

## VISION

To open up the world to people to encourage them to experience everything it has to offer; to communicate effectively; and to be as healthy, safe, and financially secure as possible.

For people to feel good about themselves and their relationships with others, to have fun, be happy, and have meaningful things to do.

For people to live in safe and decent neighborhoods where they are accepted, valued, and respected including their cultural preferences.

To guide people on their journey to discover their abilities, talents, and desires by empowering them to be interdependent; to encourage people to make their own choices and decisions so they will have control over their own lives, and over the services and supports they use.



# STEP News

August 2004 Volume 3 Issue 7

## We Want Your Opinion, Really!

STEP is always looking for ways we can improve on the already wonderful services we are providing. Part of that search includes completing an internal evaluation each year and using the results to set goals for the next year. We are beginning our internal evaluation process with our employee, stakeholder, and consumer satisfaction surveys. We have been trying to collect this information for several years and as a result have tried many different methods. We had hand written surveys and we've also had our QA Director interviewing people. In the past we did not get as many responses as we wanted and that meant changes we made were based on less than 25% of the people we are serving or employing. People have given feedback in the past that they wanted a more confidential way to express their opinions so they could feel free to say whatever they felt and not worry about someone knowing it was them who said it. This year, we may have found a way to do that.

Through an organization called "thearclink", we will offer an online confidential satisfaction survey. Employees, consumers, and stakeholders can visit a web site and answer a questionnaire in complete confidentiality. STEP will not know who filled out the survey but we will get a summary of the data at the end of the survey period. You can take the survey at [www.thearclink.org/staffsurvey](http://www.thearclink.org/staffsurvey) between August 1st and August 31st, 2004. The password for STEP is 2step1. If you do not have access to a computer to the internet, you can use a computer at the STEP office to complete your survey, just speak with Charlene Rhodes and she will assist you.

One of STEP's values is that good communication is the key to all relationships and getting the results of this survey will help us to have valuable information we need to enhance the services we provide. Thanks in advance for taking the time to fill out the survey!

Melanie Bazile-Fernandez

# STEP STARS

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Stephanie Tate for taking Donna to see her family. It was really important to her!

Judy McDonough for filling in on short notice.

Charlene Beck for hanging in there with Jeff and for really putting his needs at the top.

Nicole Kitchen for good communication and taking the initiative to resolve scheduling.

Diane Benton for all the extra effort with Jewel and helping her get through this tough time. (and for the donuts too!)

Sherry Day for taking initiative to resolve scheduling.

Melanie B for "Breaking Us Out!" in RESPECT class.

Robert Johnson for filling in with Jimmy.

Angela Olson for setting up the parenting class & having the CHP presentation car seat safety.

Mike Partee for taking Thurston fishing.

Gene C for all the work you've done with Jack Parker. You will be missed.

Nicola Brock for your help with client's difficult situation and picking up extra hours.

Sam H for all the extra support that you give to Jack Parker.

Annette Butler for helping to fill shifts at Deanna's and Robin's.

We want to THANK Jacquie and Kelly for sponsoring the Deaf Women's softball team.

Kim Van Os for picking up overnight shifts at the last minute.

Thanks to Rob H for handling Atif's crisis situations lately.

Patti U and Sandee N for being great team members for our unit.

Thanks to Rachel AC for her patience and handling Janine's difficult times.

Robin McGurran for helping clients with their finances and loans.

Thanks to Robbie W for handling so well with On-call weekend which was out of control but made it through.

Nikita Ivy for doing a great job supporting clients.

Thanks to Michelle N for her feedback and concerns about Wendy's health issues.

Doris Harris for being responsible and doing things we can and should do.

Thank you Matt Call for willing to work extra hours and for working with two clients lately. Your work is appreciated.

Sharon Jones for handling a difficult situation with professionalism.

Thank you Shannon R for willing to work with John T and accepting the challenge. John was happy to work with you and you did a SMOOTH JOB!!

Charlene Rhodes for taking the time for putting together a cookbook for Willis.

Ayren, it is nice to have you back in the office. Many thanks for making phone calls. You are doing great work!!

I really appreciate Diana Miller & Sam Holden for your assistance with Tracy for my clients. You guys ROCK!!

