

# WHAT *is your* WHY?

ANNUAL REPORT 2020-2021



Dana Bragg loves the Dallas Cowboys almost as much as she loves to come to work at STEPS. Almost. Dana teams up with other folks with disabilities to keep the STEPS Secure Document Destruction operation running smoothly. She takes ownership of her work, makes sure that everything continues to run smoothly, and — oh yeah — enjoys being part of the team.



# WHAT *is your* WHY?

Every experience is an opportunity to grow if we stop to reflect, question, and learn. We often step back and do this reflective exercise at STEPS. “What” we do is important — and “what” we do is help people. But really the “why” is equally important because it is the heartbeat of any mission and the motivation behind any success. Our answer to the “why” question is simple: we — all of us here at STEPS — care about people.



We often pause to look at the “why” of our mission at STEPS. What we do impacts those we serve. Why we do it is the motivation that gets it done.

The “what” for us is reflected in our tagline “Moving Lives Forward.” Our “why” is in our missions statement “to lead, coordinate, create and deliver quality opportunities to impact self-sufficiency and reduce poverty throughout our region.”

So, we know why we help the elderly facing electrical service termination.

Or why we help a 19-year-old dropout with two children enroll in school to learn a trade that will open the doors of possibility for a fragile family.

Or why we have education centers spread over multiple counties, bus four-year-olds and teach them colors, numbers, and letters.

All of us on the STEPS team care about people. It’s why I, personally, am motivated every day to make sure we are delivering the services our community needs to break down barriers and better people’s lives. It’s why I’ve been doing this for more than 30 years — because I know we are making a difference. I see it in the numbers and, more importantly, in the faces of the lives we are changing through every program.



But this is a team effort. If you’ll permit me to paraphrase the English poet John Donne, “No one is an island; everyone is a piece of the continent, a part of the main.”

No one accomplishes any great thing all on their own; there is someone who provided the wind for their sails.

I am delighted that our STEPS team is helping to empower those in need and we continue to do because we can.

**Because we should.**

**Because we must.**

**Because if we fail, many more brothers and sisters would fall through the cracks into failure.**

Yes, our programs have accountability and responsibility but STEPS, above all, is a place that thrives on the beat of a caring heart.

So, are you making a difference? Are you reaching beyond your family circle? Would you like to? I challenge you to examine your personal mission and ask, “What is my why?”

If you haven’t already joined us, please consider partnering with STEPS to help improve the lives of those in the community, your community. Together, we can accomplish great things.

*Sharon L. Harrup*  
President & CEO

# Secure Document Destruction Helps Rebuild Lives

He moves with precision under the glow of fluorescent lights at STEPS' Secure Document Destruction operation. Tim Wilson sits in a wheelchair opening one folder at a time with only his left hand, locating and discarding paperclips.

"At first, STEPS was a paycheck, but as time went on, you meet all types ... and I guess STEPS was my chance of being able to get out and ... meet new people," Tim says.

He is one of 13 individuals with a disability employed by STEPS. Why? The work is important — it's a job, a chance to socialize with others who have barriers, and help his mom pay bills.

Tim grew up in Charlotte County, graduated from Randolph Henry High School, served in the Marine Corps, and was working at a local manufacturing company in 1997. Someone had stolen his Honda Accord and he was driving his mom's car home from South Boston when an accident he cannot remember left him with a traumatic brain injury.

That he can stand, walk with assistance, and has use of his left hand is a miracle. "...They told my mother, 'Don't look for me to make it through the night,'" Tim said.

It has been a long journey with many obstacles but — with the care and love of a supportive mother — this soft-spoken man is an inspiration.

**"He's a valued member of the Secure Document Destruction team. Plus, he's a kind person — someone we love to help," said STEPS Vice President for Workforce Development Christin Jackson.**

Tim helps process mounds of papers to be shredded for recycling.



The operation is mostly operated by folks with disabilities — the perfect marriage between an employer needing quality workers, and folks who need to earn while they learn.

Nancy Conner, STEPS Employment Services Case Manager is a coach, supporter, teacher, cheerleader for the workers with disabilities. She helps them overcome individual barriers, become employed and grow in independence. Tim likes to work on computers and enjoys exploring current events and entertainment. Nancy is pursuing job and training opportunities tapping into his passion.

"He loves his job," Conner said, "but he does continuously talk about branching out and I think in the back of his mind he wants to definitely try something else, and I would love to be able to see him do that..." Conner added, "I would love to see every person find a job in the community"

It is a dream, but she knows growth comes in the process and what they learn will knock down some of their challenging personal barriers.

