

Step Write Up



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My Blessings

Counting our Blessings is the theme for this Holiday issue.

When thinking about writing about my blessings the first things that come to mind were my family, friends, having a career that gives me joy and my health. I think that is a great list, I really do have a lot to be grateful for.

As I think about the upcoming holidays, the first pictures that come to mind are of time with family and friends. There will be lots of days and evenings filled with games and watching movies. There will be seeing people I have not seen for a while, stories being told and catching up being done. This time of year reminds me of my first holiday season in recovery.

When I first got sober I did not have money, many friends I could still hang out with, a job, or a car. I did have a new outlook on life, sobriety, a place to live, and the desire to have fun and laugh again. Soon I got a job so I could start paying my bills again. The car did not come for many years but that was livable. Soon I met some really fun people who were a lot like me. They did not have a lot of money, most did not have cars or licenses but they too wanted to enjoy life again. We started hanging

out at coffee shops or sober clubs where we could drink cheap coffee for hours and talk and laugh. We took drives to look at Christmas lights all over the valley (luckily a couple people did have cars and licenses). We had Packer parties at people's houses all bringing a dish to pass. We had game nights at different houses playing board games or games we made up. These nights are some of the best times of my life when I met some of my closest friends. I think I was truly blessed to have this early in recovery. I learned a lot during those first couple years and would not change a thing.

I feel truly blessed to have wonderful people in my life who enjoy just being with each other. I hope you too can remember all your blessings and be grateful for each of them.

Michelle Devine Giese

President



Outstanding Safety Record for 2009

We could not allow the year to come to a close without reflecting on our ever-improving safety record. Step recognizes the dedicated efforts from both staff and employee's who together have allowed us to meet our safety goals for the year. We could not have done it without you.

I would like to take this opportunity to say a heartfelt "Thank You" for your time, energy and enthusiastic support as we continue to shape a safer future.

Sam W.

Statement of Purpose

Step Industries provides transitional employment to people recovering from addiction to alcohol and other drugs. These opportunities are intended to relieve the stress of unemployment, promote self sufficiency, and help prepare the recovering person for further vocational growth.

Although we are a nonprofit corporation, we are primarily supported through the sale of our services. Thus customer satisfaction is essential to our ongoing success.

We offer a safe, supportive work experience. We choose to work together in an environment of respect, cooperation, and trust.

Moving On

Today, November 16th, is my last day on the payroll at Step Industries. My first day was sometime in September of 1982. I start "learning the ropes" at Nova Counseling Services tomorrow as their long-time Executive Director, Marcia Larson, prepares to retire at the end of the year. I will take her place come January.

Michelle Devine Giese was elected President today to take my place and Jamie Loehnis was elected as board Chairman. Michelle has been a part of Step Industries for almost 14 years now and she will do a great job. Jamie, Executive Director at Mooring Programs in Appleton, worked at Step for twenty years before moving to

Mooring in 2007. I will be staying on the board at Step and I will be here some between now and January to help Michelle and sort through too many years of papers and files.

Imagine the range and depth of feelings I have experienced today. Some sadness, but mostly joy. This is a good change. I have been privileged to be a part of Step Industries. I have been blessed to witness thousands of recovering people emerge into greater joy and freedom. Thank you-

Hugh Holly

Happy Birthday!

Neenah

Brittany B	12/0	Maxine N.	01/09
Melissa R.	12/13	Liisa B.	01/15
Dan S.	12/29	Marcia H.	01/16
Julia C.	01/03	Daniel R.	01/22
Julie H.	01/07	Gary W.	01/31



Milwaukee

Diane D.	01/21
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Happy Anniversary!

If you see any of these people, give them a big hug and ask them how they did it!

Neenah

Tom C.	12/06/06	Marcia H.	01/29/09
Jennifer B.	12/16/08	Shane K.	01/07/09
Billie H.	12/25/08	Gary P.	01/20/09

Milwaukee

Mike P.	12/14/08	Greg T.	1/22/93
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Newsworthy Notes

Step Industries was presented with a Bridge Grant from unrestricted funds within the Community Foundation for the Fox Valley Region. This support is greatly appreciated.

Lance B. and Carrie O. announced their engagement on September 18. They plan to be married on August 7, 2010. Congratulations!

Team Leader Lisa Stadtmueller wishes to express thanks on behalf of Step to Tom V. on 2nd shift for donating his time and materials to get a job out in a timely and more efficient manor. Thanks Tom, from all of us!

I'm Baaack!