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*Happy  
Birthday*

Matt Waters 8/1

Ron Tyler 8/3

Oscar Cerrato 8/7

Henry Gibson 8/7

Rob Hilliard 8/7

Annette Butler 8/10

Duane Johnson 8/10

Yolanda Miles 8/10

Anastacia Phillips 8/10

Melinda Staggs 8/11

Bonnie Fuchs 8/12

Romilda Jones 8/12

Edna Martin 8/12

Cheri Hutchinson 8/15

Mathew Simmons 8/16

Sunita Kumar 8/17

Zulia Reyes 8/17

Kim Evans 8/19

Dawn Lester 8/19

Susan Parker 8/19

John Andrews 8/20

Jacquie Dillard-Foss  
8/20

Tim Fischer 8/20

Delores Hill 8/22

Ayren Gabrielsen 8/24

Paloma McClelland  
8/25

Christopher Funk 8/26

Stefon Craig 8/27

Pamela Norman 8/27

Sandra Price-Ott 8/29

Bibiana Alvarez 8/30

Janice Reid 8/30

Laurie Oswald Malone  
8/31



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## SLS- Deaf

We want to welcome Jessica Miller, Ken Miller, Mike Miller, Jorjan Jeter, Rima Cornish, Dachesiah, Mike Baker, and Sylvia Zarate as new STEP employees working in the SLSD unit.

We want to give big thanks to STEP for sponsoring our women's softball team for NWAAD. We couldn't do it without STEP and their recognition, too. It was obvious everyone at NWAAD was very interested in STEP. It was very nice to see some of our folks went and watched games at NWAAD.

So I want to warn that the heat is starting to go up, please keep clients cool, under the shade, and put a lot of sunblock lotion on them so they won't get burned. I want to let you know the State Fair at Cal expo starts in August; many of the clients will love to go and have BLAST time.

## SLS- Hearing

The HSL unit is on the hiring war path! Anyone interested in becoming a PA or Roommate should visit Charlene to complete an application. We are in need of quality, caring staff so if you, or anyone you know fits the description, please apply. Our unit is busy with the dealings of daily events for our clients and staff. A big task has been getting our folks switched over to their new payee as requested by Alta. It's been a challenge. The HSL unit has really pulled together to get staffing completed, to get paperwork in order, and to make sure that our clients are happy. Of course this is because the HSL unit rocks!

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## ILS

The ILS department would like to thank Melanie for "breaking us out!" It was great to have our "RESPECT CLASS" focus on the issues that we deal with on a regular basis in ILS. Melanie has given us an "assignment" that we will now be focusing on in our weekly staff meetings, putting together a Vision and Values book that pertains to ILS specifically, and how the Vision and values drives what we do everyday. We will also begin the process of doing ELP's with each of the folks in ILS. Each time we transition an individual from one instructor to another, information gets lost. Some of it's very important information. We need to get that information down so no matter who is working with that person, those details are not lost.

Just a reminder to everyone, the next All ILS/SLS meeting is on August 9th. We will let you know the exact time and what we will be doing soon.

Parenting Support Group will next meet again on August 19, 2004. It will be the "Back To School Swim Party". We will let you know of time and location soon.

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## Human Resources

We have had many new hires this month. Welcome to all of you!

Patti D. would like to thank all the staff that did such a great job getting reference checks, signed job offers and all things in place prior to orientation day. It is so helpful and everything goes much smoother when everyone does their part of the process. Thank you for your hard work!

### POLICY REVIEW:

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Summer is here, the weather is HOT. Please remember that you must adhere to the dress code regardless of the weather! You can review your specific dress code on pages 5-11 through 5-14 in your handbook. We continue to have a number of people that are not dressed appropriately for work. You must wear a closed toed, closed heel shoe when working with clients. The rule for shorts is that they must follow the "Fingertip Rule," which states that when you are standing with your hands at your sides, your shorts will still end below your fingertips. Revealing clothing is also not allowed, which includes clothing that is too tight. Remember that if you come into the office for any reason (even if it is your day off) this is your place of employment and you must be dressed appropriately. How you are dressed is a part of how STEP is represented to the community and reflects upon the agency. It is important that we all do our best to continue to have a positive image.

## Understand your phone bill, avoid getting ripped off:

Have you looked closely at your phone bill lately? Figuring out all those extra fees, surcharges and taxes confused and frustrate many consumers. The national consumers league's special report, understanding your phone bill, gives me a breakdown on what charges actually mean and how to use phone services wisely and avoid fraud. The report can be found at [www.nclnet.org/phonebill/index.html](http://www.nclnet.org/phonebill/index.html).

### More fraud projection:

Look at your phone bill carefully as soon as you receive it. Check every page, not just the one that has the total amount due.

Make sure you recognize all company names on the bill. If you find one you don't recognize, dispute the bill. Your phone services provider might have been changed without permission.

# Day Program

## Next Step

Next Step would like to welcome new staff Kenny Bennigan, Rima Cornish, and Matty Miller! We also welcome new client, Stefon Luke. Congratulations to Walter on becoming a Daddy again to his new son!

## Extra Step

Extra Step would like to briefly say goodbye to Gene Cochrane. He will be moving to Bakersfield in August and starting a new life there with his wife and two children. We really appreciate the years you have given to STEP and wish you the best of luck. We will miss you!

# Northern California Liver Walk

STEP is sponsoring a team to walk in the California Liver Walk: Sacramento on September 19, 2004. Several STEP employees and their families have been affected by Liver Disease so STEP got involved in last year's Liver Walk at which we raised almost \$1800.