Each taking STEPS to a better life.

**Tim Wilson is one of the outstanding workers with disabilities that team up to make the STEPS Secure Document Destruction operation a success. Businesses and individuals deliver or send confidential documents to the Farmville site where they are securely destroyed and baled for recycling. Here, Tim sorts through a stack of files to remove paperclips.**

# Birthday Packs Care for the Homeless

Heather Noe, of Meherrin, has a heart for people. Rather than receive birthday presents this past year, she asked her family to help her assist those facing homelessness in the community and was able to deliver 14 backpacks to the STEPS homeless prevention program. STEPS helps individuals in crisis throughout a six-county region that includes Amelia, Buckingham, Cumberland, Lunenburg, Nottoway, Prince Edward. The backpacks included a blanket and personal care items and were distributed to those in crisis as needed.



From left are Heather Noe, retired STEPS Board member, Head Start Policy Council Chairperson and Prince Edward County Board of Supervisors Vice-Chair Dr. Odessa Pride, STEPS Board member and Prince Edward County Leigh District Supervisor Jerry Townsend, STEPS Housing Case Manager Lavonia Jones, retired STEPS Board member and Prince Edward County Director of Social Services Roma Morris, and STEPS Vice President of Housing Shawn Rozier.

Heather Noe’s family has a history of community service. Every year, they try to help someone or some family in need. So, Noe, who resides in the Meherrin area, wanted to mark her February 23 birthday in a special way.

Instead of presents, she asked her family to join her in giving to help the homeless. Why? Because she cares.

“... I was unemployed for the past year and it got a little rough,” said Noe, who is the Administrative and Customer Service Manager for Sunchase Apartments. “You know, I didn’t lose my house or anything, but the bills definitely got a little tight and I just thought ... there were a lot of people out there losing things and ... to help the homeless would be a really good thing.”

Noe contacted the Prince Edward County Administrator’s Office when her special birthday present was ready and was directed to STEPS, which administers the homeless prevention program in the six-county region that includes Cumberland, Nottoway, Prince Edward, Lunenburg, Buckingham and Amelia.

It turned out to be some gift.

Noe presented 14 new backpacks to STEPS stuffed with a blanket and numerous personal care items which will be distributed by STEPS housing staff.

**“Many of the homeless that we serve come through our doors with very little,” commented STEPS Vice President of Housing Shawn Rozier. “This donation will give them something tangible to help immediately, but it also lets them know that their community cares.**

**“We are extremely thankful for Heather and her special birthday gift.”**

STEPS has a history of providing case management services for those who are homeless or at risk of being homeless through the Virginia Homeless Solutions Program, a program funded by the Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development. STEPS also assists people in overcoming poverty barriers, provides homeless individuals and families hotel stays as well as partners with other community resources to shelter individuals. STEPS strives to rehouse those receiving shelter assistance and provide limited assistance to tenants facing court eviction proceedings.

Unfortunately, the program is busy. In the fiscal year ending June 30, STEPS sheltered 368 individuals in 191 households.

“The struggle to help the homeless in the region is ongoing,” Rozier said. “But incredibly generous gifts such as this will make a difference to someone in need.”

## STEPS Seeks Tiny Solution For Growing Problem

STEPS has a tiny house solution that could make a big dent in homelessness.

“We are looking to grants, donations and potential financing opportunities,” STEPS CEO and President Sharon Harrup explained. “We would love to break ground within the next year and start to make some inroads into a systemic problem.”

According to STEPS Vice President of Housing Shawn Rozier, homelessness spans all demographics. Why? There are a multitude of reasons. STEPS sheltered 368 individuals in 191 households last year alone.

STEPS provides temporary sheltering and case management services for those who are homeless or at risk of being homeless through the Virginia Homeless Solutions Program, which is funded by the Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development (VDHCD).

Centra Health supported the program with grant funds this past year and the VDHCD provided additional funding through the pandemic. STEPS served the needy by placing them in hotels or motels locally instead of referring them to shelters outside of the region.

But when the money is gone ...

“We’ll have to go back to referring individuals and families to shelters outside the region and that has very limited success. I mean, those particular shelters are trying to take care of the homeless in their region,” Rozier explained. “So, they may have some occasional openings, but on the whole ... it’s not going to be a good solution.”

**STEPS, however, has plans to provide help in a more cost/program effective way. The plan is to build a 1,380 square foot community center surrounded by a series of tiny homes in the Farmville area to assist the needy in the short and long term.**



The community center would include kitchen and laundry facilities and meeting and office spaces to service those temporarily residing in the surrounding tiny houses. The tiny houses would be designated for individuals, couples or families; individuals would be housed from 60-90 days, enough time (with some case management guidance from STEPS’ staff) to get the homeless on more solid financial ground and enhance their opportunity for success once they leave the tiny home community.

