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# S.T.E.P. News

*Bring you stories and information from around the office and our community.*

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## DIRECTOR'S NOTES

*The whole is greater than the sum of its parts* - that is the principle of Synergy. When you type "Synergy" into a search on Google, the results are product descriptions with the words "innovation", "revolutionary", "state-of-the-art" and "harmonious". Synergy comes from the Greek word (The Father in "My Big Fat Greek Wedding" would be so proud) *Synergia* which means joint work and cooperation.

People who work toward synergy know that with others they can create a new alternative that is better than the individual ideas they had on their own, it is better than compromise. When a team comes together, each person on that team has something different to offer.

A great team sees the value in those differences and celebrates them instead of dwelling on the challenges presented by that kind of variety. By practicing creative cooperation, we can achieve innovative results, new and better solutions and transform relationships and situations.

One key skill in achieving synergy is the ability to listen with the intent to understand, not just the intent to reply. Have you ever found yourself in a conversation where you wish the other person would be quiet so you can make your point? That is listening with the intent to reply. Listening and restating the other view in your own words means you truly understand the issue from the other's perspective. Then you can explain your perspective in a way they will understand enabling quicker communication. You then can build on each other's ideas and eventually reach a solution that was better than what either had to start with- you'll reach a third alternative.

Getting to a third alternative means setting aside our ego and agenda. If our security comes from being right, we will never be able to get to a third alternative. When you only see two choices in a situation or problem - yours and the "wrong" one - you can look for a synergistic solution. There's almost always a third alternative, and if you work within a Win/Win philosophy and really seek to understand, you usually can find a solution that will be better for everyone concerned.

Synergy is the 6th habit in the 7 Habits of Highly Effective People by Stephen Covey. STEP hopes to provide this training to our employees, stakeholders, and eventually our consumers.

For more information, pick up the book or talk with me about it.

- Melanie Bazile, Executive Director

## **4 + 5 = 9**

by: Leigh Penny

*4 + 5 = 9 is an insignificant addition problem to you, but to me, as a student teacher, it opened up the world. Let me explain.*

*At the age of 22, and physically unstable due to cerebral palsy, I started student teaching with a class of 30 lively first graders. Shortly after beginning my student teaching there was some mimicry. The teacher said I should explain to the students what my "problem" was. Reluctantly, I went home that night and prepared a brief presentation for my students.*

*The next morning, I sat directly in front of the 30 children and said,*

*"I know you have noticed I have a little difficulty walking. Maybe you would like to know why? I was born too early.*

*I had difficulty coming into the world, and the part of my head that controls my walking was hurt."*

*There was silence. A mentally gifted boy sitting right in front of me kept raising and lowering his hand hesitantly.*

*He said, "I'm thinking, Ms. Penny."*

*"I like little boys that think," I responded back. "What are you thinking about?"*

*Alan threw back his shoulders, threw out his chest and loudly proclaimed,*

*"4 + 5 = 9."*

*Then they all started:*

*"I know what 1 + 3 is."*

*"Ooo, I know..."*

*How did we all react? It all added up to a big chuckle. The students just wanted to show off their knowledge. They couldn't care less about anything I said. The teacher scratched her head in wonder and I just wanted to hug Alan who put it all in perspective.*

# ANNOUNCEMENTS

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## DATES TO REMEMBER

**May 14**

### **Mother's Day**

Mother's Day is set apart every year in honor of motherhood. On the second Sunday in May, many families and churches make a special point of honoring mothers. Many people follow the custom of wearing a carnation on Mother's Day. A colored carnation means that a person's mother is living. A white carnation indicates that a person's mother is dead.

**MAY 29**

### **Memorial Day**

Memorial Day, also called Decoration Day, is a patriotic holiday in the United States. It is a day to honor Americans who gave their lives for their country. Originally, Memorial Day honored military personnel who died in the Civil War (1861-1865). The holiday now also honors those who died in any war while serving the United States.

**The S.T.E.P. office will be  
CLOSED in observance  
of Memorial Day.**

## HUMAN RESOURCE

### **401 K ENROLLMENT**

Open Enrollment for 401k will be in June for those of you that have at least 1 year of service, are 21 years of age, and have worked 1000 hours in the last year. Flyers will be posted on the benefit board. The benefit board is right outside Patti Dixon's office, check it out!

### **EMPLOYEE INFORMATION FORM**

A form was distributed to all employees for updating their information (address, emergency contact person, etc...) in January. I appreciate that some folks completed those and turned them in. For those of you that did not turn them in, another copy will be put in your box, please complete and return as soon as possible. It is so important for HR to have current, correct information for your file.

