SUPPORTING TRANSITION AND EDUCATION THROUGH PLANNING AND PARTNERSHIP

Here in the Walter and Marie Williams STEPP Program and at ECU, we just wrapped up an exciting and productive academic year. In the summer months ahead we will be involved in the rewarding work of interviewing and selecting the 2016 cohort, developing transition resources for families and middle school students, and continuing to work with the College STAR initiative. But first, we want to share with you some of the highlights of our spring semester.

Our new name is official

It’s official! On March 26, 2015 we started using our new name - the Walter and Marie Williams STEPP Program. This gave us the opportunity to make two important changes. We dropped the “Project” part of our former name, something we felt now sounded too temporary or experimental. More importantly, we celebrated the generosity of Walter and Marie Williams by naming the program in honor of their support, which began the program in 2006. They provided a leadership gift when we offered only a good idea and a passion for students with learning disabilities, and they continue to be supporters of our work and our students. Thank you, Walter and Marie, for your early commitment to our vision and to an outstanding group of Pirates.

STEPP Program Highlights

Community Building

Each month the STEPP Program selects a day for community building, a time when we pause to relax for a few hours and enjoy one another. We encourage our upperclassmen to join us to connect with first-year students and staff, and it’s always a great excuse to have fun food in the STEPP Cove. We thought you might like to see a few pictures from community building days this year and enjoy the lighter side of STEPP in this newsletter.

Eye to Eye Art Show

On April 24th elementary and middle school students from Building Hope Community Life Center and the Oakwood School, along with their mentors from East Carolina University, gave their families, teachers, and ECU staff members a glimpse into the Eye to Eye Art Room. The ECU chapter of Eye to Eye hosted its fourth annual Art Show, giving students the opportunity

continued on back page…

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>September 26, 2015</td>
<td>Family Weekend Tailgate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 29, 2015</td>
<td>Halloween Treats and Photo Booth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 18, 2015</td>
<td>Soup Day</td>
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<td>December 8, 2015</td>
<td>Cookies &amp; Cocoa in the Cove</td>
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<td>February 10, 2016</td>
<td>All Birthdays/Valentine’s Day Celebration</td>
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<td>April 6, 2016</td>
<td>Picnic STEPP-style</td>
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<tr>
<td>April 22, 2016 (evening)</td>
<td>Eye-to-Eye Art Show</td>
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<tr>
<td>April 29, 2016</td>
<td>End-of-Year Celebration</td>
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Now an ECU alumnus, Tyler lives with his family in Greenville, NC and works in the Physical Education Department at St. Peter’s Catholic School. He married Laura Beth White in August of 2013, and they welcomed their first child, a son, to their family in February. Tyler puts what he learned in his ECU Recreation and Park Management major to good use through his service on the Greenville Recreation and Parks Board of Commissions as well as volunteering with St. Peter’s baseball team. He enjoys being outside as much as possible, and still regularly cheers on the Pirates during ECU sporting events. He and Laura Beth recently joined St. James United Methodist Church and are active members of the community. When we asked Tyler to reflect on his experience with STEPP, he shared that, “The STEPP Program is a great opportunity and a great program. It helped me with school and gave me a place and time to get support and succeed. I would not have been able to do it [graduate] without the STEPP Program.” Tyler now finds opportunities to be an ambassador for the mission of STEPP. His work in elementary school athletics enables him to be there for students who experience academic challenges and offer encouragement. Thanks so much, Tyler, for the positive difference you are making!

Thank you to our supporters!

The Walter and Marie Williams STEPP Program could not exist without the generous support of those who are helping us meet our $4 million endowment goal. Once complete, this endowment will sustain the program and enable us to continue serving students long term. Moreover, it will ensure that we can do so without charging students and their families extra fees for the supports provided through STEPP, which is a critical feature of the program. We still have much work to do to fulfill the endowment, but we are extremely thankful for those who have contributed thus far. In this spring newsletter, we would like to take a moment to extend a very sincere thank you to those who have financially supported the STEPP Program. You are making such a direct and positive difference for students through your generosity!

Our thanks to:


Contributors of $25,000+: Ann & Edwin Clark, Edwin & Betsy Gray.

Contributors of $5,000+: Kathie & Pete Guild, Rebecca Flowers, Peter J. Frenkel Foundation, Tim Morris, Garry & Nancy Pegram.


We also found a new way of saying thank you to our supporters this year, with a recognition display outside the STEPP Cove that acknowledges those who have contributed at the $1,000 level or higher. If you are ever on campus stop by and check it out. Thank you again for your amazing support for our program and a very deserving group of students.

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