

Press Release

For Immediate Release

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**STEP to Host a Grand Opening for Its Newest Thrift Store & Donation Center
and Progressive Art Studio Collective (PASC)**

Services To Enhance Potential (STEP) to host a grand opening event for its newest STEP Thrift Store and Donation Center, and Progressive Art Studio Collective (PASC), to date, on **Friday, November 12, 2021**, at 13705 and 13721 Eureka Road, (next door to each other in Southgate Shopping Center), at 10:00 AM. This new STEP Thrift Store and Donation Center replaced the Dix-Toledo Road, Southgate, location. Both soft openings were held in September and October 2021. STEP is aggressively growing in its offerings.

“With our nearly 50 years in business, not only have we grown tremendously, but so have the demands of our consumers and of our communities. We will continue to meet those demands,” said Brent Mikulski, President & CEO, STEP.

Thrift store shopping is on an all-time high in growing numbers of varied demographics. STEP provides successful retail/resale work experiences for persons with disabilities and other mental health needs in Wayne County. In addition to STEP’s new and largest Southgate location, it has two other Wayne County Thrift Store & Donation Center locations, one in Dearborn Heights, and the other in Wayne. Many unique bargains and treasures are waiting to be discovered.

Watch for Your Thrift Store Diva to appear Live and on social media with fun fashion tips.

“It's about confidence in who you are and frugally and fashionably sharing it with the world,” said Leah Paige Cooley, Regional Retail Sales Manager, STEP. “Our stores are for divas who dress with personality, and do so on a dime,” added Cooley.

This is PASC’s first progressive art studio and gallery in Southgate. A progressive art studio is an open art studio model, used by many disability programs across the world, which helps artists with developmental disabilities and mental health needs to build art careers by encouraging the development of unique artistic styles and independent art practices. The studios and galleries are staffed by professional artists and curators who share their practice and serve as peer advisors offering encouragement and suggestions. This studio and gallery will become a significant part of the Southgate/downriver arts community, transforming opportunities for disabled adults in the region.

In addition to its new Southgate location, STEP's Progressive Art Studio Collective (PASC) has other Wayne County in-person studios and virtual studio programs in Detroit and Westland.

PASC Southgate will feature its first exhibition titled, *Introductions* in the PASC Southgate Gallery. It will feature a series of portraits by PASC artists in paint and drawing media, of people and animals; real, shamanistic, and fanciful. All exhibition artwork is for sale with 60% of the sale returning to the artist. T-shirts, socks, postcards, and calendars will also be available.

"This is a landmark achievement," says Anthony Marcellini, Art Studio Manager and PASC Program Lead. "It will be the first PASC studio and gallery fully open to the public, an inclusive environment where PASC artists can share and sell incredible contemporary artwork to the Southgate community," added Marcellini.

Ribbon Cutting and Speakers 10 AM

Key People and Ribbon Cutting-Names and Titles:

Brent Mikulski, President & CEO, STEP

Anthony Marcellini, Art Studio Manager and PASC Program Lead, STEP

Leah Paige Cooley, Regional Retail Sales Manager, STEP

Cherie Stangis, Director of Clinical and Quality Services and Development, STEP

Terey DeLisle, Director of Program Services, STEP

Elly Makowski, Social Media Manager, STEP

Carla Dean, Employment & Training Services Director, STEP

Karen Johnson, Marketing and Development Manager, STEP

Joseph Kuspa, Mayor, City of Southgate

Cassidy Tear, DDA, City of Southgate

Gina Guarisco, New Business Development, Today Magazine

Ron Hinrichs, President & CEO, Southern Wayne County Regional Chamber

Jessica Pinto, VP of Membership Services, Southern Wayne County Regional Chamber

Randy Pilon, Marketing and Events Manager, Southern Wayne County Regional Chamber

Southern Wayne County Regional Chamber Members

After 10 AM Festivities to include:

- Ribbon Cutting
- Beautiful New Facility Tours and Demonstrations
- Early Visit from Santa

