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FOOTPRINTS

Volume 4 Issue 1



Homeless House Fundraising is Underway

STEP, Inc. has kicked off their fundraising efforts to raise \$50,000 to build at least one house for homeless individuals and families. The goal is to break ground on the house by summer 2010.

For more than four years, STEP has been writing grants, searching for appropriate property, and dialoguing with potential partners to make the homeless house a success. The need is astounding. STEP comes in contact with more than 25 homeless clients

and families every year and hundreds more are on the verge of homelessness due to the poor economy, loss of jobs, and the housing crisis. Families and individuals in crisis are often referred to Roanoke and Martinsville. Currently, the Family Resource Center is the only space with available beds, but space is limited to women and their children who've experienced domestic violence. Homeless women can also stay at the Family Resource Center when space is available. However, there are no beds available for men or for families with involved dads.

The new home will be constructed on Dent Street, across from STEP's Corporate Office. The location is ideal because STEP will be able to provide supportive services to our guests to help them transition to permanent housing. Each guest will be required to open a savings account (through STEP's IDA program which matches \$2 for every \$1 saved),

and make progress on their individual plans that will enable them to move into permanent housing. Employment services, transportation, counseling and case management will be provided for each guest.

STEP will work with local governments, civic organizations, churches and



An architect's rendition of a duplex similar to the one STEP will build.

foundations to support the homeless house project. A proposal has been written that would provide a dollar-for-dollar match. Businesses and individuals who support this effort may be eligible to receive Virginia Neighborhood Assistance Tax Credits (See article "Tax Credits Available" on page 4).

A plaque will be hung in each home to give recognition to the businesses, civic organizations and churches that donate to make the campaign a success, while individual donors will be recognized in STEP's annual report and future newsletters.

The most unique and exciting aspect of this fundraising project is the Shamrock Half Marathon that will be held on March 21, 2010 in Virginia Beach (see "Running for the Homeless" on Page 2). Team STEP will be taking pledges to raise money for the project.

Become a "fan" of STEP

STEP is now on facebook and you can become a fan! Once you are logged onto your account, type "Support to Eliminate Poverty" in the search tool. Click on STEP's logo and become a fan.

facebook



Employees of STEP, Inc. recently volunteered a portion of their Saturday to help package 30,000 meals that will be shipped to impoverished countries overseas. The Rocky Mount Rotary sponsored the Stop Hunger Now event that brought together nearly approximately 350 volunteers, including many church and scout groups. STEP employees brought their family members to participate in the event. Employees who volunteered are; Cheryl Cobbs, LIFES Academy Director, Jon Morris, Executive Director, Terry Bridges, Finance Director, Richard Hartley, Teen Outreach Program Manager, Selena Turner, Kitchen Manager, Mike Smith Housing Director, and Kendra Witcher, Kitchen Assistant.



Larry Anderson, Senior Meals Coordinator was caught off guard by a surprise retirement celebration in his honor. Larry worked for STEP for more than 9 years, most of that time devoted to the Senior Meals Program. Congratulations Larry!

Tax Credits Available

Your donation to support the STEP Homeless House can be financially beneficial to you as well. STEP, Inc., has received a limited amount of Neighborhood Tax Credits from the State of Virginia that will be issued to persons who contribute a minimum \$500 donation to STEP. These tax credits, which are valid for five years, are equal to 45% of your contribution and can be used to offset any state taxes that you may owe. And to make it even better, your gift is also a deductible charitable contribution on your Federal Income Tax Return. The following examples show the amount you would receive for your gift, however, any amount of \$500 or more qualifies for the tax credits:

Your Gift	Credit Amount
\$500	\$225
\$750	\$337.50
\$1,000	\$450
\$1,500	\$675
\$2,000	\$900

The Neighborhood Assistance Tax Credit Program is a great way for you to give to a wonderful cause, like STEP's Homeless Housing Project, and receive a greater benefit than the gift itself. All donations must be received by December 31, 2009 for you to take advantage for tax year 2009. If you would like to take advantage of this tax credit and would like more information, please contact STEP Finance Director, Terry Bridges at 483-5142 ext. 3006.

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Head Start Director Gayle Clary and Transportation Director Mary Williams stand beside the new 56 passenger bus. STEP has been trying for many years to purchase a new bus. STEP received a grant through ARRA funding for program improvement.



A few young people from the Teen Outreach Program work together on a team building exercise using straws.