Actually, I was never gone. As most of you know, or will remember, after 20 years, I left Step Industries in May of 2007 to become the Executive Director of Mooring Programs in Appleton. I remained on the Board at Step and have stayed pretty connected after I left. This was in part because of my great affection and appreciation for Step Industries for what it has done for me in my recovery, and also because of the strong partnership Step Industries and Mooring Programs have maintained for many, many years. Step continues to be an integral part of our program at Mooring. Treatment, a supportive living environment and employment continue to be the big 3 in terms of a “whole” approach to recovery from addiction. Step has been steadfast in its commitment to us by hiring many of our eligible clients from both Mooring House and Casa Clare. The ongoing collaboration and communication with each other is a winning combination!

My relationship with Step Industries began back on November 9, 1987. I was living at the Mooring House and needed employment. Despite my poor work history, and my relatively short term sobriety, Step offered me a job. For 20 years I successfully followed its simple formula: “Work Hard, stay straight, be patient and good things will happen.” (Some may argue the point about me being patient!) In my life, many good things did indeed happen. For that, I am forever grateful to Step. Thus my continued involvement. “Giving back” means something to me.

Step is beginning a new leadership chapter with the resignation of long time CEO and Chairman, Hugh Holly. Hugh is leaving to become the Executive Director of Nova Counseling Services in Oshkosh. I am so thrilled that Michelle Devine Giese will be taking Hugh’s place as the lead Executive President of Step Industries. Michelle was my “right hand” for the last 5 years of my

time at Step while I was the Chief Operating Officer. She took my place when I left to go to the Mooring Programs. While she may have learned some things from me, I learned so much more from her. She is equipped to take on this new challenge at Step, and I am so very proud of her.

Related to the leadership changes, I have been asked, and have agreed to take on the role of Chairman of the Step Industries Board of Directors.

Step Industries continues to face very tough challenges in these economic times. To everyone, this is no secret. I feel confident, perhaps naively, that the changes in leadership will infuse the organization with a new energy, combined with new involvement at the Board level which will help Step prevail by continuing to provide transitional, supportive employment opportunities for people new in recovery from addictions.

A word about my naiveté. A life of sobriety and it’s ensuing serenity was thought by many people to be out of reach for me. I had failed miserably for many years to find a life of sobriety prior to November of 1987. But... a small handful of people, despite my many failures, and perhaps “naively”, saw something in me that many others, including myself, deservedly did not. Here I am today, sober, somewhat serene and willing to do what I can for the continuation of Step Industries.

Regards,

Jamie Loehnis

Chairman

We are Counting our Blessings

Some of our employees agreed to tell us what this means to them. Here are their thoughts:

I am blessed to have the choice to live clean and sober everyday. My past does not define my future...how I apply the knowledge I gained from it, does.

Julia C.

When I think of the blessings I have in my life, two names come to mind: Lexi and Dominic. My two children are the reasons I am still alive today. I am a mom. I cleaned up, found recovery, and my two small children led me there.

Today I want to be healthy and alive for myself. The biggest part is the fact that I am breaking the cycle of pain and abuse that has haunted my family. It stops here.

I now have a chance to take care of myself and to teach my children how to do the same. My children saved my life and they are such a blessing to me.

Tony D.

When I was at Casa Clare I was told to write myself a letter. I was to imagine how I wanted my life to be. I was supposed to send it to myself, but I didn't have an address at the time so Casa Clare held on to it. I forgot about it until this last weekend. I stopped there for trick or treating

with my kids and the house manager handed it to me. This is what it said:

5/31/08

Dear Catherine,

So now that you have your family back and you are sober and your life is so much better, this should teach you, Catherine, to listen to people when they say they want to help you. Congratulations on your sobriety. And that you may not like your job but you like your peers and your paying your bills and being responsible.

I know you and Earl and the kids are now better and doing great. Because of our sobriety, we're having the lives we deserve and HAPPINESS.

Catherine, you are doing wonderful and I am proud of you. Keep it up. Around the time you get this it will be near your birthday. The best present you will get is the fact that you don't need to use. And Catherine, you don't have to. Not today. Just keep your 24 hour rolling.

Love you always,

Catherine

All of this has come true. This is what counting my blessings means to me.

Catherine

Employee Spotlight by Gregory T. Milwaukee Plant

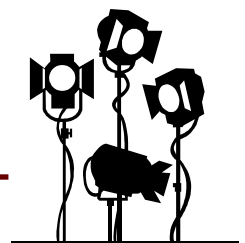
Hello, my name is Gregory T. and I was born and raised in Chicago, IL by a loving family. This family has a history of drinking and drugging. My father was an alcoholic at the age of 11. That's about the same time I started getting high and making bad decisions: running the street and throwing bricks at the penitentiary (*committing petty crimes and getting away with it*).

One day the Penitentiary doors opened for 17 long years. I was hanging out with different faces, but from the same frame of mind. My attitude kept me in segregation.

