



2017-2018 ANNUAL REPORT

A Year of Accomplishments



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STEP (Solutions That Empower People) is a community action agency that provides programs and services in Franklin and Patrick counties, as well as Bedford, Martinsville and Danville. Our focus includes Early Head Start and Head Start; youth services (LIFES Academy and Project Discovery); senior services (Meals on Wheels, transportation); supportive services (re-entry, homelessness prevention); housing services (rental assistance and weatherization); and financial services (tax preparation assistance).

Our Mission: STEP, and our partners, facilitate Solutions That Empower People to overcome their barriers to economic, educational and developmental success within the communities we serve.

www.stepincva.com



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www.twitter.com/step24151

"Poverty does not belong in civilized human society. Its proper place is in a museum."

-Muhammad Yunus, social entrepreneur and
Nobel Peace Prize recipient

Here at STEP we seek out our friends and neighbors who work diligently to escape the bonds of poverty for themselves and their families. Our goal is to match their efforts, to walk with them on their journey, and help them develop the skills and resources that they will need to succeed, for life.

Our goal is that nobody falls through the cracks. Make no mistake, whether young, old, overlooked or forgotten, we are the safety net.

The following pages share a snapshot of our successes over the past year. But these are not STEP's successes alone. A critical part of our mission is to develop and nurture relationships with other service providers, stakeholders and community partners.

We aim to remain disciplined in our core programs and services, and leverage the expertise of each partner in order to yield the most efficient, effective, holistic and sustainable solutions for the 3,500 individuals and families that we serve over the course of the year.

We hope that you will find our story interesting and insightful. And we hope that it will inspire you to act in some way to help someone else in the coming year.



Marc Crouse
Executive Director



Angie Austin
President, Board of Directors

Message



STEP uses Results Oriented Management and Accountability (ROMA) to ensure positive outcomes.

Results Oriented Management and Accountability (ROMA) is a national performance based initiative that promotes greater effectiveness and demonstrates results among states and local agencies receiving Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) funds.

Beginning in 2017, the national Community Action Network was guided by the following three broad anti-poverty goals.

Goal 1:

Individuals & families with low income are stable & achieve economic stability.

Goal 2:

Communities where low income people live are healthy & offer economic opportunity.

Goal 3:

People with low incomes are engaged & active in building opportunities in communities.

To accomplish these goals, local Community Action Agencies undertake a number of ROMA implementation actions focused on results oriented management and results oriented accountability:

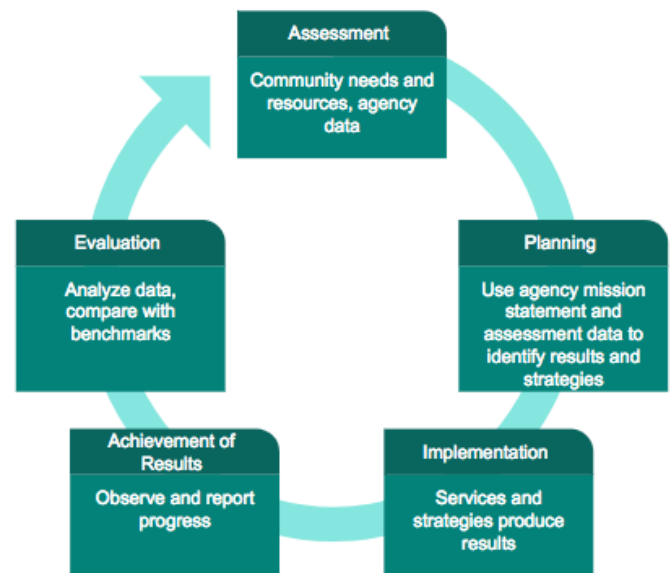
Results Oriented Management

- Assess poverty needs and conditions within the community;
- Define a clear agency anti-poverty mission for community action and a strategy to address those needs, both immediate and longer term, in the context of existing resources and opportunities in the community;
- Identify specific improvements, or results, to be achieved among low-income people and the community; and,
- Organize and implement programs, services, and activities, including advocacy, within the agency and among partnering organizations, to achieve anticipated results.

History of ROMA

ROMA was created in 1994 based upon principles contained in the Government Performance and Results Act of 1993. In recent years, within a broader national effort to strengthen the performance management culture of the CSBG network, ROMA has been improved and updated. In late 2016 the Next Generation of ROMA was launched providing a system for continuous quality improvement to enable the CSBG network to measure, analyze, and communicate performance. Ultimately, ROMA Next Generation will help Community Action Programs generate robust results for the individuals and communities they serve.

The Results Oriented Management & Accountability Cycle



Results Oriented Accountability

- Develop and implement strategies to measure and record improvements in the condition of low-income people and in the communities in which they live resulting from Community Action intervention; and,
- Use information about outcomes, or results, with agency board and staff to determine the overall effectiveness, inform annual and long range planning, support agency advocacy, funding, and community partnership activities. Programs and services may be adjusted based on outcomes and findings.

Together, We're Hanging In There Pretty Good



Nobody ever said raising children is easy.

When you work full-time, your marriage is falling apart, and you've got three young children, "easy" isn't even a term in your vocabulary. Add to that, you've just lost your father, causing you to ponder the role and impact of fatherhood in a child's life.

For Brian Tyree, it was pretty clear. "Somebody had to step up," he said.

Tyree is a bit of an anomaly. He is a single parent raising three sons. While being a single parent isn't unusual, being a single-parent *father* raising children is. According to a 2017 report from the U.S. Census Bureau, only about 1 in 10 single-parent households today are headed by fathers. (*Institute for Family Studies*)

For Tyree, STEP's Early Head Start and Head Start programs have been a life-line in this regard. All three of his children, John (5), Daniel (4), and Matthew (2) have finished or are currently enrolled in the programs.