STEP has recently expanded their Housing & Weatherization Department by adding a new crew in Patrick County. Pictured from left to right are Teddy Shelton, Interim Crew Leader Jeff Huff and Larry Haden

Running for the Homeless

STEP Executive Director, Jon Morris, and a team of friends are traveling to Virginia Beach to run in the Shamrock Half-Marathon to raise money for the Homeless House project. Each runner will work to secure pledges with the goal of raising \$5,000. What makes these runners so extraordinary, is they volunteered to travel to Virginia Beach to support this cause. "I'm so humbled and in awe that they would go through 3 months of training and great personal expense to help STEP build housing for the homeless," said Jon Morris. Each runner will pay their travel expenses and \$80 entry fee for the 13.1 mile race. The team members are:

John Coleman – John is the Senior Human Resources Representative for Apria Health Care. He is an avid runner who has run in many races including 5K's, 10K's, and one previous half-marathon. John recently received his M.B.A. from Averett University. He lives in Roanoke with his wife Joanna and daughters, Allie and Katie.

Margaret Cornwell – Margaret is a native of Tuscaloosa, Alabama and is

very excited with her hometown Crimson Tide this year. Margaret graduated from Ferrum College in 2002 and is an accomplished equestrian. She works at Fleet Feet in Roanoke and is already in shape to run the marathon. Margaret's husband, Joey, serves on the STEP Board of Directors.

Joanna Hudzick – Joanna is the owner of Haywood Jewelers in Smith Mountain Lake. Joanna is involved in many civic organizations including the Smith Mountain Lake Lions Club and the Rocky Mount Rotary Club. Joanna recently ran a 5K in Houston to raise money for Breast Cancer Research. Joanna and her husband, Mark, live in Franklin County and are involved in many community projects. This is Joanna's first half-marathon.

Lenore Duncan – Lenore is an architect/interior designer for Spectrum Designs. Lenore is also an avid runner who has ran in several races, and enjoys trail running. Lenore was the interior designer for the Rocky Mount Municipal Building Renovation, Piedmont Community Services new building on North Main Street, and STEP's new building in Patrick County. Lenore lives in Newport, Virginia with her son, Eli.

Jon Morris – Jon has been Executive Director of STEP for more than 5 years. He's not an avid runner and has never run more than 3 consecutive miles. However, he's very passionate about building the homeless house and excited about the training and challenge of attempting to run 13.1 miles without stopping.

Teen Outreach Program is Underway

STEP, Inc. received funding this summer from Franklin County to provide the Teen Outreach Program (TOP) to 13 and 14 year-old Franklin County middle school students.

The Teen Outreach Program, first developed in 1976, has been replicated and administered to an estimated 20,000 youth at approximately 400 program locations across the United States, the Virgin Islands and the United Kingdom. First offered as a school-based program during school hours as part of the health education curriculum, the program has expanded to numerous after-school and community-based settings.

STEP's Teen Outreach Program, which is designed to prevent problem behaviors in adolescents, is a broad, developmental intervention program that attempts to

help teens understand, evaluate and pursue their life options. The program is based on the research that a heightened awareness of life options, increased knowledge of and how to effectively

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STEP's Teen Outreach Program includes three essential program components:

Classroom group instruction – involves small group activities and discussions on age/developmental stage-appropriate topics of special interest to young people, allowing them to examine their values and master life skills within a supportive peer group guided by a trained adult facilitator.

Community service – offers participants service and volunteer roles which

provides them with an opportunity to help others, reconnects them to their communities and challenges them to new skills to realize their strengths and talents. TOP's two community partners in

this component are the Franklin County Humane Society and Franklin County Health and Rehabilitation.

Service learning – links the community service experience to the classroom or group instruction and ultimately to students' lives by allowing them to reflect on and process their service activities.

In addition to the three components above, STEP's Teen Outreach Program also includes the component SWAG Time (Students With A Goal). SWAG provides a supervised time for students to set goals, develop plans and work on homework assignments. STEP's TOP curriculum topics of responsibility, commitment, planning and goal setting are also reinforced.

STEP's Teen Outreach Program currently has 8 students who have been participating in TOP activities since October 26, 2009. These students have already voiced their enjoyment of the

volunteer work they have provided and have begun to see the personal benefits to being a contributing member in this community.

The Teen Outreach Program meets Monday through Thursday afternoon from 3:00 pm until 5:30 pm at STEP's Corporate Office Building on Dent Street. All participating teens receive

transportation from their school to STEP, a snack upon arrival and transportation to their homes in the evening after TOP activities. If you are a middle school teen 13-14 years old or the parent/guardian of a middle school teen this age and wish more information on the Teen Outreach Program, please contact Mr. Richard Hartley, Teen Outreach Program Coordinator, at 483-5142, ext. 3033.