I refused to leave the way I entered. I participated in every program they had to offer. I was paroled out on December 2, 2008. I resided within a program called Serenity Inn. They got me a job at Step Industries.

I've been moving forward. I got married to a wonderful woman. I've been clean for 16 years plus. Thank God. Without Him, nothing is possible.

May God Bless You All.



Step Up for a Float!

More than 75,000 people gathered on College Avenue in late September to celebrate Octoberfest. It was the 22nd year the City of Appleton has hosted the festival and the 2nd year Step Industries has been able to benefit from the event.

Octoberfest is an annual event organized by the City of Appleton to allow non-profit organizations raise funds and awareness to the organizations. Over 300 non-profits were on the avenue selling food, drinks, candy, popcorn and Root Beer Floats.

With a volunteer crew of eleven, Step sold 430 root beer floats, 170 bottles of Step Industries water and 200 cans of Monster. All profits from the event go directly to Step Industries. It was great fun to part of one of the largest events in town!



Food Drive

Step Industries has been selling our services as a way for companies to give back to the community and help recovering people get back into the workforce. We are all fortunate to have jobs, as many of us have scattered work records. With the struggling economy employers can be picky about whom they hire.

This newsletter is about counting our blessings, which raised the question about how we (the employees of Step Industries) can do more for our community and those less fortunate. One of the ways we've decided to do that is by conducting a food drive. It's no secret that food pantries are struggling to continue helping people. There is a greater need, and less to go around.

Step is organizing a food drive with the staff challenging the employees as to who can raise more in donations. It's

a contest where everyone wins. The challenge will begin December 1st and wrap up on December 17th. All the donations will go to St. Joseph's Food Pantry in Menasha.

We would like to open this up to former employees, former staff, customers, or anyone else interested in participating. If you'd like to donate, non perishable goods can be dropped off at Step Industries at 1010 Strohmeyer Rd in Neenah, Monday through Thursday between 7 AM and 3 PM. Thank you in advance for your help.

Dan Haak
Neenah Operations Manager

Counting My Blessings by Lisa Stadmueller, Team Leader

Recovery has brought me so many blessing that I am grateful for. The biggest thing that stands out would be the respect and support of my family. They have been there for me through my using and bad choices over the years. Their respect, that I have earned through continued sobriety is truly a blessing. When I doubt myself, or feel like giving up, I remember how good it feels to finally have that. I realize that I don't want to lose that for the world.

Another blessing would be the ability to be a

“mommy” again. Through my addiction, I almost lost that chance. Now, clean and sober, I am able to give my kids the mom they deserve. Taking on the responsibility, though challenging, is doable because I have recovery.

Those are just two out of the many blessings I now have. While using, I could not see the blessing that I had, let alone be able to count them! Now, the best blessing is to be able to recognize and appreciate them.

Just One of Many Blessings by Maxine Nobbe, AP/AR

I realize that some will roll their eyes when I say that one of the blessings in my life is my adopted greyhounds, but it's true. Not only do they give me and my family unconditional love, they have also opened up a whole new adventure: belonging to an adoption group!

About two years ago, a bunch of us greyhound adopters decided to take on the task of finding homes for these retired working dogs. Their fate is questionable at best, so the more we can place in forever homes, the less tragic their stories. We have even teamed up with SCAL (Second Chance at Life) and placed greyhounds that were in prison for 12 weeks learning obedience from prisoners.

Heart Bound Greyhound Adoption (a 501(c)3 non-profit organization) is made up totally of volunteers. We are currently looking at Dairyland (Wisconsin's last dog track) closing at the end of the year. That means hundreds of dogs looking for homes, and we want to help as many as possible. Please consider adopting one of these wonderful pets or giving financial help to offset the expense of vet work needed in order to place them with families. All greyhounds coming in need to be spayed or neutered, wormed, and have dental work plus updated vaccinations.

Our website is: www.heartbound.org if you would like to check us out. Please feel free to contact me with any questions as well at 920-235-2556.

Grateful by Mary Riehl, Office Manager

Whenever I get whiney, I tell myself to knock it off and be grateful for what I have: a beautiful family, sobriety and a second family here at Step.

My grandchildren, Grayson and Leighton, have put silliness and fun back into my life. They have certainly added punch to the humdrum daily routine. I am very fortunate to have held the same job for the past 24 years, and through those years have come to love my second family at Step. There have been

many who have come and gone, so I guess it is more like a foster home!

The best part of this is that without my sobriety I would have none of it. So when you are feeling down or ungrateful, take a stab at being grateful by thinking of all the reasons you want to live life to the fullest. Trust me, there will be a long list in no time.

STEP WRITE UP

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Helping People... Helping Business

Happy Holidays!

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