

Media Release
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STEP VA Adds to Board of Directors

FREDERICKSBURG, VA—STEP VA Inc., the local 501(c)3 non-profit with a mission to “empower people with disabilities and their families through creative expression and sensory exploration,” is expanding its board of directors with the addition of three new members, effective January 1, 2025.

Khaled Bitar is a section chief with the United States Department of the Treasury, working in the Financial Crimes Enforcement Network. He has volunteered with the organization for three years, often building things behind the scenes. In joining the board he hopes “to be able to assist the organization expand both its reach and its offerings so that many other individuals and families facing challenges ... have access to the amazing resources and community that STEP VA provides.”

Sara Dowd joins the board two years after her son, Marcus, who had volunteered with the organization for four years, left for college. Dowd, a senior instructional designer with The Johns Hopkins Center for Talented Youth, got involved with the organization in the spring of 2024 as a volunteer with the musical *Seussical Jr.*, and brings a lengthy resume of previous board experience across different organizations.

“I love that STEP VA gives students a chance to shine in a way that is comfortable and supportive, yet encourages and challenges them at the same time,” she says.

The third new member of the board is Jeff Henry, director of member services and community relations at Rappahannock Electric Cooperative. Though Henry doesn't have the immediate connection to the organization the others do, he's not unfamiliar with STEP VA or what it does. Having been witness to the evolution of the STEP VA spring musical almost since inception, Henry says, “I think having a creative outlet is critical for any individual's development and personal growth.”

“We're excited for this group, as they're less embedded in the organization. They'll bring a fresh, new perspective to the board,” said board vice president Carolyn McKinney.

The close of 2024 also sees the departure of Brigid O'Leary, parent advocate and member at large, from the board. O'Leary will continue in her role as chair of the media committee.

For more information about the organization or to donate, visit www.stepva.org.

STEP VA, Inc. is a 501c3 non-profit organization that provides sensory-based theater and arts programs for individuals with disabilities. Its vision is to transform the world by offering each individual the opportunity to flourish in the community.