“It strengthens our ability to provide supportive services to them,” Rozier explains. “It’s really hard to do that in a hotel environment.”

STEPS plans to locate a site near Farmville and start with 11 tiny houses to serve individuals, couples and families in crisis with three additional units to transitionally house individuals for up to a year. The clients would pay rent to stay in the transitional houses while staff shepherds them to more stable footing.

The idea is to stop the cycle, so they don’t leave only to become homeless again.

Flowers, of course, take time to bloom and even the best plans can’t be completed overnight. In the meantime, STEPS will continue to serve those facing homelessness one doorbell ring at a time.

**STEPS Vice President of Housing Shawn Rozier dreams of a solution to the housing problem. There is a great need; last year, STEPS sheltered 368 individuals in 191 households in the region. STEPS plans to build a community center surrounded by a series of tiny homes to assist individuals in crisis and help transition the homeless to a more stable, permanent solution.**

# WHAT *is your* WHY?

**Funded 4,616  
SHELTER NIGHTS**

**Invested \$668,454  
to keep citizens  
safely housed**

*The communities we serve have many needs and STEPS spreads a blanket of hope throughout the region. The joy for me is seeing a life changed — to know what we are doing as a team truly makes a difference. I also take joy in knowing that every success story we have will improve lives today and echo into future generations.*

— Christin Jackson, STEPS Vice President of Workforce Development



**UNDUPLICATED  
*Lives  
Touched*  
2,747**



**Total wages  
paid in 2020**

**\$3,046,897**

*On my first day I was greeted by a participant who remembered me from the second grade. It is a reminder that we never know the imprint our life has on others, what will be remembered. STEPS is a perfect fit for me because it fosters a “culture of care.” We strive to make good, lasting memories that help improve lives and make a lasting difference.*

— Cynthia Saunders, VP Administration and Compliance





**1,030**

*Individuals*  
who received heating  
and cooling assistance



**HEAD START  
PARENTS**

*who benefited from  
training through  
Head Start*

**Recycling  
315 tons**

*between Hampden Sydney, Prince Edward County,  
and Town of Farmville*

**Shred 256 tons**

**272**



***STEPS em-  
ployed individ-  
uals last year***

**174**



*The most rewarding part is seeing our clients  
who came to us struggling, settle into jobs and  
permanent housing arrangements that give them  
a stable home. I also enjoy connecting them with  
family, when possible, and helping them get to  
where their family is located.*

— Shawn Rozier,  
Vice-President of Housing

**18,987**

***Transportation  
trips provided  
in the community***

## PARENT PARTICIPATION

- Due to COVID parents were not allowed in the centers but were instrumental in providing education services to their children.
- 170 parents contributed 17,691.5 volunteer hours.
- Early Head Start classrooms were open to in-person services. Head Start classrooms operated on a hybrid schedule with alternating A/B weeks in some counties and went 100% virtual in others.

## Preparing for Kindergarten

- STEPS offered a tablet or Chromebook for virtual instruction and provided on-line digital curriculum and supplies to support it.
- Each student was given a backpack with supplies to participate in virtual instruction.
- Teachers conducted required assessments and focused observations as access dictated.
- Teachers and bus staff delivered packages and meals to homes weekly.
- Children had three online meeting opportunities per day with their teacher and classroom friends. Small group virtual instruction was offered at least two times per week.



## Why STEPS Has a Heart for Children

*(Editor's Note: We want our readers to connect with our leadership team, to understand what motivates them. In this light, we have asked Vice President Early Childhood Education Jessica Lehman: Why do you have such a heart for children? This is her response.)*

People always ask, “Why you are so passionate about working with kids,” or “Why do you love children so much.” No one has ever phrased it to me before, “Why do you have such a heart for children?”

The human heart is in the core of the body. It is responsible for regulating our blood flow, and providing the oxygen, and nutrients our other organs need to function properly. Our hearts electrical systems provide the rate and rhythm of our heartbeat. If our heart is unhealthy our body will not function properly, and we could die.

As children develop, they seek external comforts and supports to help them learn and regulate their bodies, whether it is navigating physical spaces or emotions and feelings.

As adults, we are the core or the heartbeat that supports them in the process of development. We need to provide “nutrients” and “oxygen” to fuel the fire that will help young children grow into self-regulated adults with good decision-making skills and a love of learning.