"John was enrolled at 2 or 3 years old. The program really helped John out so we put Daniel in," Tyree said. "Next thing I know, here comes Matthew. They did well; they learned a lot. It seemed like a nice place for them to start out before beginning public school."

As the family moved through the most difficult times, the Head Start staff helped a lot, Tyree said. "They let me know what I could do to help the boys grow and learn. We read a lot of books and started attending church, and that really helped them a lot."

Wanting to do as much as possible for his children, Tyree got involved in parent meetings and began serving on the Policy Council, a parent-majority governing body with a slate of officers which functions like a board of directors. This year, he was elected chairman.

"I just wanted to know more about STEP and what was offered to the children. I wanted to know how my children were going to be taken care of during the day and what they were going to be learning. I wanted the best for them so anything I could do to help that situation, I was on it."

The Head Start program, the staff, and the leadership opportunity have helped Tyree personally, as well. He's learned patience, he said, and that he can trust that people and organizations "have your back." Currently employed full-time by a local manufacturer, he has higher aspirations, long-term.

"Right now I have to do what's necessary. I don't have time to go to school right now. I went to college for accounting but with all the developments I didn't have time to finish. Later I might be able to finish," he said. And then, who knows what may lie in the future.

"It's been a rough start but everything is going to be ok. The staff, I can still go to them for help. I noticed a big difference (in the boys). Before Head Start they (John, Daniel, and Matthew) were just wide open. They're learning how to be nice, respectful, and courteous. They have their moments, but I've learned to be patient with them. They learn daily, and me too. Together, we're hanging in there pretty good."

"I would encourage any man who has a child to be involved with that child."

Head Start/ Early Head Start Annual Report

Funded enrollment for both programs is 218 children and pregnant women and their families during the 2017-2018 program year.

STEP, Inc. is funded to provide services to 218 infants, toddlers, pregnant women, preschoolers and their families. Our enrollment includes 138 three- and four-year olds, and 80 are infants, toddlers, or expectant women.

Head Start Over the course of the 2017-18 program year, we served a cumulative total of 150 preschool aged children.

Early Head Start Over the course of the 2017-18 program year, we served a cumulative total of 93 infants, toddlers and pregnant women.

Both programs serve children and families through 21 classrooms and two home-based classes across Franklin County and Patrick County. These classrooms include nine Collaborative Classrooms through partnerships with Franklin County and Patrick County Schools' Virginia Preschool Initiative Program.



Vision - To provide exceptional services to young children and their families, empowering them to take control of their lives and reach their potential.

STEP Head Start is a proud member of the Virginia Head Start Association, the National Head Start Association, and the National Association for the Education of Young Children.



Policy Council 2017-18
Comprised of 51% parents

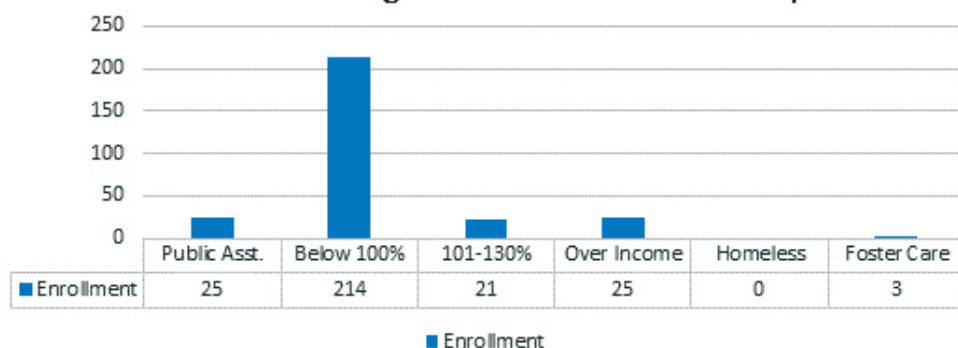
Chairperson – Casey Hurst (Franklin)
Secretary – Tabatha Fulton (Patrick)
Treasurer – Ashley Johnston (Patrick)

Community Representatives

Kristin Dulaney (Patrick Henry Community College)
Taylor Payne (Franklin County High School Early Childhood Education Program)
Angela Bowman (Physicians Assistant)
Lisa Swain (Franklin Center ELL Teacher)

Enrollment 2017-2018					
Program	Site	Classrooms	Home-Base	Enrollment	Age
Early Head Start	STEP/Rocky Mount	5	1	52	Pregnant To 3 years
	STEP/Stuart	2	1	28	
	Funded Enrollment			80	
	Cumulative Enrollment (includes turnover)			93	
Head Start	STEP/Rocky Mount	3		50	3 to 5 years
	Glade Hill Elementary	2		10	
	Lee Waid Elementary	2		7	
	Sontag Elementary	2		17	
	Rocky Mount Elementary	2		9	
	STEP/Stuart	1		16	
	Patrick Springs Elementary	1		16	
	Blue Ridge Elementary	1		13	
	Funded Enrollment			138	
	Cumulative Enrollment (includes turnover)			150	

2017-18 Eligible Enrollment Summary



Preparing Children for Kindergarten

- STEP collaborates with Patrick County and Franklin County public schools to assist with education, including transporting children to and from classroom locations.
- STEP partners with Franklin County and Patrick County Schools' Virginia Preschool Initiative Program to operate blended Pre-K/Head Start classrooms. Approximately 50 Head Start children were enrolled in these classrooms during the 2017-18 school year.

Qualified Staff:

- 100% of our Head Start Teachers hold associate, baccalaureate or masters degrees in Early Childhood Education or a related field.
- 100% of our Head Start Teacher Assistants have a Child Development Associate or other associate degree, or are enrolled in a program leading to state credential, associate or bachelor's degree.
- 100% of our Early Head Start Teachers hold an associate or bachelor's degree, or Infant and Toddler certification, or are enrolled in an infant/toddler credential program.

