

Next STEP Newsletter

Spring 2018
Bi Yearly Newsletter

Director's News



Upcoming Events

**Unified Bowling
Tournament**
3/19

Yard Goats Game
5/9

**Summer Program
begins July 2nd**

Camp Harkness
8/5-8/10

The primary goal of Next STEP is to give our students the necessary skills to live and work as independently as possible. These skills have led to 5 of our students achieving gainful employment during this school year, more than any previous year. Our participants have also made a commitment to further their education, whether this was through college classes at Manchester Community College or looking into classes through Vernon Regional Adult Education.

We added a new business partner mid-year with Vernon Public Works. They have opened their bay doors to have our participants gain knowledge in the field of auto mechanics. We also made additions to our Adult Daily Living skills lessons. These lessons revolved around role playing social interactions in the work place to prepare our students to be well rounded employees.

As we look forward to our 14th year of

Next STEP Program
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Rockville, CT 06066

providing transitional services to 18-21 year old students, our focus will be on specialized employment skills. Within the Vernon Public Schools Mission Statement it says, "in partnership with family and community, (VPS) is committed to provide a quality education". We currently have 30 "community" partners, but our students need more. More opportunities to learn, more opportunities to grow and more opportunities to achieve their goal of employment. It is with these partnerships, old and new, which will continue to have Next STEP as a State of Connecticut recognized transition program.

Peter Lynch
Next STEP Program

Congratulations
Graduates!

Nick Anderson
Ian Dawson
Nate Pollen

We are so proud of
your achievements!



Staff Members

Peter Lynch
Program Director

Joe Prignano,
Transition Coordinator

Jennifer Bundy
Vocational Counselor

Kathleen Murphy
Ginny McNulty
Lynne Calabro
Para Educators/Job Coaches

Unified Sports Spring 2018

Join the fun!



Did you happen to see Next STEP students highlighted on the billboard located on the corner of Talcottville Road and Loveland Hill Road in the month of November? The VPS billboard was highlighting volunteerism and our students were pictured at Foodshare.



2017/2018 NEXT STEP JOBSITES

- Big Lots (Manchester)
- Central Office (Vernon Board of Education)
- CVS (Vernon)
- Craig's Kitchen
- Dave's Cobbler Shoppe
- Farm Car Care
- Foodshare
- HVCC
- Jo-Ann Fabrics
- Marshall's
- Pizza Palace
- Savers

- Skinner Road Preschool
- Tolland Big Y
- TJ Maxx
- Vernon Regional Adult Ed.
- Vernon Dollar Tree
- Vernon Manor
- Vernon Public Works
- Walmart

We offer our sincere gratitude to each of these worksites for their partnership and support. Each work site is an integral piece to the success of our program and Next STEP participants!

Past Events

On December 15th, Next STEP joined with the East Windsor Transition Program to assist with food distribution to those in need during the holiday season in East Windsor. Students from both programs enjoyed eating lunch together and getting to know one another better. The following day, was our annual shopping trip. Each student stayed within their budgets and bought thoughtful presents for their loved ones.

On December 21st, Claire Dziadul, from Claire's Casual Jewelry was kind enough to visit Next STEP and provide all the needed materials for students to make their own necklace and give as gifts to a person of their choosing.

Next STEP participants enjoyed learning about nutrition from registered dietician, Bridget Sutherland, on February 2nd. She spoke about the importance of eating fruits and vegetables with every meal. Bridget emphasized the food plate and eating the colors of the rainbow for the benefits of vitamin and minerals. Small changes can make positive impacts on health and nutrition.

Joe's Corner

As we maneuver our way through this crazy winter season, the students have been actively involved in many activities. I have incorporated some new activities to their program including the EnvisionIT transition curriculum. I am constantly assessing student progress. Their program will be designed on their individual needs and progress. We have been doing a lot with social skills and have designated Wednesday's as our social/communication day. I partner with Gabriella Badea our speech clinician to develop appropriate social lessons utilized in the community. The Unified Program has had a busy basketball season. We just had our Rockville Jamboree on March 1st with South Windsor, Rham and Ellington; which was a great success. The band and honor society helped support the event by providing constant music and awesome refreshments. The next East of The River Bowling Tournament at Spare Time in Vernon is scheduled for Monday March 19th from 3-4:30. I am anticipating over 100 athletes in attendance. Hope to see you there.



Our weekly cooking lessons continue to be a favorite for the participants and help teach important independent living skills. Each week, a different participant is given the opportunity to make a recipe of his/her liking. Then, this student helps lead the lesson from shopping to preparing the meal. Through this experience, we learn budget planning, shopping, cooking, teamwork, and cleaning. Be on the lookout for The Student Cookbook coming out at the end of the school year!

Camp Harkness dates are from August 5th - August 10th. Camp Harkness is located on the beautiful beachfront of Waterford, CT. Thanks to a grant from The Harford Foundation, the camp is totally FREE for our participants.

Mark your calendars!

The Next STEP summer program begins on July 2nd and ends on July 26th. The program hours are 8:30 a.m. - 1:30 p.m. Monday through Thursday. (No program on July 4th) This 4 week program is strictly vocationally based and is a great opportunity to try various work sites and continue to strengthen vocational skills. For some students, this will be their first time working and earning initial paychecks.

~Our Mission~

Next STEP is an evidence based program designed to maximize the potential of young adults in the areas of community based vocational experiences, positive social relationships, and independent living skills.