

Spring 2014

Steppingstone, Inc.
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Steppingstone Celebrates the Holiday Season



Steppingstone staff stopped long enough for a quick pic in the foyer of Venus De Milo

On Thursday, December 19th, members of the Steppingstone, Inc. staff dressed up in their holiday finest for a wonderful and fun-filled evening at the Venus De Milo Restaurant in Swansea, MA.

Seventy-two staff members and guests were treated to a delicious meal that included appetizers, the ever famous Venus de Milo Minestrone soup, carving stations of roasted turkey breast, glazed Danish ham, and a lovely dinner buffet of Chicken Masala, Baked Scrod, Chourico and peppers, Pasta Primadore and lots of scrumptious holiday themed mini pastries, cakes and mousses.

Although, staff members didn't sit still for very long. After dinner the DJ had everyone up on their feet and moving. One staff member was quoted the day after as saying, "The party was amazing! I haven't had that much fun in a long time. It was good inter-

acting with people in a different context, too. I can tell I'm getting older though, my knees ached today and I had to take ibuprofen (smile)."

Another staff member was quoted as saying, "It was a great party and you could tell everyone was really enjoying themselves. Thanks to all who made it happen! I also think it was a great morale booster... and a great stress releaser!"

Director of Finance, Debra DeCosta, planned this very successful staff event and we're wondering how she'll be able to top this one next year. We are all very grateful to our Executive Director, Kathleen Schedler-Clark for giving staff members such wonderful memories that they won't forget for a long, long time to come.

Steppingstone, Inc. Staff Milestones...



Maureen Roy recently became a **Licensed Mental Health Counselor (LMHC)**. Maureen has worked for the agency since August of 2004. She started as a Charge Person at the Transition House while working on her Master's degree. In 2005 she began working as a per diem Substance Abuse Counselor while working full-time at Rhode Island College as the Assistant Bursar. In the fall of 2009 she was hired full-time to work in the Stepping Forward Program. In September 2012 she became a Licensed Alcohol & Drug Counselor (LADC I). Maureen is also a Massachusetts Problem Gambling Specialist (MAPGS) and holds her LMHC in Rhode Island.



Jamie Dillon recently became a **Licensed Alcohol & drug Counselor (LADC II)**. Jamie has worked as a Substance Abuse Counselor at Steppingstone's Men's Recovery Home since May 2010. Prior to his employment at Steppingstone, he worked as the Assistant Residential Director at Meadowridge Behavioral Health Center, as an Extended Outreach Coordinator at Stanley Street Treatment and Resources (SSTAR), at Family Health Care Center as an HIV/AIDS Multi-Service Case Manager and at Community Care Services as a CPI Trainer.



Jessica Hanson was recently hired as the **Program Supervisor** at the New Bedford Women's Program . Jessica worked at the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) in Boston counseling disaster victims, the Boston Rape Crisis Center as a Crisis Counselor, South Shore Mental Health as a Residential Rehabilitative Educator and High Point Treatment Center's Dual Diagnosis Unit as a Clinician and Aftercare Coordinator. Jessica received her Bachelor of Arts degree in Psychology from the University of Massachusetts, Boston. She is LADC eligible and is a certified Rape Crisis Counselor.



Delia Abate was recently promoted to **Program Director** at the Next Step Home Program . Delia brings twenty-eight years of experience working with the homeless population. She was hired in 2004 as a Case Manager at the Next Step Home Program. She became Program Assistant at the Stone Residence in 2009 and became the agency's HMIS system expert overseeing all of the HMIS systems. Prior to employment at Steppingstone, she worked for nineteen years at the Family Resource Center as a Case Manager and Secretary/Bookkeeper.



James (Jim) Salvador, Charge Person at the First Step Inn Emergency Shelter, has recently been promoted to **Program Assistant** at the Stone Residence . Jim has worked at Steppingstone, Inc. in multiple capacities since June 2012. Previously Jim worked at MetLife for eleven years as an Administrative Marketing Analyst and Freelance Consultant and at Michael's as a Replenishment Associate.