Head Start/Early Head Start 2017-18

Head Start/Early HeadStart Public & Private Funds

	Budget	Actual
Operating Grant Funds	\$2,002,372	\$2,011,197
Training/Technical Assistance	42,868	42,868
USDA	120,000	112,747
Donations	-0-	1,114
In-Kind Donations	<u>511,313</u>	<u>565,946</u>
Total Revenue	\$2,676,553	\$2,733,873

Budget Categories	Budget	Actual
Salaries	\$1,107,000	\$1,112,935
Fringe Benefits	262,894	273,931
Insurance	8,550	7,945
Consulting-Contractual	25,000	20,181
Nutrition/Kitchen Costs	163,029	180,997
Program/Classroom Supplies	21,926	20,288
All Other	222,601	195,510
In-Kind Donations	<u>511,313</u>	<u>565,946</u>
Total Direct	\$2,332,313	\$2,377,734
Indirect Charges	<u>354,240</u>	<u>356,139</u>
Total Expenses	\$2,676,553	\$2,733,873

99% Average HS/EHS monthly enrollment

88% Average HS/EHS daily attendance

Parental Involvement

Engagement

- 43% - Fathers involved in family assessment & goal setting
- 48% - Fathers involved in child development experiences
- 4% - Fathers serving in program governance
- 8% - Participation in parent education workshops
- Up to 10% - Parents receiving educational services (financial, health)

Health Information

Early Head Start/Head Start programs have helped achieve the following results.

Percentage of children/pregnant women with health insurance	100%
Percentage of children with a primary medical home	96%
Percentage of children with up to date immunizations	94%
Percentage of children with a primary dental home	140%



School Readiness

Percentage of 4 year olds who met/exceeded the School Readiness Goals

Domain	Fall 2017	Spring 2018
Approaches to Learning	68%	94%
Language Literacy	75%	91%
Physical Skills	63%	79%
Social Emotional	75%	83%
Math	67%	86%

**Home
Delivered Meals**

*13,140 meals to 72 clients
- Franklin Co.*

*8,022 meals to 37 clients
- Patrick Co.*

**Congregate
Meals**

*1,572 meals & programs
to 96 clients -
Franklin Co.*

*3,183 meals to 72 clients -
Patrick Co.*

Transportation

**30,979 miles driven
27 clients
2,061 trips**

Home Delivered Meals – Meals On Wheels

Partnering with the Southern Area Agency on Aging (SAAA) our staff and volunteers provide home delivered meals to about 125 homebound senior citizens in Franklin and Patrick counties. We deliver nutritious meals Monday through Friday and offer a friendly face, someone to chat with, and the comfort of knowing that someone cares! Pet food is also delivered to seniors who are served through our Meals on Wheels program so that they can afford to keep their companions with them in their homes.

Congregate Meals

STEP prepares nutritious lunches that are combined with interesting programs and activities. These meals are prepared in our own kitchens and served to about 150 seniors each week at various locations throughout our community.



Senior Transportation Provides Much Needed Service in Patrick County

Willie and James have gotten to know each other pretty well over the past few years. It would be hard not to, given the 255 miles and 4.5 hours they share in the front seats of the STEP Senior Services' van each week.

James Shelton is a driver for STEP Senior Services. He leaves STEP's office in Stuart and picks Willie up by 6 a.m. for the 45 minute ride to the dialysis center in Martinsville. After Willie's treatments are finished in 3 to 3.5 hours, he takes him back home.

Right now, Willie says, his life pretty much revolves around the three treatments a week he needs to filter the toxins, waste and excess fluid from his body.

But he'd be lost without James and the senior transportation service offered by STEP in Patrick County. As one of almost half a million Americans with kidney failure, Willie depends on blood-filtering dialysis to survive.

At 85, he's the care-taker of his two adult disabled sons: Lloyd (55) who was born with spinal meningitis and Tracy (53) who suffered a spinal injury in an accident a few years ago. Lloyd attends PARC Workshop (they run a van for clients) and gets around on crutches, but Tracy, who had surgery on his back last year "can't hardly get around anymore," said Willie.

A Korean War veteran, Willie retired from Bassett Furniture after "running the drawer line" for about 35 years.

He is a widower, and he and the boys get help around the house from his sister who lives nearby and a visiting nurse aide who tends to Tracy.

"We most of the time just stay around at home," Willie said. "But STEP's really been good about providing transportation."

(STEP offers rides to the grocery store and other shopping trips to qualifying seniors in Patrick County. See the side bar on this page.)

"... STEP's really been good about providing transportation."

About 468,000 Americans with kidney failure rely on blood-filtering dialysis treatments to survive.

- National Kidney Foundation

Senior Transportation

The Senior Transportation program is available in Patrick County and provides rides to and from doctors' appointments, shopping and to meet other critical needs to seniors on Monday through Friday. In addition, James and the other drivers bring more mobile participants to congregate meals and programs at the STEP sites located throughout Patrick County each week.

Life After Incarceration:

“You have to want it. It’s not going to be handed to you.”

This story is reprinted in part with permission from The Martinsville Bulletin.

Melvin Johnson credits his college education with allowing him to give back to a community he loves.

Johnson is the re-entry coordinator for Solutions that Empower People (STEP) Inc., and works to help people re-entering society from prison find their footing and become successful . . . *(Since this article was published in the Martinsville Bulletin, Johnson has been named Director of Supportive Services.)*

“Some of my tactics come from my private life, because I am a returning citizen,” Johnson said. “I understand what it takes because I’ve been through it.”

