



# STEPP PROGRAM

Winter 2018 Newsletter SUPPORTING TRANSITION AND EDUCATION THROUGH PLANNING AND PARTNERSHIP

Wow, the Fall 2017 semester is already behind us! The past few months have simply flown by, but they have been full of exciting opportunities, good work, and causes for celebration. In August, we welcomed our 2017 cohort to campus. Over the past few months, we've been pleased to see how quickly they have started to become experienced Pirates. Meanwhile, our most experienced Pirates have been preparing for graduation. Check out the features here for some of our other highlights this fall. From all of us in STEPP, have a wonderful 2018!

## STEPP Program Highlights

### College STAR Student Support Summit

On October 25 – 27, College STAR hosted a Student Support Summit at the North Carolina Botanical Gardens in Chapel Hill. This exciting event brought together almost 50 participants from 15 student support programs across the nation - a first for many in attendance. All the participating campuses have programs that support college students with various learning and attention differences. Our goal: to get to know about each program and to explore possibilities for collaboration around ways to best serve students. One outcome from that summit that is already in the works is a web page that details information about college support programs for students with learning differences that we hope will be a useful quick-reference guide for high school students. Keep an eye on the College STAR website ([collegestar.org](http://collegestar.org)) for this resource to be posted by the end of the academic year. This is just one example of what we hope will become a long-term network for collaboration that will yield a wide variety of outcomes that make a positive difference for students.

### A Fond Farewell to One of Our Crew Members

*By West Williams – 2015 cohort*

At the end of this year, Mrs. Tritt, our amazing STEPP Program Coordinator will be retiring! Mrs. Tritt has been a major part of the STEPP core team, and an incredibly valuable part of the STEPP Program for the last five years. To most students, she is the go-to person for any advice about classes and professors, and she is a rock for many during each registration season. Beyond advising, she wears so many hats! For example, she is the person you can always count on to make certain that the Cove is ship-shape for everyone. It is not uncommon to even see her vacuuming a study room, moving items to the recycling bin, or holding us accountable for cleaning up any mess we make! She makes sure students have the supplies they need and that the Cove is available for STEPP students during office hours. She plans community building events to bring us together, and keeps up with all of us throughout the year. She's tough on us when she needs to be – because she sees the best in us. Mrs. Tritt cares deeply for the students in STEPP, and will do



Barbara Tritt



The Family Weekend Tailgate provided an opportunity for current students and alumni to connect. Thanks to all who made it a great event! Pictured from left, Natalie and Hugh Allen, parents of Andrew (2017) and Emily Bosak (2012) with her parents and Meg and Jim.

anything she can to help us succeed.

Mrs. Tritt returned to STEPP in a part-time role in January for the spring semester. We will certainly miss Mrs. Tritt after May, but we know she will stay in close contact with the program. We love you Mrs. Tritt, and wish you all the best on your upcoming adventures.

### Thank You to Our Supporters in 2017!

The Walter and Marie Williams STEPP Program could not exist without the generous support of those who are helping us to meet our \$4 million endowment goal. Once complete, this endowment will sustain the program and enable us to continue to serve students long term, explore possibilities for growth, and expand our reach. We still have much work to do to fulfill the endowment, but we are extremely thankful for those who have contributed thus far. We would like to take a moment to extend a very sincere thank you to those who provided financial support to the program last year. You are making a direct and positive difference for students through your generosity. The Harold H. Bate Foundation, the Peter J. Frenkel Foundation, the Oak Foundation, Henry Bostic, the Carey Family,

#### CALENDAR OF EVENTS

**February 14, 2018 -**  
All Birthdays Cupcake Bar & Be Our Valentine

**March 19, 2018 -**  
Moustache Monday

**April 25, 2018 -**  
Kayak Float & Picnic

**April 27, 2018 -**  
End-of-Year Celebration

FOLLOW OUR MEDIA SITES ON:



Carolyn Clark, Richard and Utchie Decker, Courtney Dickens, Alan & Anne Fleischer, Gary Goodrum, Shirley Goodrum, Pete and Kathie Guild, Sandra Hansley, Stuart and Laura Hayman, Dr. Gregory and Carin Lapicki, Stephen Marshall and Sarah Raymond, Benjamin Robinson, Andrew Scappi, Dixie Smith, Malcolm and Susan Smith, Herbert Wayne, Ann and Terry Windham.