- Patti Dixon

### **DRESS CODE**

Spring is here! Don't forget your Dress Code!! Even though the weather is finally getting warmer, we must all remember that we have a dress code. The "FingerTip Rule" still applies for anyone wearing shorts or skirts. That means that when you stand up straight and hang your hands at your sides, your shorts or your skirt hem is below your fingertips. Yes, ALL your fingertips. All shorts must be hemmed. NO HALTER TOPS. Keep in mind that as professionals in this field, you can control how people see you by how you present yourself when you are working. If you look like a professional, that's what they will see. Also, that is a daily way to show your client that not only do you respect them, but that you respect yourself.

- Sandy Goodsell

# FEATURE

## Staff Spotlight

### ***Tracy Cummins***

Tracy grew up in the Yuba City/Marysville area. She now lives in Yuba City with her husband. They have 5 children and one grandson. She loves to spend much of her free time with her grandson. She enjoys reading, collecting Beanie Babies, and collects antique bicycles.

Tracy has been working in the social services field for 14 years. She has worked with a variety of folks with different developmental disabilities. She has worked as a respite worker and job coach among other jobs. She is very active with People First and has been a facilitator for one of the officers on the Alta Regional Board.

Tracy joined the STEP family in March of 2005. She is a full-time ILS/SLS instructor in Yuba City. She started the first SLS arrangement in that area for us. She also continues to work for Tri-County Respite.



### ***Shelly Taylor***

Shelly grew up in the Yuba City/Marysville area. Shelly is married and has 3 children. She likes to read, do scrap booking, and watch good movies. She also collects dolls and loves to hang out with her friends and go fishing.

Shelly has been in the social services field for 11 years. She has worked with a variety of folks with different disabilities. She has worked as a respite worker, job coach and was a site supervisor through Quest on a job site. Shelly continues to be very active with People First, Supported Life and is part of the Self Advocacy Coordination Project, which promotes and does trainings for folks. She has been a facilitator for one of the officers on the Alta Regional Board for about 7 years.

Shelly joined the STEP family in March of 2005. She is currently working as an ILS instructor, SLS coordinator and fills in as a PA when needed.

**We would like to welcome Tracy and Shelly to our STEP family! Hopefully for a long time to come!**

*- Heather Campbell*

# DEPARTMENT NOTES

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## ILS

### Independent Living Services

ILS has decided to take on a more "proactive" role with regards to influencing legislation and participated in a "GrassRoots" Training on April 26th, 2006. Our hope is to become more effective at influencing change through letter writing, emailing, as well as organized trips to the State Capitol to directly speak to our legislatures.

In addition, the ILS Parenting group held it's annual Parenting Easter Party on Friday, April 14th, here at the STEP office. We would like to especially thank Ayren and all the office staff who participated in setting up the "office egg hunt"! The kids had a blast and enjoyed themselves! Thanks for the incredible teamwork and support!



Thanks also to Jude for capturing the day in photos - much appreciation!

### *P-ILS Client Spotlight*

**Jamie Johnson (Wallis)** is part of our Parenting Program, here at STEP, and has been with us for the last three years. Jaime was born in San Francisco, but has lived in Sacramento, on and off, for the last sixteen years.

Jaime was newly married in September of 2005 and has an eight-year-old son, who she cares for on as a full-time, stay at home mom. In between caring for her son and maintaining her household, Jaime also attends college courses in the hopes of becoming a mechanic. Her personal goal this year is to succeed in completing all of her current college courses- (go Jaime!). Jaime is also working on obtaining her driver's license so that, in her words, "I can become more independent!"

Jaime loves sports, including basketball, swimming and track & field. She also enjoys shopping and watching TV.

A note from Jaime's ILS Instructor, William Marks :

"Jamie is a very motivated and ambitious individual who has no problems setting goals for herself. She is also a loving and concerned parent when it comes to her son. Because her son has a disability like her own, Jamie is always concerned about his future and therefore, keeps in close contact with her son's school to make sure that all his needs are being met. One of Jamie's biggest desires is to see her son grow to have a prosperous and advantaged life."

# VSS

Vocational Services & Support

STEP Vocational Services and Supports has created a synergistic relationship with the folks of the North Area Teen Center located here is Carmichael. Last year we were looking for a new location for the clients that collate the monthly mailer for the Sacramento Convention Center & Visitors Bureau. The site we had was downtown, hard to park near, and didn't have a restroom. It wasn't the best location. Just by chance we noticed the Teen Center. I also noticed by their posted schedule that they provided structured activities for teens just about every afternoon and evening of the week, but not in the morning...