[Since being released from incarceration, Johnson pursued his education, receiving degrees from Patrick Henry Community College (PHCC) and New College Institute (NCI).]

NCI Executive Director Dr. Leanna Blevins described him as a leader amongst his peers and a stand-out student at NCI. NCI Board Chairman [and Virginia State Senator] Bill Stanley, who has known Johnson for several years, said that Johnson’s journey from an inmate to a man who helps other inmates return to society “personifies everything that is great about America.”



“‘Perseverance’ is a word I use almost as his middle name, and I cannot speak more highly about my friend Melvin Johnson in terms of what he has done, what he has overcome and what he is doing,” Stanley [said]. “This is what the land of second chances is all about.”

Returning to society after a stint in prison is a shock to the system, Johnson [said], and as STEP’s re-entry coordinator, he helps teach men and women in prison to create plans to lessen that shock.

“Doing this work, I have the opportunity to pay it forward and give back to our community by using skills that I have acquired [through education,]” Johnson said. “If it had not been for [that], this might not have been possible. I definitely couldn’t see myself standing here talking to you today.”

Recidivism – the tendency of a convicted criminal to re-offend – is a major challenge, Johnson said. Hundreds of people emerge from jails and prisons and return to our community each year, he said, and many of these people will inevitably return to incarceration. This doesn’t happen because they don’t want to be part of society, Johnson said; it happens because they feel trapped and lack the preparation to return to society.

“I can say, for the ones I do reach, they do appear to me as being sincere and wanting to change,” he said. “I’m able to share with them what kind of changes I’ve made and how it worked for me . . . to show that change is possible, but we have to want it. That’s what I probably pound the most: You have to want it. It’s not going to be handed to you.”

Re-Entry Services

Successful re-entry begins with early planning. STEP works with clients a year in advance of release.

Life After Incarceration, cont'd

There are financial challenges for returning citizens, Johnson said. For example, if someone has been convicted of a violent crime, they have a more difficult time receiving funds to attend college. But a big challenge, Johnson said, is the feeling many have that getting a good education and a good job is an insurmountable obstacle for an impoverished person who is re-entering society.

"These are the things that torture our people in these communities," he said. "They're looking at how hard it is to go to work, how hard the jobs are, how hard it is to obtain a good lifestyle, and I try to get their focus off of that. Of course, you're going to see it, but don't focus on that."

"Focus on the big picture."

Re-Entry Services

We assist individuals returning from incarceration and their families to make a successful transition back to the community. Ideally, a year in advance of release we create a client-specific plan for success which addresses immediate critical needs and then follows-up with case management. The plan deals with issues such as housing, clothing and food; referrals to our community partners (support groups, substance abuse and mental health needs); life skills, healthy family dynamics and conflict resolution counseling; personal finance education and support; transportation assistance, and; restoration of rights. *STEP offers these services in Franklin, Patrick and Henry counties, as well as the City of Martinsville.*

Virginia Housing Solutions Program (VHSP) Homeless Prevention

We provide financial assistance and on-going case management services for low-income families and individuals who are at risk of losing their home.

Rapid Re-Housing

Our "rapid re-housing" program provides emergency financial assistance to homeless veterans, individuals and families. *STEP provides rapid rehousing and homeless prevention in Franklin, Patrick, Henry, and Pittsylvania counties and the cities of Martinsville and Danville.*

Housing Services

- 113 households
- 25 individuals
- 103 children

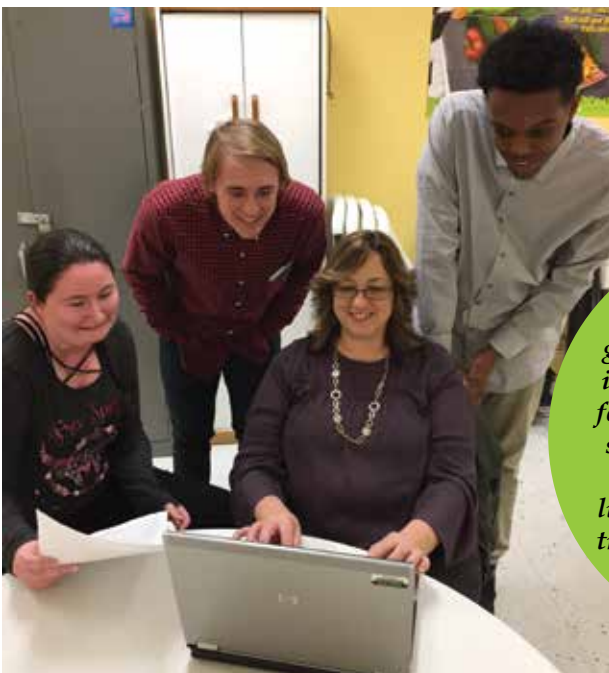
Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA)

STEP provides free tax preparation services for families and individuals earning less than \$54,000 annually. Trained and certified volunteers prepare most standard IRS documents (i.e. 1040, 1040EZ and 1040A) and submit all returns electronically. Volunteers help clients take advantage of the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC), Child Tax Credit, and more.

STEP's VITA program generates more than \$1M in refunds and tax credits for our low income clients so that they can use that money for critical basic living needs (i.e. groceries, transportation, child care, and utility costs.)

VITA Volunteer Income Tax Assistance

- 507 returns e-filed
- Average adjusted gross income: \$19,664
- 33 volunteers
- 413 volunteer hours
- Average EITC refund: \$552



A Bridge Over Troubled Waters

For 15 days Deborah and Mickey Payne called everyone they could think of looking for help. The day before that two-week stretch began, the remnants of Hurricane Michael roared through Franklin County, and they watched helplessly as it swept away their only way to and from their home.