## STUDENT SPOTLIGHT – Sebastian Turner



Sebastian Turner

During July and August, Sebastian Turner (2014 Cohort) had the extraordinary opportunity to intern for the Wildlife Justice Commission (WJC). The WJC is an international not-for-profit organization incorporated under Dutch law and operating globally, but based in The Hague, Netherlands.

Their mission is to “help disrupt transnational, organized wildlife crime by exposing criminal networks and the corruption that enables them to flourish by convincing - or if need be pressuring - governments to enforce the law” (<https://wildlifejustice.org>).

For the first five weeks of his internship, Sebastian was based at the organization’s headquarters learning about their operations structure and how to use the internet for research into the illicit global industry of wildlife crime. During his last week of the internship, Sebastian spent time with an investigative team made up of former law enforcement and military from Australia and Viet Nam, who have extensive experience in international wildlife investigation, surveillance, undercover and intelligence analysis. Because the trade route from Africa to China passes through Malaysia, Sebastian and the team worked out of Kuala Lumpur, the hub of the illicit market for wildlife. The information, which could include not only wildlife crimes, but also money laundering, fraud, and corruption, is then given to the local authorities to make arrests. Sebastian was able to be on the front lines of the battle to curb the illegal sale and export of ivory, rhino horns, pangolin scales, tiger bones, and rare turtles.

Sebastian is a senior, majoring in Multidisciplinary Studies with a concentration in Security Studies. He hopes to eventually work for a security organization in the private sector.

## ANALOGIES

We are often reminded that students in STEPP represent a group of bright and creative thinkers who offer powerful insights that can be beneficial for so many others! For example, from time to time students mention analogies or illustrations that they have developed or that their parents shared with them at a young age. These images helped them understand not only the challenges that would be associated with having a learning disability, but also empowered them to feel confident that they could meet their goals. We are working this year to collect some of these analogies, connect them with images or illustrations, and share them with young students, their parents, and their teachers in hopes that they can become useful parts of conversations about teaching, learning, and self-advocacy. Mickey Ellington (Exercise Physiology major) provided the analogy below, with a photo submitted by Joy Seward.

*School is like building a tower to climb to reach my goals. While I build my tower, I can often see people without learning disabilities building theirs. My peers’ towers look different from mine. Instead of building my tower from a small base like they do, I must build my tower with a wide and longer base of in-depth background knowledge.*

*A stronger foundation helps me to expand my learning, and I can better remember the things I have been taught. Peers who can begin with a smaller base can build their towers faster. Although it takes me longer to have a tall tower and to reach my goal, I can be certain that when I get there I have all the background knowledge I need to be successful. Actually, at times, this can become an advantage. There are times when my peers with smaller bases do not learn as in depth as possible. Therefore, sometimes during the climb to their goals, they may have towers that sway when subjects get hard. I’m accustomed to the work ethic and extra steps it takes to push through the difficult times.*

*Sometimes my peers don’t understand why it takes me so long to finish a subject. However, because of my wide base, there have been times that I have been able to help my peers better understand the information that was taught. After that, they can see that slow and steady really does win the race.*

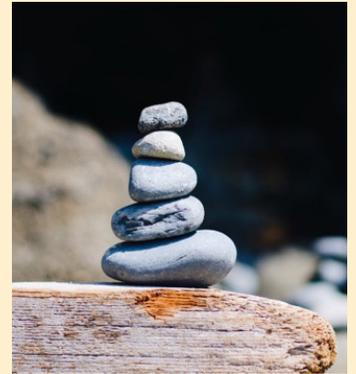


photo by Joy Seward, 2015 Cohort

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