So I went on the Internet and checked out their really cool website at [www.NorthAreaTeenCenter.com/home](http://www.NorthAreaTeenCenter.com/home)

Wow! I was really impressed with all the cool stuff they were doing. We met with Jim Vargas, Executive Director. He is Great! I introduced Jim to STEP Vocational, and who we are. We want to be great neighbors and support the teen center. What can we do to help? Jim replied, "Teenagers are really messy. Can you help us clean up and get organized?" You Bet! Mike M., Sarah G, Leah C, Barry K, Michelle D, and Laura D do a great job cleaning, and process the mailers for Sacramento Convention Center job. Thanks so much to all the Vocational Coaches that make this positive relationship happen, and a big thanks to Jim Vargas at The North Area Teen Center!

- Lynn Vaughan

## Eureka Office

ILS / SLS

The SUN is finally here and the Eureka office is gearing up for Spring and Summer. We are looking forward to our Summer picnic and are starting a planning committee to gather ideas for the festivities. Anyone interested in helping out please contact Sarah Nixon at (707) 268-1339 Ext. 101 or [sarahn@stepsite.com](mailto:sarahn@stepsite.com).

We have received generous donations of a variety of items including clothes and other household things. They are located in marked boxes in the copy room and free to anyone!

There is a program here in Eureka that can assist the disabled with getting computers for approximately \$20. Contact Tri-county Independent Living at (707) 445-8404 for information and to be put on the waiting list.

Enjoy the Sunshine!!

- Jennie Nixon

# H-SLS

## Hearing Supported Living Skills

Much of our time has been spent working on team building and improving quality of service to our consumers. We are striving to use feedback from the Quality Improvement interviews to enhance our client's homes and lives.

The managers and director recently completed 7 Habits training and we look forward to implementing the techniques and philosophy we've learned. Soon all the coordinators will be trained in the 7 Habits and that will trickle down to our personal attendants. This is an exciting endeavor for our unit and the company as a whole!

- Sandee Nieves

# CAC

## Consumer Advisory Committee

The CAC, Consumer Advisory committee met on April 17th with all but two members in attendance. Welcome back Jimmy! Our two guest speakers made the meeting very informative.

David Lopez, the Alta Consumer Advocate, spoke with us about the ALTA CAC and their work translating the Alta strategic goals into consumer friendly language. He passed out his business card and explained ways he can assist consumers, such as attending their IPP to help them advocate. Charlene Jones with the Supported Life Institute talked gave us an update on local and statewide self-advocacy and People First chapters are doing. She handed out information about the Self-Advocacy Coordination Project and invited STEP's CAC to collaborate with them on future projects.

We used one of Charlene's suggestions and got CAC members to volunteer to facilitate our monthly meetings. Tara will be facilitating our next meeting on May 8th from 1p to 3p at STEP. We will be discussing assertiveness and self-confidence necessary to managing our support. We will invite Sandy Goodsell to speak with us about the legal aspects of supervision of personal attendants. We will also have a political update from Deanna and Leigh who will be attending a Grassroots Training at STEP at the end of April.

- Melanie Bazil

# \* S.T.E.P. STARS \*

H-SLS would like to acknowledge the following :

- \* To those of you who feel committed to STEP and have shown your dedication by attending the PA trainings.
- \* To **Chaundres Carthan** for being so flexible and working at any client's house we've ask you to work. Your flexibility is greatly appreciated.
- \* **Courtney Kondro** for filling so many shifts at Allen's while we've struggled to hire more staff. You rock!
- \* **Zipporah Gaines** and **Denise Chamberlain** for truly showing your veteran status by working with new clients who needed your experience!
  
- \* **Paula Bryant** – Thank you for all the extra help you have given Bridget during her recovery! - Jennie
  
- \* I would like to recognize **David LaRue** for all of the added support you have given Darrell and his house during this transition period.  
- Jennie
  
- \* A great big thank you to **Zach DeMario** and **Becky Horn** for great teamwork and covering extra shifts to help provide a strong network of support for Nicole while we are hiring. - Jennie
  
- \* **Paul Lavender** – Thanks for helping to get the video conferencing setup, it was fabulous to be able to see everyone! - Jennie and Sarah

## MAY BIRTHDAYS

Brian Parrl	1
Rachel Allen-Coldwell	2
June Klock	2
Dominic Papa	3
Rebekah (Becky) Byng	3
Allison Cornelius	3
Cory Ross	4
Cynthia Burns	4
Angela Frazier	7
Brandon Snowberger	7
Jennifer Alloway	8
Stellina Nava	8
Nicole Patterson	8
Jeff Thompson	9
Jeffrey Musgrave	10
Gary Croker	11
Alesia Jepsen	17
Jamie Johnson (Wallis)	17
Alexander Vasquez	17
Karen Burbank	17
Darrell Walker	18
Suzane Sarrette	19
Stephanie Sgro	20
Jazmine Jade	22
Brooke Christenson	23
Moira Webster	24
Donna Wymer	25
Mike Miller	25
Pamela Longhurst	27
Alejandro (Alex) Diaz	27
Rochelle Tambornini	28
John Jeter	28
Svetlana Kireyeva	29
Cheryl Redmond	29
Kirsten Carmichael	30
Elizabeth Soriano	30
Misty Webb	30
Mary Sampson	31
Deanna Lemus	31

# FUN & GAMES!

“Between what happens to us and our response is a space.  
In that space lies our freedom to choose our response.....”