The Paynes live off the beaten track in a mobile home atop a hill. Below, Barr Creek runs through the property and they cross it every day coming and going to and from home and outings. They have owned and loved this picturesque setting for about 15 years. But on Thursday, October 11, that bubbling, gurgling creek turned into a frothing, snarling, rushing river that took out the bridge, leaving them stranded at the top of the hill.

Both Deborah and Mickey are retired, over 60 years old, and disabled. The prospect of being stuck wasn't pretty, but the fear of isolation in case of medical emergency was worse.

"We waited a few days (before reaching out for help) and then found out that FEMA doesn't do roads," Deborah said. Nor do most of the other local government service and nonprofit organizations, they soon discovered. They even called cement companies to see if they could have any extra cement left over from other jobs.

Everything was a dead-end.

Without the financial resources to pay for the bridge to be rebuilt, things were looking pretty bleak. But Mickey had a brainstorm and arranged through his auto insurance for a roll-back tow truck to lower its bed over the washed out bridge, reaching just far enough so he could drive his pickup truck onto the bed to be hauled to the other side.

"But how are we going to get to the other side to the truck?" Deborah asked.

"We'll walk across this board," he said as he laid a 2x6 board across the gash. That got them out of the house, but imagine carrying bags of groceries or other necessities as you balance on a 2x6 over a gully filled with riprap, mud, and washed out trees.

Things were feeling pretty desperate. Mickey swore that if help didn't come soon he'd start cutting down the remaining standing trees to fill in the gorge until they could get out.

Finally, someone referred the Paynes to United Way, which then reached out to STEP to see if the Housing and Weatherization department might be of some assistance.



Photos: **Top**-Barr Creek becomes a rushing river during Hurricane Michael's passage through Franklin County. **Top right**-A 2x6 "tightrope" gets the Paynes from one side to the other. **Middle right**-Deborah points out the debris left by the rushing water. **Bottom right**-(L-R) Marc Crouse and Leon Hodges (STEP), Deborah and Mickey Payne, and (in the trackhoe) Daniel Worley breathe a sign of relief after the bridge has been rebuilt.

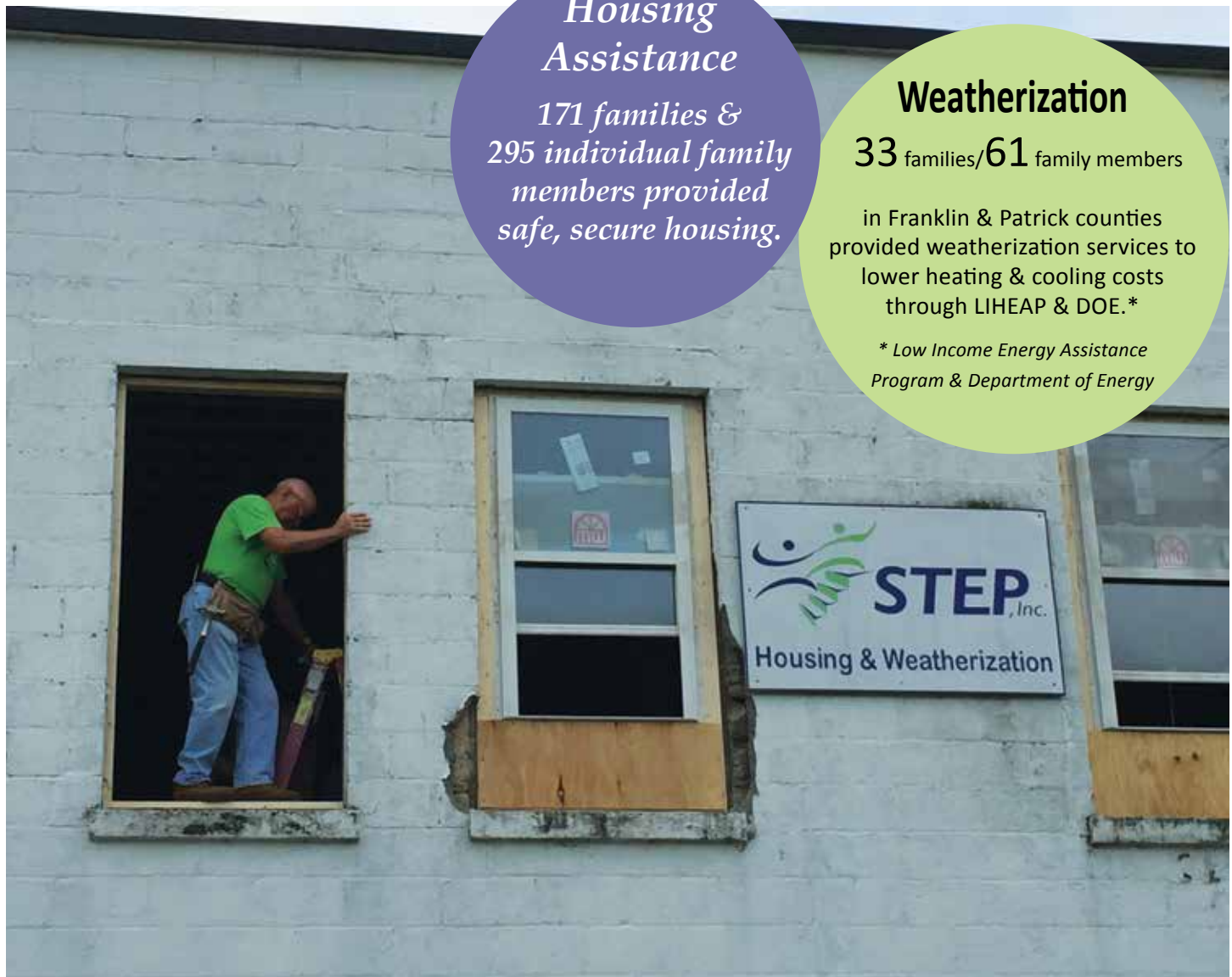
Troubled Waters, cont'd

In the meantime, an estimate of almost \$4,000 was secured for cleaning out the wash and rebuilding the bridge. This cost was so low because of the generosity of local excavating company, Blade Pro. Ordinarily such a job would result in a much higher price tag.

