STEPP Program

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) 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 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,

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!
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.