Michael Bryant has taken on a pro-active role in ensuring the homeless individuals of Fall River are well represented by going out onto the streets with formerly homeless shelter guests to facilitate the summer and winter Point-in-Time counts for HUD (Housing and Urban Development). He has fostered trust with those on the streets and sought out donations for street survival kits that are distributed during the counting days. Mike's efforts have made it possible to confirm the severity of the homelessness problem in the City Fall River to the Local and Federal funding sources.

The Spring 2014 edition of the Steppingstone Today Newsletter is filled with articles about the impressive volunteer work clients do daily to give back to the agency and the community at large. Whether they are creating meals or raffle baskets, giving rides to peers or helping with the shelter overflow they are giving back something of themselves and we are all the richer for it.

The Benefits of Volunteering



In a society that often asks, "What's in it for me?" why would anyone want to volunteer? If you think about it, you don't get paid, the hours may not be the most convenient, and you may work with people that you don't normally associate with, when you could be doing something fun for yourself instead. So why do it? What's in it for me?

HelpGuide.org has offered some surprising insights into why we should volunteer and what is "in it for us" in their online resource guide called "Volunteering and its Surprising Benefits." With their permission Steppingstone Today shares some of their insights on the benefits of volunteering and why Steppingstone, Inc. encourages clients and staff to share their gifts and talents with the wider community.

Benefit #1: Volunteering connects you to other people which can have a positive effect in the community. "You can also make new friends, expand your network and boost your social skills."

Benefit #2: Volunteering is good for your physical and mental health. It "can boost your self-confidence, self-esteem and life satisfaction." It is hard to isolate yourself if you are working with like-minded people for a good cause.

Benefit #3: Volunteering can lead to finding a new career path. "You can practice important skills in the workplace, such as teamwork, communication, problem solving, project planning, task management, and organization." You can try out a new career without quitting your day job.

Benefit #4: Volunteering can be just plain fun and helps you try something new and different. "Volunteering also provides you with renewed creativity, motivation, and vision that can carry over into your personal and professional life."

Since volunteering can be so good for you in so many ways, why not try your hand at it. **National Volunteer Week is April 6 – 12, 2014** but don't wait until then to volunteer. Your time and talent is needed.

To learn more about volunteer opportunities at Steppingstone, Inc. please contact the Human Resources office at 508-674-2788, extension 205.

To read the complete article on the Benefits of Volunteering go to: http://www.helpguide.org/life/volunteer_opportunities_benefits_volunteering.htm



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It's About Growth & Change by Linda Hayes, Case Manager

There are times when I reflect on the accomplishments of those in the Transitional programs at Steppingstone, Inc. and admire the individuals involved in their recovery process. The programs offer safe environments for clients to work on their recovery issues. The Transition House program houses 10 residents in a community setting, 5 male and 5 female, where they may remain for up to two years. The Graduate Program houses eight clients in apartment-like settings where they live cooperatively and may remain living for up to one year. Many clients in these programs enter from the agency's more structured Women's and Men's Programs. Clients who are successful in their recovery efforts work hard in the short term and have a mindset for a long term commitment. There can be no substantive changes in behavior if an individual is not motivated. The true test is how well clients do once they leave the safety of the Steppingstone environment.

The vision that Steppingstone has for each client is captured in the treatment planning process which offers a comprehensive approach to examining behaviors and defining goals tailored to specific needs. Some expectations apply to all clients such as attending AA or NA meetings, connecting with a network, finding a Sponsor and working on the 12 Steps of Recovery. They attend a Relapse Prevention Group which encourages them to compare their lives before recovery efforts and after. Some very interesting art depictions were developed by participants. [Please see these art depictions elsewhere in this newsletter.] Clients also utilize the Steppingstone Outpatient Clinic (OPC) for their psychiatric and mental health needs as well as groups on anger management, grief and loss, and parenting groups. It is hoped that when clients move on that pieces of the puzzle will fit together to give them a better quality of life that can be sustained in the future.