“One of the things that we pride ourselves on is the ability to locate and bring together resources to provide help as a collaborative group when offering that help is beyond the scope of a single organization,” said STEP Executive Director Marc Crouse.

Through his efforts and those of United Way’s Pam Chitwood, Redwood United Methodist Church, Faith Network, Helping Hands, Southern Area Agency on Aging, Disability Rights and Resource Center, and the Salvation Army all committed to pitch in to cover the cost along with STEP, United Way, and Blade Pro.

What was once a rough road is now a smooth ride, according to Deborah. In fact, the bridge has held up beautifully during recent heavy rains, she said.



Housing Assistance
171 families & 295 individual family members provided safe, secure housing.

Weatherization
33 families/**61** family members
in Franklin & Patrick counties provided weatherization services to lower heating & cooling costs through LIHEAP & DOE.*
* Low Income Energy Assistance Program & Department of Energy

STEP, Inc.
Housing & Weatherization

Helping others is a two-way street. Here, a volunteer from the United Methodist Church and Henry Fork Service Center helps install new windows on STEP’s storage building in Rocky Mount.

Lighting the Way to A Brighter Future

The 2017-18 school year was one of growth for STEP's Youth Services program. New partnerships were formed, services were expanded and the support base for LIFES Academy grew significantly.

LIFES (Lessons in Fundamental and Essential Skills) Academy provides an engaging alternative setting for students with special needs. These students have been referred to LIFES by their home schools, and receive individualized attention using student-oriented strategies for success. The ultimate goal of the program is for students to develop the skills needed to successfully transition back to their home schools and complete their middle- and high school experiences. Because of LIFES' convenient central location in Rocky Mount, students are able to make the transition in a manner best suited to their needs – either in partial days or full days - without the stresses caused by lengthy transportation to and from alternative schools outside Franklin County.

This past year, LIFES expanded its program to include middle school in addition to high school classes. Licensed to offer elementary education as well, a long-term goal is for additional classes to accommodate younger students in need of the services.

Generous donors have had a huge impact on LIFES students this year. Two such donors, who include private citizens and Ferrum College, enabled LIFES Academy to enhance its technology center with upgraded computers and to expand the curriculum with APEX Learning. This program lets students complete academic credit using a personalized approach so they can graduate on time. It is also another tool to review for SOLs and the WISE Financial Literacy Certification, required for graduation.

"We are there during a crucial stage in each student's life . . ."

Another donor was on a mission to make sure every kid in Franklin County had a winter coat to keep them warm. Through his efforts, every student at LIFES received a new coat and each one wore it with pride the rest of the winter.

Others with philanthropic leanings have opened their hearts as well as their wallets and have had an impact outside of the classroom on the students. Because of these individuals, LIFES was able to cook and serve several special meals throughout the school year, including themed lunches at Halloween, Thanksgiving, Christmas, and an end-of-year cook-out. Breakfast was also provided during the other months and each morning during SOLs. These students didn't have to worry about being hungry during the school day. Students were even able to take extra food home to share with their families.

One of the most emotionally fulfilling experiences occurred just before Christmas break. The STEP Board of Directors surprised the students with a Secret Santa celebration, giving gifts based on ideas collected by faculty and staff throughout the year. Each student went home for the holidays with gifts (for themselves and even family members) they may not have received otherwise.

Through these gracious donors, the students are truly surrounded by a strong village to help them be successful in life.



Lighting the Way, cont'd

The students have done a great job of modeling the “pay it forward” concept. With all the kindness that has been shown to them, they have taken it upon themselves to help others. They have been reading to the younger students in the Head Start and Early Head Start programs and acting like big brothers to the younger students. These activities have been so successful in Rocky Mount that STEP’s Patrick County site chose to participate. The students loaded up the bus during Read Across America (Dr. Seuss) Week and headed to Stuart to read to the children. The nice surprise was that not only did the students read to the kids, they also helped them design and create a “Cat in the Hat” hat to wear and take home. LIFES students are more than willing to help out others when needed and they take great pride in their work.

What is the next adventure for LIFES Academy?

That is the big question as we determine how to help our students become more successful after high school. Our overarching goal in Youth Services is to provide pathways for students to achieve success. Some students may choose to continue their education by enrolling in college. Project Discovery helps these students explore the possibilities (see the sidebar below). Other students will enter the workforce directly after completing high school. A long-term goal is to create a vocational center for the students to learn skills that will prepare them to provide a comfortable living for themselves and their families.

A vocational center could be aligned with local needs in the community and fill gaps in the supply of qualified employees. Whether it is with local manufacturing companies or local trade companies that specialize in construction, electrical, HVAC, or plumbing, we want our students to be prepared.

Following our motto, “Lighting the Way to a Brighter Future,” we are - much of the time - the last light of hope our students may have. We are there during a crucial stage of each student’s life and we hope to be that light to show them that success is possible.

We could not do this without generous donors who help add resources to the program or without the great partnerships with local agencies that add extra support for the students to be successful.

For all of this to be successful, it truly takes a village.



LIFES Academy 15 students*

met these

Graduation Requirements:

- * SOLs (Standards of Learning)
- * LVCs (Local Verified Credits)
- * WISE Financial Literacy Certification

** duplicated headcount*

3 students

transitioned back to their home school either full- or part-time.

