



STEPP PROGRAM

Fall 2014

SUPPORTING TRANSITION AND EDUCATION THROUGH PLANNING AND PARTNERSHIP



It seems like with each passing semester things get more and more exciting in the STEPP Cove in Joyner Library. We are once again enjoying a fantastic new group of first-year students, and Emily Johnson has started connecting with a larger-than-usual cohort of 13 students who will be joining us in 2015. As you enjoy this fall season and prepare for the upcoming holidays, take a moment to check out these updates from the STEPP Program.

Save the Date – Naming Ceremony

March 26, 2015 will be an exciting day for the STEPP Program, and we invite you to save the date for a special event. In honor of the generous early leadership funding provided by Walter and Marie Williams, we will be re-naming the program as the Walter and Marie Williams STEPP Program. Please join us to celebrate our new name and the unveiling of a display wall that will honor our supporters and mark the beginning of a fundraising campaign to complete the STEPP endowment.

Along with an invitation to the March event will come a brochure that describes the new support opportunity. If you have not done so already, please consider becoming a member of the STEPP Program family of donors and joining those whose names will appear on the donor recognition wall at its unveiling. We'd be so appreciative if you will also share this opportunity with others you feel might be interested in supporting our program. We hope you will be able to join us for this chance to honor Mr. and Mrs. Williams as well as connect with students, staff, and alumni from the STEPP Program.

Project STEPP Highlights

STEPP Program Annual Tailgate

The 2nd annual STEPP Program Tailgate was held October 4 prior to the Homecoming football game against Southern Methodist University. Nearly 40 current students, STEPP alumni and their families dropped by for breakfast fare and beverages. The forecast for the day was tentative, but the clouds gave way to sunshine and an ECU win! If you ever find yourself in Greenville during one of the dates in the box to the right, please come by



Matt Lahey (2012 Cohort)
Photo by Andrew Smith (2009 Cohort)

to visit. Each month we will hold community building activities that will give students, staff, and friends of the program a chance to connect and enjoy some time together. You can also follow us on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram for ongoing photos and updates.



Emily Bosak (2012 Cohort) and her parents, Meg and Jim
Photo by Andrew Smith (2009 Cohort)

William R. Kenan, Jr. Charitable Trust

The William R. Kenan, Jr. Charitable Trust recently announced a commitment to supporting the STEPP Program with a generous grant that will enable us to continue and expand our collaboration with K12 schools. Specifically a two-year \$167,135 grant will enable the STEPP Program to extend our work with Eye to Eye for two more years, expand the transition curriculum we

are developing by the equivalent of two new modules, and develop a set of family resources to accompany all of the curriculum materials. We are thrilled to have the opportunity to take these next steps with K12 partnerships and incredibly thankful to the William R. Kenan, Jr. Charitable Trust for their support.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

November 19, Soup Day

December 10 (Reading Day), Cookies & Cocoa in the Cove

January 29, Cupcake Bar celebrating all birthdays

February 13, Valentine's Day Celebration

March 17, St. Patrick's Day

April 24 (evening), Eye-to-Eye Art Show

May 1, End-of-Year Celebration

FOLLOW OUR MEDIA SITES ON:



Eye to Eye

Led by Emily Bosak and Becca O'Hea, a team of ECU mentors will continue to provide encouragement and serve as positive role models for students in the Building Hope Community Life Center after-school program (<http://www.bhclc.org>) through the ECU chapter of Eye to Eye. The Eye to



Becca and Emily

Eye website explains, "Using our arts-based curriculum, mentors help their mentees understand their unique way of learning and thinking, building self-esteem and skills they need to become self-advocates." (<http://eyetoeyenational.org>) In an exciting new project, Spencer Jones will be developing a video-documentary to tell the story of the mentor and mentee experiences in Eye to Eye this year. Spencer is a prospective studio arts major from the 2012 STEPP Program cohort.



Spencer

College STAR Update

Last summer we received the wonderful news from the Oak Foundation that our application to continue the College STAR initiative for three additional years was approved. Over the past three years College STAR has enabled participating campuses to explore and implement student supports and instructional practices designed to help our universities become welcoming places for students with learning differences. Originally focused on East Carolina University, the University of North Carolina at Greensboro, and Appalachian State University, during this next phase our goal will be to expand our network of campuses. Fayetteville State University has already secured funding for this work and begun designing the College STAR model for their campus. We are incredibly thankful for the continuing support of the Oak Foundation and their visionary focus on helping raise awareness of the potential of students with learning differences along the continuum of educational settings.

Student Spotlight – Andrew Smith

If you visit the STEPP Program Cove you will see some of his early work brightening the walls of the student study area. **Andrew Smith** is studying in the School of Art and Design to earn an undergraduate degree with a concentration in photography. Now, with graduation in sight, he hopes to soon build his photography skills into a career. Originally from Charlotte, NC, Andrew first discovered his interest in photography at a very young age. Through his work at ECU, he has been able to gain experience with a variety of artistic skills and is thinking about specializing in action photography, especially associated with sports events.

Andrew has been sharing his talents with the STEPP Program this year through his work photographing community building events. Come to any community building event (see schedule in this newsletter), and you will have the opportunity to see him at work. His photos from the College STAR Shared Learning Conference drew compliments from a staff

member in ECU News Services and were featured on the ECU website along with a summary of events from the conference. <http://www.ecu.edu/news/sharedlearning.cfm>.

Andrew's Artist Statement reads:

Photography is my language that gives meaning to words I cannot define. Photography gives witness to the most humble of beings and reveals the truth of life. It was early one morning when I first stumbled upon it. I was 8. I was at a yard sale our next-door neighbors were having and I reached over and picking it up, an old worn out Canon film camera, and from that moment on I was hooked.

AlumNotes

If you are an alumnus of ECU and the STEPP Program, we'd love to hear from you. Check out some updates from a few of our grads. **Noah Poe** is a Geospatial Engineer with the United States Army. Noah, Mary, and their son David currently live in Anchorage, Alaska while Noah is stationed at Fort Richardson. **Chelsea Guild** recently began a new role with UBS Investment Bank, accompanied by a move to Chapel Hill, NC. **Lee Olson** began a



position this summer with the Guardian ad Litem program in Wilmington, NC. She is using her talents and training to advocate for the well-being of children whose families are involved in the NC court system. **Logan Jones** has started her first teaching position with Randolph County Schools. Her work with students in the special education program there will make a very positive difference for those students. Since **Tyler Clark's** graduation from ECU he has been employed at St. Peter's School as an assistant in Physical Education/Athletics. He married Laura Beth White in August of 2013, and they are expecting their first child in February. **Andy Gares** is enjoying working in the hospitality field in restaurants in beautiful Nantucket, MA. He plans to soon begin studying to become a Sommelier. **Hannah Jessup** brought her talents right back to ECU and is currently working with the ECU division of Student Affairs. **Maryellen Cain** is living in Cary, NC and teaching 4th grade AIG, English, Language Arts, and Social Studies in Lee County Schools. She is enjoying her new role at J. Glenn Edwards Elementary School and no doubt making a positive difference for the students in her care. In June, **Peter Larson** moved to Windermere, FL. He is working as an outside golf operations attendant for Disney's Lake Buena Vista Golf Course; one of Disney's four golf courses operated by Arnold Palmer Golf Management. He is enjoying his new role, and especially likes central Florida living. We continue to wish all of our graduates the very best as they enter each new phase of their lives.

As the alumni network of the STEPP family grows, we hope to continue to hear from each of you and to stay connected. Graduates, be in touch with any of us in the STEPP office with ideas and suggestions for ways we can remain in touch.

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