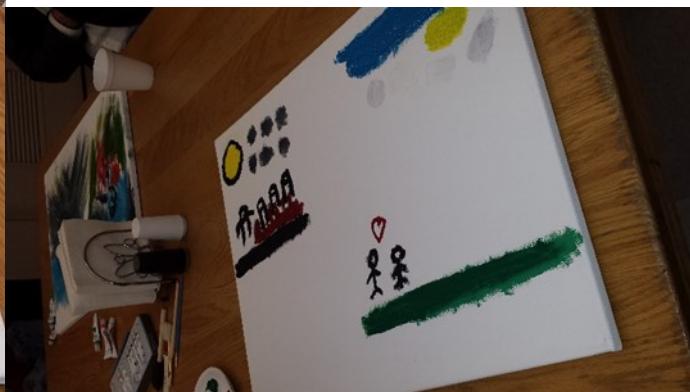
During 2013 we have witnessed the growth of many of our residents. They have come to realize the importance of community involvement. They participate throughout the community by distributing food in local

food pantries, helping out in soup kitchens, transporting peers to meetings and appointments, serving blocks of time to man overflow shelters during winter months, and supporting Steppingstone fundraising activities to benefit both the First Step Inn and their programs. Recently they had a very successful Valentine's Day bake sale and raffle. [See related article and pictures.]

Graduate clients are expected to be gainfully employed when they enter the program. Once clients settle in at the Transition House, they are expected to either work or volunteer a minimum of 20 hours per week, or attend school. Currently several clients are enrolled in Adult Basic Education classes to obtain their GED, another is enrolled in massage therapy school, several clients are enrolled at Bristol Community College (BCC), and another client attends part-time classes at U-Mass Dartmouth. Several clients have taken computer courses in sites throughout the Fall River community. Other clients have now secured full-time employment and been promoted.

When someone decides to rebuild their lives, much can be accomplished. There are many individuals involved in a client's recovery efforts and long-term success depends not only on their individual efforts, but also on cooperation and collaboration internally and externally.





Before & After

Recovery Art

Reflecting and articulating the difference in life before and after recovery is a great way to remember how recovery affects the quality of our lives. During Relapse Prevention Group; Meg, Joe, Charles, Joanne and Alexandria expressed beautifully their lives before and after recovery. Addiction brings dark skies, loss, death, chaos, storms and loneliness. Recovery brings blue skies, light, loved ones, and hope for the future.

Thought for the Day:

Leave the worries of last night to darkness and let the light of motivation and inspiring things take control of your mind and actions. Start a beautiful morning and end up with a successful and blessed day. ~ Justin Mayer

**What do you get when you combine
experience and a pay it forward attitude?
A meal that can feed fifty!**

On January 2nd, another winter overflow season began. During the coldest winter months and when the shelter is at capacity of twenty, the winter overflow serves as an informal extension of the First Step Inn Shelter. Seven days a week, homeless persons can stay at local churches and are provided a warm place to sleep for the night and a hot meal.

Admission each night is handled by Steppingstone staff but when they needed to come up with a way to prepare all the hot meals, they turned to volunteers very close to home. Two tenants of the Stone Residence immediately stepped forward and offered their skills and experience to help out.

Longtime resident Bob and a relatively new resident Ray have teamed up to provide meals that feed up to fifty people each day staying at our winter overflow shelter. Not only did they volunteer, they offered to prepare meals seven days a week. They take several hours or more every day to prepare and cook a variety of meals each day.

When they were asked why they chose to volunteer, Bob, who has experienced being homeless on the streets and in the shelter responded “I’m giving back what was given to me” and “We prepare the food with an extra passion because we know who it is going to.” Ray, who recently stayed in the First Step Inn Shelter, feels that he “just wants to help the shelter like they helped me.”

Given the nutritional deficiencies of homeless persons, Bob and Ray try to use as many fresh ingredients as possible.

During the month of January alone, Ray and Bob produced enough food for 1,400 servings. Both have committed to volunteer for the entire overflow period ending in March.