When unhealthy adults are the ones providing care for children, we are slowly killing the potential within them and their desire to learn and thrive will diminish. I have always been passionate about my work with children and families. I believe that by strengthening the skills and capabilities of the adults in children’s lives we will create healthier generations to come. We must break the cycles of poverty, patterns of abuse and elevate the quality of early childhood interventions to promote healthy outcomes for future generations.

**My work with Head Start has given me a platform to be the change I want to see in the world. I get to coach and train educators and work with families and children to drive positive outcomes. Children learn through what they do, see, and how they feel. By being kind, showing compassion, accepting our differences, striving for improvement, working hard, sharing our knowledge, connecting with each other, and modeling positive interactions, we are teaching children how to be successful and happy.**

Sharing my heart and leading this team is my opportunity to set the rhythm, provide “nutrients,” and “oxygen” that will hopefully light a spark for learning in our children and a passion for high quality intentional instruction in our learning environments.



## HEAD START BUDGET

	2020-2021 Proposed Budget	2020-2021 Actual
Personnel	\$ 2,294,193	\$ 1,842,390
Fringe	\$ 382,649	\$ 336,640
Travel	\$ 11,000	\$ 7,540
Supplies	\$ 86,950	\$ 273,816
Contractual	\$ 185,100	\$ 277,546
Other/Admin	\$ 383,440	\$ 605,400
Training & Technical Assistance	\$ <u>50,906</u>	\$ <u>50,906</u>
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 3,394,238</b>	<b>\$ 3,394,238</b>

## Total Amount of Public and Private Funds Received

SOURCE OF REVENUE		Percentage of Total Revenue
Federal	\$ 3,394,238	95%
Other USDA Reimbursement	\$ 176,211	5%
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 3,570,449</b>	<b>100%</b>

## CARES ACT (COVID related)

	FEDERAL
Personnel	\$ 27,800
Fringe Benefits	\$ 3,077
Supplies	\$ 107,580
Contractual	\$ 117,303
Other	\$ 4,368
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 260,128</b>



## NUMBER OF CHILDREN SERVED

HEAD START **136**  
 58% Average Monthly Enrollment  
 75% Eligible Children Served

## NUMBER OF CHILDREN SERVED

EARLY HEAD START **59**  
 94% Average Monthly Enrollment  
 92% Eligible Children Served

## THE PERCENTAGE OF ENROLLED CHILDREN THAT RECEIVED MEDICAL AND DENTAL EXAMS

Head Start Medical Exams **96%**

Early Head Start Medical Exams **94%**

Head Start Dental Exams **71%**

Head Start Dental Screening/Exams **69%**



## TOTAL FAMILIES SERVED

HEAD START **136**

EARLY HEAD START **48**

EXPECTANT MOTHERS **11**

## Driven to Serve Three of a Kind

Senior Community Service Employment Program participants Anna Marie Nolan, Edna Lee and Inette Brown all had the opportunity to stay on paid sick leave through much of the pandemic, but each choose to return to their job training site. STEPS administers the SCSEP program in a nine-county region that stretches from Cumberland to Mecklenburg counties. The program provides job training opportunities for eligible seniors 55 and older.



For some, work gives value to the soul. Take it away, and they are miserable. Why do they keep moving forward in life?

Inette Brown, Edna Lee and Anna Marie Nolan knew they didn't want misery. The three participants in the Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP) chose work over sick leave pay through much of the pandemic.

"I was just tired of sitting at home," Edna explained.

STEPS administers SCSEP in a nine-county central Virginia region and those with health conditions or vulnerable due to their age had the "sick pay" option.

**They each qualified, but Inette, Edna and Anna Marie resumed work at their job training sites, even before vaccines were available. They are ladies of faith who showed up, followed safety protocols, and continued to serve their community.**

They are remarkable. Consider that Anna Marie, 75, suffered a heart attack and a stroke in 2016.

"I feel that needing to work gives me a purpose of doing something ... helping other people," she explains. "I like helping people."

Anna Marie and Edna receive job training at the Heartland Regional Visitor Center. The two greet community guests visiting Farmville from all over the world.

Edna, also a heart attack survivor, had part of one foot and the lower portion of a leg removed due to diabetes.

It hasn't been an easy road, but she laughs a lot and is an encouragement to all who meet her.

Anna Marie is outgoing and driven. She grew up in Pennsylvania where she started working at age 16 managing a tailor's shop.

"It was like being in prison," she says, when asked about sitting at home before her training site reopened. "I mean, I had things to do at home. I did them ... but I just — it's not me sitting at home. I just missed the contact with people."