First 25 People in the Door, After Ribbon Cutting, Receive STEP Thermo Tumblers

After 3 PM-7 PM Festivities to include:

- 50% Off all Apparel & Accessories

- Fun Raffles with Cool Prizes with Gift Cards from Brewligan’s Public House-Trenton, and TV’s Deli & Diner- Trenton
- First 15 Kids Receive Fun STEP Loot Bags at 4:00 PM
- Thrift Store Diva Fun & photo ops
- Joe Marsh, Director of Public Safety, Southgate Police and Fire Department, Providing Useful Safety Info, Fire Truck Photos Ops, and Safety-Related Gifts.
- K9 Officer Aero, Southgate Police Department, will be Showing Off His Skills.
- More Southgate Police Department Members will also be on Hand.

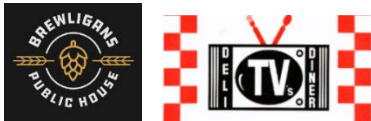
Water and Snacks:



- Provided by Meijer -Southgate

Local Restaurant Gift Card Prize Participants:

- Brewligans Public House- Trenton
- TV Deli & Diner- Trenton



Media Invite:

13705 and 13721 Eureka Road, (Southgate Shopping Center) Southgate, MI.

About Services To Enhance Potential (STEP) – STEP Thrift Store and Donation Center:

Located in Dearborn Heights, Southgate, and Wayne, Michigan, Services To Enhance Potential STEP Thrift Store and Donation Center is program within Services To Enhance Potential (STEP). Founded in 2007, it is dedicated to supporting adults with developmental disabilities and other mental health concerns to advance individual career paths in the retail field. There are no any out-of-pocket program costs for those covered by Medicaid, and scholarships are available to cover those are not. There are many unique bargains and treasures waiting to be discovered at STEP. STEP graciously accepts donated gently used goods. Hours of operation---Monday-Saturday: 10:30am–6:30pm and Sunday: 12:30pm-4:30pm. Visit www@STEPCentral.org for more information.

About Services To Enhance Potential (STEP) – Progressive Art Studio Collective (PASC):

Located in Detroit, Southgate, Westland, and virtually, Progressive Art Studio Collective (PASC) is an art and design studio, and gallery program within Services To Enhance Potential (STEP). It is dedicated to supporting adults with developmental disabilities and other mental health concerns to advance individual career paths in the art and design fields. Founded in 2021, PASC is the first progressive art studio in Wayne County, Michigan, bringing focus to the artistic talent, expression, and life experiences, while making a considerable change in the quality of life to many. Using a “progressive art studio” model, PASC participants are provided with opportunities to exhibit and sell their artwork in professional exhibitions and online galleries. There are no out-of-pocket program costs for those covered by Medicaid, and scholarships are available who are not. Contact 734.718.0483 or visit www.progressiveartstudiocollective.org for more information.

About Services To Enhance Potential (STEP):

Headquartered in Dearborn, Michigan, Services To Enhance Potential (STEP), a non-profit organization, brings employment and employment training to 1,400 adults with developmental disabilities and other mental health needs throughout Wayne County, MI. Founded in 1972, STEP strives to provide the most strategic and effective specialized programs and services in its industry. These include, DREAM, Progressive Art Studio Collective (PASC), What’s Cooking in Westland?, Cookin’ in the D, and three STEP Thrift Store & Donation Centers, Volunteer Sites, among many other programs. There are no out-of-pocket program costs for those covered by Medicaid, and scholarships are available to cover those not. Visit www@STEPCentral.org for more information.

***See attached STEP Logos, Sell Sheet, and STEP headshots for:**

- **Brent Mikulski, President & CEO, STEP**
- **Anthony Marcellini, Art Studio Manager and PASC Program Lead, STEP**
- **Leah Paige Cooley, Regional Retail Sales Manager, STEP**

***Media MUST receive STEP management permission to interview and/or photograph STEP consumers (program members).**

***All published photos MUST be approved.**

***More info and approved photos are available upon request.**

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