**A Grateful Welcome Home Program Client
Gives Back to the Community**

Since moving to the New Bedford area I have been involved with several local agencies as a volunteer. I feel that it is very important to try and give back to the community. I have received much needed, and much appreciated assistance due to my circumstances, and hopefully I can contribute to help other people whenever I can, to show my gratitude.

I have volunteered in the capacity of a Peer Support person to help other people who have the same health issues as me. I found this to be very rewarding as I have actually “walked in the shoes” of the people I was working with, and they appreciated my help, knowing that I had gone through the same things.

I have also volunteered with a local agency that raises funds to help people who are in a health crisis and oftentimes homeless. I helped set up for events; distributed clothing to the homeless, stuffed envelopes for mailings and also helped deliver food baskets at holiday times.

The most important thing to me about volunteering is the good feeling I get from helping others, getting them through their problems, similar to what I have made it through.

Another thing that I do on my own time, to contribute to the community, is to pick up litter in the park near my apartment, and in the neighborhood where I live. By doing this, I am hoping to be a role model for others to have pride in their surroundings and to feel good about the environment.



There's no "I" in Team by Ron Norfolk, Office Coordinator/Case Manager

Normally when a fundraiser is being considered the idea usually comes from a staff member and it's then shared with the clients. Anyone that has ever been involved in an event understands that there are many challenges that need to be considered. Simple ideas like a particular theme or resources can be enough to keep any idea from ever getting off the ground, and then there's the biggest issue of all "time"! This can sometimes be a difficult challenge for some T- House residents, most of our clients work or go to school full time. At the very least if they are not employed or in school then he or she is volunteering at the food bank 20 hours each week. This usually doesn't leave many of our clients with an abundance of free time on their hands.

However this time it was different, the clients had taken the initiative and decided that they would like to do a raffle. A beautiful Valentine's basket was designed with paper flowers that were created from napkins, dollar bills, and assorted heart shaped chocolates and looked like it was professionally designed. A smaller version of the basket was made up in a coffee mug and it too looked like it was professionally designed! The fundraiser did not stop at just a raffle, they had decided to have a bake sale too. Once again all the food items that would be required were provided by the clients. All that was needed were some baking pans and the use of a kitchen and a display table. Chef Mike and Louise provided the use of the pans and the kitchen, and Paul from maintenance provided the tables. It was clear that these guys had thought and planned out every detail. Once the dates were chosen all that remained for staff to do was to send out an events flyer.

The day of the bake sale was pretty amazing to watch. We could all see the level of planning and pride that these folks had put into this event. The tables were decorated with amazing attention to detail, the baked goods were packaged in such a way that it could only compliment how incredibly delicious these pastries truly were. The Valentine baskets looked so amazing that

people couldn't help but spend a few extra dollars on the raffle too!

The bake sale and the raffle was a huge success in more ways than originally intended. Not only will the proceeds go to some great causes, but it also brought together a great group of people and truly put on display some amazing talent. The program supervisor was overheard saying "a fundraiser is not just about raising funds, it's also about having fun" and it really was fun for both the clients and staff! We're all looking forward to their next event, we heard them say something about Easter.....



Debra DeCosta, Steppingstone, Director of Finance & Administration won the beautiful Valentine's Gift Basket and Rosa Medeiros, Director of the First Step Inn & Stone Residence won the lovely Valentine Mug.



Recent Staff Anniversaries...