The California Liver Walk is a pledged walk-a-thon event to benefit the American Liver Foundation. Participants ask for pledges from their friends, family and co-workers in an effort to expand awareness about hepatitis and other liver diseases and organ donor awareness while raising money to help fund research and education programs. For more information, visit [www.liverfoundation.org/chapter/db/chapter/northernca](http://www.liverfoundation.org/chapter/db/chapter/northernca). You can register for the STEP team at [http://www.active.com/event\\_detail.cfm?event\\_id=1135825&action=ct](http://www.active.com/event_detail.cfm?event_id=1135825&action=ct). Each walker has a goal to raise \$100 and our team goal is \$2000. For more information, you can also talk to Melanie Bazile-Fernandez, team captain.

Thanks for your support!

# Healthy Living:

## Cutting back on these snacks & habits can save you money.

Want to keep more money in your pockets this year? While most folks think little snacks are harmless or are ok if you keep them under control, they can put a dent in your budget over a 12-month period. Consider this:

### Soft drinks:

2 soft drinks at 75 cents each for 5 days= \$ 390 a year

1 soft drink at 75 cents for 5 days= \$195 a year

Savings= \$195 a year

### Eating out:

Lunch for 5 days at \$4=\$1,040 a year

Lunch for 3 days at \$4=\$624 year

Savings=\$416 a year

### Chips or candy:

1 a day at 60 cents for 5 days=\$165 a year

1 a day at 60 cents for 3 days =\$93.60 a year

Savings=\$62.40 a year

Its amazing how a little change in your habits can not only help maintain good health, but also adds up to big savings.



# STEP SPOTLIGHT

## Deaf SLS

Helen Keller National Center representatives were here in Sacramento in May putting on a one day workshop on issues affecting Deaf and Blind. While they were here, they visited several clients homes to get an idea about the kind of services we provide and also to give us suggestions on environmental set up of homes for blind people. After their visit, I received a wonderful letter from Sr. Bernadette Wynne, the Coordinator of the National Training Team. In her letter she stated, "Thank you for the opportunity to come to Sacramento and work with your staff. I am very impressed with the caliber and expertise of the agency. They certainly are dedicated, compassionate and skilled. STEP is one of the few agencies that realized from the beginning that clients with multiple challenges do need a different perspective on teaching methods." Sr. Bernie visited the home of Randy Merlo and Tom Caverleri and she had this to say about her visit: "Wednesday was exciting. That is a beautiful home filled with loving, caring people. I was sorry I had to leave for the airport, we were having such a good time."

Congratulations to the entire Deaf SLS unit from Personal Attendants to Coordinators, Directors to Roommates! You Rock!

Any articles, announcements, STARS, and resource information is welcome. The deadline for the next newsletter is 9/15/04.

### Jen's Trivia Question

Be the first person to visit Jen Jones's office with the correct answer and receive a prize:

Last Month:

Who was the only U.S. President to be born on Independence Day? (4th of July)

Answer: Calvin Coolidge

Winners: Ayren Gabrielson - Family: pass to Discovery Museum

Mike Warner : Free billiards time @ Country Club Family Billiards

August Newsletter Trivia Question:

Henry Ford's Model T cars got their name from...

The next RESPECT class for hearing will be on August 26th and 27th 2004 from 9am to 3pm in STEP training classroom.

*The next Hearing PA training will be on September 13th. Time and location to be announced.*

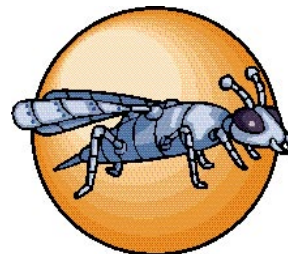
All ILS/SLS teambuilding will be August 9th from 11am to 1pm.

## DON'T BUG ME!

DRESS IN LIGHTWEIGHT LONG PANTS AND A LONG-SLEEVED SHIRT. AVOID BRIGHT COLORS AND FLOWERY PRINTS BECAUSE THEY ATTRACT INSECTS.

USE an insect repellent that contains DEET (diethyltoluamide). Caution: use a product with no more than 10 percent DEET on children.

IF YOU GET BITTEN, DON'T AGGRAVATE THE BITE BY SCRATCHING. USE A COLD COMPRESS AND APPLY ANTI-ITCH CREAM SUCH AS HYDROCORTISONE, AN ANTIHISTAMINE SUCH AS DIPHENHYDRAMINE (BENADRYL) OR A LOCAL ANESTHETIC SUCH AS BENZOCAINE.



White Water River Rafting Adventure with ETC

Sunday August 29th

\$70.00 with lunch included

Open to staff and clients-it is a great time! Please inform Stephanie Sgro ASAP if you would like to go.

