forgotten the beautiful scenery witnessed from the numerous observation decks. They have a greater appreciation of the waterfront area and eagerly look forward to more trips in the Spring and Summer.