- ◆ *Kathleen Schedler-Clark, Executive Director—32 years of service*
- ◆ *Frank Medeiros, Maintenance Worker, Maintenance Department—17 years of service*
- ◆ *Susan Bennett, Director of Agency Development—16 years of service*
- ◆ *Wayne Daveau, Charge Person, Stone Residence & First Step Inn Shelter—10 years of service*
- ◆ *Linda Berube, Charge Person, Stone Residence—9 years of service*
- ◆ *Thomas O'Brien, Supervisor Welcome Home/Medical Case Management — 5 years of service*
- ◆ *Lisa Rogers, Office Manager, Outpatient Clinic—4 years of service*
- ◆ *Marcia Littlefield , Office Assistant, Project ROAR—4 years of service*
- ◆ *Deborah Correira, Housing Specialist , First Step Inn Shelter—4 years of service*
- ◆ *Karen Aguiar, Counselor, Fall River Women's Program — 4 years of service*
- ◆ *Paul Gagne, Maintenance Supervisor, Maintenance Department—4 years of service*
- ◆ *Bruce Proc, Cook, Dining Room—3 years of service*
- ◆ *Danielle Brown, Housing Advocate, Welcome Home Program—2 years of service*
- ◆ *Julie Connolly, Charge Person, Fall River Women's Program—2 years service*
- ◆ *Karen Dunford, Clinician, Outpatient Clinic—2 years of service*
- ◆ *Rachel Levesque, Clinician, Outpatient Clinic,—2 years of service*
- ◆ *Shayna Soenksen, Project ROAR Coordinator & Outpatient Clinician—2 years of service*
- ◆ *Gina Pavao, Charge Person, Fall River Women's Program—1 year of service*
- ◆ *April Silva, Clinician, Outpatient Clinic —1 year of service*
- ◆ *Cassandra Bernardo, Charge Person, Fall River Women's Program, 1 year of service*

HEALTHIER RECIPE: TOFU LASAGNA

6-8 cups pasta sauce (homemade or from a jar)

Ricotta-style filling (see below)

9 cooked & drained lasagna noodles

In a 9 X 13 baking pan, put a thin layer of pasta sauce, then three layers of (in this order):

Noodles -- Filling --Sauce

Top with grated parmesan or mozzarella if you wish

Bake in a 350 oven for about 35-40 minutes

Ricotta-Style Filling:

1 1/2 to 2 lbs. firm or extra firm tofu, mashed

1/4 cup fresh lemon juice

1 tablespoon honey

1/2 teaspoon salt

1/4 teaspoon pepper

4 tablespoons oil (olive, canola, vegetable)

2 teaspoons dried basil (or oregano, or a mixture of both)

1/2 teaspoon garlic powder (not garlic salt)

Mix all of the above ingredients together thoroughly.

This is a delicious lower fat recipe because you substitute tofu for the customary ricotta cheese. This is also a great vegetarian dish because you don't use any meat. Our family really loves it and so do our guests! ~Editor



Giving Back to the Community by Cindy

I have faced many struggles within the last year or so, but nothing rivals the difficulty of overcoming addiction to alcohol. At least not for me.

I am thankful to have found a home in the Steppingstone community to assist me in my efforts to continue to remain clean and sober. Part of the program and path to recovery is volunteerism. Steppingstone clients are encouraged to participate in the community, giving us a sense of purpose, responsibility and commitment.

I have volunteered at The Greater New Bedford Food Pantry, located in The First Baptist Church hall, by packaging food donations, and handing packages out to the local homeless people. This “job” is a very personal one to me as I know many of the people coming through the line – from Alcoholics Anonymous and Narcotics Anonymous meetings. They are friends, sponsors, co-workers – united in our commitment to overcome our addictions. Other volunteers include women from the Steppingstone programs, facing common struggles.

In addition to the food pantry, I have joined “The Warming Center”, located at The First Baptist Church as well. The Center is open 7:00 – 9:00am during the week, providing coffee, juice, pastries, and cereal to those in need. It is nice to start my day off, chatting with friends, brewing the coffee, and making daily plans. The sense of camaraderie, and united strength of the community has been a blessing to me in my continued battle against the disease of alcoholism.

***Storm by Donald***

As I gazed up at the sky
my past came to my mind
There were dreary clouds
dark and gray no sunshine
to be seen

But then a ray of light
peeked out from behind
those dark dreary clouds
It was like a ray of hope
coming into my soul

Knowing now that behind every
storm is a day of sunshine to be seen

Sends my soul some comfort
and courage to see the storm through today

Looking forward to the sunshine

may bring comfort to my soul

But lessons are learned in stormy

weather it's amazing what

peace follows every storm

When moved to complain about the
weather

Just think of the Serenity after the Storm

**For more information about Steppingstone,
Inc. go to our website
www.steppingstoneinc.org**