

**BOARD MEMBER SURVEY OF A SAMPLING OF
FAMILIES, CAREPROVIDERS and STAKEHOLDERS
FINAL REPORT 2008**

The Board of Directors of Services To Enhance Potential recently participated in a telephone survey of families and care providers, as a means of soliciting direct feedback regarding STEP's current services, services not currently provided, what they would like to see as the future direction for STEP and overall satisfaction with STEP operations and personnel.

Survey Process:

Survey packets were passed out at the September board meeting with all surveys expected to be returned by the October board meeting. Board members not present were mailed their packets with instructions for implementing the survey process. Each Board member was given a list of 10 names (only persons receiving support coordination from STEP were included in the survey population) and was asked to call at least 5 persons on the list. There was prior training and written instruction given to the board members so that each interview would follow an the same format. Board members were encouraged to have a conversation with the family member or caregiver, to reference the person served and the Resource Center he/she attended in the conversation. All family members/care providers were instructed that participation in the survey was strictly on a volunteer basis and in no way affected the service provision given to their consumer. Families/care providers were advised that the strictest confidentiality would be maintained; all information obtained would be aggregated without reference to the persons served or the person being interviewed and no names would be identified in any resulting reports. If the family member/care provider had particular concerns, they were advised that the responsible supports coordinator would be informed to contact them. Board members were reminded that they were subject to the same standards of confidentiality as staff and should not discuss any information obtained from the survey with others. It was the decision of the Board Service Advisory Committee, which provided oversight for the survey documents, that the contacts made should be made as "cold calls", i.e. the families/care providers would not be advised in advance of the incoming phone call. The committee felt that a direct, unprepared response, would give the most information and the most honest feedback.

Survey Response:

Sixteen (16) board members were given packets. In return, ten (10) board members completed survey tools for the names on their list. A total of fifty-five (55) surveys were returned completed. Forty-four (44) surveys were not completed; twelve (12) had wrong telephone numbers or the phone was not in service, eight (8) persons were unwilling to participate in the survey process and twenty-four (24) persons were not at home when the call was made. Several board members chose not to make repeated calls; others did.

The survey had 4 questions, with question 1 having 3 parts. Questions were designed to be open-ended to elicit responses greater than "yes" or "no". Each person surveyed was guided to respond in descriptive sentences. However, it was thought that individual comments would collectively reflect a pattern or trend of acknowledgement. While the

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sampling size is small, it does represent at least 10% of the STEP supports coordination population.

Survey Results:

Question I, Part 1: Tell me what you like about our services.

Responses fell into 1 of 3 categories, staff attitude, services or activity and skill attainment.

Staff Attitude - At least 1/3 of the responses related to the attitude of the staff, It was noted that STEP staff are thought of very highly by stakeholders. Reportedly, staff...

- Are prompt in resolving issues
- Appreciated for making home visits
- Immediately address issues or concerns once they become aware of them
- Often go above and beyond what is expected in offering help to families; even to the extent of using personal time
- Show genuine interest in persons served
- Courteous at all times
- Respectful of consumers
- Knowledgeable about mental health services
- Supportive of the IPS goals of each individual with good follow through
- Knowledgeable about the individual and his/her needs
- Well-organized and well-trained for the jobs they are required to perform

Services and Activities – Comments received included:

- "STEP is commended for providing portal-to-portal transportation"
- "I appreciate that my daughter receives a paycheck."
- "It gives them something to do and goals in the IPS are being met with the support and training provided by staff."
- "They are teaching him things that he otherwise would not learn."
- "I like the way they hold meetings and keep families informed. It makes my son feel productive."
- "It is a safe place for them to go each day with opportunity for many different things to do including making friends and having positive experiences."
- "The STEP supports coordinator helped us get a wheelchair and braces."

Skill Attainment – Comments received included:

- "My son was able to get a job."
- "Volunteer experiences are great; especially Meals-on-Wheels".
- "I feel his skill level has improved."
- "STEP accommodated for health issues by offering micro enterprise supports rather than piece work."

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Question I, Part 2: Are there things you don't like?

Fewer than 10 individuals out of 55 responded to the question. Most of the responses were related to limited piece work opportunities that occasionally occur at each resource center. One response indicated a disappointment in the fact that the skills trainer, who works directly with the individual daily, did not attend the IPS meeting. Another response, revealed there was too much exposure to "junk food" both onsite and in the community. Another commented on STEP's failure to provide hot meals and more field trips. Another response noted that the attitude of the job coach toward the 1-1 staff was not always pleasant. Lastly, the respondent felt extending the work day at the Downriver Resource Center was a "bad idea".

Question I, Part 3: Where do you think we could do better?

Once again, the responses fell into three categories, transportation, communication and supports and services.

Transportation – The SMART transportation routes are not convenient for the individuals, schedules are not consistently followed, comes within a ½ hour early or later on any given day. Transportation drivers are not always considerate or safety minded. Transportation services need to be vastly improved.