- Anonymous

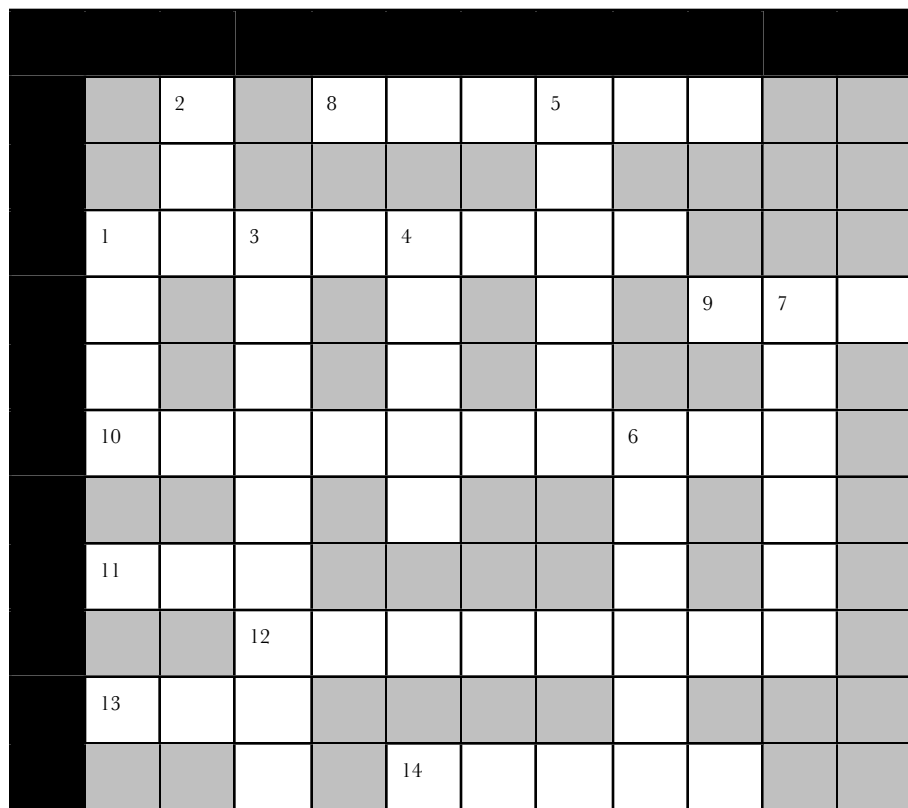
## CROSSWORD PUZZLE

### ACROSS

1. Tis the Season
8. \_\_\_\_ of Liberty
9. Primate
10. Best Sunday in May
11. Hint
12. First Monday in September
13. Fedora
14. Cool mint beverage

### DOWN

1. “We like the cars, the cars that go \_\_\_\_”
2. Darjeeling
3. Saves lives
4. Mischievous Spirit or a Golf Stroke
5. Jude’s favorite flower
6. Spinning Top
7. Five business days after time cards are due



## Jen's Tricky Trivia

The very first WHAT was held in New York City  
on March 17, 1762 ?

*The first person to answer this question wins a PRIZE! Please see Jen and collect you winnings!*

# STEP

## Strategies To Empower People

5495 Palm Drive  
Carmichael CA 95608

Phone: 916 679 - 1555

Email: [step@stepsite.com](mailto:step@stepsite.com)

Website: [stepsite.com](http://stepsite.com)



*Building on a foundation of quality.*

## RESOURCE CORNER

*Here are some community resources you may find helpful.*

*The SUN is out!*

**GET ACTIVE and do something FUN!!!**

**ACCESS LIESURE** - City of Sacramento recreational program for persons with disabilities.

Call Philip Sinclair (916) 808-6045 or log on to:

<http://www.cityofsacramento.org/parksandrecreation/ohs/access.htm>

**TRS Therapeutic Recreation Services** - Sacramento County's recreational service for people with disabilities.

Call at 916-875-6640 or e-mail: [sacotr@sacparks.org](mailto:sacotr@sacparks.org)

**JAZZ JUBILEE** - May 26 - 29 on Memorial Day weekend.

<http://www.sacjazz.com>