Inette continued to assist STEPS' EnergyShare program, which helps people in crisis with heating and cooling bills.

Inette, facing kidney failure, was blessed to get transplant in a nine-hour operation in 2011.

Life is better, but the former Certified Nursing Assistant and retail associate, who sees the guiding hand of God, still takes 15 pills every morning and nine at night to stay healthy.

Unfortunately, she contracted COVID and became sick in early 2020. Quarantine wasn't easy, but with prayer and help from friends and family she returned to health and her training site.

"I love this kind of work," Inette said. "I love doing this."

And love always trumps misery.

*(Edna was hired at her job training site in 2021 and continues to do well. Inette continues her job training at STEPS and Anna Marie has retired and continues to bless her family.)*

# Thanks to our Supporters

JULY 1, 2020 - JUNE 30, 2021

## INDIVIDUAL DONATIONS

Debra Adams  
Bonnie Andrachek  
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Betty Sue Barnes  
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Richard and Libby Blanton  
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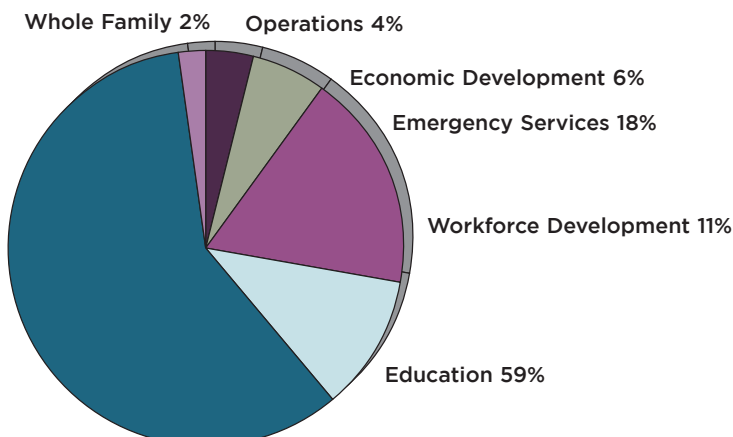
Every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of this list of donations. We apologize for any errors or omissions. Please send inquiries to: Cynthia A. Saunders 434-315-5909 Ext. 209 or [csaunders@STEPS-inc.org](mailto:csaunders@STEPS-inc.org).

“STEPS is an equal opportunity provider and employer.”

## Functional Expense

JULY 1, 2020 - JUNE 30, 2021  
(unaudited)

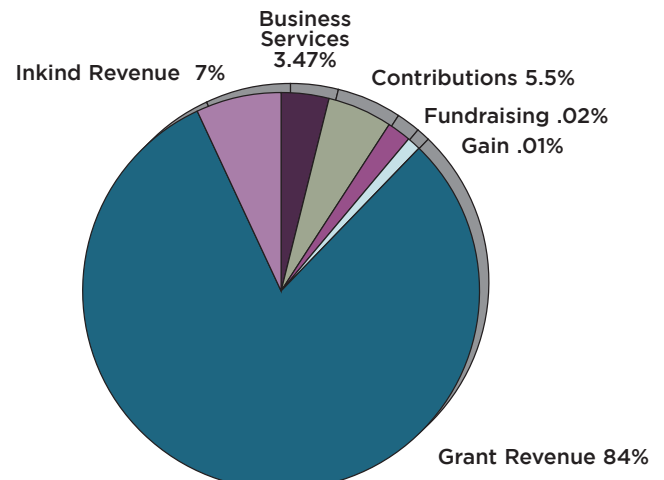
Operations	282,312
Economic Development	448,166
Emergency Services	1,241,133
Workforce Development	790,536
Education	4,105,499
Whole Family	<u>119,743</u>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$ 6,987,389</b>



## Revenue by Major Category

JULY 1, 2020 - JUNE 30, 2021 (unaudited)

Business Services	237,288
Contributions	370,314
Fundraising	1,575
Gain	500
Grant Revenue	5,623,226
Inkind Revenue	<u>463,085</u>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$ 6,695,988</b>



Help STEPS carry out its mission of **MOVING LIVES FORWARD** by donating today.



Arthur Wade enjoys sports, creating art, his work and life. A long-time Green Bay Packers fan, Arthur is part of a team that includes Dana Bragg (featured on the cover) keeping STEPS' Secure Document Destruction operation rolling.

If this report has piqued your interest in the programs and you wish to know more, please visit us online at [www.steps-inc.org](http://www.steps-inc.org).

For information about STEPS call 434.315.5909 or email us at: [info@STEPS-Inc.org](mailto:info@STEPS-Inc.org).



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