Communication – Notices are not received timely, often received too late to adequately plan for attendance or action. Need to have parent meetings at least quarterly as opposed to every 6 months. No follow up to voice message; not sure if received.

Supports and Services – It would be nice to offer after-hours entertainment and dances; there should be more time for recreation and enjoyment; provide more time for social opportunities. Teach personal skills; offer Adult Ed. Classes. More vocational training and speech therapy would be good.

Question II – What services would you like to receive that you are currently not receiving?

Respondents listed the following services they would like to receive, some of which are beyond the scope of STEP services but should be linked and coordinated with other service providers.

1. Bus transportation from the Plymouth Township area
2. Evening meetings for working parents
3. Sign language classes for consumers
4. Transportation for evening and weekend activities
5. Opportunity to attend college classes
6. Speech therapy, training in hygiene skills
7. Opportunity to attend summer camps
8. More community job placements

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9. Classes for developing communication and writing skills
10. Continue after hours "fun club"
11. Tutoring classes in parenting

Question III – What do you see as a future direction for STEP?

Respondents had few suggestions, but rather placed the greatest emphasis on STEP continuing to provide current services. Many of the comments related to keeping the "workshops" open; including bringing sheltered work back to the NW Resource Center. Other comments related to more community-based activities; including computer training, housing opportunities & independent living sites, social programs and a retirement program (senior services), and more training in life skills. It was further suggested that STEP purchase a farm and use the site for training, that STEP return to providing services only to the DD population as the organization was originally designed and that STEP should expand so they can reach a larger number of people in the future.

Question IV – Satisfaction with STEP operations:

Overall satisfaction with STEP operations was very high and most respondents felt STEP was an excellent source of supports for persons with DD. However there were some expressions of satisfaction/non-satisfaction linked to specific resources center or services.

1. Eastern
 - Always able to reach someone with questions/concerns
 - Change the location to a different (more safe) neighborhood
 - Need additional staff for adequate supervision
 - Extend working hours to 5:00.
2. Northwest
 - The transition period from school to STEP (allowing her to come part time while in school was a plus) is much appreciated.
3. Downriver
 - Need a better, newer facility
 - Better transportation; busses come too early and not mindful of safety needs (drops off consumer in the middle of the street.)
 - Later starting hours; start at 9:00 (in setting program hours STEP should have more consideration for the needs of the handicapped).
 - Larger facility – too crowded.
4. Dearborn North
 - Extended work hours (20Mins) is disruptive of home life
 - Program starts too early
 - Facility is too small for the number of persons attending program
 - Older staff appear not to be really receptive to new ideas

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CONCLUSION:

Although this was a small sampling of external stakeholders, individual's responses are consistent with what has been established in other survey and feedback processes. Overall satisfaction with STEP as an organization providing mental health remains very high. Both the organization and staff of the organization are viewed as being committed to and diligent in the work toward the betterment of all persons served.

Many of the stakeholders are parents who continue to have the individual live in their natural home and who may have attended STEP for several years and in some instances decades. They tend to have a long standing perception of STEP that parallels what was its earliest structure; i.e. alternative for schooling after age 26, with more of a social, recreational, academic component. This is why we continue to have requests for academics, and social activities versus a more vocational /employment component.

As the dynamic of mental health services has expanded over the years, STEP has become a more vocational-specific provider with advocacy and linking to other providers for those elements which enhance the quality of life, i.e. social and recreational components.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

As a result of the information obtained in this survey, STEP should prioritize the following projects for completion within the next 12 to 36 months:

1. Continue to search for more suitable buildings to house the Downriver and Eastern Resource Centers also expand community skill building opportunities to lower the in-house population.
2. Continue to support transportation providers with training and feedback on identified issues and concerns.
3. Develop a computer training program, initially at DBS and expand to other Resource Centers as needed.
3. Give priority to the development of senior services. Include senior supports/retirement planning as a "prompt" in the social work assessment.
4. Develop a Task Force to research opportunities for this organization's involvement in housing development
5. Continue to work toward expansion of weekend and evening skill building opportunities.
6. Develop a bi-monthly newsletter to improve communication efforts with families

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7. Perform a yearly survey of families, care providers, stakeholders for direct feedback.
8. Recognize staff for the outstanding performance and acknowledgement of good services made by the stakeholders.
9. Increase the organization's linkage to community and civic elements, for greater awareness of STEP and partnerships which will open doors for individuals we serve.

Follow- up:

1. Feedback will be provided to the ARCs as to Stakeholders expressed desire for more social and recreational opportunities.
2. An Evaluation form will be given out to Board Members to identify what affect participating in the survey had on each member and a request for recommendations of how the survey process could be made better if they are asked to do this again. Board members who did not participate will be asked to identify what issues prevented their participation and suggestions for making participation easier. The results from the evaluation will be added to the final report.