Project Discovery

- 11 students enrolled for first generation college readiness

Project Discovery

STEP provides tutoring, educational support, SAT and college application preparation, college visits, and other related assistance to low-income middle and high school students who want to go to college (and are often the first in their family to attend college). Through Project Discovery we help students enrolled at Franklin County High School, Benjamin Franklin Middle School and, of course, LIFES Academy.

**STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES
AND CHANGES IN NET ASSETS**

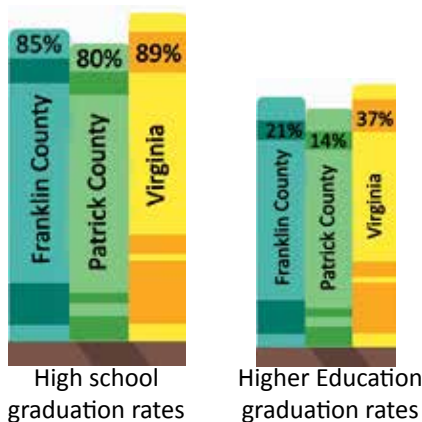
for the year ended June 30, 2018

	<u>Unrestricted</u>	<u>Temporarily Restricted</u>	<u>Total</u>
SUPPORT & REVENUE			
Grants	\$ 3,661,458	\$ 4,877	\$ 3,666,335
Contributions	91,369	--	91,369
Program service fees	13,822	--	13,822
Realized & unrealized gain/ (loss) on investments	594	--	594
Interest income	1,017	--	1,017
In-kind donations	687,612	--	687,612
Miscellaneous income	172,541	--	172,541
Net assets released from restrictions	8,456	(8,456)	--
Total Support & Revenue	<u>\$ 4,636,869</u>	<u>\$ (3,579)</u>	<u>\$ 4,633,290</u>
EXPENDITURES			
PROGRAM SERVICES			
Head Start	\$ 2,733,873	--	\$ 2,733,873
Youth Services	287,433	--	287,433
Housing	513,620	--	513,620
Senior Services	400,415	--	400,415
Homeless Prevention	269,005	--	269,005
CSBG	217,130	--	217,130
Financial Services	19,100	--	19,100
Total Program Services	<u>\$ 4,440,576</u>	<u>--</u>	<u>\$ 4,440,576</u>
SUPPORT SERVICES			
Management & General	133,725	--	133,725
Total Support Services	<u>\$ 133,725</u>	<u>--</u>	<u>\$ 133,725</u>
Total Expenses	<u>\$ 4,574,301</u>	<u>--</u>	<u>\$ 4,574,301</u>
Change in Net Assets	62,568	(3,579)	58,989
Net Assets, Beginning of Year	<u>258,719</u>	<u>8,456</u>	<u>267,175</u>
NET ASSETS, END OF YEAR	<u>\$ 321,287</u>	<u>\$ 4,877</u>	<u>\$ 326,164</u>

Demographics

In Franklin and Patrick counties, 3,300 children under the age of 4 live in poverty.
- 2016, Virginia Dept. of Health

Educational Attainment



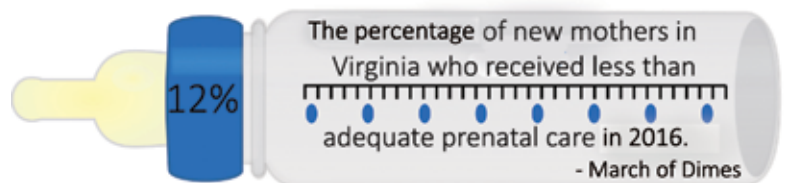
The high school graduation rates in Franklin and Patrick counties are 85% and 80% respectively. That's 4-9% lower than the state average. Students from Franklin and Patrick counties graduate from higher education at roughly half the rate of students throughout the state.

- 2016, US Census Bureau



Franklin County - 10% Virginia - 8% Patrick County - 17%
- 2016, Virginia Dept. of Health

Families in Poverty



Prenatal Care

In Franklin and Patrick counties, 369 new mothers received late or no prenatal care.

- 2015, US Census Bureau

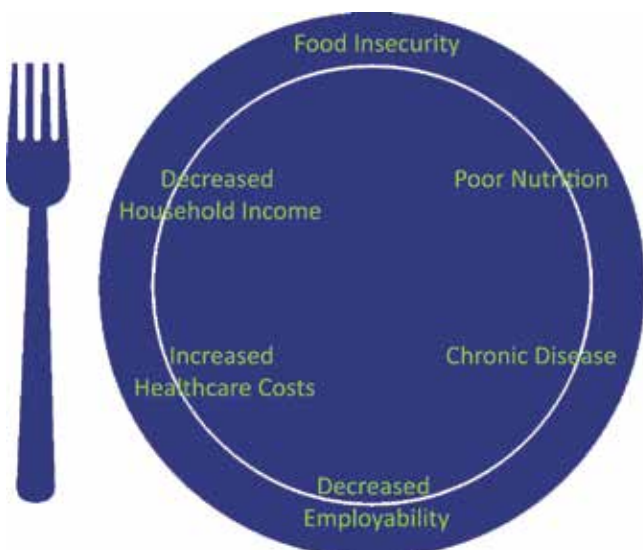
Food Insecurity

Food insecurity is a cyclical problem that is especially detrimental to children. It affects physical and mental health, academic achievement, and economic prosperity.

In Franklin and Patrick counties:

- 7,840 people are food insecure.
- Of those people, 2,630 are children.
- The annual food budget shortfall is \$4 million, equal to about \$1,300 per family.
- The average meal cost is \$2.92.

- 2016, Feeding America



Honor Roll of Donors

*We ask forgiveness of
anyone inadvertently left
off our list. Please call
(540) 483-5142, ext. 3003
with any corrections.*

CORPORATE & ORGANIZATIONAL

Amazon Smile
Blue Ridge Dental Group
Carl & Eloise Phland Family
Foundation
Christ Community Church
Ferrum College
Harvest Foundation
Kroger
MidAtlantic Broadband Communica-
tions Corporation
Mount Regis Center
Quercus Fund of Schwab Charitable
Resurrection Catholic Church
(Joyous Junque)
Stanley Family Foundation
SunTrust Foundation
United Way of Franklin County
United Way of Martinsville/Henry
County
WalMart

INDIVIDUALS

Emily & Billy Boone
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Richard & Carol Crouse
Todd & Melinda Crouse
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Ricky Davidson
Barbara Dudley
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Harold Hill
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Janet Trussel

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Jeff & Lori Webber
Jennie West
Bob & Pat Wetheral
Dale & Pennie Whitworth
Debra Worley
Adam & Pam Worley

INVEST IN YOUR COMMUNITY

STEP relies on donations and sponsor-
ships from our community so that we
can help our friends and neighbors in
need. You can play a role in helping
us continue this good and necessary
work. You can make a difference!

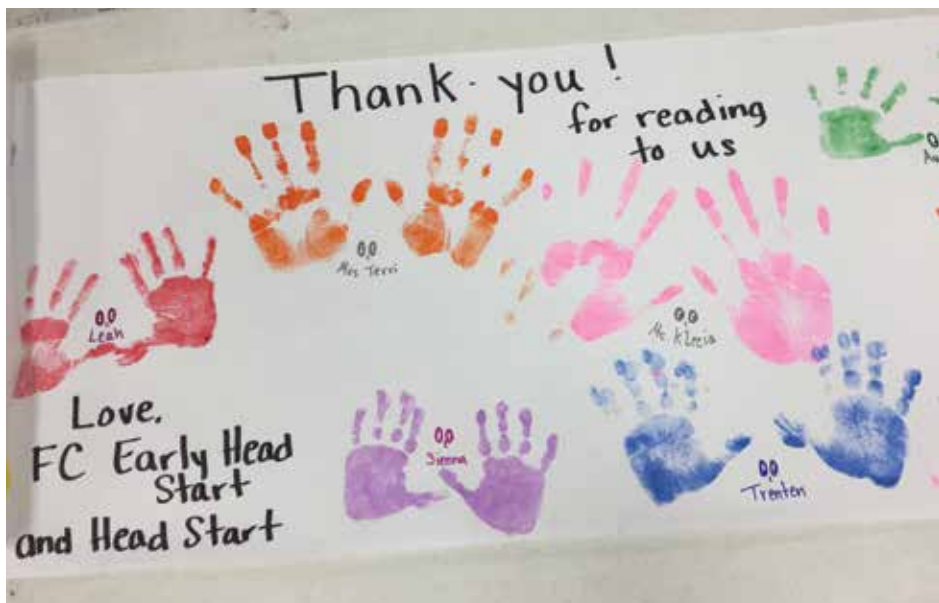
Ways to Give*

- A donation by cash or check
- A donation of appreciated stock or property
- Sponsorship of a program or special event
- A gift in memory of a loved one
- Planned giving with a bequest, charitable trust, or by naming STEP as a beneficiary of a life insurance policy

*As a 501(c)(3) non-profit
organization, contributions to
STEP are tax-deductable.*

*** Neighborhood Assistance Program (NAP)** state tax credits are available to individuals, trusts, and businesses making eligible donations to STEP, Inc., an approved NAP nonprofit organization. In return for their contributions, donors may receive combined tax credits equal to 90 percent of the donation that may be applied against their state and federal income tax liability.

For more information, please contact
Marc Crouse, Executive Director,
(540) 483-5142,
marc.crouse@stepincva.com



Board of Directors



All community action agencies (CAA) are governed by a tri-partite Board of Directors, meaning 1/3 must consist of elected public officials or their representatives, not less than 1/3 of members must be chosen democratically and represent low-income individuals/families, and the remaining 1/3 of members must represent the community (business, labor, industry, religious, law enforcement, education, other major groups, and interests).

The STEP board of directors works very closely with the Head Start Policy Council, fulfilling the Head Start Performance Standards requiring that certain governance functions be shared jointly by the STEP Board of Directors and the Head Start Policy Council.

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Market Manager, Member One Federal Credit Union

Michael Ferguson, Vice President

Food Services Director, Ferrum College

Greg Winge, Secretary/Treasurer

C.S.A. Program Director, FC Government Center

Linda Aron

Mortgage Originator, First Citizens Bank

Mary Bonds

Manufacturing Professional, Retired

Antron Brown

US Army Retired

Cooper Brown

Attorney

Pam Cobler

Disability Rights & Resource Center

David Cuff

Chapter 60 Commander, Disabled American Veterans

Pat Cundiff

Interior Designer/Operator P.A.C. Interiors

Deanna Goad

STEP Head Start Policy Council Chair, Homemaker

Debbie Hamrick

Adult & Career Education Coordinator, Franklin County
Public Schools

Crystal Harris

Patrick County Board of Supervisors

Betty Kingery

Re/Max Mountain to Lake Realty Owner

Peggy Morrison

Urban Planner, Retired

Patti O'Neal

Day Care Provider, Retired

Mark Newbill

Rocky Mount Town Council

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Director, FC Family Resource Center

Leon Puckett

Stuart Town Council

Warren Rodgers, Jr.

Executive Director, Southside Survivor Response Center

Joel Rodriguez


TNT Auto Body Repair & Service Center

Tamika Royal

Outreach, FC Family Resource Center

Christy Stocks

Director, Student Resource Center, PHCC



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Rocky Mount, VA 24151